

## New MSU Extension Agent for Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Building Leadership and Economic Capacities of the Community

Abbie Phillip started MSU Extension Anaconda-Deer Lodge County agent in August 2014. Prior to Extension, Phillip was a professional birth doula and lactation educator and volunteered with children and youth.

Phillip received her MS in Geochemistry from Montana Tech of the University of Montana and worked for the New Mexico Environment Department Superfund Oversight Program.



**Phillip Leading Transfer of Wealth Workshop**

The A-DLCo MSU Extension focus is community and economic development educational programming including:

- Leadership
- Horticulture
- City beautification
- 4-H youth development
- Family consumer sciences

In 2016, Phillip will launch Anaconda LEAD: Leadership Education and Development, for sustainable, effective local government, nonprofit service organizations and community neighborhoods.

Additional classes include Master Gardener Level One and The Beginning Farmers Network entrepreneurship for growers and value-added food producers.

### **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

The Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) program addresses the unique needs of grandparents, including other relatives and close family friends, who are caring for grandchildren because the birth parents are temporarily or permanently absent due to death, incarceration, work, and other circumstances.

The Anaconda GRG support group helps Grandparents who are parenting the second time around, raising trauma-impacted children facing legal and advocacy responsibilities, navigating adolescents, and rebuilding their family.



**Laura Malcom, Anaconda resident, widow, Grandmother, mom of two girls**

The Anaconda GRG program facilitates a vital peer support group and a network of resources. Laura shares, “when grandparents get together, we ease each other’s path. Raising grandchildren is tough; my children feel left out because their mom is old. I feel left out because most of my peers are retired, empty-nesters, and I am very busy with young children.”

### **Financial Literacy**

Abbie Phillip serves on the Anaconda Community Foundation (ACF) board to ensure a financial legacy for a thriving community in Anaconda forever.

Phillip collaborated with Gloria O’Rourke, ACF director, on two public wealth preservation workshops. “Transfer of Wealth in Montana”, about the unprecedented wealth that is projected to transfer between Montana’s generations over the current 20 years.

“Estate Planning” with Marsha Goetting, MSU Extension Family Economics Specialist at the Metcalf Senior Center and the Hearst Free Library. The Estate Planning program was attended by a total of 23 people. 75-100 percent ranked the program as very useful; they gained a great deal of estate planning knowledge and would refer others to this program.

## Walking to Wellness

### Nordic Walking with Robert Sweetgall

Walking to Wellness Day inspired 200 people to attend five workshops in April with Robert Sweetgall, owner of Creative Walking Inc, national motivational speaker and public wellness educator.



Robert Sweetgall leading Anaconda Nordic Walking Workshop

Teachers and administrators in the Anaconda School district discussed a daily walking program for school children to increase classroom achievement and decrease childhood obesity.

The Community Hospital of Anaconda Wellness Team catered a professional development wellness luncheon for their employees and physicians.

The Metcalf Senior Center hosted seniors and community development leaders on the “Mind and Body of Healthy Ageing” and “Low cost, High impact Community Walking Programs” respectively.

Finally, 135 community members at-large attended the Nordic Walking workshop at the Anaconda High School and listened to Sweetgall talk about his trans-America walks and active lifestyles to reverse national health trends.

Participants praised Walking to Wellness Day, understood the health value of walking, and wanted more wellness programming like this.

### 30@Noon

30@ noon is a daily, outdoor walking group formed as a result of Walking to Wellness Day with Robert Sweetgall.



30@Noon Walking Group—Georgetown Railroad

For 21 weeks, Monday-Friday Abbie Phillip led a free, 30-minute walk for community members at-large. The 22 people joined the walks, walking a total of 570 times and 712.5 miles from June through October.

- *“I walk everyday, but now I have people to walk with”*
- *“I love to walk outside, but I’m afraid of dogs. The group gives me courage to walk outside”*

The walking group created awareness and motivated other people to add more walking to their workday and sedentary lifestyle.

### Mt Haggin Hiking Group

Mt Haggin hiking group is an extension of 30@Noon, meeting for weekend hikes; Phillip created a Facebook group to post public hiking events, pictures and promote outdoor education like the Wilderness Survival workshop with MSU Extension A-DLCo agent Abbie Phillip and Rod Alne, owner of The Peak Inc.

### Hike it Baby Anaconda

Established October 2014, a grassroots hiking group for families with young children to get active, get social, and get outside to enjoy local trails and parks.



Hike It Baby Lost Creek Trail group, February 2015

We are empowering parent volunteers to lead hikes and outdoor events.

This year 728 people, 383 youth, 345 adults joined 90 hikes led by six volunteer hike leaders. Anaconda families report benefits of:

- Welcoming new residents
- Meeting active families
- Calming children
- Relieving stress
- Learning skills, (bear aware, leave no trace, plant id and day hiking strategies)

The National parent organization, Hike it Baby LLC offers an online platform, social media, hiking expertise, and an interactive calendar, connecting with five countries, 163 community-based branches, and 63,536 members.

