

montana sharesreport

Newsletter & Annual Report from Montana Shares, a partnership of Montana-based nonprofit groups devoted to improving the quality of life in communities throughout Montana

Fall 2020

THE COVID-19 ISSUE

by Bill Crane

I hope this is the best issue of our newsletter ever.

We are in a pandemic that very few of us ever thought would happen in our lifetime.

For the last few months, I have been interviewing our member groups about how they have been dealing with Covid-19. These videos are available on both our web site and Facebook.

Going into this process, I was expecting to hear stories of hardship. What I heard was how resilient our member groups are. They can adapt quickly. Their staff rise to each day's challenges with spirit. They can identify client needs and pivot within a few days to help those people.

The inside pages of this newsletter are examples of what organizations are doing to adapt to Covid-19. I asked groups to tell you what was going on in their organization. The voice and focus of the writing will not match, but I would rather they just told their stories without us editing it.

One of the issues we see is there are significant amounts of CARES act funds available to the people that are affected by Covid-19 and the related workforce layoffs, but the people needing it do not know how to access it. Often our groups are expanding their role to include helping people fill out the grant requests and helping them follow up on those grants. Other nonprofits have had to implement policy practically overnight to protect their staff and clients. Then a week or two later, they have to adjust just as quickly again.

Obviously, they still need the support of people like you.

I am a numbers person. The good news that the numbers show is we in Montana have a mortality rate (~1%) that is less than half of the national and worldwide rate (~2.5%). Also good news is that 80% of people that contract Covid-19 will recover at home.

The flip side of these numbers is cause for concern. The bigger concern for me is the doubling rate of hospitalizations. If one person in five that contracts Covid-19 requires hospitalization, we could exceed capacity in a very short period of time. As I am writing this, two of our major hospitals, Benefis and St Peters, have 90% of their bed occupied. Four more major hospitals are between 70% and 90% occupied. With a doubling rate between 15 to 30 days, we could exceed our hospital capacity in one or two months. Even these small percentages add up.

There seems to have been significantly less focus on Covid-19 during the election. The elections are over and I expect that will change. An email just came through describing drastic changes by Lewis and Clark County and how they will be serving their citizens.

I wrote this article for three purposes. **One**, is to convince you to do everything in your power to stay safe and protect your personal health. **Two**, accept that more and more people you know will get sick and you should not judge them. Even when people are being very careful, there are too many ways for Covid-19 to get to them. **Lastly**, please do what you can to keep our communities strong.

For Montana Shares, this is the workplace giving season and end of year giving time. If you are employed and secure, please make a pledge for next year's workplace giving. If you are retired and secure, please make an annual donation now with the form on page 6. With many of us working from home, you may have missed an email or other method encouraging you to give. If that is the case, just contact us. We can get you a pledge form or direct you to online giving.

**You are more important now than ever.
Be safe and stay well.**

memberstories

Most of our member groups were able to give us short updates on how their organizations have been meeting needs, expanding services and dealing with Covid-19. These are those stories *(denotes new member groups)



Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)

AERO, in partnership with MOA (Montana Organic Association), launched the MONTANA FOOD PROVIDERS PROJECT on April 2, 2020 in response to COVID-19. MFPP purchases quality food from MT farmers, ranchers and value-added producers who lost market channels and gifts them to Montanans in need across the state, particularly those communities the MT Food Bank Network can't reach. Over 10,000 lbs of organic flour, lentils, safflower oil, grass-fed beef and goat donated to date! 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. animeals.com



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Montana

The pandemic has challenged our kids and our families. These challenges have caused us to be nimble and creative in our work. Our mentors and kids now meet virtually in a myriad of ways that they had not before. While schools were closed, we hand-delivered learning packages to our kids and these interactions at their homes deepened our relationships. Working together with our mentors to solve pandemic related challenges has likewise deepened our practices. So, while we would not wish for COVID-19, we will be a stronger and more robust organization for it.



Bike Walk Montana

Bike Walk Montana is taking our programs and projects online, through digital meetings, improved website and embracing that, as a state wide organization, we have always had to do "Montana distancing". The increased use of trails and shared use of paths during the pandemic has heightened how society sees active transportation as a necessity, not just an amenity. bikewalkmontana.org



Bridgercare

Due to the pandemic, Bridgercare's patient services landscape has changed dramatically. During the initial weeks of quarantine, we had several patients experience ectopic pregnancies, miscarriages, and even an appendicitis. Even when they were in significant pain, these individuals feared being exposed to the virus and avoided going to the E.R. or an urgent care at all costs. However, they did feel safe reaching out to Bridgercare, as we don't treat COVID-19 patients. Because they trusted us, we were able to safely bring them into the clinic and diagnose their pain. We also pivoted quickly to telehealth visits and were able to serve most patients from March through July in the safety of their own homes. People in our region have counted on Bridgercare to provide care during this unprecedented time and, with your support, we will continue to do so. bridgercare.org



Camp Mak-A-Dream

"My son was ill last week, however the time he spent in the zoom chats meant so much. It was the first time in a year he had the chance to spend time with kids his own age. The friends he had prior to his cancer diagnosis evaporated soon after diagnosis and he hasn't felt well enough or confident enough to

attempt to make more. We could hear him talking while on the chats and it was a wonderful sound. Afterwards, he was the happiest and most animated we have seen him in a long time. For a brief time every day, he had a vacation from his struggles thanks to his fellow campers and your incredible staff." campdream.org



Cancer Support Community Montana

Cancer Support Community Montana quickly moved all their programs to their Virtual Community in March and continues to serve hundreds of Montanans impacted by cancer free-of-charge. Isolation and uncertainty are common feelings for anyone who has heard the doctor say the word cancer. Covid-19 has only increased the need for our programs. We continue to provide; education, support, exercise, well-being, and family programs to Montanans impacted by cancer, all virtually. 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



