

MONTANA WOMEN'S PRISON: CARING FOR MONTANA'S INCARCERATED FEMALES

Law and Justice Interim Committee

March 21, 2022



**Where we are, where
we've been, where we
plan to go....**



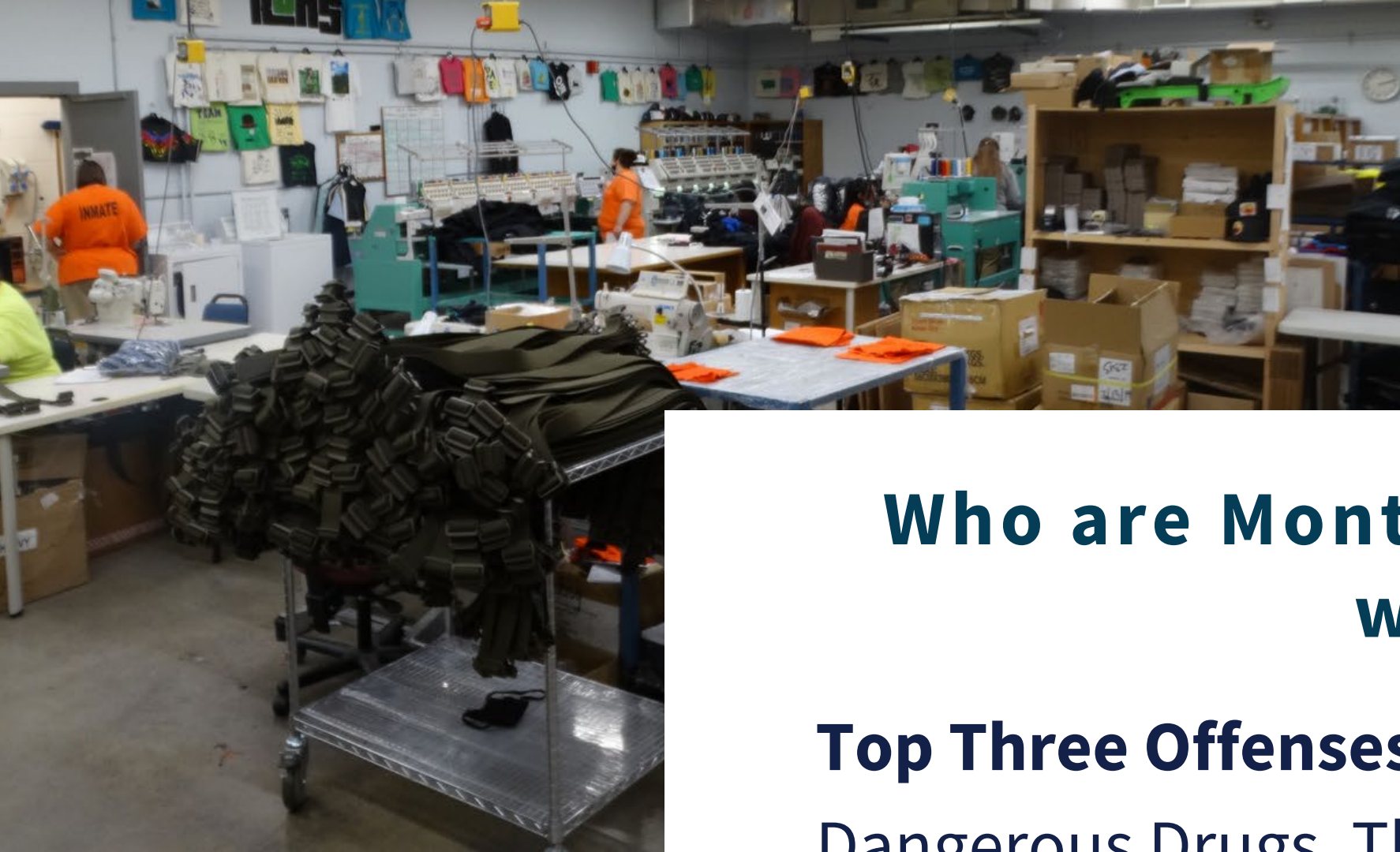
MWP: Then and Now



MWP Facility



- Female inmates located at facility in downtown Billings since 1994.
- Building is the former Rivendell Psychiatric Center which was constructed in 1984. (46 beds)
- Structure was expanded in 2003 to allow for increased capacity.
- 85,000 square-foot facility.
- Operational capacity of 240 inmates.



