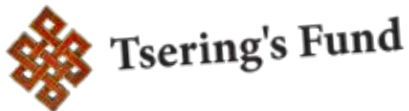




Guide to Giving

WINTER 2019-2020



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BIG SKY NONPROFITS	
All Saints in Big Sky	allsaintsinbigsky.com
Arts Council of Big Sky	bigskyarts.org
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Gallatin County	bbbs-gc.org
Big Sky Chapel	bigskychapel.com
Big Sky Christian Fellowship	bigskychristianfellowship.com
Big Sky Community Food Bank	bigskyfoodbank.org
Big Sky Community Library	bigskylibrary.com
Big Sky Community Organization	bscomt.org
Big Sky Discovery Academy	bigskydiscoveryacademy.org
Big Sky Futbol Club	bigskyfc.org
Big Sky Skating and Hockey Association, Inc.	bssd72.org
Big Sky Ski Education Foundation	bssha.org
Big Sky Youth Empowerment	bssef.com
Crail Ranch Homestead Museum	bscomt.org/ crail-ranch-homestead-museum
Eagle Mount – Bozeman	eaglemount.org
Friends of Big Sky Education	friendsofbigskyeducation.org
Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center	mtavalanche.org
Gallatin River Task Force	gallatinrivertaskforce.org
Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance	gallatinisa.org
Greater Yellowstone Coalition	greateryellowstone.org
Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center	grizzlywolfdiscoveryctr.org
HATCH	hatchexperience.org
Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter	heartofthevalleyshelter.org
Jack Creek Preserve Foundation	jackcreekpreserve.org
KidsLINK After School Program - Ophir	bssd72.org
Montana Land Reliance	mtlandreliance.org
Montana Wilderness Association	montanamountaineering.org
Morningstar Learning Center	morningstarlearningcenter.org
Rotary Club of Big Sky	bigskyrotary.org
Soldiers Chapel	(406) 995-4089
Spanish Peaks Community Foundation	spanishpeaksfoundation.org
Thrive	allthrive.org
Visit Big Sky	(406) 995-3000
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center	warrenmillerpac.org
Western Sustainability Exchange	westernsustainabilityexchange.org
Women In Action	bigskywia.org
Wortman Lung Cancer Foundation	wortmanlungcancerfoundation.org
Yellowstone Club Community Foundation	yellowstoneclubfoundation.org
Yellowstone Forever	yellowstone.org

There are countless nonprofits in our region, and we couldn't possibly list them all here, but we encourage you to find one that you identify with and feel inclined to support either monetarily or by volunteering.

A Guide to Giving

EBS STAFF

BIG SKY – At times, it’s easy to forget the end-of-year holidays aren’t just about presents under the tree and adding a few obligatory pounds from feasting on roasts, cookies and eggnog.

Giftng and giving, for many, extend only to loved ones and family, and around the holidays the two can admittedly become mutually exclusive.

In Big Sky and the surrounding area, many of our neighbors rely on the noble work of nonprofits to provide clothing, education, shelter, food and vocation. So, too, do the health and access points for many of Big Sky’s natural splendors rest on the shoulders of nonprofit and volunteer-based organizations.

We at Explore Big Sky hope to bring awareness to such efforts this holiday season, in hopes of inspiring a passion for donating to worthy causes that both directly and indirectly impact us all here Big Sky, Montana.

Inside this Guide to Giving, you’ll find information about a wide range of organizations—and how to support them—with interests in protecting what we in the Big Sky community hold dear. You’ll also learn about those organizations bent on elevating the fruits of the human spirit.

We invite you to spend a few minutes perusing these pages with the intent of thinking outside the walls of your office or home and outside your network of friends and family so that the joy of giving reaches everyone within our growing community.



The science of charitable donations

BY DOUG NEIL, CPA
NEIL & COMPANY CPAS

Along with the holidays, the end of the year also signifies the time to begin year-end tax planning. One strategy, often a piece of the planning, is charitable giving.

The 2018 tax reform named the “Tax Cut and Jobs Act” included a major overhaul to the tax code, and with it came new ideas and ways to optimize tax strategies including tax deductions for charitable contributions.

The tax reform increased the standard deduction to \$12,000 for Single Filers and \$24,000 for Married Filing Jointly (adjusted to \$12,200 and \$24,400 for 2019). The increase prompted the notion of grouping charitable giving into one year for tax deduction purposes with the ability to then spread out giving over a period of time.

Donor advised funds have been around for several years but have recently become a hot topic in charitable giving conversations—with a DAF, a taxpayer can put a lump sum into a donor advised fund and then have the fund distribute cash to organizations of the individual’s choice at his or her own pace. The taxpayer then receives the maximum income tax deduction immediately, even if the assets aren’t distributed right away.

Taxpayers looking to exceed the higher standard deduction from the 2018 tax reform can pool several years worth of charitable donations into a single contribution to a DAF. Contributions can be in the form of cash, stocks, mutual funds, real estate and other nonfinancial assets, without incurring capital gains taxes.

Another advantage of a DAF, versus traditional charitable giving, is the idea of organizing charitable giving into one place; essentially eliminating the need to collect receipts since the fund collects and holds all documents for the taxpayer.

When considering giving to causes that are important to you this holiday season, a DAF may be a good tool to work into your year-end tax planning strategies.

Tsering's Fund

PHOTOS BY KENE SPERRY

Each year, as many as 20,000 girls are trafficked out of Nepal and endure unspeakable treatment. But there is hope. Local dentist Peter Schmeiding and his wife Karen Fellerhoff started Tsering's Fund more than a decade ago to educate Nepali children and keep them safe.

The organization and its volunteers have dedicated their lives to this cause and have changed the trajectories of hundreds of children, young women and families in Nepal.

On a recent powerful trip to Nepal, Big Sky photographer Kene Sperry joined the group, which visited a number of schools in various regions of Nepal to document progress and bring supplies, including clothing and shoes.

