# ANNUAL REPORT

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# B I G SKY YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

byep.org



BYEP Mural by Griffin Foster Contact at griffinfosta@gmail.com 919-785-6583 or on Instagram at @jopsae





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The new BYEP HQ is now open! Come see us at 225 East Mendenhall in downtown Bozeman for a tour of our new space!

## the most **powerful mentorship** program in the country



## Robin Hill Executive Director

**Dear BYEP Community**,

Happy 20th Anniversary! I'm writing to you now from a beautiful new 8,000 SQFT building covered in artwork and bustling with energy from 11 full-time staff, 43 volunteer mentors and 148 young leaders. Natural light streams in through skylights into a new tutoring center where kids sit quietly with new chromebooks and tutors from MSU. They are determined to not let Covid slow their progress in school. Nearby, you can hear the gentle sound of

machinery and laughter coming from the new art and makerspace, where kids are heat pressing BYEP patches onto their backpacks and working on a group collage. Right next door in our gear room, kids and mentors wearing beanies are listening to music and talking about powder turns while waxing their skis and snowboards with our state-of-the-art ski and snowboard tuning bench. The energy is electric!

When teenagers walk into BYEP, they don't feel like "at-risk youth" - they feel like artists, snowboarders, future college students, and leaders. Ultimately, this is what BYEP is all about. Before they even walk in, these young people are amazing, talented and full of potential. Of course, there are hurdles, as we all learned again and again from 2020. The pandemic has hit us hard, requiring everyone to come together and support each other, but at BYEP that is our ethos! We bring mentors and young people together to build life skills, embrace the power of their stories, and get outside to have fun. In our 20-year history, our mantra to get outside and grow inside remains the same. It is the full, unequivocal belief in the goodness of people, and each of our potential to grow, learn and succeed that has guided our trajectory from Pete's garage in 2001 all the way to our new space in 2021.

Anniversaries are a time of reflection and appreciation. We wouldn't be here without your support. The hundreds of community members, mentors, board members, donors, staff, families and kids that have invested in BYEP are ultimately why we continue to thrive in the Gallatin Valley. To all of you thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Anniversaries are also a chance to look forward and ask ourselves: what do we want to accomplish in the next 20 years? With our commitment to quality, our investment in local youth, and our energy for expansion, we seek to embrace the same ethos as we continue to meet the needs for families in the Gallatin Valley and expand our programs into the rest of Montana. Starting with a Park County Program launching in 2023, followed by other Montana communities, the sky is the limit!

Our commitment to provide the youth of Montana with the opportunities and skills to become happy, healthy, and successful young adults will ensure that communities continue to thrive despite the challenges we will face.

And so, I ask you with full humility and confidence to join us for the next chapter at Big Sky Youth Empowerment as we strengthen the future of our community for the next 20 years!

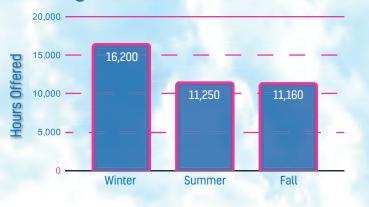
With love and hope,

Robin





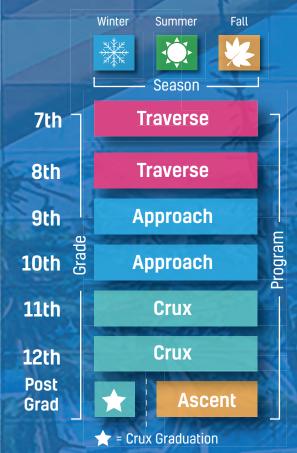
At BYEP, we don't define our participants by the challenges they face. Instead, we help them find the courage and resilience within themselves to face their challenges head on, learning to see themselves as agents of change in their environment.



#### **Program Hours Offered Per Season**

#### **2020 BYEP Program Offering**

After a successful programmatic expansion that will be completed in 2021, BYEP will have grown the capacity to serve 192 adolescents in Gallatin County. Our program success lies in our massive exposure to the young person's life. A youth engaged in our program will take part in 360 hours/year of programming.



