

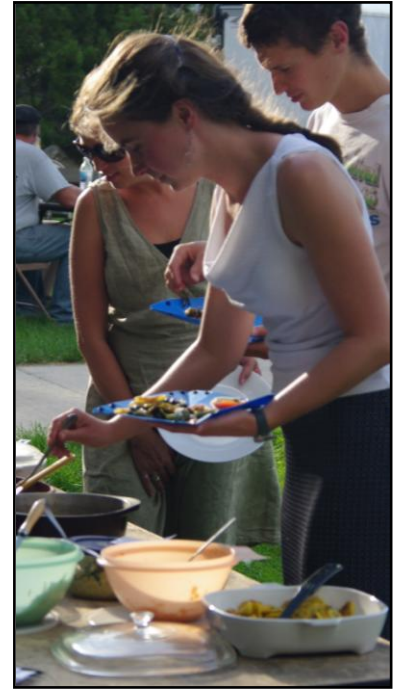


# Working for Equality and Economic Liberation



32 S. Ewing #109  
Helena, MT 59601  
(406) 495-0497  
www.weelmpowers.org

WEEL is a grassroots, economic and social justice non-profit organization. We are made up of people experiencing poverty and our supporters. Through advocacy, action, and education, we work together to eradicate the myths, stereotypes, and stigmas that are harmful to low income families.



*Clockwise from top left: volunteers taking a break; potluck during a garden party; Volunteer For Veggies; campaign to raise the minimum wage; GCP steering committee members; volunteers learning about compost*

## Board of Directors

Kim Abbott, President  
Lacey Stricklen, Secretary  
Virginia Swain, Treasurer  
Brian Coplin  
Don Judge  
Jeri Rittel  
Anita Roessmann

## Staff

Layna George, Executive Director  
Kendra Byrom, GCP Supervisor &  
Grants Manager

## Funders

Community Catalyst  
High Stakes Foundation  
Lewis & Clark Community  
Foundation  
Llewellyn Foundation  
MT Dept of Agriculture  
Northwest Area Foundation  
Social Justice Fund Northwest  
St. Peter's Hospital

## Community Partners

Action Print  
Alternative Energy Resources  
Organization (AERO)  
AmeriCorps\*VISTA  
Barnstormers Coffee  
Benny's Bistro  
Blackfoot Brewery  
Carroll College Green Team  
Cooney Homes  
Creative[MT]  
ExplorationWorks!  
GardenWerks  
Governor's Office of Community  
Service  
Great Harvest  
Grow Montana  
Growing Friends  
Helena Farmers Market  
Helena Food Policy Council  
Helena Food Share  
Helena Parks Department  
Helena Sand & Gravel  
Lewis & Clark Extension Office  
Mark's Lumber  
Montana Conservation Corps  
Murdoch's Ranch & Home Supply  
No Sweat Café  
Project for Alternative Learning (PAL)  
Plymouth Congregational Church  
Power Townsend  
Real Food Market & Deli  
Rockhand Hardware  
SRA Design Studios  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
Taste of the City  
Toi's Thai  
Van's Thriftway  
YMCA  
YWCA

# WEEL—Working for Equality and Economic Liberation

## New Executive Director at WEEL

Hello! My name is Layna George and I started as the Executive Director of WEEL in November 2010. I've been a WEEL employee and volunteer since 2008 when I moved to Helena to serve as the AmeriCorps\*VISTA for the Growing Community Project. The WEEL community was so welcoming and fun to work with that I continued to volunteer! Becoming the E.D. is a great opportunity to serve WEEL members and

continue our work advocating for policies that make our community stronger. Our last Executive Director, Mary Caferro, is a wonderful mentor, and I have learned so much about

community organizing and social justice from her. I'm looking forward to working with all of you in the coming years! I would love to get to know you better, so please give me a call and we can go



From left to right: Sarah Bhimani, former WEEL VISTA; Layna George, E.D.; Kendra Byrom, GCP Supervisor; Don Judge, board member

## Support Economic and Social Justice!

*I was new to Helena, and saw a community garden. I thought, 'this is good for the community, and so positive!' WEEL supports families by giving everyone in the community access to plots to grow food and take it home to their families. It's a good gift for everyone. I started volunteering at WEEL, and I felt I was contributing in a good way. WEEL made me feel needed, and that my time and services are valued. And I need that at this point in my life.*

--Remona

***We hope that our successes and our goals will inspire you to contribute to WEEL today.***

We are off to a great start this year, thanks to your support. We would like to update you on our work, and inspire you to invest and participate in our work. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 by July 31.

This year we have over 70 community gardeners growing food for themselves, their families, and their neighbors. And it doesn't stop there! We are working with neighborhoods to build two new gardens this year. This means more fresh veggies on the table for more people, and more relationships built with neighbors.

The residents at the Helena YWCA are getting their hands dirty and coming away with green thumbs. We are having container planting classes at the YWCA, and this summer the residents are looking forward to fresh lettuce, tomatoes, and herbs straight from the porch.

WEEL is reviving monthly community

discussions, opportunities WEEL members to come together to talk about important in their lives, to brainstorm solutions. meetings are held at the YWCA, which has helped the residents there more involved in WEEL. couple of amazing women have been volunteering in the WEEL office and at events, and they are invaluable!

