



Welcome!

With this edition, we welcome you to the *Report*, the new quarterly newsletter of the Park County Community Foundation. Our goal is to keep you informed about the many aspects of the Foundation's work in Park County, introduce you to the notable work of nonprofit groups working to improve the quality of life in the county, and encourage the spirit of philanthropy in this unique corner of Montana that we all love.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM GROWS IN IMPORTANCE

A year after it was formed in August 2006, the Park County Community Foundation began one of its most important responsibilities – the Annual Community Grants Program, one of the primary functions of a community foundation.

The first call for applications from nonprofit and other community groups went out in mid-2007. To be eligible, applications were required to provide detailed information on how funds were to be spent, evidence of need, the group's own financial data, leadership roster, and specific information on who would be served as the result of the grant and how that service would be delivered.

It has been 10 years since the program was initiated. Since then, more than \$340,000 has been awarded to 83 different organizations from Wilsall to Cooke City for worthy projects or for important operating needs. In the same time period, requests to the Foundation totaled \$565,255.

Applications are evaluated by the Grants Committee consisting of Foundation directors and some community

members. Among factors considered for a grant to be made are the immediate needs, purpose of the request, funds available, and the quality of the application contrasted against other applications submitted in the that particular annual cycle.

The amount to be granted is determined by the Foundation's annual budget. Annual operating funds represent the greatest portion of grants awarded, although many gifts to the Foundation are designated to that purpose by donors.

With support from First Interstate Bank of Livingston and Gardiner, the available funding pool for 2017 stands at \$95,000 – the largest in Foundation history. The amount includes a first-time incentive of up to \$20,000 for a collaborative application from two or more organizations to address a common purpose.

Community Grant awards for 2017 will be announced by mid-June.

DINNERS FOR SENIORS

LOCAL MEAL DELIVERY SERVICE FEEDS WITH PURPOSE

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”

Michael McCormick turns no one away at the Livingston Food Resource Center—and he may supplement your loaf of bread with Hippocratic wisdom. In his eight years with the Livingston Food Resource Center, the former volunteer-turned-executive director has brought the organization from its roots as a traditional food pantry to its current incarnation: a visionary, vibrant Park County staple. The center’s new downtown building, completed in 2015, features a community meeting room and a licensed commercial kitchen, in addition to its pantry. Now, thanks to a grant from the Park County Community Foundation, the LFRC goes even farther to help locals in need.



Many Livingston seniors receive lunches from Meals on Wheels -- MOW. But McCormick heard stories of individuals for whom the program left dietary gaps. Facing health issues, mobility constraints, or impoverished circumstances, they were unable to prepare their own regular, healthful meals—and frequently went hungry. For some, the MOW lunch was their only meal of the day.

Around that clear need, McCormick formed a plan, enlisting the expertise of Montana State University dietetic interns, and conducting in-depth interviews with local seniors. With funding provided by the Foundation, the Dinners for Seniors pilot program is now rolling out across Livingston: healthy meals, made from local ingredients, in a local kitchen, delivered to local seniors in need.

As McCormick puts it, the traditional food pantry model keeps people from being hungry today but fails to address health issues or foster economic growth. “Most food pantries are just that,” he says with emphasis.

The Livingston food pantry itself functions like a grocery store, but instead of cheap bulk food, the shelves are stocked with homemade, whole-grain bread, locally grown organic produce (processed and frozen in-house), and grass-fed beef and elk meat (donated by local ranchers and hunters). “Most of this meat has never been out of Park County,” says McCormick. The delicious soups and other frozen meals are created right there in LFRC’s commercial kitchen—healthy, with low sodium and no added sugar.

McCormick’s big-picture vision means, “It’s not a dead-end for dollars – we believe in investment, not donation.

“Because we’re supporting local farmers and other food providers, the money we spend goes right back into the Livingston economy,”

he continues. “Our ROI is a strong, healthy community in which people want to live, raise families, and start new businesses – so we all benefit” Thanks to the hard work by staff and volunteers, and the support of the Foundation, the Food Resource Center continues to help people – and their community – in dynamic, meaningful ways.

Photo: Michael McCormick and MSU dietetic intern Erin Nyberg (left) evaluate meal-packaging equipment.



DONATE TO THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Did you know you can donate safely and securely to the Community Foundation’s work through our website? Simply click on “Donate Now” and make your selections. A receipt will be provided for your tax-deductible gift.
Thank you!

INSPIRED SCIENCE FROM FISHING TO PHOSPHATES:

SHIELDS VALLEY FIFTH GRADERS TURNED WATERSHED WARRIORS

Outfitted with protective green safety goggles, the fifth graders at Shields Valley Elementary school flip through their well-worn science notebooks, finding blank pages on which to draw new charts. Matt Wilhelm’s lesson this afternoon involves boxes of mild chemicals, pH tests, and local water samples from the Shields River – as well as from Wilhelm’s personal aquarium.

He asks a review question: “What happens if nitrate and phosphate levels rise?” Hands fly up and answers pop out: “Plant growth!” “Eutrophication!”



Matt Wilhelm holds up a test tube as Shields Valley fifth graders wait for the telltale color shift indicating a chemical reaction.

Wilhelm is education director for Watershed Warriors, traveling to schools around the region with a curriculum which combines fly-fishing with science. Together with a Livingston teacher, Chris Gillespie, he developed their 22-week syllabus. It helps provide two-thirds of Common Core science standards in a uniquely hands-on approach, encouraging kids to learn about their local river – and get outside.



Students enjoy teamwork and problem-solving with Wilhelm’s hands-on approach to teaching and learning.

