

Arlee Community Development Corporation (Arlee CDC)

March 15, 2021



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome members, partners, and community members to the Arlee Community Development Corporation. I am glad you are taking the time to learn more about the Arlee CDC and some of the projects the organization is currently working on.

Since its founding in 2002, the Arlee CDC has grown significantly in projects and services. The mission of the Arlee CDC is to assist and foster the planning and development of projects deemed to be beneficial socially, economically, and culturally to the public interest of the Arlee-Jocko Valley. Our legacy volunteers know, and I hope new members will soon discover just how many opportunities our organization offers for you to get involved with committees, youth programming, business development and community events.

This past year has seen some unprecedented events: We welcomed the Jocko Valley Food Bank into the Arlee CDC as we adjusted to the reality of a global pandemic and its impact on food security in our community. We showcase the Pantry, the Volunteers, and the success of our partnership with the MT Food Bank Network in additional articles in the newsletter – I encourage you to take a closer look. I am especially proud of the work we have achieved in pivoting the Arlee CDC's capacity to meet the community need. We thank this community for its great support in a year when many of our neighbors and friends needed a little extra help. I would also like to thank Jitka Davis, our Food Pantry Coordinator for her incredible organization, support and coordination of Pantry activities. I truly appreciate her commitment to this great work.

2020 was definitely a year of changes with the opportunity to acquire the Hangin Art Gallery building and make the commitment to keeping the food pantry and Arlee CDC programming on Main Street. It also highlights the board's commitment and focus on ensuring the strength of the Arlee CDC. With the acquisition of the building, we have secured a strong foundation and a place for the continued work of the organization.

With the recent decision to hire a full-time Executive Director, it gives us the capacity to continue to strengthen our pillars of service while at the same time, identify new opportunities and bring these opportunities to Arlee. The Arlee CDC is grateful to have the expertise of Marie Hirsch as our new Executive Director. Her years of experience in community and economic development, her connections and collaborative nature, combined with her passion for the work and desire to help others made her a natural fit.

I am so excited about the opportunities, programming, and projects at the Arlee CDC that as I write this letter, I am also preparing to take a six-month sabbatical from serving as the President of the Board to complete a Food Sovereignty project with the MT Healthcare Foundation and the Arlee CDC. I am going to become a member of the staff to finalize this important project focused on assessing food insecurity, development of food sovereignty programming and collaborating with community partners. I look forward to sharing these findings with you over the next few months in future newsletters. In the interim, I will be handing over the reigns to Marie Corcoran-Kloberdanz. Marie is excited to serve as President and has a life time of commitment to the Arlee community.

Sincerely,

Casey Barrows — Arlee CDC President 2019-2021



ARLEE CDC HIRES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Arlee Community Development Corporation (Arlee CDC) has hired Marie Hirsch as their Executive Director. As a seasoned and passionate regional supporter of community and economic development over the past eight years, she joins the Arlee CDC from Mission West Community Development Partners where she has served as the Business Development Center Director, involved in business development, community building, partnership building, and outreach. Marie currently serves on the Montana Economic Developers Association board.

At the Arlee CDC she joins a strong board and a dedicated community of volunteers that have embarked on bold initiatives over the past 18 years to address important community issues. "I have pure respect for the board and community accomplishments during a remarkable past two decades," states Ms. Hirsch. "Community visioning, combined with tremendous volunteer support has transformed not only the organization, but so much about the Arlee community. I feel incredibly fortunate to inherit the phenomenal staff, dedicated volunteers, supporters and partnerships that make up the Arlee CDC."

"Marie is a passionate and energetic leader. Her practical approach to problem solving, and dedication to leveraging resources to help community is proven," Board President Casey Barrows commented. "The board is excited to work with Marie as our new executive director and confident that the Arlee CDC will be well positioned under her guidance to thrive in the years to come."

Marie began work in Arlee in mid-November and can be reached at: mariehirsch@arleecdc.org or by phone at 406-726-5550.

ACQUISITION OF HANGIN ART GALLERY BUILDING

In early November 2020, Donna Mollica (Arlee ArtSpace) advised the CDC that she had shown the building and had an offer. As previously agreed upon, the Arlee CDC was given first right of refusal.