## **2020 Financials**

Income

📕 Grants: \$984,982 - 37% Capital Campaign: \$605,000 - 23% In-Kind: \$482,578 - 18% Annual Giving: \$290,020 - 11% Special Events: \$280,835 - 11%

Programs: \$1,333,350 - 51% Building Expansion: \$892,077 - 34% Fundraising: \$260,208 - 10% Management: \$114,779 - 4% Capacity Building: \$43,001 - 2%

\$2,643,415

#### **Expenses**

\$2,643,415



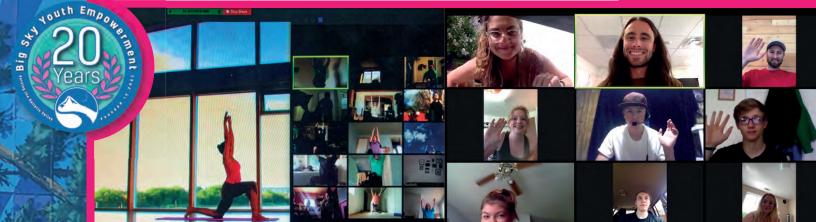
# **Responding to COVID-19**

With cosmically bad timing, the doors of the new BYEP HQ were set to open the same week that the first lockdowns began in Montana. Our new space, designed to both increase the number of youth we serve and the amount of time they can spend at BYEP, was empty. Across our community, families were isolated and afraid of what might come next.

Within a week of our staff pivoting to fully remote work, BYEP was up and running again. The creativity and passion of BYEP's Programs Team enabled us to provide fully online programming for our participants during their regularly scheduled workshop and adventure times. With virtual yoga classes, cooking lessons, dance parties, and activities designed to keep our participants going outside, learning, and connecting with their friends and family, BYEP played a crucial role in providing a sense of normalcy and support for our participants throughout the lockdown.

Luckily, the lockdown didn't last forever. Soon the challenge became cracking the code of how to safely return to in-person programming. We adopted a hybrid model, offering in-person adventures and workshops to participants every other week, allowing us to keep the occupancy of our building low enough to ensure safe social distancing. Zoom workshops and adventures filled in the gaps, but were reduced in duration as our whole country struggled with Zoom fatigue. Daily temperature checks, masks, and gallons of hand sanitizer all made it possible for our participants to maintain real connections without risking the health and safety of themselves and their families.

We're still waiting with the rest of the country for life to fully return to normal, but until then we'll be doing our part to keep our participants and our community engaged and safe. We've maintained our hybrid model, continually improving it to maximize the impact of our in-person programs while keeping our Zoom-based curriculum as fun as possible. We've been so lucky to have such a supportive community throughout the pandemic, enabling us to continue our life-changing programs uninterrupted by financial challenges. In fact, 2020 was a record-breaking fundraising year! If that trend continues into 2021, we'll be on track to expand BYEP to other Montana communities in the coming years, providing support and connection to communities and families across the state.

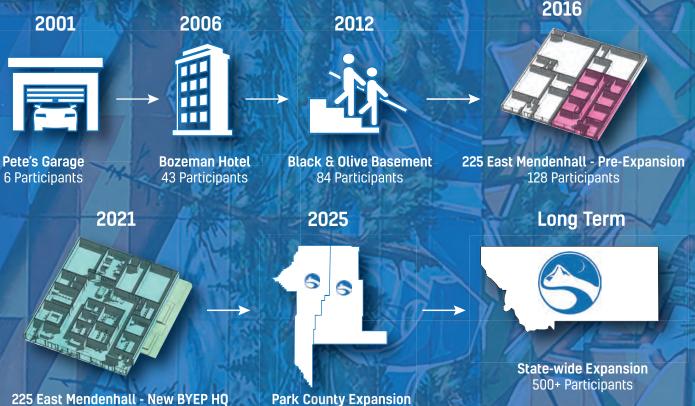




## 20 Years Later: The Evolution of BYEP

Big Sky Youth Empowerment was born from the belief that people have a responsibility to leave this world in better condition than they found it, and for the past 20 years BYEP has provided young people and adult volunteers with the opportunity to do exactly that. Our founder Pete