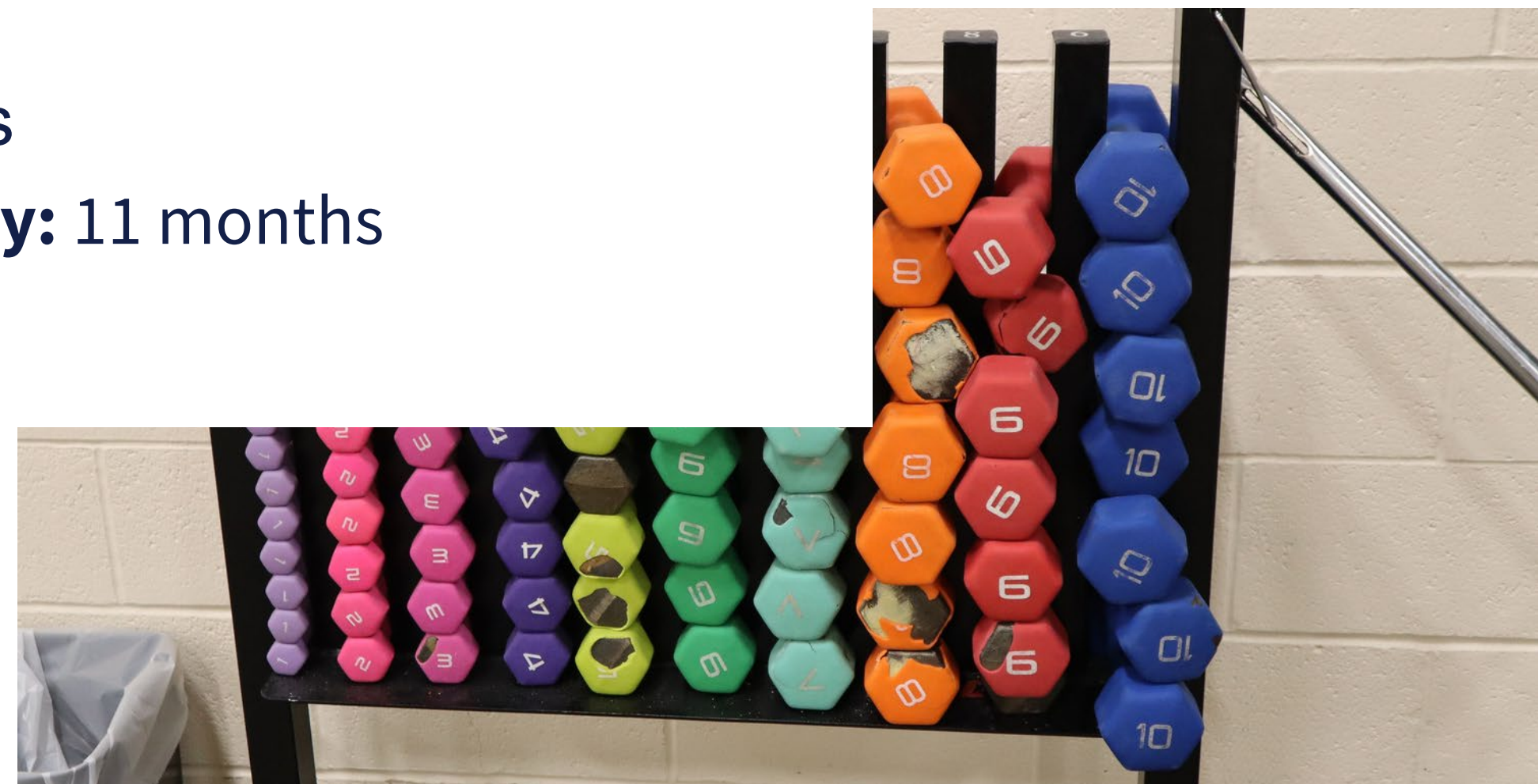
Who are Montana's incarcerated women?

Top Three Offenses: Criminal Possession of Dangerous Drugs, Theft, Criminal Endangerment