"Trafficking of young girls in Nepal is an epidemic," said Schmeiding, president of the nonprofit Tsering's Fund. "We feel the best way to help is to sponsor the girls and educate them. Many live so far from schools—too far to walk every day—so they can go to boarding schools."

This holiday season, keep in mind that those with the least often need the most. — *The Editors*



The Jyugal Boarding High School in Chautara, in the Sindhupalchok District of Nepal, sponsors 103 students through Tsering's Fund.



(L-R) Kene Sperry, Andy Holm, Prakash Uprety, Peter Schmeiding, Tsering Dolkar Lama, Mary Grace Wilkus, Bishnu Bhandari

WOMEN IN ACTION

In 2005, a group of Big Sky women came together to create Women in Action, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of our growing community. WIA believes that everyone who calls Big Sky home deserves access, not only to the unparalleled beauty around us, but also the resources that help people lead full and healthy lives through the following four main areas of focus.

Camp Scholarships

In 2019, WIA awarded 65 scholarships to help Big Sky kids whose families demonstrated financial need attend summer camp, winter ski programs and year-round enrichment opportunities. Scholarships are supported through grants from local foundations, individual donors and the proceeds from Harbor's Hero Run, organized by Lone Peak High's National Honor Society.

Behavioral Health

WIA partners with behavioral health providers throughout the Gallatin Valley to provide individual, couple and family mental health therapy, as well as substance use disorder counseling here in Big Sky. These services, which were previously unavailable, are made possible through support from Big Sky Resort Area District, individual donors and local foundations who are committed to removing barriers to access such as high cost of services and transportation limitations, as well as stigma reduction in receiving behavioral health care.

WIA, in partnership with the Montana State University Human Development Clinic (HDC), offers graduate student-level confidential and affordable mental health counseling services for all Big Sky residents. WIA provides office space and a sliding scale for all who are eligible. In 2019, for the first time in our 10-year partnership, two counseling interns were needed to meet the need in our community.

Through our partnership with Alcohol and Drug Services of Gallatin County (ADSGC), WIA provides office space and travel costs for a substance use disorder counselor to provide individual and group therapies, court-mandated treatment and prevention strategies to the Big Sky community. Since the start of 2019, ADSGC has provided 192 hours of client services for our friends and neighbors struggling with substance use issues.

In addition, WIA made services locally available through partnerships with a Licensed Clinical Psychologist who treats adolescents and adults experiencing a range of mental health challenges, as well as a mental health counselor specializing in children and adolescents.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WOMEN IN ACTION

Education

Since its inception, WIA has worked with the Big Sky School District to provide funds in areas where public tax dollars fall short. In 2019, WIA provided a grant for an online English as a second language program, as well as art and music supplies.

Community Enrichment

This year, WIA, along with Haven, Thrive and Girls for a Change offered a healthy relationships and self-defense course for Big Sky's women and girls; WIA and the Arts Council of Big Sky presented MountainFilm for Families—a free screening of family friendly films and a fun arts project for more than 55 kids and parents; and WIA and local stakeholders came together to continue identifying and addressing gaps in behavioral health services.

For information about our services, or how you can help WIA, email Executive Director Jean Behr at jean@wiabigsky.org, or visit bigskywia.org.



BIG SKY COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST

Visioning Big Sky, a community visioning effort, identified affordable housing as the community's most urgent challenge. The vast majority of local employers identify lack of housing options as the most significant problem in their recruitment and retention of workers. Recent reports show over 50 percent of local workers commute daily through the Gallatin Canyon to their jobs in Big Sky because of the shortage of affordable living options in the area.

To ensure good places to live are within the reach of our local workforce, the Big Sky Community Housing Trust is working to increase the supply of both rentals and entry-level housing. Because Big Sky's rents and mortgages are out of sync with wages, the BSCHT is also diligently striving to influence policies that would improve the town's housing situation.

BSCHT is using a community land trust to keep housing units perpetually affordable, and BSCHT homes are sold to qualified applicants at about 30 percent below market rate. In exchange, there is a deed restriction which caps the resale appreciation of the home at 2 percent per year. This ensures the home stays affordable over the years and that the initial subsidy stays with the community, not the first buyer. All BSCHT units must be owner-occupied and cannot be rented out as a short-term rental.

There is a waitlist of families ready to make their first home purchase in Big Sky with BSCHT. To qualify for the program, household income must be less than 150 percent of the area median income, or about \$110,000. At least one person in the household must have worked in Big Sky for at least two years, and buyers must attend the eight hour HRDC Home Buyer Education Class.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST

The MeadowView Condominium project, off Little Coyote Road and behind the softball fields, is the first BSCHT initiative. Eighteen homes in Phase 1 of this project are completed and sold with Phase 2 construction now underway. The average MeadowView purchaser is in their mid-30s and most have worked in Big Sky for over five years, struggling during that time to find a place they can afford to buy and make their home. Seventy five percent of the MeadowView Phase 1 buyers needed down payment assistance, provided through donations to BSCHT, to help them qualify for their home purchase. All these workers provide critical and valuable services to the members and visitors who value Big Sky.

BSCHT is looking to create additional rental opportunities at affordable rates, as not every worker is ready to purchase a home. The long-term rental market for Big Sky locals has decreased dramatically the last few years as short-term rentals have hit record high levels. More units are desperately needed in the long-term rental market.

BSCHT is dedicated to timely implementation of strategies that address these issues. There are opportunities to help by supporting the BSCHT Rent

Local Program, Down Payment Assistance Program or by donating directly to the New Development Fund.

Visit thebrdc.org/big-sky-community-housing-trust/ to make your tax-deductible donation. For more information, contact Program Director Laura Seyfang at (406) 995-3696.