## Strong Women

Strong Women classes continue with four new instructors and three locations, InMotion Studio, Goosetown Health Club, and Community Hospital of Anaconda. Strong Women classes have reached 60 senior and working women with social exercise that increases strength, circulation, bone density, balance, and nutrition, which are imperative for healthy ageing.



**Strong Women Training January 2015—Bozeman**

In January 2015, Lisa Saur, Abbie Phillip, Melissa Tyvand, and Katie Fleming attended the Level I and Level II training in Bozeman with Lynn Paul, the Montana State Strong Women program director. Benefits reported:

- *“My doctor and I were amazed at how fast my knee surgery rehab went because of doing the Strong Women strength training prior to surgery”*
- *“I am not dependent on a handrail to move up and down as a result of the Strong Women class”*
- *“My doctor significantly decreased my insulin dose and suggested that I may be able to manage my Type II diabetes with diet and exercise”* This woman has remained committed, recruiting three friends, who meet regularly twice a week for walking and strength training.

## Youth Development

### 4-H

The MSU Extension 4-H program is improving the lives of 70 youth in Anaconda Deer Lodge County, where youth participate in 4-H Clubs, Tri-County Fair, the States 4-H International Exchange program, Anaconda School District Enrichment programs, out-of-school programs with the Boys and Girls Club of Deer Lodge County and Anaconda Community Interventions (ACI). A-DLCo MSU Extension agent Abbie Phillip helped ACI to organize and host the first annual Camp H2O for 20 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade youth, 12 High School counselors and five adult counselors.

The camp, focused on healthy lifestyles, resiliency, positive self-identity, leadership skills, effective interpersonal communication, team building, conflict management and problem solving. Youth reported having a great time, learning important life skills; all but one would recommend the camp to a friend.

Camp H2O provides MSU Extension an impactful, collaborative way to deliver 4-H youth development programming to a larger population of A-DLCo youth.



**Phillip Leading Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Learning**

This year, A-DLCo MSU Extension was involved in various youth development events:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Service Learning workshop,
- Teambuilding games including Pickleball and Human vs. Zombies
- Camp H2O
- Anaconda Leadership Academy
- 4-H Text, Talk Act youth mental health discussion
- Community gardening
- 4-H horse project Western Games
- Graduation Matters Anaconda
- 4-H fundraising

### Pickleball

MSU Extension A-DLCo agent Abbie Phillip was awarded \$250 for a service learning project engaging youth leaders to pioneer a community recreation Pickleball league. Between May and August, 13 youth and 6 adults hosted “Learn to Play” events where 62 people played and more than 100 by-standers observed.

- *“There aren’t a lot of activities that can be offered in the community that are cross generational, and Pickleball is a great opportunity to do so”*
- *“Pickleball really boosted our summer Healthy Recreation Program, and the games grabbed kids and adults attention at Alive After Five”*

Pickleball is being considered by Anaconda Recreation Board as a new program.



**Anaconda Youth Experiencing Pickleball at Alive After Five**

## Urban Forestry Stewardship

A-DLCo MSU Extension agent, Abbie Phillip provided 30 hours of in-kind service totaling \$750 match toward the Anaconda Street Tree Committee (ASTC) DNRC grant committed to the propagation and sustainability of our urban forest. In 2015, the ASTC planted 51 trees in public spaces, sold 39 trees to private landowners, involved 30 volunteers and hundreds of volunteer hours worth thousands of dollars to the community. ASTC Treasurer Lydia Janasko, *"I believe that [MSU Extension] support for educational programming, informing the public about the Emerald Ash Borer epidemic will soon come to the forefront of our project. The MSU Extension Master Gardener program builds an educated **and motivated** volunteer base to support our projects."*

## Community Gardens

Abbie Phillip has consulted on the Anaconda Food Bank garden at Commercial and Alder, and the Cherry Street Neighborhood Garden. The Cherry Street Neighborhood garden was initiated by the Poole-Thompson family after demolishing a blighted home on their property, with 60 volunteer hours by MSU Extension Master Gardeners, Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp youth, the Living Waters Church, and the Boys and Girls Club of A-DLCo. They have planned a raised-bed garden where neighborhood families and churches can raise vegetables and berries. Phillip also contributed time, expertise and donated materials to the Nursing Home of Anaconda Therapeutic garden made up of eight self-watering container gardens. *"Cooking with carrots grown in the garden was awesome"* stated Nursing Home activity director, Nancy Clark.

## Home and Garden Outreach

A-DLCo. MSU Extension replied to 40 office calls and contributed five newspaper columns to the Anaconda Leader on the care and maintenance of urban and residential landscaping and household insect identification promoting a healthy urban forest with research based information and non-chemical, integrated pest management solutions.



**Left: Youth & adult volunteers building raised beds for the new Neighborhood Cherry St Garden.**

**Right: Boys & Girls Club youth planting Garlic with the help of a Master Gardener volunteer**



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