The CDC board reviewed the building capacity along with the need to secure the building for the sustainability of services and programming. Time was spent researching the background of the building and the need for a "A Gathering Place."

After reviewing the history, through to today's use of the building to support an urgent response to COVID-19 in our community this building has served as home the Arlee CDC. The Gallery building has long provided

ed the social infrastructure and the connection people depend on to help them be more resilient during times of crisis.

The building history showcases a wide range of human, social, cultural, and artistic services and has been an anchor and stabilizer in the community.

Right now, the facility is creating a place to serve, as reflected in the growth in the volunteer numbers in the weekly Food Distribution program, along with the volume of families served in the community speaks volumes to the success of meeting mission and showcasing the resiliency of the facility, community and the Arlee CDC.

"Watch for future issues to include pictures and history from the Gallery Building!"

MISSION STATEMENT

The Arlee Community Development Corporation (Arlee CDC) will assist and foster the planning and development of projects deemed to be beneficial socially, physically, economically, and culturally to the public interest of the Arlee-Jocko Valley community.

Guiding principles for implementation of mission statement adopted April 2010.

Our projects will include strategies that:

- are sustainable;
- are culturally appropriate and recognize our place as the southern end to the Flathead Indian Reservation;
- provide both economic and social benefit;
- recognize our need to protect the special and beautiful environment in which live;
- employ local residents and provide training opportunities for adults and youth;
- increase the economic viability of our existing businesses and organizations;
- insure that money paid into our local economy stays in our local economy as long as possible before it is paid out;
- are cooperative.

ARLEE-JOCKO VALLEY FOOD PANTRY

The Arlee CDC's ongoing work in food sovereignty prepared the organization to respond immediately to the increased demand for food when COVID-19 and the resulting economic effects hit in March of 2020. Not only were we able to support the small volunteer community food pantry that was immediately overwhelmed by demand, but we were also able to immediately join the Flathead Reservation Community Action's (FRCA) reservation wide coalition and serve as their fiscal agent to quickly begin providing services throughout the Flathead Reservation.

The Arlee CDC joined the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) as the needs of our valley quickly outstripped our existing small food pantry's capacity. The director of that Pantry turned over the assets that he had raised to us so we could buy more food and provide a larger, drive through food distribution program which we continue to operate. The Arlee CDC's history of collaboration has helped us receive mobile food bank assistance biweekly from the MFBN in July and part of August until they had to shut down the mobile program. In addition, we partnered with Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center to receive local produce boxes from local farmers – 50 boxes a week from July through December -- that were well received by our clients. The Mission Food Pantry and the Commodities offices have also been generous with donations as well as the Livingston Food Resource Center and the Missoula Food Pantry.

Beginning in March 2020, we began seeing an increase in demand almost every week. By June, we were feeding between 70 and 140 people and 18-20 families a week. In late July, we experienced a spike in demand that has not slowed down and since then we have been feeding 250 to 300 individuals and 72 to 78 families a week, including deliveries to families that are not able to come to our drive through distribution on Fridays.

It is our intention to continue this service in our Valley until demand decreases and to work with local food pantry groups to evaluate and collaborate on the food infrastructure here. Our partnership with the MFBN has allowed us to purchase food more economically through their system.

The Arlee CDC has managed our food distribution program through 18 regular volunteers and a volunteer oversight committee comprised of the President of our Board, and three members of the Food Sovereignty Committee. A 10-15 hour per week project coordinator has supported the team as the demands have out-paced volunteer capacity.

The Pantry has received nearly \$60,000 worth of in-kind food donations (including donations from the MFBN). The donations continue to showcase great community and partner support for the emergency food distribution program. The private funding from our local community, and outside the area has allowed us to purchase food at lower costs, increase our visibility and outreach to attract farm and ranch donations, and much needed support to serve the community.

Food Insecurity is intertwined with economic vulnerability. Early on, COVID -19 revealed that many families are one paycheck away from being impacted by food insecurity. People who have never had to rely on Food Pantry services had to begin relying on the services.