MacFadyen started BYEP in 2001, operating out of his garage with a few of his friends-turned-volunteers and a group of 5 local high schoolers. Their goal was to fill in the spaces that school and therapy didn't have the means to access, building confidence and empowerment within the participants through powerful and positive connections built on the ski hill. They didn't have much in the way of resources, but they had the willingness and courage to try something new.



225 East Mendenhall - New BYEP H Capacity = 192 Participants + 96 New Participants = 288 Total

20 years and more than 800 teenagers later, BYEP has come a long way from Pete's garage. With the completion of the new HQ, BYEP currently serves a population of 148 7th-12th graders with the support of 51 volunteer mentors & tutors, along with a full-time staff of 11 amazing individuals. Yet the power of BYEP comes from the same source: empowering young people through authentic connections made during amazing outdoor adventures, especially when the snow is falling.

With the rate of teen suicide in Montana more than double the national rate and an increasing number of U.S. teenagers meeting the criteria for a mental health diagnosis each year, the need for programs like BYEP is both clear and growing. With a new endowment and a full time grant writer on staff, the goal is to be able to meet the need in Bozeman in perpetuity, and also to expand to other Montana communities.

Ambitious as it may be, we aim to establish facilities and local programming in Park County in the coming years, growing outward from there. We're also exploring how we might retool BYEP's proven curriculum as a resource for organizations around the country.

#### **BYEP Wellness Wheel**

2020 marked a major growth milestone for BYEP. As our building grew, so did our capacity for youth we serve - from 120 participants to nearly 200!

We quickly recognized that BYEP was going to keep growing and expanding, and knew we needed a deliberate approach to ensure our curriculum stavs consistent over time. Introducing our BYEP Wellness Wheel!

Our Wellness Wheel is based on a set of 10 domains that focus on both external and internal wellness assets:

Physical, Social, Emotional, Financial, Intellectual, Spiritual, Environmental, Community, Future, and a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion component as well.

Emotional Wellness Emotional wellness means learning to manage your stress level, developing a strong sense of self, staying on top of school work, asking for help, and being able to recognize and share a wide range of feelings in a constructive way.

#### Intellectual Wellness 😰

Intellectual wellness means staving curious and open to learning new things. To improve intellectual wellness, engage in creative activities, think critically, be aware of social and political issues, or seek out new challenges.

**Financial Wellness** 

planning for future

Financial wellness means

taking steps to live within

your financial means and

this by creating a budget,

about financial systems.

financial health. You can do

saving money, and learning

#### Environmental Wellness 💔

Environmental wellness means taking care of your global environment and your personal surroundings. Decluttering your room, recycling your trash or volunteering to clean up your neighborhood can improve health for all.

## DEI Wellness

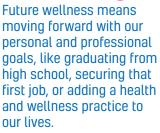
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion means taking an active role in ensuring access, respect, and equality for all. You can do this by collaborating, learning, communicating, empowering, including, and amplifying diverse perspectives.

#### Community Wellness 🏹

Community wellness means understanding a person's place in and responsibility to their greater communities. You can do this by understanding the needs of your identified community, completing a service project, or doing something kind for others.



#### Future Wellness



#### Social Wellness

Social wellness means having a positive social network, dealing with conflict appropriately, and having others you can depend on for love and support.

**BYEP doesn't** subscribe to the theory that we serve an "at-risk" population. A quick look at the statistics shows that more than half of teenagers in the US struggle with mental illness, regardless of socioeconomic class. Instead, we empower our participants to see themselves as agents of change, capable of facing their challenges with courage and resilience. BYEP is for every young person looking for a safe and welcoming place to grow, to belong, and to have fun.

healthy meals, sleeping, managing stress, receiving preventative medical and dental care, and getting sexual health screenings when you become sexually active.

