

BECON
5/1/26

Happy belated May Day!

We had a great meeting yesterday and before we go any further, I just want to say that honoring our Book of Golden Deeds winner, Shelly Greenfield at breakfast yesterday provided a reaffirmation for me, and I'm sure all those in our club, of why we do what we do. Shelly was instrumental in establishing Family Promise of Yellowstone County, a non-profit that helps homeless families stay together in partnership with local churches. I was just so taken by the selflessness of both Shelly and the FP Executive Director Felicia Burg who speak and act with such love and faith and caring for people that it's just humbling how lucky we are to have these angels in our community and how lucky we are to be able to support them in our small way. Thanks also to Craig Burke and his committee for bringing this award back after being dormant for a couple of years.

Guests

- Guests include our BOGD honoree Shelly Greenfield and staff and friends of Family Promises including Morgan, Jennifer, Joan, Felicia and Michele.
- Todd Sherman, who works for Coldwell Banker and was formerly a Downtown Exchange Club member.

Announcements

- Shawnee had Mark "Lumpy" Cloud, one of our newest members, come up and receive his certificate and tell us a little about himself including coaching wrestling and having a couple of kids (and if I could read my writing, I'd tell you a little more – sorry Lumpy).
- Shawnee thanked those who attended the Diamond X joint fundraiser for the Club and the Family Tree. It's nice of DX to host these fundraisers and to let me pay my food and bar tab a day late after I hogged and jogged (I swear it was an accident).
- Shawnee is looking for help for her final five meetings needing a program/speaker. If you have any ideas where someone can come in and speak on our non-business meeting dates, let her know.
- Tarra provided another update on the upcoming Rotary Club parade, which I believe is on May 23rd starting at 10 am (show up at 9) including signups for help with this starting next week. The parade will include an equestrian drill team, and some Decedents of American Revolution group in costume carrying a period American flag and Air Forcemen also carrying flags. The BEC float will be staged two or three in the parade.
- The results of Club Elections were announced with Tanner becoming the Prez Elect, Ed and Tanya staying on as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively and Mike Songer,

Greg McManus and Misty Wittman becoming the newest Board members in a super tight (one-vote) race; and finally Jeff Roach and Nate Allie were voted to the Foundation Board.

- I sent a quick shout-out email yesterday about the last day of Yellowstone Valley Gives fundraising campaign – thanks to those that participated.
- And a final TY to the Club from Linda at the Free Store.

I knew that my schedule yesterday/this weekend was going to be busy, so Charlie graciously recorded the meeting with his AI device that records and transcribes what it hears – just amazing. So, what you read below are those notes just slightly edited.

Recognition of Shelly Greenfield and Support for Family Promise at Breakfast Exchange Club Event

Event Overview

The event was hosted by the Breakfast Exchange Club, recognizing community service and supporting local nonprofits. Attendees included members of the public, guests, and representatives from organizations such as Family Promise Yellowstone Valley and the Free Store.

Book of Golden Deeds Award

The highlight of the morning was the presentation of the **Book of Golden Deeds** award, honoring unsung heroes who contribute selflessly to the community. After a three-year hiatus, the award was revived by a dedicated committee including Greg McManus, Darryl Weber, Tony Parrish and Shawnee who reviewed nominations and selected this year's recipient. Shelly Greenfield was honored with the award for her foundational role in establishing **Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley** in 2004. Michelle Gagliano, Development Director at Family Promise, introduced Shelly, highlighting her leadership in creating Montana's first and the nation's 100th Family Promise affiliate.

The program allows homeless families to stay together in rotating host churches, providing meals, shelter, and case management.

Shelly Greenfield's Speech

Shelly shared the origin of her inspiration, tracing it back to the late 1990s when she read about the Interfaith Hospitality Network. In 2002, after learning of interest from Pastor Kate Fox, she joined a group that researched local homelessness and discovered critical gaps—such as shelters separating families without a marriage license and **enough homeless children in Billings Public School to fill an elementary school**. She recounted visiting Loveland, Colorado's program, which inspired the launch of Family Promise in Billings. It took **18 months** to organize, with support from **nine host churches** and widespread community donations of bedding, toys, and funds. The program has achieved an **over 90% success rate** in helping families secure permanent housing.

Two emotional stories illustrated the impact: a father and his children who had been living in their car, and a 3-year-old girl who, upon entering the shelter, ran inside excitedly and asked, "Can I go play on that playground?"-a moment Shelly described as an epiphany: "We're keeping an eye on these kids."

Felicia Burg's Presentation

Felicia Burg, Executive Director of Family Promise, spoke next, emphasizing that **75% of guests in the emergency shelter are fully employed**, revealing systemic housing affordability issues. The organization now supports families across the housing instability continuum, offering:

- **Eviction prevention and stabilization services**
 - **Rotational emergency shelter** (hosted in interfaith partner churches)
 - **Transitional housing** (low-rent units for up to a year, priced between **\$350-\$600/month**)
- She highlighted the **Community Diaper Bank**, launched to meet a basic need not covered by government assistance. Diapers are classified as non-essential, yet lack of them can prevent childcare access, leading to job loss and deeper crisis. The diaper bank provides support with no strings attached, building trust and serving as a gateway to broader assistance.

Yellowstone Valley Gives Campaign

Felicia announced that **today is the final day** of the Yellowstone Valley Gives campaign, urging attendees to donate. The immediate goal includes collecting:

- **70,000 diapers**
- **70,000 wipes**
- **\$7,000**

Donations can be dropped off at the Family Promise office (open 9-4) near the skate park or made online. Through the National Diaper Bank Network, diapers cost **17 cents each** (vs. **30 cents at Walmart**), maximizing impact.

Additional Notes

- There are **five** Family Promise affiliates in Montana, each operating independently but collaboratively.
- The **average age of a guest** in the rotational shelter is **9 years old** (national average: 11).
- Volunteers are welcome every **Monday from 2:30-5:00 PM** at the diaper bank.
- The Breakfast Exchange Club will make a donation to a nonprofit of Shelly's choice- presumably Family Promise.

Closing Moments

The event concluded with applause, photo opportunities, and a brief raffle. Felicia shared a personal connection: she and her two sons were guests in the program in **2012**, and credited Shelly's work with transforming her life. She expressed hope to have a similar legacy in 20 years.

A final note encouraged donations of **size 4, 5, 6 diapers, and pull-ups** -not newborns-as Montana's babies are "big". Wipes are also urgently needed.