

March 2023 Newsletter

In this newsletter:
 Missoula new coach training
 Diversity in literature meet-up
 Co-authored blog post about coaching friendships



Coaches worked with students at Whitefish Middle School on a persuasive essay earlier this semester.

Coaching Update

As spring starts to peek out (and then hide again), consider coaching as a way to get out of the house! We need coaches to sign-up for the following sessions:

Whitefish Middle School

- [Monday, March 6](#)
 - 10:15-11:10, 3 coaches needed
 - 12-12:50, 1 coach needed
- [Tuesday, March 7](#)
 - 10:15-11:10, 7 coaches needed
 - 12-12:50, 4 coaches needed
- [Monday, March 13](#)
 - 10:15-11:10, 4 coaches needed
 - 12-12:50, 2 coaches needed
- [Tuesday, March 14](#)
 - 10:15-11:10, 7 coaches needed
 - 12-12:50, 4 coaches needed

Target Range Middle School

- [Monday, March 13](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:11-11:01, 8 coaches needed
 - 12:40-1:30, 9 coaches needed
 - 2:26-3:16, 8 coaches needed
- [Tuesday, March 14](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:11-11:01, 8 coaches needed

Big Sky High School

- [Wednesday, March 15](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 8:55-10:25, 3 coaches needed
 - 12:50-2:20, 4 coaches needed
 - 2:25-3:55, 2 coaches needed
- [Thursday, March 16](#), In Person, Single Draft
 - 2:25-3:55, 2 coaches needed

Columbia Falls High School

- [Monday, March 20, Columbia Falls HS](#)
 - 1:27-2:16, 6 coaches needed
 - 2:21-3:10, 5 coaches needed

Evergreen Junior High

- [Tuesday, March 21, Evergreen Jr. H](#)
 - 11:13-12, 8 coaches needed
 - 12:48-1:35, 7 coaches needed
 - 1:43-2:30, 9 coaches needed
 - 2:38-3:25, 8 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](#)



A mother and daughter duo were trained as new coaches at Bitterroot Public Library in February.

New coach training in Missoula next week!

Want to add more meaning and connection in your life? Become a writing coach! One of our volunteers recently stated that coaching "is one of the most fulfilling volunteer activities I've done in my many decades of volunteering for various organizations."

You can become a coach by attending an interactive workshop at Missoula Public Library this upcoming [Wednesday, March 8](#), 2-4pm. Register below to receive the video and documents to review in advance.

If you're located in Missoula or Ravalli and this date doesn't work for you, never fear! We have another training at Bitterroot Public Library in Hamilton scheduled on [Monday, April 3](#), 6-8pm. And a Flathead training will be scheduled soon, date TBA.

Email Missoula/Ravalli Coordinator Kat Jackson (kat@writingcoachesofmontana.org) or Flathead Coordinator Jeanne Wdowin (jeanne@writingcoachesofmontana.org) with questions.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



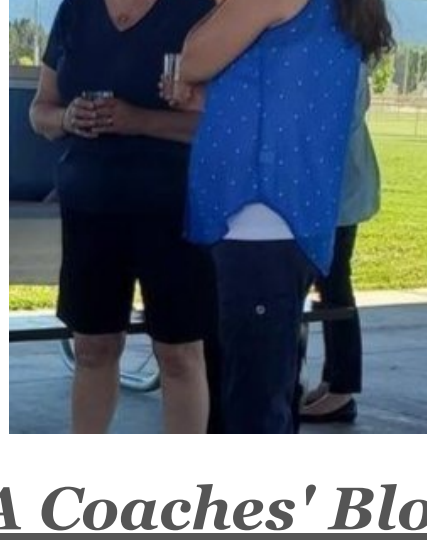
Diversity in Literature Meetup

Join for us a virtual meet-up on [Thursday, March 9](#), 5:30-6:30pm, to discuss the importance of diverse representation in literature. The meet-up will be facilitated by WCM intern, Julia Wynne.

If you missed Julia's moving blog post from last month's newsletter, check it out [here](#).

We had an outstanding time last month with WCM board member Dr. Beverly Chin to discuss revision strategies. Don't forget that trained coaches can access recordings of meet-ups and other resources through the [coach portal](#), and anyone can access WCM resource videos via our [YouTube channel](#).