BIG SKY COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

The Big Sky Community Food Bank is unlike most other food banks in the US because essentially all its clients are part of the workforce. In Big Sky, many working households struggle to make ends meet as the cost of living increases and the housing market becomes even more challenging. On tight budgets, many neighbors are just one fender-bender or trip to the emergency room away from losing everything. BSCFB exists to bridge the gap when clients are in a food emergency and to help Big Sky become a stable and livable place for all.

BSCFB clients include both year-round essential and seasonal workers, families who have lived here for years and new young professionals hoping to make Big Sky their home. Since opening its doors in 2012, BSCFB has served:

- 2,389 people
- 100 children
- 61 senior citizens
- 5.5% of our clients are veterans of the US armed services

Clients can use the food bank once each month and can choose enough food for a week's supply. Other BSCFB services include a crockpot and cookware exchange for those who do not have full kitchens, warm winter clothing for children and adults, as well as help enrolling in healthcare insurance, tax assistance, referrals for mental and legal help. The food bank rescues unsold produce, dairy and bread products from the grocery stores and bakeries in Big Sky, as well as canned goods from the donation bins around town. BSCFB is aided by canned food drives initiated by the Big Sky schools and community groups, but often have to purchase food from the Montana Food Bank Network.

BSCFB was created as a local effort between the Human Resource Development Council and Big Sky community members. The food bank is open two days a week year-round and is managed by a local employee along with a group of dedicated volunteers and advisory council members.

As Big Sky grows, so will our food bank. BSCFB is looking to partner with local community members and businesses that will commit to support the



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

food bank on a yearly basis. In order to meet the growing demand, BSCFB needs community members to sustain its efforts into the future. Through these partnerships, the BSCFB will help make Big Sky a stable and livable community for all who desire to make Big Sky their home.

The Big Sky Community Food Bank Advisory Council, staff and volunteers would like to thank the community of Big Sky for your generosity in helping us realize our mission. BSCFB clients have expressed their heartfelt gratitude time and again as we meet their needs in times of emergency.

For more information please email sarah@bigskyfoodbank.org or call (406) 995-3088.



BIG SKY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Two hundred and fifty-plus volunteers; 93 acres of public parks and 19 miles of public trails and counting: this is Big Sky Community Organization in a nutshell.

BSCO has been connecting people with recreational and enrichment opportunities since 1998 thanks to the generous support of the Big Sky community and town we call home.

From making much needed improvements to the Upper Beehive Basin trailhead, to purchasing 3.3 acres of new parkland in Town Center, implementing our Master Trails Plan, starting a network of groomed multi-use winter trails, and breaking ground on BASE—Big Sky's first community center—we, the community and BSCO, have done a lot together.

BSCO has set some sky-high goals for 2020 based on what you, our community members, have asked for, including new pedestrian and bike trails and pathways, with four connections planned for a total of nearly 10 miles of new trail. Better access to our public lands, with a major trailhead renovation and expansion planned for the beloved Ousel Falls. Not to mention, more parkland, fields and space for future indoor recreation.

Thank you for your continued support to keep Big Sky a place where trails and parks provide beautiful vistas, space for wildlife and opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to play and connect.

To donate and learn more about BSCO, call (406) 993-2112 or visit bscomt.org.



Enjoying BSCO's Big Sky Community Park, an ideal location for the young and the young at heart to gather and play – summer, winter, and all times in-between. Encompassing 44 total acres, there is plenty of space to enjoy a variety of activities, from walking your dog and riding a bike to cross country skiing and snowshoeing. The park also features a playground, basketball court, skate park, pump track, climbing boulders, tennis & pickle ball courts, softball and multi-use fields, disc golf course, and fishing access. PHOTO BY LOVE STREET MEDIA.



GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

Listen to Montana and you hear its rivers—and we in Big Sky listen to the Gallatin.

With chop and splash as it moves over rocks and the walls of its canyon, it is our lifeline. The Gallatin is a river that provides water for seven communities from Yellowstone National Park to the mighty Missouri; to towns like Big Sky, growing at a rapid rate. This river holds so much in its waters, including our stories, such a the days we spend wading within its cold embrace throwing cast after cast in hopes of a taut line and glistening trout. Exhilaration mounts paddling through rapids, getting bounced, wet and shaken. The Gallatin River shares our stories, and the Gallatin River Task Force listens, working to safeguard its headwaters for generations to come.

The Gallatin has drifted through our history, and it continues to flow with promises for Big Sky's future. It's an artery joining generations of families, friends and communities. The community needs it to live and to thrive—it's drinking water, an engine for our economy that simultaneously provides habitat for fish and wildlife in our region; it's a balm to the human soul. Just saying the word "river" makes a person feel good.

The Gallatin runs through our home and our hearts and it needs protection in the face of a growing population, warming temperatures and heavy usage. Safeguarding the waters of the Gallatin requires energy, volunteerism and financial support. The GRTF needs your help as it takes the lead to steward and safeguard Big Sky's beloved waterway.

The GRTF asks for your end-of-year donation, support, and stewardship to ensure that the organization can mitigate threats facing the watershed, including future algae blooms.

The Gallatin watershed remains vital today because of your sustained partnership, and the impact of that has been truly profound. Your contribution will further benefit aquatic health, river and streambank restoration, and conservation, and you should expect to hear more from us as the GRTF



PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLATIN RIVER TASK FORCE

expresses its deep gratitude for your on-going involvement and investment in the organization's programs and successes.

Patagonia Matching Donation Opportunity: *Help spread the word that Patagonia will match any donations to the Task Force through their donation portal until Dec. 31 up to \$10,000 per donation, until their total giving has reached \$10 Million Dollars. Visit [patagonia.com/actionworks](https://www.patagonia.com/actionworks) and type in Gallatin River Task Force or Big Sky, Montana.*

We are a 501c3 | TAX ID: 74-3127146.

Visit gallatinrivertaskforce.org for more information.



WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center opened its doors on March 12, 2013 through a collaborative effort of the Big Sky Community, Friends of Big Sky Education and the Big Sky School District.

