



Not Your Average



Mom,
Spouse,
Teacher,
Salesperson
Yoga Instructor,
Camp Organizer,
Jewelry Designer,

**And She Loves
the Bitterroot ...**

Biking, Yoga Instructor, Sign Language



Organizer, Teacher,
Mom, Spouse



You have probably seen her at the Farmers Market on Saturdays in Hamilton and hopefully purchased her handmade jewelry. But little did you know, hiding behind that pretty smile and mild manner is "Not your average (Bitterroot) Valley Girl".

Jessica Fitzpatrick is a great example for all of us. River to Ridge magazine has talked to many business/community leaders over the years. A few stand out. OK, let's name some other exceptional Bitterroot woman: Pat Easley, Office Manager at the Bitterroot Chamber; Tamar Stanley, Exec. Dir. at the Ravalli County Museum; and Hope Benedict, President, Lemhi County Museum. (There are outstanding men also, but they don't often like to be called "Valley Girls.")

And we think Jessica is special. She doesn't answer to a board. She doesn't punch a time clock. She is on the job 24-7. She is working to make sure that her daughter Sequoia (who is on

the autism spectrum) has the opportunity to achieve her full potential. With Jess for a mom, Sequoia will. (And Jed is a great dad too.)

Jessica's example sets a standard for all of us. She organized and managed a Sensory Summer Camp for kids in Hamilton. Some of those kids are on the cover of this magazine. She teaches yoga, knows sign language, designs and makes jewelry. She helped start Library Night (for kids) in Hamilton and Stevensville. Working with Doctors in Philadelphia, she executes and refines a sensory exercise program for Sequoia. And on top of this, she hopes to become a certified Brain Gym instructor, as well as get a master's degree in art therapy and open a practice for people with special needs.

Some people may ask if the Bitterroot Valley is the best place to raise a child on the autism spectrum. But Jessica and her husband Jed love the Bitterroot Valley, the community, and especially the outdoor

opportunities. Despite the struggles that people living on the autism spectrum face: being accepted in social settings and the political and educational barriers slowing integration into the school system, Jessica gives accolades to the Bitterroot community for its acceptance of Sequoia. And Jessica gives special mention to the "community" of friends at Bitterroot Brewing for their fond friendship of her family, including Sequoia. (This might be the place to say, "only in Montana.")

We should all be thankful for the efforts, skills, energy, and dreams of Jessica Fitzpatrick and others like Pat, Tamar, and Hope – for "not being your average Valley Girl" and helping us all have a "Beautiful Day in the Bitterroot".

(If you are interested in assisting people with special needs in the Valley, you can email us at, info@fromrivertoridge.com, for contact information.



Jewelry designer,
craftsman and
salesperson

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