Physical Wellness

Physical wellness means

moving your body, eating

#### Spiritual Wellness 🔰

Spiritual wellness means understanding the beliefs, values, and ethics that help guide your life. Whatever your preferred approach, spending time asking and exploring your spiritual side can help you find your meaning in life.







## Brittany DeKoch, M.A. - Program Director

A core tenet of BYEP philosophy is 'operating from a growth mindset'. We believe there is always a way we can strengthen and enhance our programs, year after year. That's why we sit down as a programs team at the end of each BYEP session and examine the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of how we facilitated workshops and adventures the previous 12 weeks. While we could not have anticipated a global pandemic, and abbreviating our winter and summer sessions as the result, we were gifted the opportunity to take

an in-depth look at the existing curriculum and decide what we could keep and what we could improve in order to increase positive outcomes for the youth we serve.

In 2020, we began measuring social-emotional outcomes and protective factors using the Search Institute's Developmental Assets Profile, which is a reliable and valid assessment of strengths and supports that are essential contributors to a young person's success in both school and adulthood. The Developmental Assets Profile is based on a set of 40 positive supports, opportunities, and relationship qualities young people need across all aspects of their lives (external assets) and personal skills, social-emotional strengths, self-perceptions and values they need to make good choices, take responsibility for their actions and become independent (internal assets). We know that when the youth we work with at BYEP have more assets, they are more likely to thrive both now and in the future, less likely to engage in risky behaviors, and more likely to be resilient in the face of challenges.

We combined what we learned from the Search Institute with our existing curriculum and developed a new model for programming: our BYEP Wellness Wheel is comprised of 10 domains rooted in external and internal assets. Weekly workshops are dedicated to a specific wellness domain, program managers create objectives from those domains, and participants have a clearer understanding of what they can expect from their time at BYEP. We believe this comprehensive model fosters an environment in which our youth are mentally and physically healthier, safer, more caring, more supportive of their peers, and more involved with their communities.









#### **Room to Grow**

"It's like this was made for me!" has become the chorus of our participants' responses to the new BYEP HQ. Light, warm, spacious and fun, the goal of the rennovation was to make a place where young people not only feel safe, but celebrated. At BYEP, they'll be greeted every day by the physical embodiment of the support and encouragement of our community. That sense of belonging is a fundamental aspect of how BYEP changes lives and elicits growth from our participants.

Perhaps the most exciting change accomodated by the new HQ is the

#### **Skate Park**

In the spring of 2020 we completed the BYEP Skate Park, open to the public and designed to provide our community with a space for young people to thrive. Come summer 2021, we'll begin to implement a learn-to-skate program for interested BYEP participants.

increased capacity to serve the young people in the Gallatin Valley. The extra 5,400 square feet allow us to boost our participant population from 120 up to a maximum of 192 youth.

Over 20 years of operating youth programming in the Gallatin Valley, it's become clear that the more BYEP can do to impart independent living skills to our participants, the more success they'll have transitioning into adulthood.

Our focus on fostering independence in our participants is expressed in multiple ways throughout the new HQ. Although COVID delayed this vision, in the (hopefully) near future participants will be able to come to the BYEP HQ for electives and events in addition to their scheduled workshops.

BYEP already provides nearly 360 hours of programming per year to our participants, and by expanding our program offering to include electives we can increase their exposure to BYEP significantly.









Perhaps the most literal example of our integration of independent living skills is our new Learning Kitchen. The Learning Kitchen will not only allow our participants to learn the ins and outs of the culinary arts, but it will also provide the context for teaching other necessary life skills, from grocery shopping and budgeting, to meal planning and healthy eating.

