

December 2022 Newsletter



Coaches (left to right) LaWen, Jeff, Emma, and Jarl were 4 of the 50 volunteers who coached every 8th grader at Washington Middle School last month. What makes us happy at WCM? Amazing community members showing up for students!

Coaching Update

We are wrapping up a wonderful fall 2022 and are already booking dates into the new year!

See below for our coaching needs, with an exciting development of reconnecting in Florence-Carlton schools for the first time since before the pandemic!

December 2022

- **Kalispell Middle School (Flathead)**
 - [Tuesday, December 6](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 9:17-10:05, 3 coaches needed
 - 10:09-10:57, 1 coach needed
 - 11:37-12:25, 2 coaches needed
 - 12:29-1:17, 3 coaches needed
 - 2:13-3, 4 coaches needed
- **Whitefish High School (Flathead)**
 - [Monday, December 12](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 1:54-3:27, 1 coach needed
 - [Tuesday, December 13](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 1:54-3:27, 3 coaches needed
- **Columbia Falls High School (Flathead)**
 - [Thursday, December 15](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 1:27-2:16, 4 coaches needed
 - 2:21-3:10, 4 coaches needed
 - [Monday, December 19](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 8:15 - 9:10, 6 coaches needed
 - 9:15 -10:04, 6 coaches needed
 - 1:27-2:16, 6 coaches needed
 - 2:21-3:10, 6 coaches needed

January 2023

- **Corvallis High School (Ravalli)**
 - [Monday, January 9th](#), In Person, First Draft
 - 10:10-11:45, 5 coaches needed
 - [Wednesday, January 18th](#), In Person, Second Draft
 - 10:10-11:45, 5 coaches needed
- **Florence-Carlton High School (Ravalli)**
 - [Thursday, January 12th](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 9:07-10:00, 8 coaches needed
 - 1:25-2:18, 4 coaches needed
- **CS Porter Middle School (Missoula)**
 - [Monday, January 9th](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, 13 coaches needed
 - [Tuesday, January 10th](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, 15 coaches needed
 - [Wednesday, January 11th](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, 15 coaches needed
 - [Friday, January 13th](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, 13 coaches needed
 - [Tuesday, January 17th](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, 13 coaches needed
 - [Wednesday, January 18th](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, 15 coaches needed
 - [Friday, January 20th](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, 13 coaches needed

All session details and registrations can be accessed through our [coaching calendar](#).

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

[CHECK OUT COACHING CALENDAR](#)



Giving Season Update

We are so thankful for everyone who has donated to WCM during the 2022 Giving Season so far! We have raised **\$2,845 toward our \$5,000 goal**. [Can you help us reach \\$5,000 by the new year?](#)

Please consider giving to help us reach our goal:

- **\$25** = a background check for a new coach
- **\$150** = recruitment costs for a round of coaching
- **\$500** = 150 coaching sessions
- Another way to support WCM is by signing up for our Friends of WCM monthly giving program. Instead of giving once, monthly installments allow WCM to be sustainably supported throughout the year. **Just click the box at the bottom of our [donation page](#) to join** (and be entered for fun raffle gift certificates throughout the year)!

[DONATE](#)

Missoula & Kalispell Pint Nights!

Don't forget to join us for pint nights **THIS WEEK!**

- **Tuesday, December 6, 5-8pm, [Dram Shop Central](#) in Missoula**
- **Thursday, December 8, 5-8pm, [Bias Brewing](#) in Kalispell**

\$1 per pint sale will be donated to WCM during both events.

At **Bias Brewing**, we will also have a raffle for a year-long brewery membership (\$5/1 ticket; \$20/5 tickets). Tickets can be purchased in-person during the event or by [donating online](#) from now until 5pm on 12/8. (Send an email to cassie@writingcoachesofmontana.org after making your online donation to be entered for the raffle.)

At each pint night, WCM will host a **friendly writing competition**. Working in groups of 2 or 3, attendees will be asked to respond to a mock school assignment prompt. Who can generate the most effective topic sentence, judged blindly by our board members? We will see! As a prize, you'll win some amazing publications.

[BUY RAFFLE TICKETS](#)



Corporate Sponsorship

Thank you to PayneWest Insurance for being a platinum WCM sponsor and investing in the next generation of communicators!



Growth Mindset: A Coaches' Blog

This blog post is brought to you by Coach Sherry Ritter, from Stevensville.

Being a Guide

Whenever a student comes to me for coaching, I feel like I'm about to open a package. Will I find inside a student who is excited about writing or leery of it? Will it be someone who would rather be left alone or one who is open to help? Being a writing coach can be a struggle at times, like last spring when we were trying to coach middle schoolers just before the end of school. Clearly, some had already "checked out." Mostly, though, coaching is a delight. My first session this fall was one of those times.

I saw the teacher talking to a young man who had come in late. I'd noticed how he sat with his hooded sweatshirt pulled part way over his face, as if hiding from the world. Then another student came up to talk to him and the young man broke into the sweetest smile.

After coaching two other students, I looked up to see this one walking to my desk. I introduced myself, then I told him that I'd seen him across the room and that I loved the way he lit up when his friend came over. I hadn't done something like that with other students, but I sensed that this student needed a compliment.

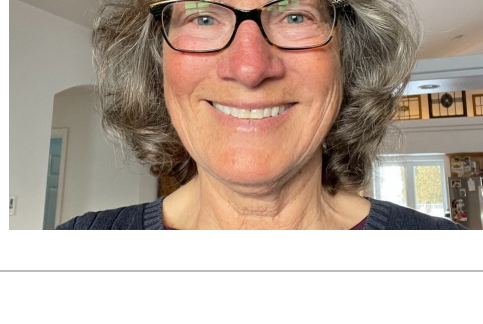
He hadn't started his "My Hometown Hero" assignment yet, so we chose one of the teacher's suggested tools, a mind map or "bubble," to figure out what he wanted to say about his hero. I felt myself holding back from telling him what to do, then pushing him a little, then stepping back again. I wanted him to tell his story, but I could see he was struggling to find it.


There was some resistance and at one point I noticed he was focusing on anything other than the project and me. So I said, "I feel like you're done with me." He looked startled and asked what I meant. I explained that he seemed ready to go back to his desk and if so, that was OK. He told me that he just has a hard time focusing, but after that, he did the best work yet on finding his story. When we met again two days later for the second draft, he worked hard on expanding his essay. When I asked him for examples to back up his claims about his hero, he smiled when he realized he knew exactly what to write about.

We coaches play a different role from teachers, and that difference is why teachers choose us to come to their classrooms. The individual attention the other coaches and I can give helps the students find their stories. We question, we prod, we step back when there's resistance, then we gently move in again, maybe by taking another tack. At each advance, when students find the words and the story they want to tell, we congratulate them. Finding their story is a big deal, and they deserve to have us acknowledge that.

Do I want to tell them what to do? Absolutely. So my challenge is to back off and just be their guide. And not just a guide, but a positive voice in a world where some kids don't hear that enough.

--Sherry Ritter





HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

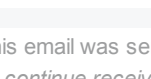
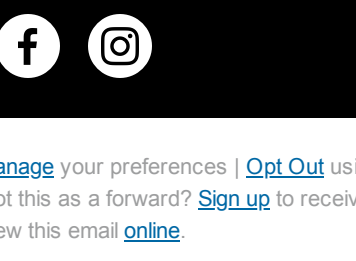
FROM THE WCM TEAM



Contact us:

admin@writingcoachesofmontana.org
406-529-5629

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Missoula, MT 59807



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