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Growth Mindset: A Coaches' Blog

Denise Mahrer (left) and Donna Lambiase (right) are pictured at WCM's June 2021 coach appreciation picnic. They are long-time coaches and now dear friends. The Ravalli-based dynamic duo co-authored this month's blog post, highlighting how WCM brings people together in wonderful and unexpected ways:

"Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you; spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life" (Amy Poehler, American comedian, actress, writer, producer and director). When volunteers rally around a common goal it creates a sense of that group. As coaches of that group. As coaches of that group. As coaches of that group. (WCM) with a diverse collection of backgrounds: lawyers, nurses, teachers, accountants and therapists, to name a few. The commonality you will find is our shared love of the written word and a belief that writing is a valuable tool for self-expression. There are many coaching communities within WCM, designated because of location. Montana is a big state. As WCM members, the common bond between every coach, that will keep us united and inspired, is not only our rewarding connections with students but with each other. This is especially true for two of the Bitterroot writing coaches, Denise Mahrer and Donna Lambiase.

Having moved to the Bitterroot Valley in late 2013, by fall 2016 Denise was looking for a volunteering opportunity. As a retired English teacher she knew it had, in some way, to involve stepping back into the classroom:

In the late summer of 2016, I was leaving Clark Fork Farmers Market when I was approached by the former director of WCM. The program was hoping to expand into the Bitterroot and was in need of additional coaches. Her brief overview of the WCM philosophy was all it took for me to sign up for the next training session. Here was an organization that wanted to work with every student in the class, foster their love of writing and help move their ideas forward. From the very first meeting with the new coaches the sense of camaraderie was infectious. Knowing there were others, akin to myself, who valued education and wanted to show student writers that folk in the community cared was heartening. Working one on one with the student writers, listening to their thoughts and guiding them in articulating their ideas is rewarding. Spending time before and after coaching sessions with fellow coaches, discussing the assignments the students are working on, learning about each others' lives, careers, and literary tastes has been equally rewarding. It has been through these "after hour" interactions that friendships have blossomed.

Donna came to WCM after reading an article in the February 2018 edition of the *The Falcon View* about coaches working one-on-one with Florence-Carlton High school students:

My fond memories of after-school library hours spent working with student writers bubbled to the surface when I read the article about Writing Coaches of Montana. With experience as a fiction writer and reader for a publisher, I felt confident as I hurriedly applied to WCM in 2018. I believe when a person takes on a new endeavor they enter with expectations limited to their past experiences. I was so eager to relive the joy of working with students I believe I was blind to other possible benefits. My eyes were opened during my first WCM training class. Unexpectedly, I was welcomed into an entire community of volunteers who shared my strong personal commitment to spreading the value of the written word. Not only would I be engaging with students in a rewarding setting but I made connections at this first training which became the foundation of my own community of coaches. Over the years I have worked alongside many coaches, teachers and administrators and I highly value the history behind each of these brief, but enriching, encounters. It seems there is another unexpected benefit of belonging to a group of like-minded individuals, the development of friendships.

One never knows where or when a chance encounter may spark a friendship. While we have mutual friends, if it weren't for WCM, we may never have met. As C. S. Lewis once said, "Friendship is born at the moment when one man says to another: 'What! You too? I thought that no one but myself...'" The initial commonality, in our case, the love of the written word and the desire for the younger generation to be as enthused as we are, is what led us to WCM in the first place and to the ever-evolving friendship we have today. What started as rereading and chatting about the works students were analyzing, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Fahrenheit 451*, transitioned into discussions regarding best coaching practices. How best to approach the reluctant student who either hasn't read the work and has no intention of doing so? Or the student who hasn't even begun his/her essay and doesn't know where to start?

In our case, it didn't take long before we began talking about the books and authors we enjoy reading. Soon we were meeting to discuss new literary gems, or aspects of the students' writing assignments prior to coaching sessions. We discovered we have other interests in common; baking, gardening and quilting as well as our passion for writing. When we aren't helping students within the valley with their writing assignments, we use each other as sounding boards for our own work. We, and our families, frequently celebrated the quintessential American and British holidays, July 4th and December 26th, Boxing Day, in each other's company. Five years ago, we met as strangers, today we ride to coaching sessions together as friends.

WCM Executive Director, Cassie Sheets, ends her communications with the following quotation, "It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes" (Fred Rogers). Neither of us expected to find heroes or fast friends when first volunteering for WCM, however we are fortunate to have found both. Those who coach alongside us have chosen to make the child, the community, their world, their problem. They have seen the need and responded. We feel privileged to be a part of the WCM organization as a whole and specifically, here in our "Bitterroot Valley" neighborhood, where our coaching "neighbors" have become friends too. Mr. Rogers would be proud.

--Donna Lambiase & Denise Mahrer



welcome SPRING

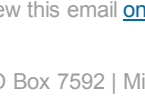
"In the spring, I have counted
136 different kinds of weather
inside of 24 hours."

— Mark Twain

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