The WMPAC's mission is to establish and maintain a clear and stable artistic infrastructure to grow a community of confident performers and inspired audiences.

The WMPAC team brings creative vision to the stage in Big Sky through presenting both world-class acts and local performers. Located on the campus of Lone Peak High School, our 280-seat venue creates an intimate experience, with dynamic sound and up-close visuals that draw in audience members and engage the senses.

Over the past seven years, WMPAC has brought 875 national and international performers to the stage, including the Kronos Quartet, Ira Glass, Tig Notaro, Billy Collins, Vanessa Williams, Reggie Watts, Edgar Meyer, The Crossing and more. More importantly, WMPAC has hosted over 4,000 local performers through annual community theater productions, Big Sky Broadway and Big Sky Broadway Junior, the latter two of which give local children as young as five their chance in the spotlight.

WMPAC is best known for its annual winter season headliners, when WMPAC presents eight performances between December and March. During the summer, the theater provides a venue to incubate new artworks, including theater and dance. This fall, WMPAC launched a three-show mini-season specifically designed for local families, which smashed all previous fall attendance records and verified that Big Sky is engaged with the arts.

As a nonprofit, WMPAC relies on the generosity and support of our community to continue providing the type of world-class arts experiences the WMPAC team prides itself on. A performing arts center in Big Sky diversifies the ski town experience, providing opportunities for more community gatherings that complement the community's incredible recreational opportunities. Supporting WMPAC means supporting a fundamental creative outlet for our growing community, one which unites all through shared stories and experiences.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The cost of bringing in outside performers is graciously subsidized by sponsors and donations. This ensures that WMPAC is able to bring in the highest quality artists to inspire our audiences, as well as professional directors and resources to guide local performers to their best performances when it's their turn on stage. Donations also go towards offsetting the ticket cost. The arts are for everyone, and it's WMPAC's priority to keep prices affordable for the entire Big Sky community.

Supporting WMPAC means keeping tickets accessible for the whole community, providing interesting, relevant, meaningful work and supporting a cultural ecosystem that puts community building at the forefront.

For more information, visit us at warrenmillerpac.org, or call us at (406) 995-6345.



BIG SKY SEARCH AND RESCUE

Living in the Big Sky area means taking part in the myriad outdoor activities that make this area a covetable destination. Whether one is an avid hunter, hiker, skier, snowmobiler, angler, white water rafter or mountain biker, there's always something worth heading outdoors for.

That being said, all of those activities have their inherent dangers: cue Big Sky Search and Rescue.

Big Sky Search and Rescue is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit community organization staffed by a dedicated group of 30 volunteers. When needed, BSSR is called through the Gallatin County Dispatch (911) and responds with expertise and equipment under the direction of the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office.

The BSSR is anticipating that 2020 will be yet another big year for dispatches as the number of people visiting and moving to Big Sky continues to increase.

In 2018 BSSR responded to over 30 calls to assist people that had been injured or lost when recreating in the Big Sky area—the primary response area is the mountains and valleys around Big Sky, which include the Gallatin and Madison mountain ranges and the drainages of the Gallatin River.

Most BSSR rescues are in response to some form of injury requiring BSSR's teams to provide emergency medical care, and BSSR often responds to said calls using a variety of different equipment such as snowmobiles, side-by-sides, litters for hand carry, ropes, rigging and skis.

Not all of the BSSR's important work is emergency-borne, as it also provides volunteers to help with local events such as The Rut, Big Sky Biggie and skiing events, among others.

Being a member of the BSSR team is a rewarding, yet demanding, experience requiring a commitment to responding to calls for help—no matter what is happening in one's personal life when paged. The time of day or night, weather conditions and other factors are non negotiable. When someone needs us, the BSSR responds.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY SEARCH AND RESCUE

Those duties also require a dedication to physical training, which the team does on a monthly basis, minimum.

This past year has been a learning experience of sorts for all BSSR members—with an influx of people came a wide variety of incidents. And even the most skilled outdoorsman can have an “off day.”

The BSSR encourages always packing overnight outdoor necessities, as well as bear spray. The local terrain can be unforgiving, but the BSSR does its best—as a close-knit unit—to ensure everyone makes it home at the end of the day.

A donation to Big Sky Search and Rescue supports efforts to provide current and relevant training for its members, as well as to maintain equipment in a state of readiness.

Visit bssar.org for more information.



HEART OF THE VALLEY

Are you thinking about adding a pet to your family? Then we at the Heart of the Valley, which last year alone found new homes for over 2,100 homeless dogs and cats, encourage adopting from the HOV facility.

Each year, HOV cares for thousands of lost and homeless animals until they can go home. Animals just like Crash, the happiest, most adventurous kitten! When Crash came to HOV as a six-week-old stray, the HOV team knew it would need to find a very special home for him. Crash has a neurological disorder that affects his balance and the movement in back legs. He's also blind.

On the surface, one wants to feel sorry for little Crash—life has certainly thrown several curve balls at him. But once one meets him, one quickly realizes that nothing slows him down. The couple that adopted him had experience with special needs animals, and when they brought him home, they planned to slowly introduce him to his new home environment, letting him get to know one room at a time. But, of course, Crash had other plans. He figured out how to climb the baby gate, and then taught himself how to go down the stairs and back up again.

He loves to run across the room, only stopping when he finds a wall—hence the name Crash. Don't worry—he's taught himself to put his paws out in front of him to find obstacles.

Crash quickly made friends with all of the other dogs and cats in the house, but his very best friend and constant companion is his sister Betty, a deaf pit bull mix. Even though Crash can't see her, they manage to find a way to play together, jumping and running through the house, having a great time.

Crash reminds us that no matter what life throws at us, we can persevere and enjoy life on our own terms. At the shelter, the HOV team is grateful for the opportunity to care for and find homes for thousands of animals each year and to serve as a resource for the community.