Shields Valley fifth grade teacher Billi Taylor wanted to bring Wilhelm’s fishing-based science to her classroom. Thanks to her efforts procuring a grant from the Park County Community Foundation, the Watershed Warriors program has been a classroom staple for the past two years, making at least 20 annual visits to Taylor’s Wilsall class.

From the physics involved in casting a fly rod to the ecology of tying flies representative of local macroinvertebrates – and even today’s chemistry lesson, testing the water quality of their local river – the Watershed Warriors lessons incorporate scientific method into lived experience. For many students, the Shields River is a part of everyday life. For others, what they learn emboldens them to spend more time in the beautiful Montana landscapes we call home. And for Wilhelm, that’s what it’s all about.

“If we can get these kids outside, the positive impacts spill over into their health and their interest in conservation for years to come.”

As the classroom lesson draws to a close, the impact of Watershed Warriors’ hands-on science can be heard in the fifth graders’ conversations. “I want to be a chemist when I grow up,” a girl reflects confidently. “You said physicist,” someone replies, and her eyes pop up from the lab notes. “That was last year!”

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THE REPORT VIA EMAIL?

As a registered, tax-exempt organization, the Foundation is qualified to receive nonprofit-rate mailing privileges. But there is still a cost. Please help us reduce costs by visiting www.PCCF-Montana.org and clicking on the green “Sign Up Now” to receive our E-Newsletter.

SILVER GATE COMMUNITY PARK

WELCOMING VISITORS TO YELLOWSTONE'S NORTHEASTERN ENTRANCE

The tiny community of Silver Gate sits at the Northeastern Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. The permanent home of about 140 residents, Silver Gate becomes a true destination from November to April, when snowmobilers, skiers, and wildlife watchers can access town only via the North Entrance at Gardiner. When the spring snows melt, and the highway to Red Lodge opens once again, Silver Gate warmly welcomes its seasonal crowds of tourists traveling to and from the Park.

In 2016 more than 100,000 vehicles passed through Silver Gate last year with many of those travelers hoping for a place to have a picnic, a restroom, somewhere to let the kids out to play and stretch their legs. But for the past three decades, the only public area for travelers to stop was a small plot of land along Highway 212 offering only swings and a teeter-totter.

The people of Silver Gate had a dream, and their success story is a testament to the power of vision and cooperation within a community.

In June of 2015, Cindy Hartman – who comprises half of Wildlife Along the Rockies along with her husband Dan, an internationally known photographer – began planning with the Colter Pass, Cooke City and Silver Gate Community Council – the CCC as it is known locally. Community businesses desperately needed an alternative to simply sharing their restrooms with all passersby, and the old, rickety playground equipment had to go.

Silver Gate rallied. Hartman helped organize community funding. The Cooke City Museum donated three brand-new signs. Kristen Galbraith assisted with obtaining a grant for the project from the Park County Community Foundation, and one of the Foundation’s benefactors, Mountain Sky Guest Ranch. The National Park Service donated a much-needed vault toilet, agreeing to provide regular servicing. The Crazy Mountain Ranch gifted funds through the Community Foundation as well.



The work begins: Kelly Hartman, Greg Shifflett, Carol Widman and Julie Warren.



Mission accomplished: Julie Warren, Carol Widman, Bob Smith and Greg Shifflett.

The new Silver Gate Community Park offers a restroom, picnic tables, and a beautiful wooden play structure. It sits beneath the iconic vista of 10,000-foot Amphitheatre Mountain, and hosts yearly performances of Shakespeare in the Park. Most importantly, the park offers a beautiful, relaxing environment for visitors to take a rest stop. As the only such park in the region, it benefits tourists and locals alike. Thanks in part to your support of the Community Foundation, Silver Gate can take extra pride in their beautiful town and better welcome guests to incredible Yellowstone National Park!

NONPROFIT NETWORK



Liz Moore, Executive Director of the Montana Nonprofit Association, discussed legal and fiscal issues facing nonprofits in a recent seminar.

The Park County Community Foundation provides professional development training to all nonprofit organizations in Park and Sweet Grass counties in the monthly brown-bag lunch series, “Nonprofit Network” with support from the Mountain Sky Guest Ranch Fund and the Shane Lalani Center for the Arts. The Foundation also partnered with the Montana Nonprofit Association to present a monthly four-seminar professional development series from February through May. Topics included strategic planning, legal and fiscal issues, nonprofit financial management and fund development.

WHAT IS A DONOR-ADVISED FUND?

A donor-advised fund is a philanthropic vehicle established at the Park County Community Foundation – consider it your own family or personal foundation held at the Community Foundation. It allows donors to make a charitable contribution, receive an immediate tax benefit and then recommend grants from the fund over time at their own pace. The Community Foundation handles all the paperwork and correspondence. An easy way to think about a donor-advised fund is like a charitable savings account: a donor contributes to the fund as frequently as they like and then recommends grants when they are ready.

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE PARK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

THE FOUNDATION:

- Identifies opportunities to convene and facilitate collective thinking and action via a “collective impact” process to address major systemic community challenges;
- Provides funding for key community projects through an Annual Community Grant proposal process;
- Raises operating funds to support the Annual Community Grant Program, support community initiatives, “keep the lights on;”
- Encourages and expands local philanthropy with the belief that “everyone can be a philanthropist;”
- Provides professional development training to Park County nonprofit organizations and their volunteer board members in proper governance, performance management, public relations, finance and other areas.

VISIT THE FOUNDATION WEBSITE

WWW.PCCF-MONTANA.ORG

Meet our volunteer board of directors, learn about our history and the principles under which we operate, consider ways to help build the Foundation, apply for grants and scholarships, see what community programs we support, and check out what's in "News & Notes." You also can be informed about the important work of local organizations in the video "Nonprofit Spotlight" series. Our Facebook feed is visible, too.

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