

April 2022

**Dear Friends,**

The first week of May is Small Business Week, a great opportunity to recognize the accomplishments and contributions women small business owners have made to our communities.

Women small business owners have strong networks within their towns and cities. They support their families and bolster the health and wellbeing of entire communities. They have the power to influence decision-makers and shape how we understand our economy. And small businesses owned and operated by women in Montana are growing.

While there is much to celebrate, there continue to be challenges specific to women-owned businesses. Indigenous women looking to establish and maintain small businesses face some of the greatest barriers. Traditional banks and credit unions rarely step in to provide financial products to tribal communities, meaning that Indigenous women have limited access to capital to start new businesses.

**Tonya Plummer**, executive director of the **Montana Native Growth Fund** (MNGF) in Fort Belknap, is working to address those barriers. MNGF is building opportunities to improve the economic outlook for Native Americans by offering access to credit and capital blended with culturally empowered education.

A few weeks ago, I attended the Indigenous Business Symposium in Billings, hosted by MNGF. The Business Symposium was a companion event of the Big Sky Indigenous Women in Art and Fashion Symposium and Gala and provided a fantastic series of business workshops offered for all Indigenous designers, artists, creators, supporters, and attendees of the Big Sky Indigenous Women Fashion Gala and Art Market. The workshops were filled with valuable business content and were designed to give business savvy to creators and makers to establish, monetize, grow, scale, and market their creations as a business. The Women's Foundation of Montana was honored to be one of the sponsors of the event. **See highlights of some of the incredible creators, designers, and artists that were in attendance here.**

MNGF is a member of the **Mountain | Plains Regional Native-Led CDFI Coalition** and is making space for Indigenous women to grow and thrive. If you're interested in supporting small business owners as they work with Montana Native Growth Fund, **contact Tonya Plummer.**

Sincerely,

Kylie



Kylie Gursky  
WFM Program Officer  
[kylie@mtcf.org](mailto:kylie@mtcf.org)

Still looking for a way to honor a mother, sister, grandmother, niece, or friend this Mother's Day? Give a gift to the Women's Foundation of Montana in honor of a special woman in your life.

[Donate Here](#)

celebrating Montana  
women and girls

## Grantee Highlight: Red Ants Pants Foundation



### Red Ants Pants Foundation

Red Ants Pants Foundation's mission is **"to develop and expand leadership roles for women, to preserve and support working family farms and**

ranches, and to enrich and promote rural communities." Red Ants Pants raises money each year through their **Red Ants Pants Festival** (July 28-31) to support their **Girls' Leadership Programming** which consists of 8 girls, 8 mentors, and professional facilitators meeting up multiple times throughout the year to grow the participants' leadership strength as well as their communication, self-management, conflict resolution, and self-care skills, among others. WFM is proud to sponsor the **Red Ants Pants Music Festival** and the amazing work that goes into their **Girls Leadership programming**.

## Up To Date



**The Montana Community Foundation** and **the Women's Foundation** had Mariah Gladstone, founder of **Indigikitchen**, share a cooking demonstration of her pumpkin lentil soup while she discussed what food sovereignty means to her. The event also included presentations from food sovereignty leaders Lynette Two-Bulls, from **Yellow Bird Life Way Center's Food Sovereignty Program**, and Brenda Richey, founder of **Insta-success with Instapots** through the **Montana State University Tribal Extension Office on the Flathead Reservation**. If you would like to learn more about Food Sovereignty work in Montana check out the recording of our webinar above.

## PowerHouse Blog

"**Hood Feminism**," was published in 2020 by activist and cultural critic, **Mikki Kendall**. It covers issues of food, housing, gun violence, schooling, domestic violence, and feminism in the United States and how each of these issues is experienced in vastly different ways for women of different racial groups.

Click [here](#) to read some of my thoughts on the book and excerpts from "**Hood Feminism**" that helped stretch my feminist understanding of issues

women face.



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## Have You Remembered To Update Your PowerHouse Profile?

Not sure when you last updated your PowerHouse profile or if you even have one set up? Click [here](#) to update or create a profile and start connecting with other women .

**PowerHouse Montana, an initiative of the Women's Foundation of Montana, is an online platform designed to connect Montana women to the mentors and resources they need to succeed. Learn more and sign up at [powerhousemt.org](http://powerhousemt.org).**



**Support Montana Women and Girls!**

*Together we can empower Montana women and girls to pursue their dreams.*

**Give Now**

## About the Women's Foundation of Montana

Established in 1999, the Women's Foundation of Montana is a program of Montana Community Foundation and on a mission to advance women's economic independence and create a brighter future for our girls. Learn more at [wfmontana.org](http://wfmontana.org).



MONTANA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION