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## NEWS

### Michelle Obama praises campaign workers in Kalispell

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By **JIM MANN** □ The Daily Inter Lake

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Michelle Obama was in Kalispell Monday, leading a phone-banking rally for her husband's presidential campaign on the eve of Montana's primary election.

Obama spoke for more than a half hour at the KM Building, not long after reading to preschool children at the Nurturing Center in Kalispell.

She said Barack Obama's momentum in the primary race against Hillary Clinton has been driven by the energetic support of individuals and small donors.

While her husband also has the backing of large donors, she said, "Barack has attracted a whole new crop of people who have given \$20, \$40, \$60 ... I think Barack has changed the face of presidential fundraising forever."

The campaign has been built on an "amazing organization" of everyday supporters across the country, she said.

"Here we are, on the brink of doing something amazing with this guy," she said, to rousing applause and a standing ovation from nearly 80 people in the room.

Obama reflected on the difficult decision to enter a prolonged, arduous presidential campaign, saying that her decision was based on a belief in Barack Obama's ability to lead.

"I started thinking, if I wasn't married to this man, I would want him to be president," she said.

"People want (the country) to be in a better place, and they want it desperately," she said. "They don't care about race or gender, they just want someone they can trust."

Obama said the nature of the presidential race is about to change, as Montana and South Dakota close out the final primary elections and Barack Obama is widely expected to clinch the Democratic nomination.

Voters will no longer have to discern minor "nuances" in the differences between her husband and Hillary Clinton. For the balance of the campaign leading up to the November election, she predicted voters will see "substantial differences" between her husband and John McCain, the presumptive Republican nominee.

"Keep making those calls. Every vote counts," she said. "At 8 p.m. tomorrow, this chapter will be closed, so let's close it well."

Obama then sat down and made a few phone calls, joining volunteers armed with cell phones and calling lists to make the campaign's final push in Montana.

She later mingled with the crowd, hugging children and posing for photographs.



Michelle Obama talks with Polson residents Hallie, left, and Roxanne Hovenkotter during her visit to a phone banking rally for her husband's presidential campaign Monday afternoon in Kalispell. "Here we are, on the brink of doing something amazing with this guy," she said, to rousing applause and a standing ovation from nearly 80 people there for the get out the vote phone bank. Karen Nichols photos/Daily Inter Lake

Sarah Smith was working the phones with her husband, Ric, and sons Davis and Russell when she got the chance to meet Obama.

"She just came across as so human, yet she's so professional," Smith said, noting that she and Obama talked about being working mothers. "To see her on both of those levels, I'm even more inspired."

Smith said she and her husband opened their Century 21 real estate office in Polson to serving as the Obama campaign's Lake County headquarters.

Before her appearance at the KM Building, Obama read three books, including "Green Eggs and Ham," to about 20 preschoolers at the Nurturing Center.

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