The Arlee-Jocko Valley Food Pantry is grateful for all the community support as well as in-kind and financial resources that have been donated. **Thank you all!**

EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN PICTURES AND BY THE 2020 NUMBERS



1,279 VOLUNTEER HOURS



\$60,000 WORTH OF IN-KIND DONATIONS



7,000 INDIVIDUALS
75 FAMILIES/WEEK
SERVED IN 2020

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(AS OF MARCH 2, 2021)**

Interim President:
Marie Corcorin-
Kloberdanz

Vice President:
Wendy Swab

Secretary:
Melissa Zachariasen

Treasurer:
Temporarily Vacant

Member:
Wilhemina Wright

Member:
Lawna Burland

**ARLEE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION STAFF**

Executive Director:
Marie Hirsch
mariehirsch@arleecdc.org

Food Sovereignty
Program Manager:
Casey Barrows
foodsovereignty@arleecdc.org

Food Pantry Coordinator:
Jitka Davis
foodpantry@arleecdc.org

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OFFICE PHONE NUMBER
406-726-5550

**COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE**

The Arlee CDC is here to provide leadership and resources for entrepreneurs with ideas for new business, artists wanting to sell their product commercially, businesses needing to expand, retention, technical assistance, referrals to workshops, and access to capital.

If you have a business idea or a community project or programming idea, please call us to schedule an appointment at 406-726-5550.



**YOUTH PROGRAMS AND
IMAGINATION LIBRARY**

Youth programs are a major program priority for the Arlee CDC. Project include after school art programs collaborating with the Arlee Schools, summer camps, poetry programs and youth tracks in the development of projects. We also contribute to youth activities run by community groups and students.

We partner with the Jocko Valley Library to support the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program and share fundraising to support the

library's summer reading program.

COVID-19 restrictions have had an impact including cancellation of the important annual Chocolate Lovers Festival fund raising event. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library project continues uninterrupted. The project provides a free book monthly to children under 5 in the Arlee Joint School District. If you have children under the age of 5 and would like to sign them up for this program please visit our website www.arleecdc.org to learn more and donate.

VOLUNTEERS MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

There are many ways a volunteer can help at the Arlee CDC, but the most recent volunteers have been incredible crews that show up every Thursday evening to pack the emergency food boxes and then another crew that shows up every Friday afternoon to distribute the emergency food boxes. These volunteers have a deep commitment to community and assisting local families. The volunteers have had fun getting to know some lovely individuals whose lives were often different than their own. Yet, not so different, as they all have incredible respect, love, empathy, laughter, joy, as they work together to serve their neighbors and friends.

Many of these volunteers started helping out over 10 months ago and they are still showing up when needed. The Arlee CDC would not have been able to provide the level of community support in the form of emergency food boxes if it were not for this dedicated team of volunteers. We can't survive on our own. We need other people to succeed in life. Volunteering makes a difference for others and for the volunteer as well.

Thank you to all the Arlee – Jocko Valley Food Bank Volunteers in 2020 and 2021! We truly appreciate all of you!



“THE ARLEE CDC WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE THE LEVEL OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN THE FORM OF EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES IF IT WERE NOT FOR OUR DONORS AND THIS INCREDIBLE TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS.”



**ARLEE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
(ARLEE CDC)**

FORMED IN 2002, THE ARLEE CDC HAS BEEN THE MECHANISM BY WHICH MANY PEOPLE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE AND BECOME INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY, AND BY HOSTING A VARIETY OF COMMUNITY VISION PROGRAMS, IT HAS SERVED AS THE CONDUIT FOR RESIDENTS TO VOICE THEIR PRIORITIES AND PREFERENCES. IT ALSO SERVES AS FISCAL AGENT TO SEVERAL OTHER SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO GROW BUSINESSES AND NON-PROFITS. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS CALL 406-726-5550.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ARLEE CDC

The commitment you make, is up to you. Some will pay the yearly due and be kept up to date as to what is going on and that will be as far as it goes. Others will pay their dues and volunteer to be on a committee of interest. Others still, will choose to be on the board, attend monthly meetings and be a part of the decision making.

The \$10 membership fee helps us as a source of revenue, but more importantly, it shows community support to potential funders. Funders want to see members invested in the vision of the CDC. The more community support, the better the chance of being funded!

If you are interested in becoming a member visit the website at arleecdc.org, contact us via telephone at 406-726-5550 or send a note to info@arleecdc.org

Arlee

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CORPORATION
(ARLEE CDC)**

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