

Nov. 1-14, 2013

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a guide to giving

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# Big Sky Search and Rescue

Andy Dreisbach was coaching a youth soccer game after work in mid-October, when he got the call. A woman had fallen off her horse on Porcupine Creek trail and had shattered her shoulder.

A four-year member of Big Sky's Search and Rescue team, Dreisbach met seven members of the SAR team at their building in the community park, gathered equipment and rode four-wheelers the 2 1/2 miles to the scene. They gave the injured woman warm bullion, water and blankets to keep her comfortable, treated the injury and immobilized her for transport to the ambulance waiting at the trail-head.

Big Sky SAR is a nonprofit agency whose 33 volunteer members must be ready for rescues at a moment's notice and in any conditions. Often, they're searching for victims at night. When they aren't at their day jobs or with their families, these highly trained community members are working scenarios or continuing their education at one of the many training courses they attend.

"It's a way to keep the skills honed and give back to the community," Dreisbach says.

The team of EMTs and Wilderness First Responders works closely with local law enforcement, fire departments, medevac helicopters and ski patrols on everything from high alpine rescue to snowmobile accidents, to climbing falls, lost hikers and whitewater rescue.

Big Sky SAR is notified through the Gallatin County 911 Dispatch Center and operates under an incident commander, usually a Gallatin County sheriff's deputy. Their primary response area consists of the Gallatin and Madison ranges in southwest Montana, and they collaborate with 10 other specialty rescue groups in the region.

In the past 10 years, these groups have responded to an average of more than 90 incidents each year, according to the Gallatin County website.

*Big Sky Search and Rescue is supported by L & K Real Estate. For volunteer opportunities, to donate or learn more, visit [bssar.org](http://bssar.org).*



Andy Dreisbach hangs with a rescue litter above Ousel Falls during a highline training exercise on Sept. 29. PHOTO BY STEPHEN HALVORSON

# Big Sky Youth Empowerment Program

BYEP uses the outdoor opportunities of southwest Montana to make a difference in the lives of at-risk Gallatin Valley youth. Founded by Pete MacFadyen in 2001, the group mentoring program provides kids with life skills, communication tools and professional development.

MacFadyen ran a private mental health counseling practice in Bozeman after earning his graduate degree from Montana State University, but after two years, decided there was a better way.

"I got really frustrated," MacFadyen said. "It's not a good modality to make change with teenagers by saying, 'come sit with me once a week and talk about your problems.'"

The majority of teenagers working with counselors are there because parents or probation officers force them to, MacFadyen said; plus, he



Program manager Alyson Sperry and a BYEP youth participant high five during a day hike atop Drinking Horse Mountain in Bozeman, as part of a weekend adventure. PHOTO COURTESY OF BYEP

knew many of his clients would benefit from being outdoors.

He started the nonprofit with \$750 in initial financial backing from his parents; in the 12 years since,

nearly 700 kids have come through the program. Youth apply to BYEP voluntarily, and those who successfully complete their first winter trimester get to keep the outdoor gear – like skis, snowboards and

outerwear – provided by its corporate sponsors.

Megan Keenan began volunteering as a mentor with BYEP in winter 2011.

"The skiing was the initial draw, because I love it," said Keenan, an adjunct art education instructor at Montana State University. "When I was younger, I couldn't afford it...so I never had those opportunities." She soon realized that the program offered participants much more.

"[BYEP] gives kids an opportunity to have a supportive relationship with adults and express themselves in different ways," she said.

This winter 96 kids are enrolled; by winter 2016, BYEP expects 120.

*Big Sky Youth Empowerment is supported by VIA/Studio AV and Santosha Wellness Center. Find more at [byep.org](http://byep.org).*



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## Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation



PHOTO COURTESY OF RMEF

A 40-acre acquisition secures public access to 18,000 acres of National Forest land for hunters and others to enjoy. That, in a nutshell, sums up the work of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. It also sums up the nonprofit's latest, greatest Montana project.

Acting on a tip from a RMEF member and hunter, the organization bought the small tract of land that has 30 feet in common with a corner piece of the Lewis and Clark National Forest, for \$190,000. RMEF will sell the land – located about 20 miles south of Lewistown in central Montana – to

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for \$50,000, effectively donating the remaining \$140,000 to the agency.

