



May 2024 Newsletter

In this newsletter:

Coaching opportunities

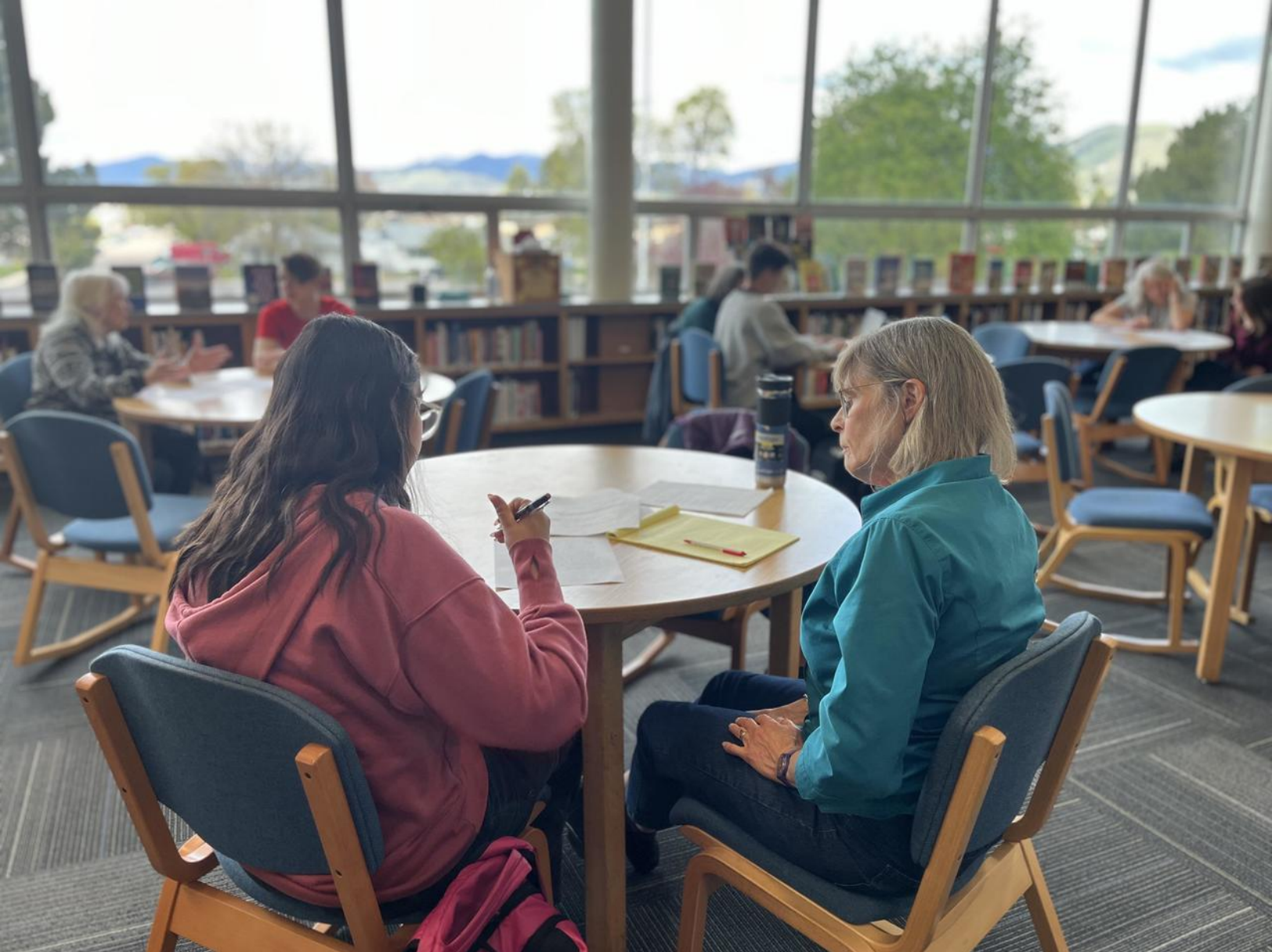
Whitefish Community Foundation grant!

Appreciation picnics reminder

Thank you, Missoula & Bitterroot Gives donors!

Growth Mindset: A Writing Coach's Origin Story

Teacher Appreciation Week



From sea slugs to Impressionism to black holes, coaches were enamored with 9th graders' research topics at Sentinel High School earlier this month.