Average Age: 39 years

Average Length of Stay: 11 months

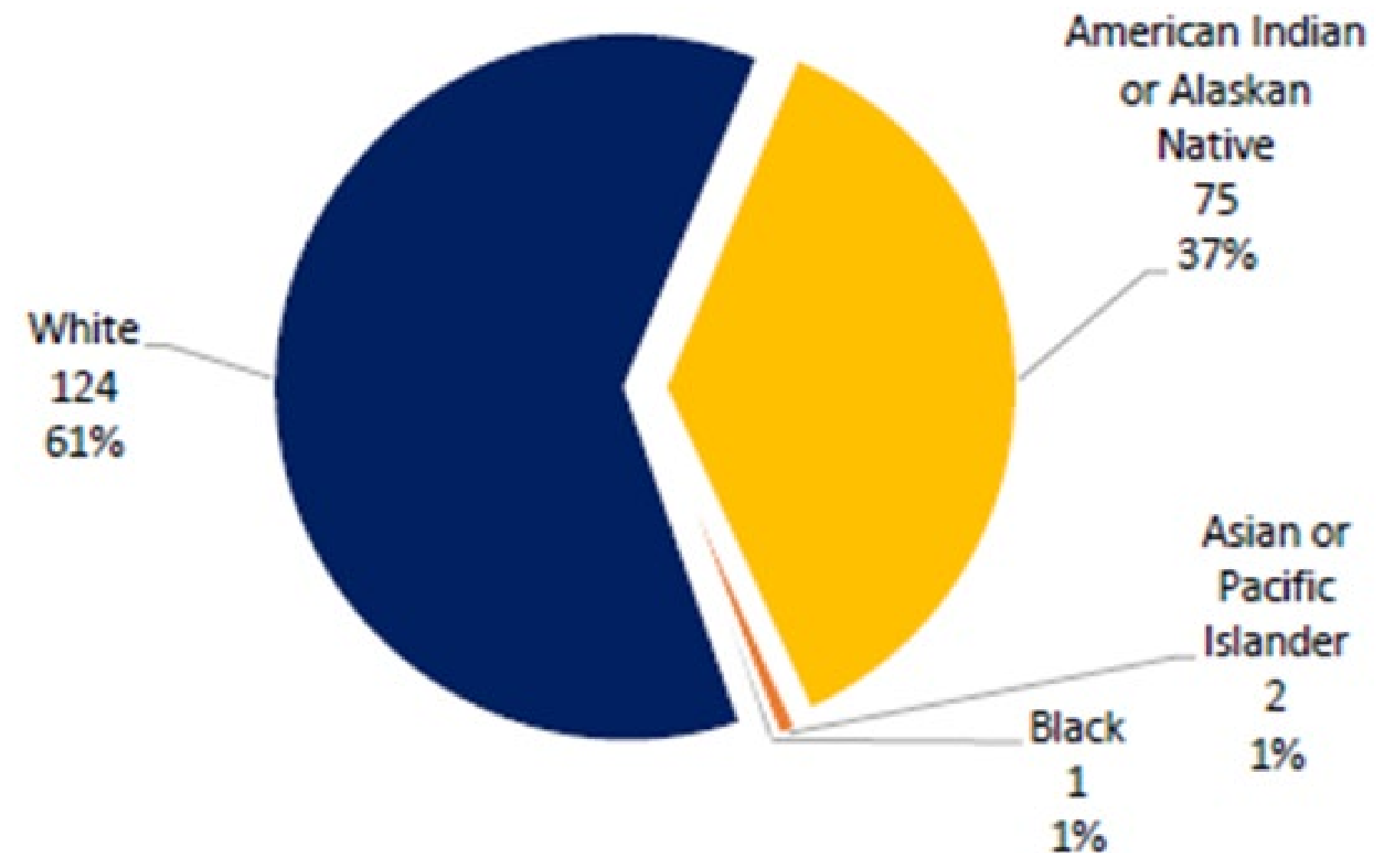
Cost per day: \$116.15



MWP Race Demographics

While American Indians make up about 6 percent of Montana's population, American Indian women comprise 37 percent of inmates sent to MWP.

