

# From a Time of Risk to a Time of Opportunity

## This is Afterschool



The hours after the last school bell rings and before parents typically return home from work is a time of endless opportunities and potential for young people. It can be a time of learning and growth, when kids explore new topics in fields like science, technology, engineering, and math; discover new interests; and develop their communication, teamwork, and leadership skills alongside supportive mentors. It can also be a time of risk, as an October 2019 report by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a membership organization of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and other law enforcement leaders, found.



*9 in 10 adults agree that afterschool programs are important to their community*

Although juvenile crime has dramatically decreased in the past decade, *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks* determined that nationally, the hours between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the peak time for juvenile crime.<sup>1</sup>

In the U.S., for every 1 young person in an afterschool program that inspires learning, provides enriching activities, and keeps them safe, there are 2 more who are waiting to get in. Public support for afterschool is high, with 9 in 10 adults agreeing that afterschool programs are important to their community, but there are not enough programs today to meet the needs of all children and families. The new Fight Crime: Invest in Kids data is further evidence of the need to do more to help ensure that all youth are able to take advantage of the benefits and supports that afterschool programs provide.

### Juvenile Crime in Montana

Analyzing data obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting database, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids' report, *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks*, determined that 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. is the peak time for juvenile crime in Montana during school days, with 27% of juvenile crimes occurring during this time period.

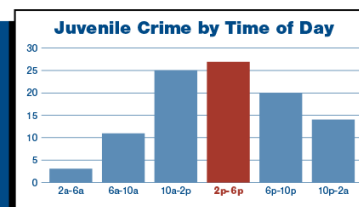
In Montana, 77% of parents agree that afterschool programs help to give parents peace of mind about their children when they are at work and 69% agree that afterschool programs help to keep kids safe and out of trouble. Yet, for every student in an afterschool program, 3 more would participate if a program were available.

*With 49,273 students in Montana waiting to get into an afterschool program, increased investment in afterschool programs is needed.*

### 2 to 6 p.m.: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime in Montana

#### Quality Afterschool Programs:

- Reduce Crime
- Boost Academics
- Improve Behavior
- Lead to Healthier Habits
- Save Money



#AfterschoolFightsCrime

FightCrime

FIGHT CRIME:  
INVEST IN KIDS  
COUNCIL FOR CRIME PREVENTION

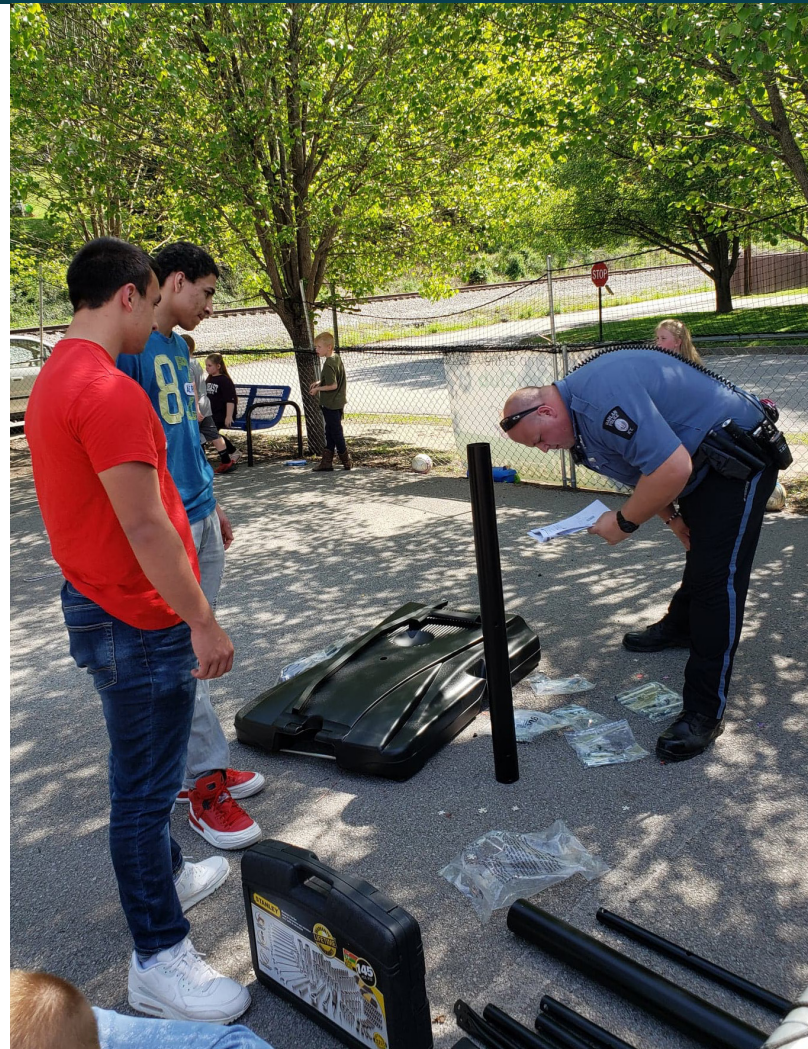
## Program Spotlight

The Center for Restorative Youth Justice (CRYJ) | Kalispell, MT

The Center for Restorative Youth Justice (CRYJ) in Kalispell, Montana traces its roots back to 1998 when a peer court—where first time minor juvenile offenders receive sentencing from their peers who serve as judges, lawyers, and jurors—was established in response to high rates of juvenile crime in the county. A collaboration involving the Juvenile Probation Department, local police, city leaders, and community volunteers, this diversion program has evolved over the years to incorporate more community-based restorative justice practices rooted in connection, direct service, education, self-awareness, and communication.

Referrals to CRYJ come through the county youth courts system. Program participants first engage in a family conference with parents or guardians and CRYJ staff. CRYJ employs a restorative model where youth share challenges they are facing and identify the supports they need moving forward. Youth create a restorative agreement, which outlines their specific set of required activities as a part of their CRYJ term. For example, youth attend a weekly community impact circle where several youth and their support people (family members, guardians, or close friends) join staff and community members to discuss the impacts of their actions and share their experiences. Youth also attend afterschool workshop sessions that cover topics from life skills, such as cooking or resume writing, to mediation, yoga, and reflections that help youth learn how to express themselves.

According to Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Nick Nyman, embracing this restorative approach has made a huge difference in the county, in part by helping to keep youth in the community feel more connected and less likely to commit future crimes. “By focusing on community-based interventions, we’ve been able to drastically reduce the need for out-of-home



placements,” Nyman says, explaining that “money being spent placing kids out of our community [has] very little return on the investment.” Meanwhile, CRYJ has documented a 97 percent program completion rate and an average recidivism rate among program participants of 10-12 percent. Post-program evaluation data has shown that 92 percent of participants said CRYJ “helped me understand how my actions impact others.”

### Source

<sup>1</sup> Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. (2019). *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks*. Retrieved from [www.strongnation.org/articles/930-from-risk-to-opportunity-afterschool-programs-keep-kids-safe](https://www.strongnation.org/articles/930-from-risk-to-opportunity-afterschool-programs-keep-kids-safe)



**Afterschool Alliance**

[afterschoolalliance.org](https://afterschoolalliance.org)

The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. Learn more at: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](https://www.afterschoolalliance.org)