



ANNUAL COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM SETS A NEW LEVEL OF SUPPORT TO NONPROFITS

A record \$90,000 has been awarded to 28 Park County nonprofits and community organizations through the Annual Community Grants program of the Park County Community Foundation.

“This year’s grants program nearly doubles the amount provided in our 2016 awards,” said Bruce C. McKnight, chairman of the Community Foundation board of directors. “This higher level of support provided to deserving community projects and programs is possible only as the result of generous contributors to the Foundation’s mission.”



Bruce McKnight

The Foundation received more than 30 applications with funding requests totaling \$195,000. Proposals were evaluated on measurement of need, the application work plan, budget feasibility, target population, collaborations and partnerships, and measurement of impact if successful. Projects involve all areas of Park County and residents of all ages.

“All awardees are required to provide a follow-up report on the outcomes of their projects as a condition of eligibility for future funding,” said Peter D. Fox, Foundation executive director.

For the first time, a collaborative grant was awarded to multiple nonprofit and community organizations working together on a common-purpose program and project objectives. The \$14,000 award went to a group led by Livingston HealthCare, Livingston School District, and Park County Health Department with 15 community members participating on a coordinating team. The collaborative project, dubbed “Live Well 49” will have primary focus on health and wellness issues for children, youth and senior citizens but extends to the entire county population.

In its 11-year history, the Community Foundation has provided \$377,982 through its Annual Community Grants Program for the betterment of Park County residents.

See complete list of 2017 Annual Community Grants recipients and their projects on Page 2

GARDINER'S AIDEN VERESS, 2-TIME COUNTY CHAMP, REPRESENTS MONTANA AT NATIONAL BEE IN D.C.

Hats off to Aiden Veress of Gardiner who, on Feb. 24, won the Park County Spelling Bee for the second year in a row. He went on to win the state Bee on March 19, and then joined 291 other spellers from May 30 to June 1 at the 90th National Bee sponsored by Scripps.



Aiden exudes excitement as Montana's representative to the National Spelling Bee.

“There were students from all over the country and surprisingly, the world,” said Aiden’s mother, Linda Veress. “There were representatives from Jamaica, the US Virgin Islands, and even Korea.”

“During our trip to Washington, D.C., I was very nervous but also very excited,” Aiden recounted. “I had studied the word lists many times but I also knew that many of the words used would not be on any lists.” The first round of the Bee was a

written test composed of spelling and vocabulary questions. “I was worried because I did not know many of the words but I still tried my best,” he said. “In the first oral round, I correctly spelled ‘hypochondria,’ a word that was on the list. In the third round I spelled ‘plangent’ despite having never heard the word before.”

Linda summed up the experience: “What a celebration of words and language it was, and we were very grateful to have been a part of it and are grateful for the support of communities such as Park County which sponsor and run the local Bees.”

Montana began holding a statewide Spelling Bee in 1935. County school superintendents were tasked with picking a representative from each county to participate in the State Bee, and thus our yearly county Spelling Bee began. Working with Jo Newhall, the Park County school superintendent, the Community Foundation has been a long-time supporter of the Bee.

Annual Community Grants recipients for 2017 and their projects

- ASPEN: Tolerance Respect Empathy and Empowerment Education Project
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Park and Sweet Grass Counties: General Operating Services
- CASA of Park and Sweet Grass Counties: General Operating Services
- Child Care Connections: Child and Youth Safety Program
- Clyde Park Community Improvement Committee: Holliday Park Playground Improvement
- Family Outreach: Park County Special Needs Grant
- Gardiner Food Pantry: Multi-Purpose Service Building Project
- Human Resource Development Council: HRDC Park County Homemaker Program
- Landon’s Lookout: General Operating Support
- LINKS for Learning: Wellness and Outdoor Education Project
- Livingston Center for Art and Culture: 2017 Summer Camp
- Livingston Depot Foundation: Exhibit and Educational Program Support
- Livingston Education Foundation: East Side Intermediate School Multi-Purpose Audio Visual Initiative
- Livingston Food Resource Center: Community Garden Project
- Livingston Food Resource Center: Dinner for Seniors
- Livingston Rotary Club: Picnic Shelter at G Street Park
- Livingston School District: Live Well 49
- McNair Skate Park: Mission McNair: A Gravity Park for All
- Park County 4-H: Work-Based Learning Facilitator
- Park County Environmental Council: Trails 49 Project
- Park County Health Department: Diaper Depot Project
- Park County Health Department: Night Owl Run
- Park County Senior Citizens Center: Well-being of Park County Seniors
- Park County Spelling Bee: Spelling Bee
- Shane Lalani Center for the Arts: Devised Theater Initiative to Address Contemporary Social Issues
- Shields Valley Elementary School: Fifth Grade “Watershed Warriors” Curriculum
- Stafford Animal Shelter: Veterinary Assistance Fund
- Western Sustainability Exchange: Young Entrepreneurial Stewards

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 If your name is missing or incorrect, we apologize for the error. Please contact us with corrections at (406) 224-3920 or email us at Office@PCCF-Montana.org.*

Beginning in 2015, the Foundation recognizes donors to organizations that receive our fiscal sponsorship.