Female Race Distribution - Secure Facilities



Personal Growth Opportunities at MWP



Religious, Parenting, Cultural Activities

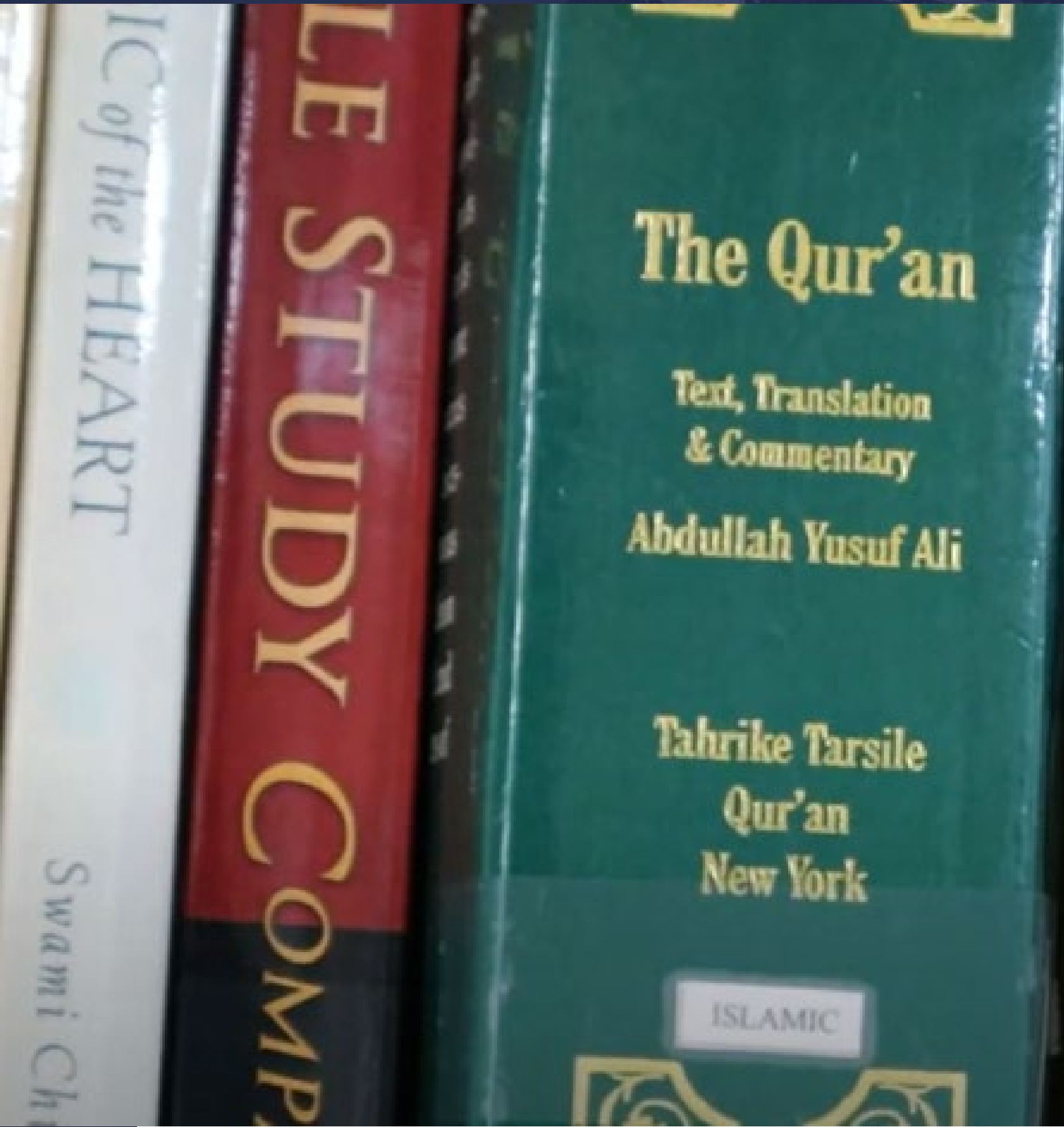


Family-Oriented Activities

- **"Treehouse"** - an area on MWP's campus for mothers and children to spend time together away from the visiting room.
- **Family Tree Center** - nonprofit which provides parenting education, support to inmates.
- **Kids Days** - opportunities for children to visit their family members, play games, participate in face painting, etc.
- **Recorded book program** - mothers record themselves reading books. The books and recordings are sent to the children so they can listen and read along.



Religious Activities

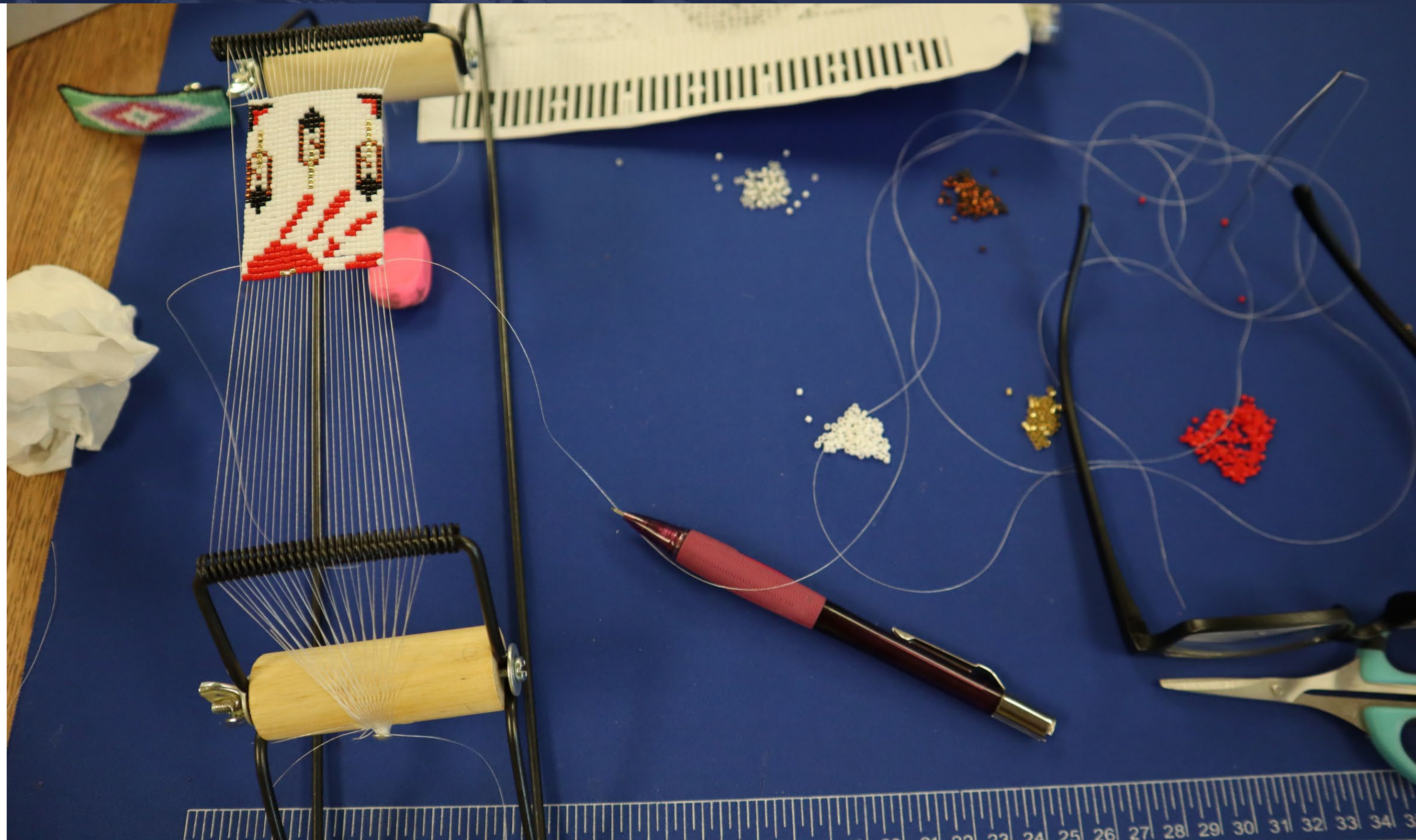


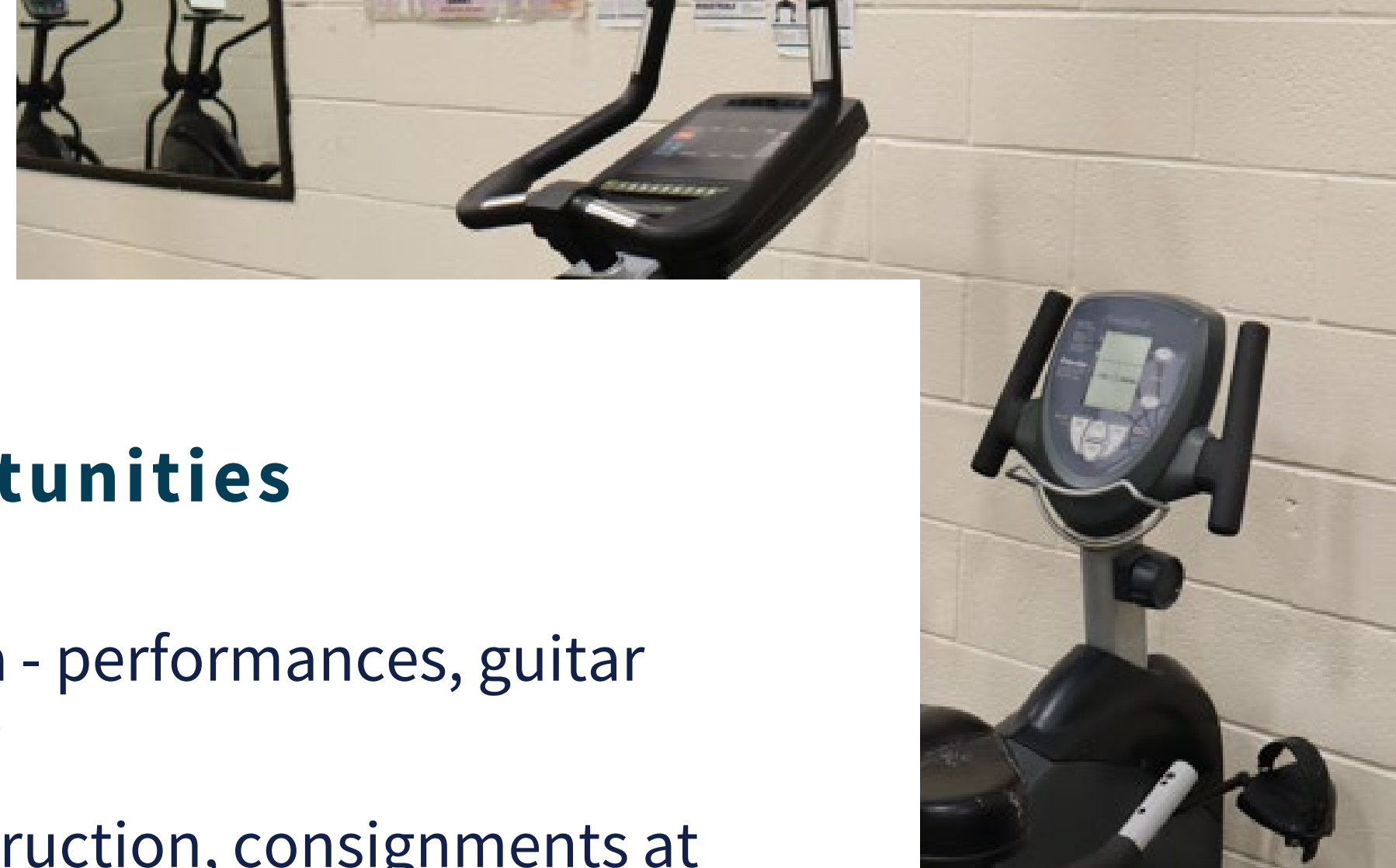
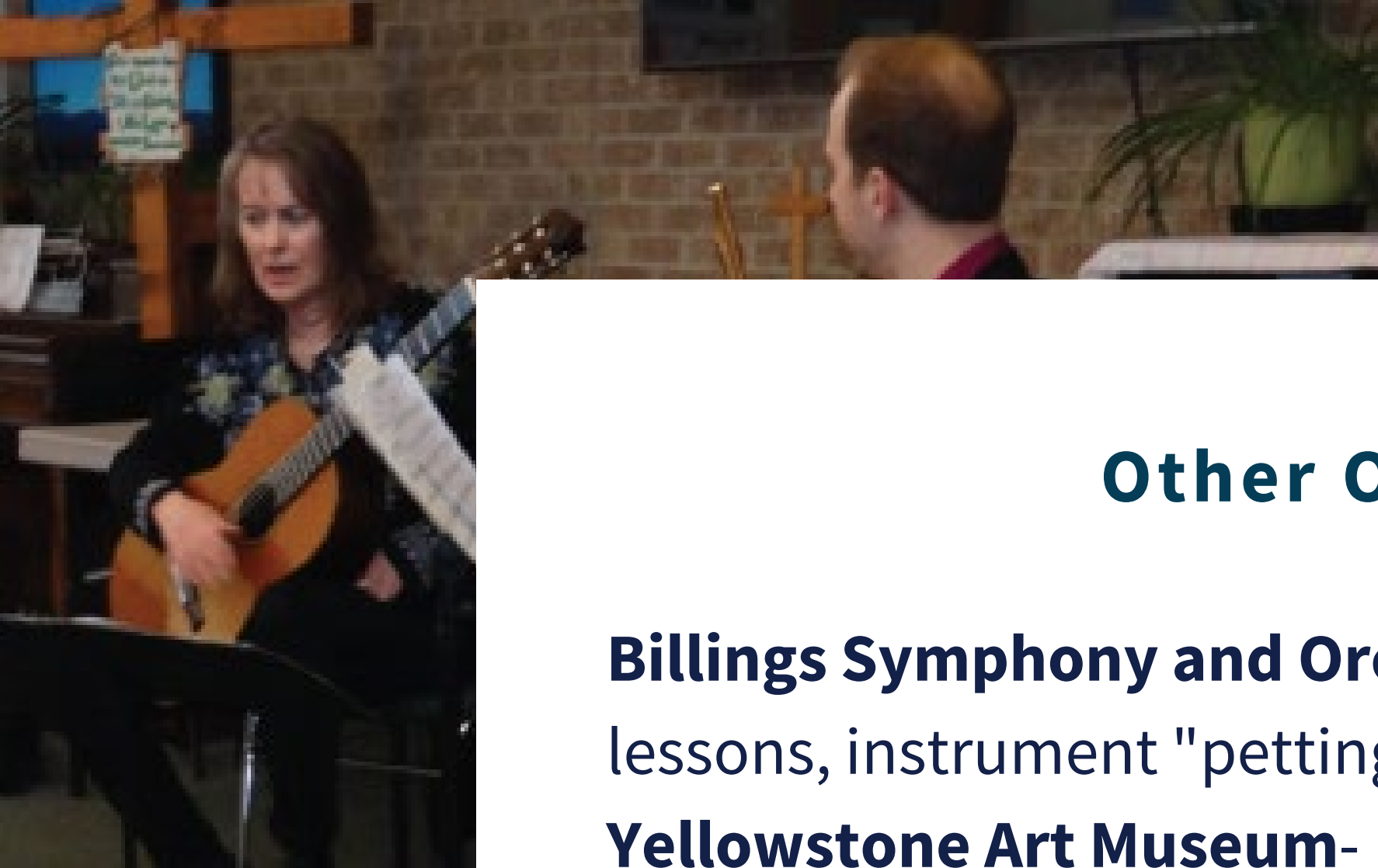
- MWP employs a religious activities coordinator, but also relies heavily on volunteers from the community who provide religious opportunities for inmates.
- A wide range of religions are represented.
- In addition, to serve the 37 percent of MWP's population who are American Indian, MWP contracts with an American Indian liaison who visits the prison weekly to lead ceremonies and activities.

Hobbies

Inmates at MWP
enjoy:

- Beading
- Quilting
- Painting
- Card making
- Many more



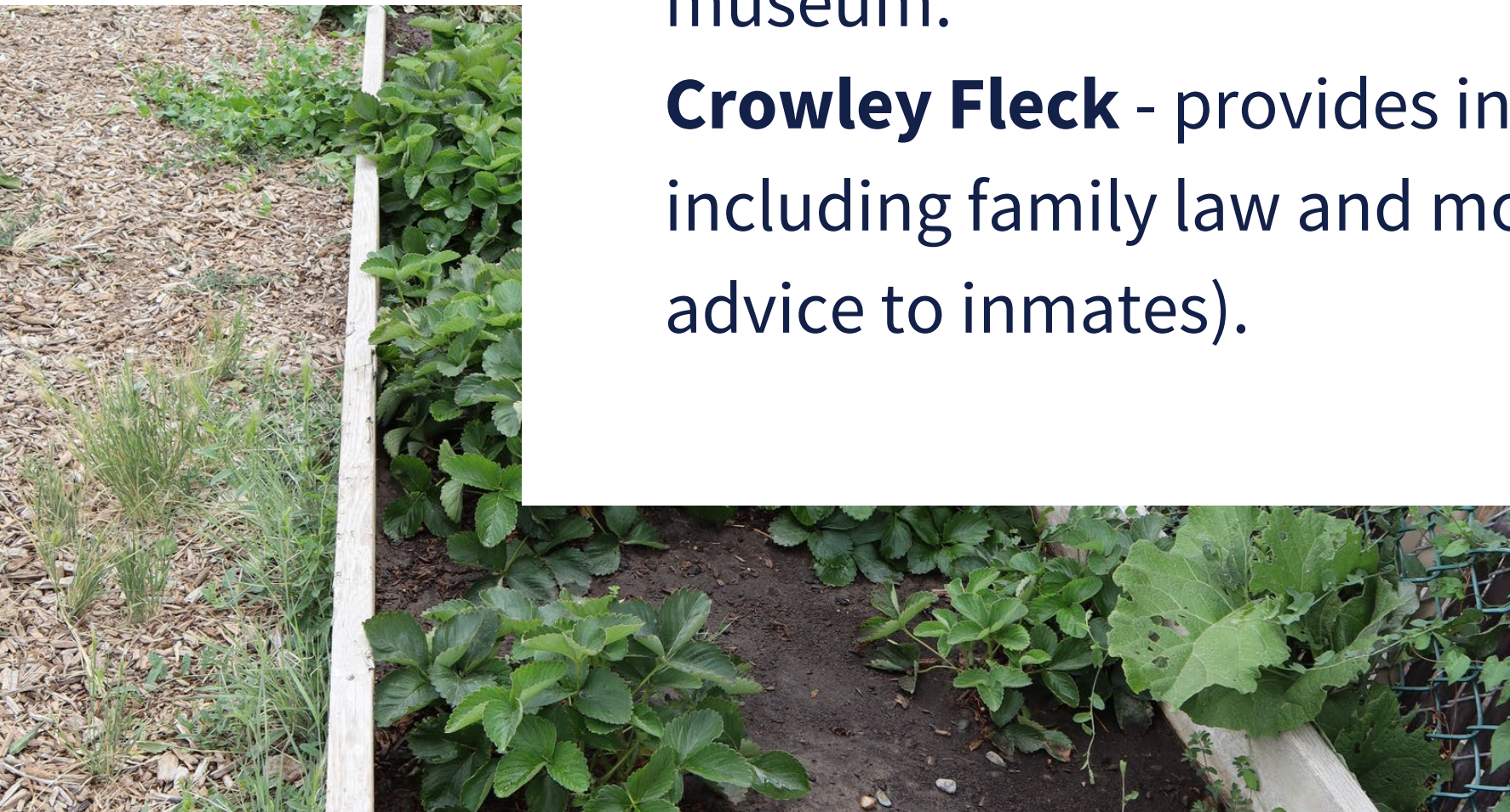


Other Opportunities

Billings Symphony and Orchestra - performances, guitar lessons, instrument "petting zoos."

Yellowstone Art Museum- art instruction, consignments at museum.

Crowley Fleck - provides informational sessions on topics including family law and more (presenters do not give legal advice to inmates).



Medical Health Services

- Inmates receive routine and preventative care (including dental and vision), vaccinations, health education, medication management and chronic care on site.
- Collaboration with DPHHS and River Stone Health for on-site mammograms and cervical screenings.
- Serious illness or injuries require transport to off-site, local hospitals.



Behavioral Health Services



- Inmates receive on-site mental health and treatment services from therapists who are dually licensed and can provide co-occurring treatment to address both mental health and substance use issues.
- MWP provides evidence-based, gender-specific programming designed to help inmates manage trauma and understand the pitfalls of criminogenic thinking.
- That includes, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Helping Women Recover, Seeking Safety, Beyond Violence, and Moving On.

Educational Opportunities at MWP

**"Every person who comes to us should have the
opportunities and skills to never come back to us."**

-Cynthia Wolken, Deputy Director



Education and Career Readiness



Basic Education



- Montana Correctional Enterprises assumed direction of educational programming at MWP in 2021.
- Previously, MWP contracted with Billings School District 2 to provide adult education while MCE focused on vocational opportunities.
- Hired two certified teachers to assist with HiSET preparation, special education, college correspondence, job readiness.
- In FY21, 22 inmates participated in HiSET education, with 11 completing their HiSET

Montana Department of Labor and Industry

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs



- Computer Technology including Microsoft Office, Adobe
- Dog Grooming, Dog Training
- Industrial Sewing Machine Operator
- Custodial Worker
- Landscape and Grounds Worker
- Administrative Assistant

Nationally Recognized Certifications



- OSHA 10
- First Aid, CPR, AED
- Bloodborne and Airborne Pathogens –
Emergency Care and Safety Institute
- Forklift Safety – JJ Keller

Work Assignments at MWP

- Inmates may apply for any of 132 facility work assignments, and another 37 Industries assignments and 30 educational assignments offered by MCE.
- Voluntary work assignments within the facility help prepare offenders to return to Montana communities, and a portion of inmate pay is used to pay fines and restitution.
- In FY21, MWP inmates through MCE:
 - Trained 171 dogs
 - Groomed 298 dogs
 - Produced 22,000 belts for SIMMS
 - Embroidered 15,000 garments
 - Screen printed 29,000 garments
 - Produced 1,100 sublimated items



What's next for MWP?



Challenges

- Aging infrastructure.
- 3-acre campus constrained by location (surrounded by offices, businesses).
- Comparatively small population (MWP - operational capacity of 240 vs. MSP - operational capacity of 1,582). Narrows the scope of vocational programming and industries opportunities.
- Inmate average length of stay (11 months)



A&E Assessment

- The department worked with the Montana Department of Administration's Architecture and Engineering Division and DLR Group in 2020 to develop a strategic master planning report related to DOC prisons. They determined:
 - “The female population is well served in Billings, where the facility is close to gender-appropriate services, and renovation and expansion is preferred over replacement. We recommend a building expansion and facility remodel at MWP given the identified deficiencies noted regarding vocational and programming as well as staff offices, infirmary space, and the ability to better serve the serious mentally ill inmates.”*

Planning for the Future

- Option selected for MWP involves renovations of the existing space and construction of an annex.
- This combination approach would:
 - Increase medical/mental health counseling, treatment space
 - Expand education, career technical education facilities
 - Expand MCE area
 - Create modern visiting center
 - Provide flexible special needs housing (acute mental health care, chronic mental health care and high-security housing)
 - Create Board of Pardons and Parole hearing room

Planning for the Future

Montana Women's Prison	TOTAL BUDGET	\$27,758,120	\$36,036,056
Security Related		\$1,100,000	\$1,430,000
Annex Expansion/Renovations/Functional Improvements		\$25,788,520	\$33,525,076
Physical Improvements		\$704,600	\$915,980
Develop Facility Specific Program & Master Plan		\$165,000	\$165,000

Planning for the Future



Questions?

