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# October 2024 Newsletter

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*Above: Coaches worked with students at Columbia Falls High School last week.*

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## **Coaching opportunities**

We have our first coaching opportunities of the 2024-2025 school year available for trained coaches. Thanks to all of our generous donors and grantors over the past year, all coaching sessions will be 100% free to schools moving forward!

### **Flathead**

#### **Kalispell Middle School**

6th grade poem "Where I'm From", Handford

**Tuesday, October 22**, single draft

8:00 - 8:55am, 8 coaches needed

9:00 - 9:50am, 8 coaches needed

11:25am - 12:15pm, 8 coaches needed

12:25 - 1:10pm, 8 coaches needed

### Whitefish High School

Persuasive Essay for Whitefish Vision, Webb

[Wednesday, November 6, 2024](#), 1st draft (final draft already filled)

8:20 - 9:53am, 2 coaches needed

10:36am - 12:09pm, 1 coach needed

[Thursday, November 7, 2024](#), 1st draft

8:20 - 9:53am, 3 coaches needed

9:58 - 11:31am, 1 coach needed

[Thursday, November 14, 2024](#), final draft

8:20 - 9:53am, 4 coaches needed

9:58 - 11:31am, 2 coach needed

### **Missoula**

Sentinel High School

12th grade, Allison

[Wednesday, November 20](#), single draft

12:30-2:00pm, 7 coaches needed

2:05-3:35pm, 8 coaches needed

11th grade, AP English, Allison

[Wednesday, December 4](#), single draft

8:35-10:05am, 8 coaches needed

[Thursday, December 5](#), single draft

8:35-10:05am, 8 coaches needed

10:45am-12:15pm, 8 coaches needed

9th grade, Of Mice and Men, Schick

[Wednesday, December 4](#), first draft

2:05-3:35pm, 7 coaches

[Wednesday, December 11](#), final draft

2:05-3:35pm, 7 coaches

[Thursday, December 5](#), first draft

10:45am-12:15pm, 8 coaches

[Thursday, December 12](#), final draft

10:45am-12:15pm, 8 coaches

## **Ravalli**

### **Hamilton High School**

9th grade, Love Letter to a Place, Janes

[Tuesday, October 15](#), Single draft

10:10-11:40, 6 coaches needed

2:00-3:30, 7 coaches needed

[Wednesday, October 16](#), Single draft

10:10-11:40, 7 coaches needed

Not a trained coach yet?

Register for Missoula & Ravalli's next workshop on [Friday, October 11th](#) or reach out to Kat Jackson (kat@writingcoachesofmontana.org).

Register for Flathead's next workshop on [Wednesday, November 20th](#) or contact Jeanne Wdowin (jeanne@writingcoachesofmontana.org).

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## **Fall 2024 meet-ups**

We will be hosting two virtual meet-ups this fall. All WCM supporters--including coaches, teacher partners, parents, etc.--are welcome to join in our lifelong learning gatherings through the Zoom links, below.

- **Understanding How Trauma Impacts Students**
  - Thursday, **October 15, 12-1pm**
  - Kat Jackson, Missoula & Ravalli Coordinator & Missoula youth group home counselor
- **Supporting English Language Learners**
  - Monday, **November 4, 12-1pm**
  - Matt Bell, Office of Public Instruction & WCM board member

# New coach training workshops

We were delighted to welcome 11 new coaches in September! If you missed that workshop, you can join these instead.

**Advanced registration is required.**

**Missoula/Ravalli:** [Friday, October 11, 3-4:30pm, Missoula Public Library](#)

**Flathead:** [Wednesday, November 20, 10:15am-12:15pm, ImagineIF Library Kalispell](#)

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"I love the writing coaches organization and all they've done for my students. It is wonderful to watch my teenage students light up as they share their writing with someone who really listens to them and hears their intent with respect and enthusiasm. In a hectic world, the writing coaches give space for real life connections and mentoring. No matter their skill level or situation, my students leave the interaction with a confidence that nothing else could replicate."

–Kalispell Middle School teacher



## Thank you, Great Fish Community Challenge donors!

We are over the moon with the \*preliminary\* numbers in so far for the Great Fish Community Challenge!

We'll find out the total number raised at Whitefish Community's Foundation's awards ceremony on October 22nd.

Until then, we'll just say THANK YOU to everyone who donated!

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## Sponsor highlight: Bias Brewing

Thank you to Kalispell's [Bias Brewing](#) for once again supporting WCM's mission! This time, Bias Brewing generously offered WCM in-kind donations for teacher and coach appreciation.

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## Growth Mindset: A Coaches' Blog

*Nancy Reece Jones is one of WCM's outstanding seven coach mentors for the 2024-2025 school year. Based out of Ravalli, in this picture she coaches a Sentinel High School student in Missoula.*

### **Paying It Forward**

I was a prolific writer as a child. Story after story, all about wolves named Lobo or horses named Stormy. My young imagination ran as free as my four-footed protagonists. After composing a story, I'd sit at the kitchen table with Mom, who'd meticulously go through my words with a keen editor's eye and a red pen. Those memories are among the earliest and sweetest I have of my mother, whose attention I had to share with three other siblings. That one-on-one time with her was precious and set a firm foundation for my writing skills.

Not surprisingly, I gravitated to communications as a career, starting as a technical editor and eventually a writer of scientific/technical material. As a writer, I always invited review, knowing full well every writer needs an editor.

My career behind me now, I still love the world of words as much as ever. I jumped at the opportunity to be a WCM volunteer when I heard about the program about six years ago. It's been a highly rewarding experience, one that has challenged my aging brain and touched my heart.

I start each of my coaching sessions taking a student's literary temperature by asking "Do you enjoy writing?" Sadly, most of the time my young friend admits "not so much." As we move through the session, I'm working on two levels: one

on the surface, talking content and punctuation; the other, determining what I can identify as their strengths. When we finish, I compliment them on the latter and encourage them to read, read, read to build their writing skills. I tell them that whatever career course they choose, basic writing is key to communicating with others.

I love it when I can honestly exclaim, as we're wrapping up: "You're a good writer!" or "I like the way your mind works!" I can always find something to acknowledge. In that moment, I see their eyes light up and a flash of a shy smile. Bingo.

If I have a few additional minutes, I ask about something I've gleaned from their writing to show I've 'seen' them. Often, it's sports related. How is the football season going? Is your foot going to be healed enough for the upcoming volleyball season? If I'm coaching a senior, and it doesn't feel too invasive, I'll inquire about their plans after graduation.

It's not about what I try to impart—which I sometimes work too hard at—it's how I do it. By mirroring my mother's attitude as she sat next to me six decades ago, I'm passing on her encouraging, positive energy to these young people. And hopefully helping them see writing as a valuable form of self-expression, something they can experiment with and enjoy the rest of their lives.

—Nancy Reece Jones

### Contact us:

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