Besides being a member of RSS’s Board of Directors, I am also a member of the Billings Art Association. That being said, when the call went out for artists to volunteer work for an art auction to benefit Landon’s legacy, I felt the need to contribute. My son and I worked on a watercolor together and donated it to the auction. It was titled “Autistic people experience joy”, and both of us did just that as we created the painting. Landon’s legacy made me think about kindness. Landon’s legacy started out as a small group of people who wanted to honor the memory of a young man with developmental disabilities by creating a safe outdoor play space for people with disabilities and their families. That small group of people became a large group with a common cause. A small group of people connected out of necessity, to protect and enrich the lives of people close to them, their sons, daughters, cousins. Then there are those who attach themselves to the small group, not because they have a family member with a disability but because they have empathy, because they are helpers.

 I remember a story told by Fred Rogers in which he recounted a story from his childhood. He had witnessed an accident and was quite shaken by it, but his mother said to him, “Look for the helpers.”Pay attention to those people who are there because they want to help. They have big hearts, lots of empathy, and an overall need to be kind. I had a friend who was asked to give a commencement speech at a highschool graduation. His wife was an elementary school teacher whose goal, along with academics, was to give her students a sense of community, of belonging. She stressed friendship, kindness, and working together toward a common goal. My friend’s commencement speech was a reminder to all the highschool seniors to be kind. That’s it, just be kind. No matter what the world throws at you, be kind.

 That’s the kind of people we have at RSS, that’s the kind of people we want working for RSS – the kind ones, the helpers. People who have empathy toward their fellow human beings and a desire to make their lives better. As a mom and as a board member, thank you, RSS, for kindness.

 Sue Schuld, RSS Board of Directors