Coaching Update

Please help us fill the last coaching opportunities of this school year!

May

Flathead

Columbia Falls High School

12th grade, 5 page synthesis research project

- [Wednesday, May 15](#)
 - 8:15 - 8:57am, 1 coach needed
 - 10:40 - 11:21 2 coaches needed

Missoula

Big Sky High School

9th grade, analysis essay, Vincent

- [Tuesday, May 14](#), Single Draft
 - 10:40-11:30, 10 coaches needed
 - 1:15-2:05, 10 coaches needed

Sentinel High School

9th grade, research essays, Schick

- [Thursday, May 16](#), first draft
 - 2:25-3:55, 2 coaches needed
- [Wednesday, May 22](#), second draft
 - 10:30-12:00, 2 coaches needed
 - 2:25-3:55, 2 coaches needed

Questions regarding sessions can be directed to Flathead Coordinator (jeanne@writingcoachesofmontana.org) or Missoula/Ravalli Coordinator (kat@writingcoachesofmontana.org).

[CHECK OUT COACHING CALENDAR](#)



Above: Flathead coordinator Jeanne Wdowin (left) and WCM board director Rita Braun (right) were all smiles during Whitefish Community Foundation's grant award ceremony on May 2nd.

WCM receives Whitefish Community Foundation grant!

WCM is over the moon to receive a \$4,000 grant from Whitefish Community Foundation to fund research in partnership with Columbia Falls High School during the 2024-2025 school year! We look forward to measuring the impact of coaching on students' writing.



End of Year Picnics: RSVP by May 10th

- **Missoula/Ravalli:** Wednesday, May 15, Meadowlark Pavilion at Fort Missoula, 6-8pm
- **Flathead:** Thursday, May 16, City Beach Gazebo 3 in Whitefish, 6-8pm

Coaches, educators, donors, supporters & their families are welcome to join us!

If you plan to attend either picnic, please RSVP by responding to this email by May 10th.

Thank you to Orange Street Food Farm for funding the picnics, Le Petit for donating bread, and Fleur Bake Shop for donating tokens of appreciation for coaches!



Thank you for donating to Missoula & Bitterroot Gives!

What an amazing community we have! You helped us raise \$7,215 for Missoula & Bitterroot Gives. We appreciate your support for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds and continue to aim to do away with school fees by fall 2024.

Thank you to Clearwater Credit Union for providing a \$1,000 match which helped us encourage donations!



clearwater

CREDIT UNION



Growth Mindset: A Coaches' Blog

Steve Thomas has been a writing coaching since 2016. Based in Ravalli, he has worked with students across several school districts.

A Writing Coach's Origin Story

Many years ago, when I was in high school, writing coaches hadn't been invented. But I **had** a writing coach. She was our English teacher, and we called her Mrs. Case.

As a teacher, she had her own multiple, daily obligations, one of which was to try to teach me French. (The French didn't work too well for me, which probably disappointed Mrs. Case.) As for my writing in English, Mrs. Case wasn't shy about critiquing and grading my assigned papers. But somehow, she took the time to encourage me to write with extracurricular assignments. Her coaching style was to suggest, nudge and sometimes push. Little did she know then that she would be a soft, lingering voice that would suggest and nudge me to become a Montana Writing Coach.

Each Montana Writing Coach has her/his own style, but the fundamental approach is the same for all of us; leave the grading to the teacher, meet students where they are, and move ahead together. Like a story or an essay, a coaching session has a beginning and an end. For me, the beginning is multi-dimensional: logistical-factual, informational, emotional, and serendipitous.

I never think about any of these esoteric criteria when I meet a student. I think, what a young, wonderful person. And then it gets better, with the paper, the student, and me in the same orbit. I'm a partner--a colleague—working to meet a shared goal. And that's what we do. It's reciprocity that I hope benefits the student, and I know benefits me.

As someone who still writes "creatively," working as a Writing Coach, I am frequently inspired to write either by the class assignments or the teacher herself/himself. I'm sure it would be hard to quantify on standardized tests, but the auras of

the teacher and students resonate with me.

Here is a haiku with no direct inspiration from a particular teacher or assignment. It does come from being in environments of support, guidance, imagination, opportunity, nurturing, and some nudging and pushing.

The haiku:
A diffident moon
parked on the western horizon.
A bare bulb in an empty closet.

--Steve Thomas



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