

# Montana Respite Retreat Program

The Montana Respite Retreat Program is a research-informed program utilizing social engagement while completing activities to improve and sustain well-being of caregivers. Each retreat involves four modules focusing on social, mental health, nutrition/physical activity, and stress reduction for the participants. The modules allow the caregivers to be a part of a social group and learn new techniques to improve their mental health and well-being.

## Retreat Participation

In 2022, the Montana Respite Retreat Program held **12** retreats in **11** different Montana counties.

**137** caregivers attended and the retreats provided **912** hours of respite.

Retreat participants show an immediate increase in well-being scores\* across all the retreats and for all of the participants.

Well-being increases with participating in the day of rest, relaxation, social engagement and activity that promote a positive experience. The data shows a continued increase in overall well-being after 1 month and 3 months have passed.

The caregivers who responded to questions about the experience on the day of the retreat expressed decreased stress, relaxation and appreciation for being cared for.

Participant reactions included:

**“I no longer feel alone in this caregiving”**

**“My cup was empty when I came, but now it is full”**

**“I found something to affix my attention to and take my mind off my sources of stress.”**

**“I feel cared for”**

\*A mixed methodology is being utilized to measure the effectiveness of the 1-day respite retreat on wellbeing with a pre, post, 1 month, 3-month and a 1-year evaluation. The research is focused on the experience that the participants had during the retreat and their experience using the self-care practices delivered at the retreat. Additionally, the WHO -5 Wellbeing Scale questionnaire is being used to collect data on the individuals Well-being.



Project Partners: Montana Lifespan Respite  
Montana Department of Health and Human Services and the  
MSU College of Education, Health and Human Development