The transaction allows hunters access to a portion of the Big Snowy Mountains that was extremely difficult to reach beforehand, and

where the elk population is over the FWP management objective.

A national conservation leader, RMEF's core programs are permanent land protection, habitat stewardship, elk restoration and supporting hunting heritage programs. Its mission: to ensure the future of elk and other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage.

Founded by four Montana elk hunters in 1984, the organization has effectively conserved about one square mile of elk country every day since. That track record adds up to more than 6.3 million acres of habitat enhanced or protected, while also opening or securing access to more than 667,000 acres of land across elk country.

At RMEF, hunting is conservation. Hunters generate \$1.6 billion annually for the conservation of America's wildlife and landscapes.

The RMEF membership is currently 200,000-strong, with 10,000-plus volunteers.

*RMEF is supported by ticketprinting.com. Join in the effort to conserve elk country at [rmef.org](http://rmef.org).*

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## CASA/GAL supports abused, neglected children



PHOTO COURTESY OF CASA/GAL

The Gallatin County Court Appointed Special Advocates/ Guardian as Litems (CASA/GAL) program is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to guiding abused and neglected children through the juvenile court system to safe, permanent homes. It's one of over 950 programs under the umbrella of the National CASA Association in Seattle, Wash., which was formed in 1977.

The program serves children whose emotional and/or physical health has been jeopardized by someone who is supposed to nurture and protect them. For these children, the path to

healthy development often lays at the discretion of a court system, which may have little personal knowledge of them.

CASA/GAL volunteers advocate to ensure that no child's individual story goes unheard, and that there is someone committed solely to their wellbeing. Nationally, the program has approximately 50,000 volunteers.

*CASA/GAL is supported by Open Range restaurant in Bozeman, which will host the second annual CASA/GAL fundraiser on March 3, 2014. Find more information at [gallatincountycasagal.org](http://gallatincountycasagal.org).*

## Payden Memorial Foundation

The Payden Memorial Foundation is named for Payden Polsak, who died in November 2001 at age 6, as a result of a brain tumor (medulloblastoma). His parents Max and Janette established the foundation after realizing the vast array of needs present for Montana children and their families living with cancer.

Based in Livingston, the foundation is a continuation of Payden's spirit, according to Janette, and raises much of its money through Blazing Saddles, an annual bike race held each July. This year, the race raised approximately \$40,000, some of which PMF will donate around the holidays to [curesearch.org](http://curesearch.org), in the names of Montana families battling cancer.

The foundation also sends these families money to help pay for



PHOTO COURTESY OF PMF

expenses associated with caring for a child with cancer. "We send them money to use for travel expenses, food, clothing, mortgage - whatever they need it for," Janette said.

*The Payden Memorial Foundation is supported by Ressler Motors. Find more information at [payden.org](http://payden.org).*

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## Women in Action

Women in Action was founded by a group of Big Sky women in 2005 on the basis of wanting to bring health and educational services to families in Big Sky who weren't getting them due to the rural nature of the area.

Executive Director Rachel Thesing, former board president who founded the nonprofit, says the idea came to her after volunteering in the community and realizing that many children were missing out on health and educational opportunities.

"WIA has worked to help bridge that gap through a broad scope of social programs in the past eight years," she said.

One of the organization's mainstays is its camp scholarship program. Since its inception, 252 youth have received summer and winter camp scholarships with an annual average of 80 scholarships awarded to youth ages 3-15.

The nonprofit is currently accepting applications for ski school scholarships at Big Sky Resort, which is running the Moonlight Basin ski school as well. Applications are due Dec. 10 and are available at [wiabigsky.org](http://wiabigsky.org), the Ophir School, and Morningstar Learning Center.

Other programs offered include funding of the Parent Liaison position at the Ophir School, a community-counseling program through a partnership with Montana State University's human development clinic, and a new drug and alcohol-counseling program in partnership with Gallatin County drug and alcohol services.



## WOMEN IN ACTION

ENRICHING THE LIVES OF FAMILIES

This summer, Women in Action held its 8<sup>th</sup> annual croquet fundraiser, where they raised \$20,000 to benefit health and education programs. The next community event is a "ladies ski and après" scheduled to take place at Lone Mountain Ranch in March. Instead of a fundraiser, Thesing calls the event a "friendraiser," as the event was created to build awareness about WIA and to celebrate donors while building community.