Learning how to fill free time with meaningful activities that channel creativity and self-expression is critical for developing into a well-rounded adult. That's the theory behind our new Maker Space. Dedicated to facilitating everything from fine arts and

ceramics to t-shirt making and woodworking, the Maker Space will be a place kids can go to develop their passions and interests in a motiviating and inspiring environment. No matter what their goals in life are, all participants will have full access to the tools to grow creatively in a wide variety of mediums. The Learning Kitchen and Maker Space work in

#### Tutoring

The David Ireland Granger Jr. Memorial Tutoring Center lies at the center of BYEP's vision for our continued evolution, not to mention that this space will play a key role in ensuring our participants have a safe place to learn and push themselves academically. conjunction with our new skate park and the Dave Ireland Granger Jr. Tutoring Center to create new opportunities to empower and inspire our participants in ways we never could before.

At the end of the day, the power of our new space isn't that it allows us to expand our programs to a higher quantity of young people the real power comes from our newfound ability to increase the quality of our programs while simultaneously increasing the number of kids we serve. Between quality and quantity, we're fortunate enough to have the resources for both, but at BYEP the priority is always the quality of our programming.

DAVID IRELAND GRANGER JR MEMORIAL TUEOCETING COLLIGE:



## Journey - BYEP Participant, 4 Seasons

## How would you describe yourself? What are your biggest strengths?

I'm relaxed, kinda hyper, but chill most of the time. Competitive. I'm good at video games, I have a lot of experience with building cars and I'm pretty good at coding I guess.

#### How would you describe BYEP's effect on your life?

It's helped me. If I have been sad or something, going to BYEP every week helps cheer me up. My friends are there - Hunter started the first season I did. He goes to Sacajawea and I didn't really like Sac kids but we get along really well and hang out all the time.

#### What made you feel like you wanted to join BYEP?

My therapist recommended it - I was wanting to get involved and she told me about this thing called BYEP. Coincidentally, the week after they started taking applications at school and I thought it sounded cool. I wanted to do something new that I hadn't done. Skiing, a bunch of activities, hanging out - that sounded sick!

#### What makes BYEP special? What are some of your favorite things about it?

It feels like a safe space where you can talk about really anything and nobody is going to bully you for it and you can just be open. But really it's not BYEP itself - it's the people there. They're nice, they care about you, even if they're strangers. If they are involved in BYEP, I just trust them a little bit more. Snowboarding is my favorite part of BYEP. Fun conversations on the lift, racing my friends down the runs, playing tag while riding, it's really fun.

#### Do you have any stories about BYEP that could help other kids understand why BYEP is a special place?

Last year I was going through a rough time - really sad and depressed - and I just didn't want to do anything. My mom said I should go to BYEP, there's people there that care about me. I want to keep doing this, I want to keep being positive.

Did you know 20 years ago BYEP was just 5 participants and the office was our founder Pete's garage? Given how much changed for BYEP in those 20 years, where would you like to see BYEP be in 20 years from now?

I'd like to see BYEP in 20 years collaborating with more people, organizations, and sponsors so we can keep







## Paige - BYEP Mentor, 10 Seasons

#### How did you find BYEP?

My name is Paige Lisowski and I came to Bozeman to go to school at MSU. I was feeling stuck in the MSU bubble and I wanted to know more about the Bozeman community. I saw an ad for BYEP in some pamphlet somewhere and it looked interesting, so I applied to become a mentor.

#### How would you describe BYEP?

BYEP is awesome because it's a place where everyone is welcome and everyone belongs. BYEP gives kids a space where they can be themselves and not only be accepted, but embraced for who they truly are. I think that at some point in life, everyone feels like they don't belong somewhere or like they don't have as strong of a support network as they need in their life and it can be really hard to thrive (or even survive) in that environment. BYEP gives participants a solid foundation and support system so that they can flourish as individuals and as community



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members. I think the magic of BYEP is that we don't give kids the answers to everything and we aren't pushing them towards some sort of major epiphany. The magic of BYEP is that we give kids millions of chances to have their own breakthroughs. Some breakthroughs are big and easy to see, while most are subtle and fly under the radar, but all are worth celebrating.

