Tooting Our Horn

Tooting your horn is the theme of this annual report and newsletter. Over 27 years ago, nonprofit pioneers formed Montana Shares. Since that time, Montana Shares has raised over 5 million dollars for 127 nonprofits. Every 3 years we raise another million dollars.

This year we added eight new members. Their stories are highlighted in blue in the inner section. We have started dialog with another seven nonprofits for possible membership next year.

This year we shifted our focus from serving our member groups to a broader mission of making giving easy for our donors, serving our member groups and engaging in our community.

The other significant change we are beginning to implement is a combination of the trend of infographics and dealing with TMTR, Too Much To Read. This year’s financial are simplified with some simpler pie charts to tell our story. TMTR shows how easy it is to create content. As humans, we have and are currently developing a new skill called filtering. This skill lets us quickly decide what is important and what is not. Consequently, everyone needs to figure out how to quickly and easily tell their story.

We thank all individuals and businesses that play such a vital role in the nonprofit community and give to Montana Shares.

The Tuesdays

Before the next newsletter arrives, two giving events that land on Tuesday will occur. December 1, 2015 is Giving Tuesday. This is a national giving day with local events. In the same way that Black Friday, Shop Local Saturday and Cyber Monday kick off the buying season, Giving Tuesday kicks off the giving season.

Give Local will take place on May 3, 2016. Give Local is another National Giving Day with local events. Four major events took place in Montana in 2015, Bozeman, Helena, Missoula, and Flathead. The one day total for the four events was over $640,000! Keep an eye on Facebook and your email for more details on these events.

Most of our givers give through workplace giving. If you do give this way and get an email for a one day event, think of it as an invitation to come out and play for the day. We never expect you to give any more than your pledged amount through workplace giving.
Visible community investment is a concept that is gaining ground and needs to gain a whole lot more. Most of the largest corporations in the country have created loopholes that permit them to dodge taxes on their profits, pay their employees poorly and acquire large property tax abatements. On the other hand, we live in a state that has incredibly generous businesses. These local businesses give volunteers, products for prizes and silent auctions, and cash support. They do this over and over again for many of the nonprofits that ask them.

Yet, we often order a product online because it may be a few dollars less expensive. There is a good chance that this online company may not be investing in communities as well as local ones do. I feel we have an obligation to spend a little more, if necessary, to support the local businesses that support our community. Then the question comes up, “How do I know if they are investing in our community?”

The answer to that question brings us back to the beginning of this story. Businesses need to tell how much they are investing in the community. The pictures here are three examples. Blackfoot River Brewing Company donates $1.00 per drink each Monday to some community nonprofits. Since its inception, they have given away about $109,000. In addition to this, they give other support to the nonprofit community. Their chalkboard does not account for these additional funds.

Vans Thriftway started the Round Up for Montana Shares in February of 2015. Since then that program has raised over $13,000. As with Blackfoot, they support numerous other fundraisers with donations.

About 8 years ago, Real Food Store wanted to curb plastic bag waste. They implemented a Save or Donate program where the customers could save ten cents per reusable bag or donate ten cents per reusable bag used. That program has raised over $28,000 for Montana Shares. It also recognizes that over 280,000 plastic bags were kept out of the waste stream.

Back at the beginning of this story, I said these community investment signs were gaining ground, but needed to gain a lot more. This is where you come in. Tell local businesses that you want them to post their investment in their community. Have them put a sign in their windows that shows how much they support your community.

Thank you,
Bill Crane
Executive Director

“That program has raised over $28,000 for Montana Shares. It also recognizes that over 280,000 plastic bags were kept out of the waste stream.”
Impact statements give you a quick look at an issue and a solution. The following impact statements from our members demonstrate their work throughout the state.

**Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)**
If every Montana household spent $10 per week on locally grown food, $186 million would be contributed back into Montana communities. AERO promotes sustainable agriculture, renewable energy and conservation, environmental quality, and community self-reliance.
[aeromt.org](http://aeromt.org)

**AniMeals**
In the United States an estimated ten million animals are abandoned to shelters every year. Many of the shelters & rescue groups who house & feed these animals are struggling daily. The purpose of AniMeals work is to supplement the food needs of organizations so they can focus their money on medical needs & operational costs. In addition, their food delivery service helps to keep companion animals in their homes when their caregivers can’t afford to feed them. So instead of giving them up to already over-populated shelters, they can keep them home where they belong. In many instances AniMeals is the difference between keeping a four-legged family member home and the heartbreak of surrendering them to an unknown future. AniMeals works to ensure there are no more hungry animals in Montana.
[aniMeals.com](http://www.aniMeals.com)

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Montana**
Big Brothers Big Sisters is the only best practice prevention program in Montana proven to impact a broad spectrum of risk factors (i.e. delinquency, alcohol, tobacco and drug use, teen pregnancy, school dropout) while simultaneously helping children reach their highest potential. As such, the return on investment is higher across the board than dollars invested in single issue prevention programs.
[montanaabbbs.blogspot.com](http://montanaabbbs.blogspot.com)

**Bike Walk Montana**
Two-thirds of Montanans are overweight or obese, resulting in escalating health-care costs. By providing opportunities and places for more people to walk and bicycle on a daily basis, we can improve the health, economy and environment of Montana.
[bikewalkmontana.org](http://bikewalkmontana.org)

**Bridgercare**
In the U.S., a poor woman is FOUR TIMES as likely to experience an unplanned pregnancy as a higher-income woman, an estimated 44% of pregnancies in Montana are unintended, and 1 in 4 teen girls will get pregnant at least once by age 20.

Investment in family planning services is highly cost-effective. Nationally, for every $1 invested in helping women avoid pregnancies they did not want to have saved $8.68 in public expenditures that otherwise would have been needed. Annually, Montana family planning clinics helped women avoid approximately 5,300 unintended pregnancies, which would have resulted in 2,400 births, 2,300 abortions, and 600 miscarriages.

Family Planning healthcare and education has the goal of giving couples the best chance to plan for and space children according to parents’ desires and resources. Benefits include better maternal health outcomes, improved infant and child survival and health, and greater economic security for families and resulting academic achievement for children.
[bridgercare.org](http://bridgercare.org)

**Camp Mak-A-Dream**
What started out as one camp in 1995 for 46 campers has turned into 11 different camps and retreats in 2015. Over the years, as specific needs were identified, we created programming to meet those unique needs, such as our sessions for brain tumor survivors, sessions for siblings (children and teens who aren’t sick themselves but someone in their family is or has passed away from cancer), and long weekend retreats for women with cancer. We partner with medical professionals across the country to help identify gaps in services and how Camp Mak-A-Dream might be able to help fill those gaps.
[campdream.org](http://campdream.org)

**Cancer Support Community Montana**
The daily demands of living with a life-threatening disease are a constant struggle. Cancer Support Community Montana’s free programs and services help individuals & families rediscover a healthy balance and celebrate hope. Cancer Support Community Montana helps families live well with, through, and beyond cancer.
[cancersupportmontana.org](http://cancersupportmontana.org)

**Disability Rights Montana**
Montanans living with disabilities want to be included in everyday living and need access to appropriate support and services. DRM actively works to make local communities more physically accessible. DRM also advocates to bring support and services to your community and to protect your right to live, receive an education, work, and recreate in your local community.
[disabilityrightsmt.org](http://disabilityrightsmt.org)

**ExplorationWorks (Community Works, Inc.)**
ExplorationWorks offers family groups a rich social environment for science-based interactive learning experiences and also offers significant support for Montana’s schools, through field trips and outreach programs. Our activity-based science opportunities increase positive attitudes toward science, provide logic development, communication skills and reading readiness. Our enjoyable experiences lead to logic development, communication skills and reading readiness. We partner with medical professionals across the country to help identify gaps in services and how Camp Mak-A-Dream might be able to help fill those gaps.
[explorationworks.org](http://explorationworks.org)

**Great Falls Community Food Bank, Inc.**
More than 300,000 Montanans are considered at risk of food insecurity. The Great Falls Community Food Bank is one of only three true food bank warehouse/distribution facilities in Montana. Serving four counties and 63 emergency food sites, the Food Bank distributed over 475 tons of food which provided over 755,250 meals for children, seniors, and adults.
[greatfallsfoodbank.org](http://greatfallsfoodbank.org)
Heart of the Valley, Inc.
In 2014, Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter found homes for 1,339 abandoned animals and reunited 640 lost animals with their worried families. heartofthevalleyshelter.org

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity
Children raised in a home owned by their parent(s) are three times more likely to graduate, go on to college, own their own home, and become vested in their communities. Helena Area Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with income-challenged families to make home ownership a possibility and to provide simple, decent housing for today’s children. helenahabitat.org

Holter Museum of Art, Inc.
As the only art museum within a 90-mile radius of the capital city, the Holter is committed to presenting a wide range of media, content, and aesthetic sensibilities appealing to the broad and diverse constituency we serve and exhibiting annually 14 exhibits with corresponding education programs. holtermuseum.org

Humanities Montana
In 2014, Humanities Montana provided:
• 152 Speakers Bureau programs in 54 communities in 33 counties;
• 63 Speakers in the Schools programs in communities such as Brockton, Frenchtown, Clyde Park, Harlowton, Miles City, Gardiner, Troy, and Arlee;
• 41 grants totaling $150,000 to organizations large and small throughout Montana to support programs on history, literature, Native American cultures, and more;
• Underwriting for superb radio programs that reach the entire state through Montana and Yellowstone Public Radio: “Home Ground,” “The Write Question,” and “Reflections West.” humanitiesmontana.org

Jeannette Rankin Peace Center
Our world is complex, and we face serious long-term challenges to the building of a just, non-violent, and sustainable global culture. But each challenge is also an opportunity for each of us personally and all of us collectively. The Jeannette Rankin Peace Center offers us the tools of peacemaking. jrpc.org

Komen Idaho Montana (Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure)
For the 2013 grant cycle, Komen Montana grants provided 347 mammograms and diagnostic screenings, 154 clinical breast exams, and breast cancer education materials to over 7,000 people. Additionally, small grants allowed breast cancer survivors to attend Mending in the Mountains and provided funds for the Women’s 4 Wellness health fair so women who had abnormal mammograms could get follow-up diagnostic services. komenmontana.org

Last Chance Community Pow Wow
Last Chance Community Pow Wow hosts an annual celebration to empower and honor our youth by preserving our distinct Native American cultural and spiritual traditions. The pow wow and other cultural activities that take place throughout the year instill pride among our local Native population, especially our youth, helping them choose healthy lifestyles. lastchancerpowwow.com

Lewis & Clark Humane Society
The Lewis & Clark Humane Society is the tri-county area’s only animal shelter, we continue to care for the homeless, abandoned and surrendered animals who need a warm place to live, caring people, food, water and medical care. Shelter staff and a corps of trained volunteers last year provided care to over 1,500 animals. Our Spay Montana program travels throughout Montana, offering low or no cost spay/neuter services to reduce overpopulation. Outreach education programs in schools and to the general public help educate our community about animal welfare issues. Additionally, we continue to assist other rescue organizations in Montana, specifically the Kaawaapomaakaa Rescue on the Browning Indian Reservation and RezQ located near the Fort Belknap reservation in housing and placing their homeless animals. mtlchs.org

Mai Wah Society, Inc.
Butte’s Chinese population and its impressive Chinatown are a hidden secret in this historic community. The Mai Wah Society is preserving the heart of Chinatown by restoring the Wah Chong Tai and Mai Wah Noodle Parlor buildings, exhibiting artifacts, retelling the stories, and presenting educational and cultural events. maiwah.org

Missoula Community Access Television, Inc.
Missoula is a city full of culture, art, music, and political hot topics with approximately 66,000 people living within its borders. MCAT provides Missoula residents, nonprofit organizations, and civic and student groups with the equipment, training, and channel time to produce TV programs based on their interests and concerns. These programs reflect Missoula’s cultural, political, and intellectual diversity, and help foster a community dialogue about people and issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. mcat.org

Montana 4-H Foundation, Inc.
With over 4,000 adult volunteers working with over 23,000 4-H youth in Montana last year, these volunteers donate well over 200,000 hours in planning and conducting exciting activities. Economic impact of this volunteer service equals approximately 3 million dollars and is equivalent to over 105 full time staff positions.

Montana Association for the Blind, Inc.
An estimated 20,000 to 25,000 Montanans are blind or “visually impaired.” The Montana Association for the Blind actively advocates on behalf of equality and opportunity for all blind and low vision Montanans statewide. The MAB also provides programs that teach and develop skills critical to maintaining independence and employment or to pursue educational and vocational goals. In addition, the MAB’s eleven local chapters across the state reach out to newly blinded Montanans to carry the message of hope and self-determination to every blind Montanan and their families and friends. mtblind.org

Montana Audubon
Montana has lost more than 50% of its valuable wetlands, and more than one-third of the birds that nest in the state are declining rangewide. Accelerating development along Montana’s streams and rivers are damaging water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Montana Audubon works to ensure that all native wildlife populations are healthy and sustainable by protecting and conserving their natural habitats. mtaudubon.org

Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network
MCCRRN links parents to available childcare and afterschool programs and helps low-income working families pay for these important services. By training early education and afterschool workers, MCCRRN builds a quality care and education system and helps makes it accessible to all Montana families. mtcchildcare.org

Montana Food Bank Network, Inc.
One in seven Montanans, and 1 in 5 Montana children, struggle with hunger today. The Montana Food Bank Network reduces hunger by acquiring and distributing food, educating the public, and advocating on behalf of people in need. mfbn.org

Montana Shares
Montana Innocence Project

The Montana Innocence Project serves indigent Montana prisoners who are factually innocent by providing pro bono legal aid, DNA testing assistance and investigation. We also train the next generation of attorneys, paralegals, and journalists through our Innocence Clinic and work to improve our criminal justice system by advancing proven public policy reforms and providing training and education to attorneys, law enforcement and others statewide. mtinnocenceproject.org

Montana Legal Services Association

Financial barriers to the legal system erode the promise of equal justice for all created by our founding fathers. MLSA helps ensure access to justice for low-income Montanans by providing free civil legal aid for people with incomes at or below the 125% of the federal poverty rate. In 2013 MLSA helped more than 6,000 Montanans, including 2,759 children, through easy-to-understand forms and legal self-help and by providing assistance in 2,622 cases. mtlsa.org

Montana Meth Project

The financial and social consequences of Meth abuse in Montana are devastating to families and children. Costs associated with the Meth problem in Montana exceed $100 million each year, a tremendous economic burden on the state. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), conducted every other year by Montana’s Office of Public Instruction, teen Meth use has kept a constant decrease of 63% since Montana Meth Project’s inception. However, the threat to Montana has not disappeared, according to the U.S. Justice Department. The supply of Meth is at a five-year high, so we need to maintain our commitment to eradicating Meth use. montanameth.org

Montana Spay/Neuter Task Force

The Task Force teaches respect for life. Its mission is to reverse the universal acceptance of killing as a solution to pet overpopulation by using education, low-cost spay and neuter, and community involvement. montanaspayneutertaskforce.org

Montana Supporting Soldiers

Many deployed troops, wounded warriors, and veterans do not receive support for needed items. We send approximately 10,000 pounds of goods to over 1,000 deployed troops each year. We also actively support our Montana wounded warriors and veterans in various ways whenever a need arises. mtsupportingsoldiers.com

Montana Trout Unlimited

Montana Trout Unlimited conserves and protects Montana’s coldwater fisheries, which helps wild and native trout. The presence of abundant, healthy trout produces a positive environmental and economic benefit for humans too. Native trout impact entire ecosystems, from grizzly bears to eagles. Angling contributes more than $237,000,000 to the economy in Montana every year... another reason to work for robust trout populations. Through education, conservation and advocacy, MTU is protecting our treasured rivers and streams for the next generation, of grizzly bears and anglers. montanatu.org

Montana Watershed Coordination Council

Montana’s water resources are precious, as Montana’s waters not only serve Montanans, but also much of the western and central United States. However, this vital resource is increasingly fragile, due to droughts, severe climate fluctuations, pollution, and increased demands. Since 2009, MWCC has organized and hosted two statewide watershed symposiums, nine watershed trainings, Watershed Wednesday at the Capitol, and the biennial Wetland and Watershed Awards, empowering hundreds of water resource caretakers to ensure clean, plentiful water for all 1 million Montanans and everyone downstream. mtwatersheds.org

Montana Wilderness Association

Only 3% of Montana’s wilderness is protected under the Wilderness Preservation System. Through grassroots organizing, public education, and our Wilderness Walks programs, Montana Wilderness Association encourages citizens to become advocates for the protection of crucial wildlife habitat, clean watersheds, and the preservation of our states unique and beautiful landscapes. wildmontana.org

Montana Wildlife Federation

The Montana Wildlife Federation gives a voice to hunters, anglers, and other conservationists in order to safeguard our fish and wildlife, land and water, and public access. MWF works to support the rights of everyone who hunts, fishes, or just enjoys the opportunity to see and experience wildlife in our state. montanawildlife.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Montana Foundation

Over 66% of high school seniors reported being sexually active in 2012, but less than half of Montana high schools teach about birth control pills and emergency contraceptives. Montana youth need to be provided comprehensive, medically accurate sex education in order to make healthy decisions throughout their lives. NARAL Pro-Choice Montana Foundation works for an educated, alert, and active pro-choice citizenry to ensure access to safe, affordable reproductive health care in Montana prochoice montana.org

NeighborWorks Montana (Montana Homeownership Network, Inc.)

Montanans are feeling the pinch of oil development and other growth in several ways, including a lack of housing and proper infrastructure. NWMT believes that housing is a part of the economic engine for the state, and is working hard both on policy issues that affect housing growth and development, and on homeowner education and financial coaching to help potential homeowners cope across the state. nwmt.org

Queen City Ballet Company

Queen City Ballet Company affords dance students and the general public the experience of high-quality, professional full-length ballets with professional guest artists, lighting, costumes and sets. QCBC contributes to a vibrant cultural community by offering at least two performances a year, the Nutcracker Ballet and a full-length spring classical ballet production and/or a contemporary work. A dancer that aspires to a career in ballet can receive the experience and education in the art of performance to prepare for a career in dance. The Company offers scholarships for performance fees and summer intensives with QCBC. queencityballet.com

Rural Employment Opportunities, Inc. (REO)

Rural families who work seasonally have limited income and resources and struggle to maintain economic stability. Rural Employment Opportunities helps limited-income Montanans and their children with emergency assistance and access to education, employment, and job-training activities that lead to year-round employment, improved family income, and greater economic security. reomontana.org

Student Assistance Foundation of Montana

In 2012, 39.8 percent of adults in Montana held a two- or four-year college degree (U.S. Census). SAF wants to improve that number by providing students with the knowledge and tools to pursue and fund postsecondary education. smartaboutcollege.org

Youth Connections Coalition

The rates of youth alcohol, tobacco, drug use and violence in Helena are unacceptably high. Working together, our community can protect youth and create long-lasting changes for youth to thrive and succeed. youthconnectionscoalition.org

Your support of Montana Shares makes a difference because Montana Shares members make a difference. Learn more and link to each member group at montanashares.org
Send your donation to:
Montana Shares
PO Box 883
Helena, MT  59624

Print name: ____________________________
Address: ______________________________
City/Zip:_______________________________
E-mail: _______________________________
Phone: _______________________________

_____ Enclosed is my check payable to
Montana Shares for $__________________.

To give by credit card, please use our
secure online giving tools at
www.montanashares.org.

We honor your choice. You may designate all or
part of your donation to go to one or more of our
member groups listed on the right; otherwise,
your tax deductible gift will be shared among
members.

Thank you!

___Montana Shares (for work with its members)
___Alternative Energy Resources Organization
(AERO)
___AniMeals
___Big Brothers Big Sisters of Montana
___Bike Walk Montana
___Bridgercare
___Camp Mak-A-Dream
___Cancer Support Community Montana
___Disability Rights Montana
___ExplorationWorks (CommunityWorks, Inc.)
___Great Falls Community Food Bank, Inc.
___Heart of the Valley, Inc.
___Helena Area Habitat for Humanity
___Holter Museum of Art, Inc.
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___Montana Wildlife Federation
___NARAL Pro-Choice Montana Foundation
___NeighborWorks Montana
  (MT Homeownership Network, Inc.)
___Queen City Ballet Company
___Rural Employment Opportunities, Inc. (REO)
___Student Assistance Foundation of Montana
___Youth Connections Coalition
___Undesignated
New member applications accepted this winter

If you know a nonprofit interested in applying to participate as a member of Montana Shares in the 2016-2017 campaign, have them contact the Shares office for the criteria, requirements and application packet. Deadline: postmarked March 1st.

Organizations must have a current 501(c)(3) IRS tax exemption and agree to work toward the Shares’ mission, vision and values. There is a list of requirements and an application process posted on our website. This ensures our donors are supporting solid, accountable nonprofits working to make Montana a better place to live. If accepted, they will be able to participate in Montana Shares’ public and private workplace campaigns.

Accountability and Disclosures

Montana Shares is audited annually and meets the national standards for workplace giving federations set by Community Shares USA. For 2014 fiscal year, our IRS Form 990 reflects a low 4.2% fundraising/general management expense compared to revenue. Our IRS 990 and audited financial statements are posted on our website. We hold our members to accountability standards as well, so the donors and employers can be confident that the contributions are supporting the causes intended and are being well managed.

Montana Shares raised $290,250 for campaign year 2015 and $301,378 for campaign year 2014. Distributions to members are 85% of actual collected pledges; 100% of campaign contributions stay in Montana. Fifteen percent is withheld from collected contributions for program support. Our uncollectible pledges ran 8.89%. Member organizations pay annual dues based on a percentage of funds received. They commit to actively working with Shares to open and grow workplace giving campaigns. Members help Montana Shares with our work. Based on their involvement, they receive designated pledges plus a proportional share of undesignated pledges based on our member-approved policy.
Thank you to Montana Shares 2015 Raffle Donors

Every year Montanans and individuals beyond our borders donate to support the work of Montana Shares in a variety of ways. This year’s raffle, with 36 fabulous prize packages, raised almost $24,000, up $1,800 from last year. Thank you to our hard working members’ staff and boards, our council and friends for your help and support. Thank you one and all! The winners of the 2015 raffle drawing were notified following the 9/12/15 drawing and their names are posted on our website. Visit montanashares.org home page, go to MT Shares Annual Raffle for the raffle results.

We Are on TV!

Montana Shares has started a program on HCTV in Helena. To date there has been 10 episodes produced. This is a great chance for the viewing public to get an in-depth view of what the nonprofits are doing in our state. Normally we live and die by 25 words. The State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign, the Combined Federal Campaign and our brochures are examples that limit descriptions to 25 words. Now a nonprofit gets to talk about their work for 20 MINUTES! These programs air Tuesdays at 7:30pm on Channel 189 in the Helena area. You can watch any of the episodes on the Montana Shares website or Facebook page. This project helps create website and YouTube content for member groups and is fun to create.