SPOTLIGHT: PUTTING ON THE HOOT



The fourth time around was picture-perfect for this year’s downtown Livingston HOOT musical festival.

The event on August 3 “was perfect,” co-producer Joanne Gardner Lowell said with pride. “There was room to dance, there was room to relax, everyone wasn’t running into each other,” she explained.

This was the third year the Park County Community Foundation served as the fiscal sponsor for the Livingston HOOT, the brainchild of Gardner Lowell and her co-producer/husband John Lowell. After an overflow crowd of 2016, an estimated 6,000 people filled the streets more comfortably in 2017 to hear nationally known and local acts.

The Park County Community Foundation took on the HOOT fiscal sponsorship because the event fits perfectly under the Foundation’s mission umbrella – it provides Livingston with a free-attendance festival that showcases the town, its family-friendly talent, and the many downtown businesses.

The Foundation’s role as fiscal sponsor – the recording and acknowledgement of donations, paying the bills, filing tax forms – is invaluable, according to Gardner Lowell. “The Park County Community Foundation gives John and me the chance to produce the Livingston HOOT and offer our donors the benefit of working with a fiscal sponsor that is well-respected and connected in our community.

“Providing access to nonprofits in this county is a part of why we do the HOOT,” she continued, “and the Foundation is the primary coordinator of all nonprofits. They are partners with ideas and suggestions and truly work to help us make our event a success each year.” The HOOT benefits the city’s businesses financially, boosts its reputation, and provides an ideal example of enhancing the spirit of community.

“Park County has a large number of events and fundraisers for such a small population. We find having the Foundation as our fiscal sponsor gives us several advantages when we compete with the constant requests coming to business and personal donors,” adds Gardner Lowell. “The Community Foundation offers expertise and connection with all community nonprofits, and security in knowing a donation and the tax accounting aspect will be managed in a professional manner.”

In the summer of 2018, the blocks of Main Street south of Callender will be under construction for long-postponed sidewalk repairs, and the HOOT will probably take a one-year hiatus. The Lowells look forward to putting on another wonderful experience in August of 2019 – with community help and enthusiasm for what is becoming an iconic event.

Photos (below, left to right): Quebec Sisters from Texas provided three-part fiddles and vocal harmony, melding Bob Wills and the Andrews Sisters; headliner Jon Cleary, winner of the 2016 Best Regional Roots Grammy, and his band took the stage to deliver some New Orleans funk to the appreciative crowd; family-friendly entertainment is what the HOOT is all about. (All photos courtesy of William Campbell)



DONATE TO THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Everyone can be a philanthropist at whatever level they choose. The Park County Community Foundation welcomes your gift via our secure “E-Donate” link on our website at www.PCCF-Montana.org.

SPOTLIGHT: BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS A STAFF-INTENSIVE PROGRAM

The Park County Community Foundation is especially proud of its fiscal sponsorship for one of Park County's oldest programs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Park and Sweet Grass Counties. Its mission: to provide children facing adversity with strong, enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.



"Big" LaNette Jones enjoys a sweet moment with her "Little," Lacey, at the BBBS office in Livingston; at right, Jasper shows off a photo of himself and his "Big," Ariana Cline.

Vital to the BBBS program is what are known as "matching" and "monitoring." These are carefully monitored procedures that ensure an appropriate pairing of the Big Brother or Big Sister with a "little" brother or sister.

"Match support is critical for us to ensure child safety and relationship building," said Carly Colgan, BBBS executive director. "Four out of our five programs require constant staff supervision for meetings of 'big-little' pairings. This support continues on a consistent basis." BBBS staff costs for this matching and monitoring process are considered an integral program element and thus make up a high percentage of program costs, while administration costs are relatively low.

BBBS manages this with two full-time and two part-time staff members. Staff members are present at all times for "Lunch Buddies" (matching high school and younger students), "Boost" (after-school mentoring), "Summer Buddies" (a seven-week outdoor education program), and "Class Act" (an elective credit course at Park High).

"In the Community-Based Mentoring Program, carefully screened adult volunteers ('Bigs'), provide children and youth ('Littles') with individualized time and attention on a regular basis, typically two to four times a month, for two to three hours," Cogan explained.

The screening process is thorough and time-consuming, but it is key to the success of each relationship and to the enduring success of the program as a whole. Every 15 minutes of staff time is allocated to program services, fundraising or administration by the BBBS accounting firm. In audited financials from 2015–2016, program costs account for 70% of spending, fundraising for 17%, and administration for 13%. Financials are published for all to see on the BBBS website (www.bbbsparkcounty.org) via the "donate" page.

Most programs aim for the quickest solution possible to a problem. BBBS offers professional support for long-term, ideally life-long, relationships.

"Throughout the life of the match, our professional staff provides ongoing communication with the parent, child, and the child's Big," Cogan said. "It's the best way to build a strong relationship that will have the greatest impact on the child's future success."



WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THE REPORT VIA EMAIL?

The Park County Community Foundation publishes an informative, colorful quarterly newsletter – would you like to receive it via email (and help us reduce mailing costs)? Please visit our website at www.PCCF-Montana.org and click on "Sign Up for Our E-Newsletter." And – thank you!