*Women in Action is sponsored by Pure West Properties in Big Sky. To learn more about programs offered by WIA or how to get involved, visit [wiabigsky.org](http://wiabigsky.org).*

## Yellowstone Park Foundation

BOZEMAN - The Yellowstone Park Foundation recently launched Gateway Businesses for the Park, a program offering tools to help area companies grow, as well as an organized way to give back to the park.

YPF memberships help provide funding to protect and preserve Yellowstone in six areas of focus: visitor experience; wild-life, wonders and wilderness; cultural treasures; ranger heritage; tomorrow's stewards; and greenest park.



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Based in Bozeman, YPF has been the official fundraising partner of Yellowstone National Park since 1996. The foundation's mission is to fund projects and programs that protect, preserve and enhance the natural and cultural resources and the visitor experience in the park. To date, the foundation has raised more than \$75 million for 250-plus projects.

*To join or learn more about the Gateway Businesses program, visit [forthepark.org](http://forthepark.org). YPF is supported by Big Horn Radio. Find more at [yppf.org](http://yppf.org).*

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## American Rivers: Watching over the nation's rivers



American Rivers played a key role in the removal of two dams on the Elwha River that will restore 400,000 salmon to this western Washington river. PHOTO BY SCOTT BOSSE

A small cadre of river advocates in Denver founded American Rivers 40 years ago, based on their concern that the nation's dam-building binge in the 1960s and '70s would leave no free-flowing rivers in

the West. The nonprofit organization has since become the nation's largest conservation organization dedicated solely to protecting and restoring rivers.

American Rivers' original mission was to prevent new river damming by adding as many waterways as possible to the newly created National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Today, its mission has broadened and now includes restoring rivers by removing obsolete dams; helping communities meet their water supply needs through innovative, environmentally friendly solutions; and partnering with communities to enhance recreational opportunities and promote river stewardship through the establishment of Blue Trails – community waterways that help people discover their rivers and provide family-friendly recreation.

The organization is perhaps best known for its annual America's Most Endangered Rivers report, which for 27 years has shined a national spotlight on 10 rivers facing imminent threats from dams and other harmful projects.

To date, American Rivers has helped protect and restore 150,000 miles of rivers nationwide, from Washington's Olympic Peninsula – where it played a key role in the world's largest dam removal project – to blackwater rivers along the southeast coast.

The group's Northern Rockies office in Bozeman is currently spearheading a campaign to bring new protections to dozens of rivers in western Montana, including the Gallatin.

*American Rivers is sponsored by Sara Pfaff, who generously donated an ad for the nonprofit in this issue of Explore Big Sky. Find more information about American Rivers at [americanrivers.org](http://americanrivers.org).*

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# Warren Miller Performing Arts Center

John Zirkle wants to saturate the après-ski scene with performance arts this winter.

The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center artistic director has lined up nine major acts in collaboration with the Arts Council of Big Sky for the center's debut season, including comedy, theater, live music and dance.

"We're hoping to diversify the notion and understanding of performance art, and what it means – specifically to show that it's more than just music by focusing on a triptych of communicative media – movement, speech and play," Zirkle said.

By bringing "cool, quirky acts" to town, and focusing on classical elements in new ways, he hopes to show the interconnection of performing arts throughout time and place. "We need to remind ourselves that there is no Hendrix without Bach, no Miley Cyrus without Pavarotti, and conversely no Shakespeare without Saturday Night Live," Zirkle said.

In one example, WMPAC will host a young Ukrainian pianist who Zirkle says approaches the piano with "fire, enthusiasm and vigor that makes it

incredibly exciting. He enables us to speak with the actual composers in a new way."

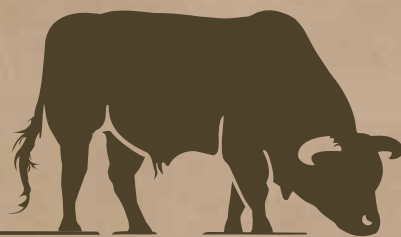
In another, Zirkle has commissioned a new composer to think through contemporary Montana themes, and ask what they look like in music. The resulting piece will premiere at the center with a performance by a violin, cello and piano trio.