Poverty does not have one cause, and there is no one solution. WEEL members continue to work together to change the poverty is viewed.

**Let's work together for social and economic justice.** Help us raise \$20,000 by July 31 and a contribution to WEEL today!

## How to Donate

- **Become a Sustaining Donor!** Join our NEW monthly giving campaign: donate online & select the recurring gift.
- Donate securely online: [www.weelempowers.org](http://www.weelempowers.org)
- Fill out and return the enclosed envelop
- WEEL is a 501(c)3 organization, and contributions are tax deductible.

## Growing community, veggies, and food security

We believe that everyone should have access to healthy, affordable food. The Growing Community Project is developing community gardens within walking distance of every neighborhood in Helena. We collaborate with the Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO), and the Helena Parks Department on this project.

### Semla Held Community Garden

Semla Held began organizing her neighborhood to build this community garden over four years ago. Unfortunately she is no longer with us to see the garden completed. The neighborhood, the GCP

and the City Parks Department are working together to built it in her memory. It will be our biggest garden yet, with over 40 plots available! The City installed a water system so community gardeners can easily access water for their plots. We will have people gardening there this spring! The garden is located at the corner of Saddle Drive and Beltview Drive.

### Janet Street Community Garden

We are developing Janet Street Community Garden with the support of the City of Helena, the Janet Street neighborhood, volunteers, local businesses, and

supporters like you. We have already built eight raised beds, all wheel-chair accessible. The garden is located next to Aspen Villages, an assisted living facility, and many of the residents are eager to get their hands in the dirt and grow veggies.

*"It's very powerful to raise your own food at the community level."*

*-Plymouth community gardener*

**Your contribution will grow gardens!**



*A few years ago, Selma Held stood in front of an empty field. Today, thanks to her tireless advocacy, there is a community garden in this spot.*



*Brent Sarchet, Lewis & Clark Co Extension Agent, teaches how to build a cold frame to extend the growing season. Over 35 people attending this class held at Helena Food Share.*

## Volunteer for Veggies

Every year, volunteers tend Volunteer for Veggie plots, and any produce that is not taken home by volunteers is donated to Helena Food Share. Total donations for 2008-2010 were 3,375 lbs of fresh produce! To get involved, please call our office, we would love to talk to you!

# SAVE THE DATE

## Gardening Classes:

**all classes are free, and childcare is provided**

### Building Fertile Soil & Controlling Pests Without Chemicals

June 16<sup>th</sup> 6:00-8:00pm  
St. Paul's Methodist Church  
(80 E. Lawrence)

### Preserving: Waterbath Canning

August 18<sup>th</sup> 5:30-8:00pm  
Helena Fairgrounds

### Preserving: Pressure Canning

August 25<sup>th</sup> 5:30-8:00pm  
Helena Fairgrounds

### Preserving: Freezing, Drying, and Fermenting

September 22<sup>nd</sup> 6:00-8:00pm  
Plymouth Congregational  
Kitchen (400 S. Oakes)

### Putting Your Garden to Bed

October 15<sup>th</sup> 2:30-4:30pm  
Exploration Garden behind  
the YMCA

## Second Tuesday Community Discussions

**2nd Tuesday of every month, 6:30-8:00pm, YWCA 501 S. Park Ave.**

Want to be more involved with combating poverty and creating equality in Montana? We'll be talking about issues that affect low-income Montanans:

healthcare, jobs, education, food security, and more. We use our collective voice to affect change and work for social and economic justice. Dinner and childcare provided. Transportation can also be arranged.

## Member Story: Anita Roessmann

Hello! It is a pleasure to be WEEL's newest board member. I work at Disability Rights Montana, a private, non-profit civil rights organization that advocates for the rights and opportunities of people with disabilities. I have been a staff attorney there for 13 years--which is almost as long as WEEL has been around--doing more and more policy advocacy as the years passed. That's how I got to know WEEL, by admiring the work of committed advocates like Mary Caferro as they fought for low-income and struggling families in

forums like the Montana Legislature. I have watched WEEL successfully advocate for expanded access to children's health insurance and successfully fight efforts to shrink it again. I want to be part of the effort to make sure that Montana is supporting it's young families, its working parents and its children. And I'm proud to be part of the organization that defines "family values" to mean that every family matters, every child is valuable, and we're all in this together.



*Anita is camera shy, but her nephew certainly isn't! Anita became a WEEL member and board member to support her nephew Will Roessmann and every other Montana family.*

## Parents As Scholars funded!

WEEL members have been advocating for years for Parents as Scholars, a program that will allow moms on TANF to count education as a work activity, and the program was funded this legislative

session! Senator Mary Caferro carried the bill, and with the support of WEEL and many of our partner organizations the bill passed. Thank you everyone who worked so hard to pass this bill!

**WEEL has a new look!** Check out the new WEEL website! WEEL member Jesus Salazar of Creative{MT} designed and built a beautiful new website: [www.weeleepowers.org](http://www.weeleepowers.org)



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Inside: New E.D. at WEEL; Community garden projects; upcoming events*



**NAME**  
**STREET ADDRESS**  
**CITY, ST 22134**