SPOTLIGHT: LINKS FOR LEARNING

EMPOWERING ELEMENTARY STUDENTS AND BUILDING COMMUNITY



For most elementary students, the end-of-day school bell signals that it's time to start the walk home, head to the bike rack or catch the bus for their ride home. But for children participating in the LINKS program, the same bell is an invitation to finish creating ... perhaps a dream of a remote-controlled robot.

LINKS is an after-school and summer program serving the students of Livingston elementary schools and Park County. It is a place for children to spend the afternoons while their parents wrap up their own work day. From its beginning in 1999 as a 21st Century site, LINKS has significantly increased its scope and impact, with events scheduled months in advance and a seemingly permanent waiting list for hopeful participants. Currently, 105 students are enrolled and 15 students are on the waiting list.

The 21st Century program was created by Congress to assist community learning centers at rural and inner city schools, providing academic enrichment opportunities for children during non-school hours. However, a portion of future funding is in jeopardy as support from the federal budget has been eliminated, said Program Director Terri Hartly. If that decision holds, the Livingston LINKS program will only be able to serve 40% to 50% of the families that currently participate, and the number of scholarships provided to low-income families would decrease.

LINKS students head to Washington, Winans, or East Side schools from release until 6 p.m. The program integrates children's academic, physical, and emotional needs. LINKS provides tutoring assistance, a healthy snack and half an hour of physical activity, and a way to develop friendships outside of the structured school day.

Livingston is home to a blend of students from many different backgrounds, including students from financially strapped families. Nearly half of the children enrolled in LINKS qualify for free or reduced lunch, and many of them live well below the federal poverty line. LINKS offers

scholarships to children whose families cannot afford to pay the full cost of the after-school program.



LINKS students are excited to sell "Ooey Gooey Fun" at the Livingston Farmers Market, left, while other children "test drive" their robotics device.

The curriculum creates opportunities for community involvement, scientific research, and entrepreneurship. The students have responded with excitement; many return to LINKS year after year, only leaving when they "graduate out" as fifth graders. Even the homework help is far from basic. "Foster" grandparents help struggling readers, and a former LINKS participant, now an adult, rejoins the elementary program each week to listen to third graders practice their reading. In the spirit of giving back, students regularly visit the Livingston-Park County Library and Park County Senior Citizens Center to lend a helping hand.

Last fall, Hartly integrated science, math, engineering, and programming into an exciting robotics class as part of expanding a "STEM" curriculum, short for "Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics." This past summer, the LINKS syllabus explored running a business – students researched and created their own products to sell at the Livingston Farmers' Market.

Obviously, the federal funding question weighs heavily on Hartly and her staff, and alternate planning is underway if the reduction holds. But a strength of the LINKS program has been its ability to use their resources well and be on the lookout for ways to innovate. That's why the Park County Community Foundation takes pride in providing its financial support to LINKS.

PUTTING 'COMMUNITY' IN THE PARK COUNTY FOUNDATION



From left: Bruce McKnight, Foundation chair; Peter Fox, executive director; Joseph Hanser, First Interstate Bank; and Annie Beaver, Foundation vice chair and treasurer.

The First Interstate Bank of Livingston and Gardiner has long partnered with the Park County Community Foundation, but earlier this year President Joseph Hanser asked to play a role in the Foundation's Annual Community Grants Program and provide funding to the awards process conducted by the Foundation's Grants Committee. After a call for applications is made to the Park County nonprofit community in late winter, interested organizations submit applications via an online application process that allows the Grants Committee to evaluate requests on their merits. First Interstate Bank's local support was matched by the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation.

Fourteen nonprofit executive directors and staff members participated in a "facilitative leadership" workshop Sept. 19-21 hosted by the Park County Community Foundation, at no cost to the participants. "Facilitative" is used because techniques taught are intended to help nonprofit leaders inspire and create conditions that enable others to be their best in the pursuit of shared goals. The seminar focused on creating the conditions for groups, teams, organizations and communities to effectively and creatively cope with challenges, and leverage opportunities for greater social impact. The seminar was part of the Foundation's ongoing "Nonprofit Network" professional-development series for nonprofits in Park and contiguous counties.



Instructor Bruce Truitt, standing, leads the seminar held at the Livingston Food Resource Center.

HOW DOES THE PARK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION DIFFER FROM OTHER NONPROFITS?

Most nonprofit organizations have a specific mission. By contrast, the Community Foundation mission is broad: to improve the quality of life in Park County. This breadth of mission reflects our ability to make grants in any field of interest with charitable benefit to our population.

This flexibility allows us, on one hand, to serve a wider group of potential donors – community philanthropists – and, on the other hand, a wider group of nonprofit organizations that we consider our partners in improving life across our county.

Local nonprofits benefit from the existence of the Park County Community Foundation because the foundation helps keep money in the county. As the Community Foundation grows, it will become a center for charitable giving across Park County.

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 our "Community Gives Back" series also published in the *Livingston Enterprise*. Our Facebook feed is visible, too.

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