## WARREN MILLER™ PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center is a collaborative initiative of the Big Sky School District, the Friends of Big Sky Education, and the Big Sky community. Its primary mission is to establish and maintain a clear and stable artistic infrastructure to grow a community of confident performers and inspired audiences. The debut season performances will be announced before Thanksgiving.

*The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center is supported by Creighton Block Gallery. Find more at warrenmillerpac.org.*

Right: Cory Goel of the James Sewell Ballet  
PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES SEWELL BALLE



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## Eagle Mount



PHOTO COURTESY OF EAGLE MOUNT

Eagle Mount is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> year providing therapeutic recreation opportunities for people with disabilities and young people with cancer. Through its many adventure programs, Eagle Mount focuses on people's abilities, while volunteers attentively support their disabilities.

The program began with weekly alpine and Nordic skiing adventures to support people with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, visual and hearing impairments, developmental disabilities, amputations and spinal cord injuries. In addition to skiing, Eagle Mount has since expanded to challenge participants

with ice skating, horseback riding, swimming, camping, rock climbing, kayaking, cycling and fishing.

Eagle Mount accepts all participants, even if they cannot pay, and does not accept government funding. Last year's programs enrolled 1,785 participants, assisted by 1,800 volunteers.

"We couldn't do anything that we do without the support of this generous community," said Executive Director Mary Peterson.

*Eagle Mount is supported by the Inn on the Gallatin. Find more information at [eaglemount.org](http://eaglemount.org).*

## The Craighead Institute

In 49 years of conducting research for conservation efforts, the nonprofit Craighead Institute has helped direct wildlife policy and management, supported grassroots campaigns and scientific foundations, and been a leader for responsible development in the northern Rockies and parts of western Canada.

Founded by pioneering grizzly bear researcher Dr. Frank C. Craighead in 1964, the organization is now focused on development of conservation plans at multiple scales, particularly as it relates to habitat for large carnivores like grizzly bears and wolverines, according to executive director Lance Craighead, Frank's son.

In the last decade, it has also researched alpine ecosystems in Montana and pika populations, which are an indicator species for climate change.

The institute also works to develop wildlife habitat suitability and connectivity models, and has been involved in large-scale conservation area designs for regions in the U.S., Canada and Tibet.

Its work over the last five decades resulted in a book co-edited by Lance and published in 2013, by Esri Press, *Conservation Planning - Shaping the Future*. With 30 different contributors, it outlines the current best science for conservation planning for use by students, managers and planners.

*The Craighead Institute is supported by The Montana Import Group. Find more at [craigheadresearch.org](http://craigheadresearch.org).*



A historic bear research photo. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CRAIGHEAD INSTITUTE

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# Additional Sponsored Nonprofits



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BSSHA is a nonprofit organization in Big Sky, Mont., dedicated to bringing hockey, ice skating and programs to the Big Sky community. The Big Sky ice rink is located outdoors in the Town Center. [bssha.org](http://bssha.org)



**Big Sky Community Corporation**  
BSCC is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit entity created in 1998 to promote, acquire, preserve and maintain lands, parks, trails and easements for the use of the people of the Big Sky Community and the general public. [bsccmt.org](http://bsccmt.org)



**Gallant Chance Ranch**  
GCR is a 501(c)(3) organization established to help youth become a success rather than a statistic. Our mission is to inspire teens to D.R.E.A.M. - Develop Responsible, Enthusiastic and Ambitious Mindsets. [gallantchanceranch.org](http://gallantchanceranch.org)



**Red Feather Development Group**  
Founded in 1995, Red Feather Development Group is a nonprofit that partners with American Indian nations to develop and implement sustainable solutions to the housing needs within their communities. [redfeather.org](http://redfeather.org)



**Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter**  
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**Jack Creek Preserve**  
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**HAVEN**  
HAVEN is committed to reducing the incidence and minimizing the impact of domestic abuse on families and communities. The group provides emergency shelter, crisis intervention, on-going support, referrals, and education. HAVEN's services include a 24-hour crisis line, legal advocacy, counseling, support group and emergency shelter. [havenmt.org](http://havenmt.org)



**Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center**  
The Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center helps support the GNFAC through fundraising and education efforts. [mtavalanche.com](http://mtavalanche.com)



**Blue Water Task Force**  
To promote public stewardship of aquatic resources in the Gallatin River watershed through community education, water quality monitoring and data collection. [bluwatertaskforce.org](http://bluwatertaskforce.org)

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