In return, HOV relies on community support to operate the shelter. Hundreds of volunteers give thousands of hours of service each year to help care for animals and provide outreach and education. The majority of HOV's annual funding comes



PHOTO COURTESY OF HEART OF THE VALLEY ANIMAL SHELTER

from the generosity of donors who believe in its mission and have a passion for helping animals and giving back to their community.

HOV is proud to serve the Madison and Gallatin valleys and hope to inspire a visit the shelter to learn how to get involved!

This holiday season, please consider a donation to Heart of the Valley to help the team continue its lifesaving work.

Visit heartofthevalleyshelter.org for more information.



GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is one of the most iconic and beloved natural areas on Earth. Home to the world's first national park and a remarkable diversity of fish and wildlife, the Greater Yellowstone is one of the last intact ecosystems in the planet's temperate zones. It is also the traditional homeland of indigenous peoples who have been here since time immemorial and maintain deep connections to the region's lands, waters and wildlife.

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition's mission is to work with people to protect the lands, waters and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem now and for future generations. The GYC's vision is a healthy and intact Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem where critical lands and waters are adequately protected, wildlife is managed in a thoughtful, sustainable manner, and a strong, diverse base of support is working to conserve and sustain this special place as part of a larger, connected Northern Rocky Mountain Region.

Learn more about what we do at greateryellowstone.org. Together, we all can make a difference for Greater Yellowstone.



Pronghorn photo: copyright Cindy Goeddel.



FRIENDS OF BIG SKY EDUCATION

As one of the oldest local non-profits in Big Sky, Friends of Big Sky Education is primarily a volunteer organization that promotes education and culture. Through the community's generosity, FOBSE has helped construct and expand programs and infrastructure that are key community pillars. Its our mission: "A Better School Builds A Better Community." Here are a few of FOBSE's most valued and extensive projects.

Lone Peak High School

Along with the community, FOBSE recently celebrated a landmark birthday for Lone Peak High School, FOBSE's first initiative. Ten years after the school's opening, many residents can't imagine Big Sky without a high school; FOBSE led the initiative by facilitating community conversation, advocating for a required state statute change, and then supporting the school board's local balloting.

More than a decade ago, the school district's bonding capacity would not cover all construction costs to build the high school. FOBSE stepped up and coordinated community giving totaling \$2.5 million.

LPHS educates Big Sky teenagers in their own community through exemplary programming, which helps families remain in Big Sky to populate the local workforce. Ninety percent of LPHS graduates pursue post-secondary study, many of whom are accepted into highly competitive colleges. LPHS is a certified International Baccalaureate school, and our students' ACT scores rank among the top in the state.

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center

What can a school district do with a non-regulation size obsolete gym? In Big Sky the gym was recycled for repurposing as a performing arts center to support students' interests and talents. Once again, FOBSE led the initiative through capital campaigning and designing this key community infrastructure.

Since 2013, the WMPAC honors the legendary filmmaker, Warren Miller, who blended skiing with the arts, and connects high-caliber professional artists with our community and our classrooms.

Community Scholarship Program

Our Community Scholarship Program is a conduit for local businesses, organizations and individuals to support LPHS graduates who continue to study after high school. In the last five years, FOBSE has helped 72 LPHS graduates with expenses by awarding more than \$270,000 in scholarships.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Through the scholarship program, FOBSE helps to promote a "culture of scholarship" and provides an opportunity for the community to tell graduates that we are proud of them.

Superintendent's Fund

FOBSE is the fiscal agent for donations to the Superintendent's Fund. These contributions augment tax dollars to support exemplary programs that educate our students at the peak of excellence. Donations to the Superintendent's Fund help the district toward sustaining long-term strategic visions and plans, including professional development.

We invite you to pitch in to build a better school and a better community by volunteering for or contributing to a FOBSE initiative. Contact Loren Bough at lorenbough@me.com or Anne Marie Mistretta at annemariamist@gmail.com, or send an email to info@friendsofbigskyeducation.org.

To donate, visit fobsedonate.org.



BIG SKY SKI EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Big Sky Ski Education Foundation has provided the area youth a variety of competitive Alpine, Freeride, and Nordic ski programs since 1993. As a non-profit, volunteer-based organization, BSSEF's mission is to provide an opportunity for kids to become great skiers and pursue personal goals while promoting good sportsmanship, healthy competitiveness, sound technical skills and an appreciation for the spirit of skiing in the mountains. Participants in BSSEF's programs range from young skiers learning the fundamentals of skiing to more experienced freeriders and racers. Over the years, BSSEF programs have grown to include up to 175 total participants in the Alpine, Freeride and Nordic programs, the majority of which live full time in Big Sky. The rest are part time residents of Big Sky that live elsewhere in Montana including Bozeman, Billings and Helena.

As a non-profit organization, BSSEF strives to provide programming at prices that are achievable to all families. However, the program fees do not fully fund the annual budget, so BSSEF relies on its team sponsors, local grants, cash donations, and annual fundraising events to make up the difference, providing scholarship funds to those who need it.

The BSSEF Alpine ski racing team consistently dominates the USSA Northern division, winning the Youth Ski League (YSL) Championships Team award year after year. Additionally, BSSEF regularly has individual racers competing at the top level in their age groups.

Beginning in the 2019-2020 season there has been a renewed focus on growing our Nordic ski programs. BSSEF has two levels of Nordic programming—a Recreational team and a Competitive team. The Rec team focuses on teaching kids the skills they need to build a good foundation and have fun in classic and skate skiing. The Competitive team is a more serious group of kids interested in competing in Nordic Racing and Biathlon with a strong focus on aerobic fitness and technique. Many of BSSEF's competitive racers will be traveling around the western region to compete in events in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and Utah.

In recent years, the largest area of growth in BSSEF programs has been in its Freeride Competition program. With Big Sky Resort serving as their backyard, BSSEF athletes are almost guaranteed to be a dominating force in the freeride competition



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY SKI EDUCATION FOUNDATION

world. In just about every freeride competition the BSSEF team has attended, the organization has numerous athletes on the podium in various age groups for both boys and girls. The program emphasizes a strong focus on fitness and nutrition to fuel the extreme skiing they do while training. They not only regularly ski the steepest terrain off the tram, but they hike the Headwaters Ridge and work on honing their "jump" skills to increase the level of difficulty in their competition runs.

Visit bssef.com for more information.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF GALLATIN VALLEY

Are you sitting at home in Big Sky while reading about local nonprofits? If you are somewhere else, do you have a home to go to this evening? Is it warm and safe? Can you afford to live there and still put food on the table?

Unfortunately, having a safe, decent and affordable home is not something that everyone in the Big Sky community enjoys. As a matter of fact, a recent community survey found that 74 percent of respondents in Gallatin County said affordable housing was their top concern.

Habitat for Humanity is on a mission to address that concern and create a world where everyone has a decent place to live, and Habitat for Humanity of Gallatin Valley partners with people in Gallatin, Park and Madison counties to help them build or improve a place they can call home.

The immediate benefit of these projects is creating affordable homes for hardworking families in our communities. The long-term accomplishments are much broader—stable housing allows employees to stay in the community, leading to a consistent workforce and thriving economy. Working with families to purchase homes also increases the tax base in these communities, leading to an ongoing investment into community needs.

Homeownership opportunities create pathways for families to thrive. Children of homeowners are 19 percent more likely to graduate from high school and twice as likely to attend college. Additionally, 74 percent of Habitat homeowners across the nation said their families' overall health had improved since moving into their home.

Who can qualify for a Habitat home?

Partner families are not given homes for free but instead purchase their home with an affordable mortgage, as the typical Habitat partner family is steadily employed but not able to qualify for a traditional mortgage. HFHGV has worked with veterans, chefs, social workers, teachers and business managers: the people who form the backbone of our working community.

What are the requirements to be a Habitat partner family?

Partner families must demonstrate the ability to pay the mortgage, put in 500 hours of sweat equity and participate in homeownership and financial education courses.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF GALLATIN VALLEY

What is Habitat for Humanity of Gallatin Valley currently working on?

HFHGV is currently repairing homes in all three counties, building two duplexes in Belgrade and two triplexes in Big Sky. The Big Sky build is a partnership between HFHGV and the Big Sky School District—through that partnership, HFHGV is building two triplexes to affordably house Big Sky's teachers and faculty, and this project will allow teachers to remain in the community, leading to more consistent educational opportunities for the children of Big Sky.

To donate, volunteer or learn more, please visit habitatbozeman.org.



AMERICAN RIVERS

American Rivers protects wild rivers, restores damaged rivers, and conserves clean water for people and nature. American Rivers' roots date back to 1973 when a small group of passionate river advocates in Denver ponied up a few hundred bucks to form a new group dedicated to saving the nation's last remaining wild rivers from being dammed. Some 80,000 dams had already been built across the U.S., and dozens more were being proposed. Among the rivers in the crosshairs were the Yellowstone in Montana, the Teton in Idaho, and the Stanislaus in California.

American Rivers has come a long way since then—from a scrappy grassroots organization comprised entirely of volunteers, the organization has grown to become the nation's largest river conservation organization with more than 275,000 members, supporters and volunteers and an annual budget of over \$20 million. American Rivers has spearhead efforts to add 13,000 river miles to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, removed more than 200 obsolete dams, and cleaned up more than 25 million pounds of trash from America's waterways.

In 2016, Outside Magazine recognized American Rivers, declaring the organization among "the 6 best environmental groups to donate to for a better world."

While American Rivers is headquartered in Washington, DC, the majority of its team works in field offices across the country. That combination allows American Rivers to influence river policy at the highest levels of government while also conducting grassroots campaigns in its highest-priority local geographies. American Rivers' Northern Rockies office based in Bozeman has four full-time staff committed to protecting the most cherished wild rivers in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. Since American Rivers opened its doors on Bozeman's Main Street a decade ago, the organization has played an instrumental role in winning the following victories:

- Won permanent protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for 415 miles of the Snake River and its tributaries surrounding Jackson Hole, Wyoming (2009);
- Saved Wyoming's Hoback River from industrial-scale gas drilling in its headwaters (2013);
- Permanently protected the North Fork Flathead River watershed in Montana and British Columbia from all new mining and energy development (2014);
- Stopped two proposed dams on the Upper Green River in Wyoming (2015);
- Won permanent protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for East Rosebud Creek, marking Montana's first new Wild and Scenic river in 42 years (2018)



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN RIVERS

Currently, American Rivers' Northern Rockies office's highest priority is winning permanent protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for more than 600 miles of Montana's most storied rivers, including the public lands reaches of the Gallatin, Madison, Yellowstone and Smith. Some of American Rivers' other major campaigns include protecting the Smith River from a proposed copper mine in its headwaters, and removing four low-value dams on the lower Snake River to restore Idaho's legendary wild salmon and steelhead runs.

For more information or to donate, please visit americanrivers.org or contact Scott Bosse, Northern Rockies Director, at sbosse@americanrivers.org.



ARTS COUNCIL BIG SKY

Many Big Sky residents and visitors know the Arts Council of Big Sky from the Music in the Mountains free concert series, one of the most popular community events in Big Sky. But did you know that this is only a small part of what the ACBS does?

From educational outreach to public art, the ACBS is the leading community arts organization in Big Sky. The council wants to ensure that as Big Sky grows, the arts play a central role in community development. Big Sky is lucky in that our town is still being created, and community members still have the rare chance to define what is important as we move forward. The ACBS been around for 30 years and never resting on its laurels—the organization wants to be out in front, leading by example.

