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MUST Region 4 Marketing & Sales Representative – Jim Mephram

In the early 1980's as I was about to embark on a forty-year journey in Montana Public education I was given a piece of advice from a University of Montana professor that defined my entire career. I'm sure this was standard advice to all education majors, but I took it to heart. Build relationships with the cooks, custodians and clerical staff at school. This advice followed me through my career and evolved as my jobs changed from teacher to coach to school administrator.

As a beginning career teacher, I assumed this advice was to help me survive moving to a new community and to get the things I needed to get through the year. It worked as I soon learned that getting to know the custodians got me great hunting stories and access, always complimenting the cooks got me seconds, leftovers, and a big gut, and thanking the clerical staff meant I would get the good substitutes and wouldn't have to use the ditto machine, even though I always ended up with the purple stuff on my face and clothes.

Over time and career changes I continued with building relationships with classified staff in all my school positions and saw my values change. As a coach who had the State record for miles on a school bus, I must add bus drivers to the list of valued relationships. It's hard not to build relationships at three in the morning on a school bus when you're hoping there are at least two people awake and one of them is "Barnacle Bill" the bus driver.

Superintendents usually begin new jobs on July 1 and it's easy to get to know the custodians and clerical staff as they are the only ones around. I made the mistake with my first Superintendent job of not learning more of the unwritten culture of the community before the beginning of the school year. I didn't realize until my back-to-school speech was done that I had violated the number one school rule by wearing my street shoes on the sacred gym floor. I helped clean the gym after ball games for a year to survive that one.

Over time I've realized that classified staff have a huge impact on students, too. A bus driver is the first and last person to see a child every day and can make or break the student's day with a smile and a hi. I think the biggest hugs I see at the end of the year are the elementary kids hugging their bus drivers. Custodians who smile and love their jobs are great role models for students. Pride in cooking great meals increases the number of meals served and am I the only one who has had huckleberry vinaigrette glazed corndogs? Good food and a big smile are the best ways to start any school day. It goes without mention that I would never want to work at a school that the clerical staff did not own and run. They really do know everything about everyone!

Finally, cooks, custodians, clericals, and bus drivers are the pulse of any Montana community. Their views and ideas do represent the community. Ask a custodian if a levy will pass. Ask the bus driver which kids are struggling at home. Ask a secretary why a kid is really absent and ask a cook to raise a student's test scores. Teachers and administrators aren't the only ones who can impact students. It takes a village!



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OMADA - Omada gives you the latest technology with ongoing support so you can make the changes that matter most. Even small changes in how you eat, sleep, handle stress or increase your movement can help you lose weight and lower your risk of getting type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

This is an interactive program. You'll get a wireless smart scale, weekly online lessons and a health coach to help you make choices that can improve your health.

LIVONGO - This wellness program helps you take control of high blood pressure or diabetes management and prevention.

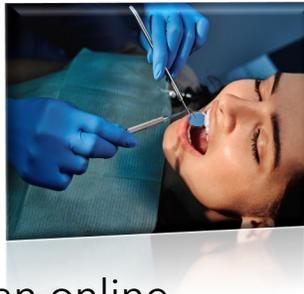


For high blood pressure this program motivates you every step of the way. Online education and support from a live coach can teach you to manage your weight and stress for better heart health.

Diabetes Management and Prevention can help you keep your condition under control. You'll get a new glucose meter to let you know when your levels are too high or too low. It will also ask you if you need more test strips. As part of this program, you will get unlimited test strips sent to your home.



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You don't need a Delta Dental ID card when you visit. Provide the dental provider with the primary member's name, birthdate, and Social Security number. Prefer to have an ID card? Simply log in to your account to view or print.



Utilizing your Vision Benefit is just as easy! Create an account on vsp.com to view your in-network coverage, find the VSP network doctor who's right for you, and discover savings with exclusive member extras.

At your appointment, tell them you have VSP. They will look you up by the primary member's Social Security number. Have hardware only coverage - don't forget to give the vision provider your BCBS Medical Card to bill for the exam.



Pecan Pie Recipe

Author: Shelly Prep Time: 10 min Cook Time: 60 min

Ingredients

- 1 cup light OR dark corn syrup
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 cups (6 ounces) coarsely chopped pecans
- 1 (9-inch) unbaked OR frozen deep-dish pie crust

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Mix light corn syrup, eggs, sugar, butter and vanilla using a spoon or a rubber spatula.
- Stir in pecans.
- Pour the mixture into pie crust.
- Bake on center rack of oven for 60 to 70 minutes.
- Cool for at least 2 hours on wire rack before serving.

Notes

- If you are using a prepared frozen pie crust, place cookie sheet in oven and preheat oven as directed. Pour filling into frozen crust and bake on preheated cookie sheet.
- The pie is done when center reaches 200°F. Tap center surface of pie lightly - it should spring back when done. If pie crust is over-browning, cover edges with foil.

Nutrition

Serving Size: 1 slice **Calories:** 304
Sugar: 46.7 g **Sodium:** 54.6 mg **Fat:** 12.4 g
Carbohydrates: 48.9 g **Protein:** 3 g
Cholesterol: 61.9 mg

HOLIDAY SEASON – NO EXCUSES

The holiday season is a time for family get-togethers, parties and socializing with friends. Usually, this means that there is alcohol involved and combined with the peak in traveling, Montana weather, this makes a more dangerous time on the road. Statistics show that there is an increase in DUI offenses and alcohol-related incidents during the time between Thanksgiving and New Year's. Montana was the deadliest state for holiday alcohol-related accidents in 2020 according to the National Highway Safety Administrations (NHTSA) Fatality and Injury Reporting System (FARS).

If you are traveling this year, be sure your vehicle is in good running condition and follow these tips to keep yourself and loved ones safe on the roads: prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency kit with you, get a good night's sleep before departing and avoid drowsy driving, leave early, buckle up, put the cell phone away and practice defensive driving.

Remember alcohol-related crashes are 100% preventable. If you plan to indulge in libations, please remember there is **no excuse** for drunk driving. Plan ahead for a safe ride - designate a driver, arrange for a pick-up, use a ride home program, spend the night, call a cab/Uber, but whatever you do don't get behind the wheel. It's up to each and every one of us to do our part to prevent these tragedies.

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AWARENESS MONTHS

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Lung Cancer Awareness Month

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JANUARY

Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

FEBRUARY

Marijuana Awareness Month

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