#### Do you have any stories that showcase the way BYEP helps participants grow?

In a recent workshop, the theme of the night was housing. We talked about what is important to us about where we live, what we would look for in roommates, some things to consider when looking at places, all sorts of stuff. One of the participants in our group was talking about how he is having trouble figuring out how to navigate moving out of his parents' house because his parents wouldn't give him access to his birth certificate or social security card or any other legal documents, which meant that he couldn't get a job and so he couldn't save up any money to move out on his own. He was also really struggling with finding an affordable place to live because the Bozeman/Belgrade rental market is very competitive and difficult to navigate. He had been really stressed out about this for a couple of months and was really feeling like he was trapped and wouldn't be able to start his own life. In workshop, we were able to give him a whole bunch of resources for finding housing in the area and we were also able to help him navigate how to approach a conversation with his parents to ask for his documents and possible next steps if the conversation didn't go well. Seeing him on the verge of tears because he felt so much relief after months of stress and feeling like there was no solution to his problems, was a powerful reminder that the support we provide to our participants has a real effect on their lives.

#### What do you wish more people knew about BYEP?

BYEP is so much more than an after-school program. BYEP is a place where kids of any background can come and be with people who won't judge them for what they look like, or what grades they get, or what their hobbies are. BYEP is a place where kids can escape from the pressures of the real world for a few hours and be in a supportive place where they can grow and just be kids. BYEP gives kids access to so many resources and activities that can feel completely out of reach when trying to figure things out all on your own. I don't think there is a single person in the world who wouldn't benefit from a program like BYEP and I would love to see it continue to expand and help as many kids as possible.





Pete MacFadyen - BYEP Founder, 60 Seasons

## You founded BYEP 20 years ago. What planted the seed to create an organization like this?

I've always believed that we (as in humans) have a responsibility to leave the earth in a better place than we found it. Whether by way of social innovation, conservation, or simply living life in a kind and caring way I think we all have to do our part. It was that belief that planted the seed.

## 20 years ago, what was your vision for BYEP's future? How does it compare to where we are now, 20 years later?



This may sound smug but the vision 20 years ago

was what is currently happening. I saw a community of people coming together to create opportunities for connection and meaning. If you walk into BYEP's HQ today that is exactly what you'll see happening. I could not be more proud of the youth, mentors, staff, and board for taking advantage of the opportunities that present themselves on a regular basis.

#### How would you describe BYEP's relationship with the community of the Gallatin Valley? What do you wish more people knew?

I think we have a healthy relationship with the community of Gallatin Valley. On the surface our programs are designed to empower young people. If you dig a little deeper you'll see that we have a similar impact on the folks that choose to volunteer (mentors & board) and work at BYEP. I wish everyone in Gallatin County knew we existed and I wish everyone understood the depth of the work that we do. We are so much more than outdoor recreation

#### What's your hope for the next 20 years of BYEP?

I'd like to see additional places of service across the state of Montana, a sustainable funding strategy, and 200+ youth annually participating in our programs.

#### Other thoughts or ideas you would like to share?

BYEP works because we have stayed true to our values. When many people chip in to help, the work does not feel all that heavy. Time and time again I've seen our society set up in ways that distance young from old, but when we break down those barriers and facilitate opportunities for connection the old will learn from the young and vice versa.















# The Byep Family

Throughout our 20 year history, BYEP has depended on our community of supporters to keep our programs running. In 2020, our community rose to the challenges of the pandemic, helping us break organizational fundraising records during the toughest year in recent memory.

## \$5000+

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uth Empowers

## 2020 BYEP Mentors donated a combined 14,400 HOULS of their time, knowledge, and passion!



Adam Howard Aleesha Redmon Alexander Burreece Allie Lindsay Allison Perez Amelia Hennessv Andrea Bererra Garcia Andrew Bridgers Anna Pirkey Ari Richard **Bailey Curtis** Ben Goodhard **Benjamin Deuling Berette McNaught** Braelyn Standish Briana Nava Caitlin Holzer Cammie Reid Charles MacMillan Charlotte Furman Dana Janes **Daniel Flavin** 

## **2020 Mentors and Tutors**

None of the work BYEP does would be possible without our amazing crew of 43 volunteer mentors showing up consistently through the worst of 2020. Our 8 strong tutoring squad was an essential part of helping our kids stay on track through the trials and tribulations of Zoom-based schooling.



Derek Draimin Derek Ellingsen Eleni Comstock Elizabeth Lee Eloise Somerby Emily Lyon Emmett Foster Grant Carroll Griffin Collins Hadley Hindman

Hannah Franklin Hannah Szafraniec Hayes Chandler Howie Seim Iris Craig Izzy Cybula Jackie Pondolfino Jacob Hubert Jacquie Miller Joey Morrison John Barry Jordan Hunsaker Jordan Mueller Joseph Henshaw Kacey Bertolino Kala Bertolino Karl Bailey Karston Harding Katharine Sutphen Katie De Moreas Kelly Ryan Kenny Smith Lauren Buxbaum Liam Kilgore Lucie-Rose Hldik Mack Kautzman Madelyn Thomae Maisey Hoffman Malea Tesseneer Maren Stubenvoll

McKenzie Selden Megan Salt Michaela Alvers Morgan Cassell Nathaniel Bowen Nicholas Leach Paige Lisowski **Rachel Tilton Rea Oury Robert McMahon Rozalyn Richmond** Sean Dickson Siera Donovan Tatsuhiko Ota **Tierney Strandberg** Tom Mullen **Torey Mill Travis Morrison** Tre Barney Victoria Voigt

Matthew Lucas

Being a teenager is hard. Whether it's grades at school, trouble at home, mental health, or just feeling lonely in a world dominated by the dual forces of the pandemic and social media, no part of being a teenager in 2020 came easy. But at BYEP, teens have a place where they can build the confidence they need to reach their potential, no matter what obstacles their lives put in front of them.

# Our Sponsors



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## **Capital Campaign Partners**

We want to send out an extra-special thank you to all of our supporters who made our expansion into the new BYEP HQ possible. The combined effort of these individuals, organizations, and businesses helped us build a home for BYEP that can last the next 20 years and beyond.

100 Strong Aliant Securtiv **Bean Granger Beartooth Signs Browning Kimball Foundation** Comma O Architecture Design 5 Landscape Architecture **Evergreen Skateparks** Inline Painting and Millwork **Interface Carpet** 

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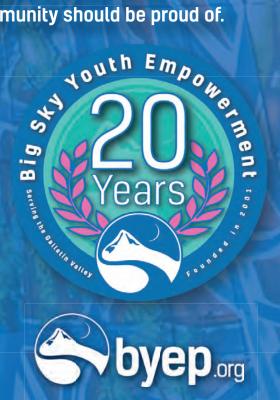






BYEP is a place that fosters courage, resilience, and hope. We don't ask our donors to save the kids at BYEP because they don't need saving. They need a community of people willing to be courageous enough to stand with them as they learn to navigate their challenges. For 20 years, the BYEP community has done exactly that, and as a result, BYEP has been able to help change countless lives. Thank you to everyone who has supported BYEP for the last 20 years. Your generosity has helped us build the most powerful youth mentorship program in the country, and that is something everyone in the Gallatin Valley community should be proud of.





## Syep., get outside. grow inside. Syep.,

Syep.org

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## BYEP belongs to this community.

touth Empowerment

ears

For 20 years, the people of the Gallatin Valley have supported the mission & growth of Big Sky Youth Empowerment. With your support, we'll continue our work of helping teenagers see the courage, resiliance and potential they have inside of themselves for years to come.