This past year was a defining one for the ACBS' public art program. The council recently installed the first outdoor, public sculpture in the state by renowned Montana artist Deborah Butterfield. A signature piece that will draw visitors from all over, "Winter" anchors the newly constructed Town Center Plaza in front of the Wilson Hotel. The ACBS also installed a beautiful reclaimed bison sculpture from Bozeman artist Kirsten Kainz, titled "Waldoza," in Town Center's Fire Pit Park. The council also finished wrapping six utility boxes with local artwork as part of our annual Community Wrap Project, installed Jim Dolan sculptures at the Ousel Falls trailhead and in the Town Center, and installed Continuity, by Robert Winslow, in the Town Center. This is all part of the organization's Public Art Master Plan, which is a multiyear project that identifies key locations around the community where public art can play a role.

ACBS education and outreach efforts continue to expand throughout the community. This past year the council offered three different painting workshops featuring well-known Western artists. The ACBS's ARTventure program offers Lone Peak High School students in grades 9-11 a chance to participate in engaging arts field trips, and creates a safe, artistic activity zone at our summer concerts that in 2019 alone served more than 1,200 younger kids. Each year the organization also brings an Artist-in-Residence to the local schools, who works with Big Sky's students on a variety of creative projects.

In addition to Music in the Mountains, the ACBS also produces the annual Big Sky Classical Music Festival, hosts a free performance of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, offers a weekend of documentaries as part of Mountainfilm in Big Sky, and creates one of the most exciting arts events in the region at our annual Auction



THE ELDERS BAND PHOTO BY RICH ADDICKS

for the Arts fundraiser gala. Finally, the ACBS offers selected classical programs through our Schwer-Toepffer Memorial Fund, the annual Madrigal Dinner holiday event, and occasional programs at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center—like International Guitar Night, coming again in March of 2020.

The ACBS could not do any of this without the support of individuals, businesses, local community foundations, and the Big Sky Resort Area District. The council also receives funding from state and national agencies, helping validate that what we do is important not only in Big Sky, but in Montana and beyond.

To find out more about the Arts Council, please visit bigskyarts.org.



MONTANA LAND RELIANCE

Montana is an extraordinary place in every sense of the word. As more and more people discover Montana, the protection of the open spaces and special places that have drawn us all here is increasingly important.

The Montana Land Reliance partners with private landowners to permanently protect these lands, including fish and wildlife habitat, open space, and local and sustainable food production.

MLR has conserved over one million acres in Montana, leaving a lasting legacy of protected land for generations to come. MLR's conservation easements protect valuable open space and wildlife habitat, buffer public land and enhance landscapes for tourism, all factors that contribute to protecting the character of our community and the integrity of the ecosystem in which we live.

Such conservation work is particularly important in southwest Montana because private lands contain disproportionately significant habitat, and are not only crucial for Montana's wildlife and water quality but also for



PHOTO BY ALEXIS BONOGOFSKY

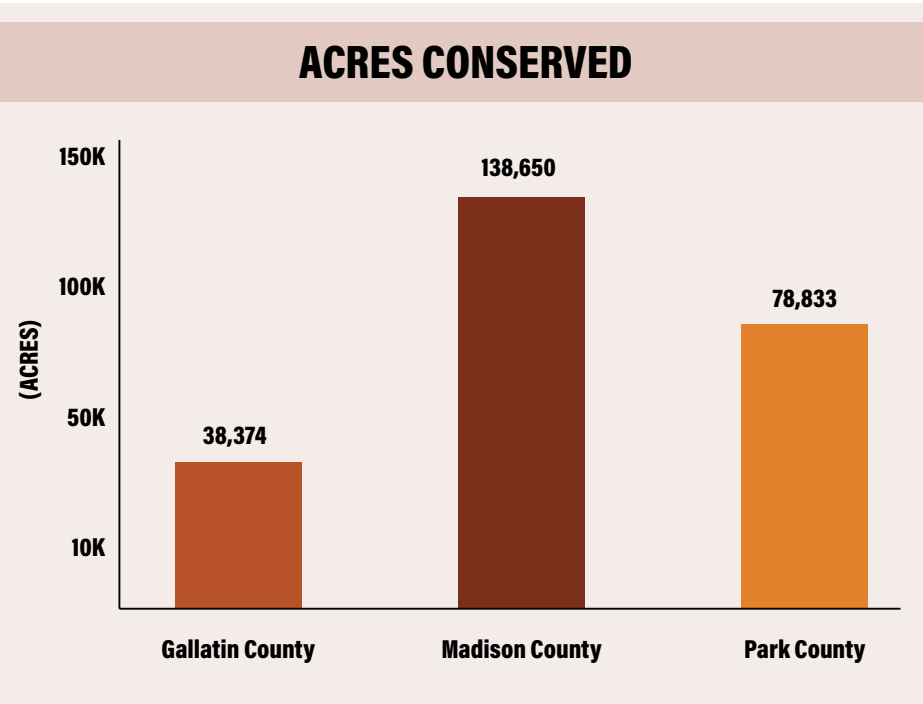
the residents of this beautiful region. Conservation easements provide ecosystem services such as air and water filtration that benefit areas like Big Sky's by mitigating the effects of its growing infrastructure. Big Sky has one of the strongest economies in the state—the views, habitat, access to outdoors and open lands are fueling that success.

Please join MLR in ensuring Montana's water and wildlife, agricultural heritage, and open spaces are protected for generations to come. For more information regarding MLR's programs, events or volunteer opportunities, or to show support for MLR through a donation, please visit mtlandreliance.org or call Jessie Wiese at (406) 594-1570.

Join us Dec. 18, at Green Drinks Bozeman, where we are partnering with Montana-made Duckworth Clothing to celebrate the holiday season—37 East Main Street, Bozeman.



Visit mtlandreliance.org for more information.



WOMEN IN ACTION

Women In Action is committed to improving behavioral health in Big Sky by providing access to substance use disorder and mental health counseling through partnerships with providers from across the Gallatin Valley.

In 2017, WIA were asked to focus on increasing awareness of these services among young people living and working in Big Sky. Through outreach to employees at the Hungry Moose Market & Deli, and conversations with Lone Peak High students about their concerns around behavioral health, the organization learned how it could best reach them with its messaging, and what kinds of images would capture their attention.

Together, the community and WIA created the Never Alone on Lone Peak campaign. This print and digital marketing campaign was directed at the young people in the Big Sky community with the goal of helping them find the behavioral health resources they may need, the ability to support their friends who may be struggling, preventing suicide by highlighting local services and reducing stigma around seeking behavioral health services.

This campaign was made possible through incredible community support. Local photographer, Ryan Turner, donated his stunning photograph of "Lone Peak at Sunset" for the backdrop, and the Hungry Moose, Yellowstone Club Community Foundation and Resort Tax Board provided funding.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WOMEN IN ACTION

Together, the Big Sky community and WIA proved that we are truly Never Alone on Lone Peak.

Visit bigskywia.org for more information on getting involved.



FAMILY PROMISE OF GALLATIN VALLEY

Family Promise of Gallatin Valley is dedicated to providing shelter to homeless families with children and assisting them to develop and implement lasting solutions to their unique situations. Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 FPGV engaged 28 families with intensive case management through our rotational sheltering, aftercare and transitional housing programs. FPGV does this through three key programs:

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) and Day Center

Family Promise is a network of interfaith organizations which provide a place for homeless families to sleep, complete with healthy meals and compassionate hospitality during a 90-day program. During this time, staff work with our guests to develop a Family Permanency Plan which will include finding or maintaining employment, sourcing and providing affordable, quality childcare, and locating a sustainable place to live. During the day, FPGV families are provided access to our Day Center to apply for jobs, cook meals, wash clothes or spend quality time together.

Moving Mountains After Care Program

FPGV is committed to providing support and services to families after they graduate from the IHN program. One of the organization's main focuses is to help families engage in the local community and navigate the hurdles in their road to self-sufficiency, while celebrating their successes and achievements with incentives.

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing provides families with the opportunity to stay in our housing for up to two years. While all families start off paying a below-market rate of \$300, rent increases over the length of their 2-year stay. This is a great method for families to establish savings, create a positive rental history, pay off debts, and establish goals to break down the barriers of their past.



For a testimonial of our services, read the following story from one of our clients:



The winter of 2018 changed our family forever. It was during the season of giving that found us homeless and struggling. We knew our kids deserved better. We knew we could do better.

The following week we found Family Promise, or rather, Family Promise found us. With two kids and another on the way, the fear for their future outweighed the fear and embarrassment of our situation. We needed help, we needed guidance.

Family Promise helped our family in more ways than I ever imagined possible.

Garland found a better job and Family Promise gifted him the clothes and tools he needed to continue his hard work. We completed a finance class and Garland is just a few classes away from being completely done with his court obligations. Our most exciting accomplishment Family Promise helped us with was moving into transitional housing before welcoming our third baby, Gavin. Family Promise helped us with getting our collections and hospital bills taken care of, along with so many other things.

Mackenzie is now doing well in third grade at Longfellow Elementary and Grayson is in preschool. I just applied to MSU for their bookkeeping program through the Gallatin College.

Our family is so grateful for Family Promise and our many adventures ahead that are possible because of their support and guidance.

– Melissa

This holiday season please consider a donation to Family Promise of Gallatin Valley. Visit familypromisegv.org to learn more about Family Promise of Gallatin Valley.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION

The mission at Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association is to enhance access to trails and advocate for mountain bicyclists in southwest Montana. By engaging and educating the community, working with public-land managers, collaborating with other user groups, and building and maintaining trails, SWMMBA is fulfilling that mission.

SWMMBA serves southwest Montana through several initiatives, such as the following.

Gallatin Forest Partnership

The Gallatin and Madison ranges serve as the region's wild backyard, a rugged area that includes the Porcupine Basin that borders Big Sky. These public lands provide vital resources to the Big Sky community, including important undeveloped open spaces and trails that attract business to southwest Montana. As more people move to Montana and explore these places, more conflict is being created between people and wildlife. This agreement provides all of us—people and wildlife—trails and streams and places in the Gallatin and Madison ranges to explore and thrive.

Copper City Trails Project

Located just over an hour north of Big Sky, Copper City Trails offers a rich Montana experience. This project was made possible through a partnership between SWMMBA and the Bureau of Land Management. The project has over 20 miles of bike-optimized trails, open to cyclists, hikers, and trail runners. Copper City encompasses a wide range of trails including beginner-friendly trails, flow trails, and two downhill-only bicycle-only trails. There is a new youth-focused skills park that serves all ages and abilities. As of September 2019, after just three short years of construction, the Copper City Trails Project is officially complete.

Caring for Local Trails

SWMMBA's volunteers maintain and clear trails across southwest Montana. Among the 500-plus miles of trail throughout the region, this year SWMMBA's volunteers assisted in maintaining both the North Fork trail and the Mountain to Meadow trail in Big Sky.

Voice in Numbers

This past spring SWMMBA launched its free membership with the goal of reaching 2020 members by 2020. Attracting a greater number of members brings greater representation to cyclists who value trail opportunities in Big Sky and southwest



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTHWEST MONTANA MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION

Montana. Since launching free membership in March 2019, SWMMBA boasts over 1,600 members.

Advocacy and Education

SWMMBA's volunteers organize, research, communicate and facilitate the protection of access to Public Lands. SWMMBA offers a number of educational seminars throughout the year and regularly reaches more than 5,000 individuals in the region.

The Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association plays a vital role in building and maintaining trails in southwest Montana. Contributions will support advocacy and education for cyclists throughout southwest Montana, as well as building and maintaining local trails, and providing activities that foster a healthy and engaged Big Sky community.

For more information or to donate, visit southwestmontanamba.org or call at (406) 219-4032.