Friends of the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula

For the first time since founding the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula in 1975, we canceled the 4th @ The Fort Celebration and closed the Main Museum. To say this summer was surreal, would be an understatement. But at the same time, there were amazing things happening. Engaging people via virtual history lessons and seeing folks using the Historic Park to safely recreate, walk with friends, and let kids burn off steam was inspiring. All this and more was summer at the Historical Museum. fortmissoulamuseum.org



Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument

The Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument (FMB) has been involved with the monument every step of the way from designation to today, nearly 20 years. 2020 will be the year the Friends reinvest in becoming a valued member of central Montana as a whole. To do so, the Friends will be holding quarterly events in the towns of Fort Benton, Lewistown, Havre and Great Falls. Each event will have a call to action to help the Breaks, and more broadly central Montana's public lands. Together with this change, the Friends will remain active in our stewardship work to reestablish plains cottonwoods on the banks of the Missouri River and continue to build partnerships with local schools to provide watershed education. missouribreaks.org



Great Falls Community Food Bank

The onset of Covid-19 meant the Food Bank had to cancel our major 2020 food drives. With the reaction to the pandemic causing a shortage of food supplies as well as an increase in need, we had to ask our public for cash donations to make up the difference. For the most part, our generous donors have met our needs. But with the uncertainty of the immediate future, we remain grateful for any amount of cash donations. The Food Bank has been feeding the hungry in Cascade County since 1982, including our Backpack4Kids program and grocery recovery.

COVID-19 has meant we have to serve our agencies in some unique ways—finding different suppliers, purchasing different types of food and limiting our volunteers. However, we have weathered the storm and with help, we will remain here to help those who need a hand up. greatfallsfoodbank.org



Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter

By mid-March, we were making significant changes to our operations in response to the COVID-19 crisis. As an essential service, we were determined to find a way to stay open and continue to serve lost and homeless animals. The changes we made helped us focus on the health and well-being of our staff, volunteers and the public. We split our employees into two separate teams to ensure there would always be staff available to take care of the animals. We managed the flow of the public by setting up adoptions, surrenders, etc. by appointment. We postponed our largest fundraiser of the year, Dog Ball, to late fall. We reduced the number of kids in the summer camp, Pet Pals and we conducted foster volunteer sessions via zoom. Our staff and volunteers responded to the sometimes daily changes with grace, professionalism and an incredible amount of flexibility. Their focus never wavered: provide great care for animals and the people who love them. heartofthevalleyshelter.org



Holter Museum of Art, Inc.

The center for art-based, community-focused education in Helena and surrounding areas is now extending its reach into the community with deeper impact. In 2016 the Holter, as a leader in the arts created Art for Survival (AFS) to help teens use arts to work through serious personal and social issues such as teen suicide, recognized as a significant problem by the school District. In early 2019 the museum introduced the Holter Art Cart program to St. Peter's Health with Blue Cross Blue Shield as a third partner. holtermuseum.org



Jeannette Rankin Peace Center

Peace is more critical today than ever before! The Jeannette Rankin Peace Center opened back up in May. We learned online platforms for sales, discussion groups, etc. which broadened our audience and allowed us to continue serving impoverished global communities. But more than anything, we have taken the opportunity to refocus on what is truly important – the way we each live our lives, the way we treat each other and the way we walk on this planet. jrpc.org



K9 Care Montana

Established in 2009, K9 Care Montana, Inc. provides service dogs at no cost to Montana wounded veterans, first responders, and children challenged by autism. During the service dog training, we incorporate customized outdoor activities to better understand some of the recipient's day to day challenges. Our goals and objectives remain the same: bettering the lives of our recipients through the incorporation of a service dog. k9caremontana.org



Last Chance Community Pow Wow

As has been done during winter for the past 20 years, the Committee completed plans for the annual pow wow typically held in September. Fundraisers of dancing, drumming, and selling Indian frybread/tacos were scheduled, making for a busy season. But then, COVID-19 hit and the celebration was postponed until 2021. The year off has allowed us time to reflect on the importance of the pow wow in strengthening our spirituality and relationships with friends, family, and newcomers to the circle. We look forward to the 2021 pow wow in honor of the children. lastchancepowwow.com



Lewis & Clark Humane Society

Pablo came to the Lewis & Clark Humane Society because he had found a very sweet stray cat, and he wanted to make sure that if she had a family, they would be able to find her. However, he told us that if her family didn't come forward, he wanted to be her new family. It wasn't long before we figured out Miss Bella was expecting kittens! We let Pablo know Bella would need to go into Foster Care to have her babies and raise them before he could adopt her. This didn't dissuade him though. Instead he called up his 3 roommates and they all agreed that Bella was part of the family and that they needed to foster her! Bella was blessed with 4 very excited foster dads who have helped to raise her 2 adorable kittens and even found them new loving homes. lchsmontana.org

montanashares.org



Mai Wah Society, Inc.

The Mai Wah Noodle Parlor and Wah Chong Tai Mercantile buildings are our largest artifacts. This summer the first phase of repair and restoration has begun with work on the west brick wall, storefront and windows and replacing the aging vaulted sidewalk. In the 1940's, Charles Bovey purchased the contents of the mercantile and moved them to Nevada City and Virginia City. Upon receiving a long term loan, the contents were returned and re-created to portray the actual mercantile. As you wander through the museum you will see this and much more including the Noodle parlor kitchen and our growing collection of donated items from Butte Chinese families. maiwah.org



Missoula Medical Aid

Missoula Medical Aid

Since 1998, Missoula Medical Aid has sent 60 teams of medical volunteers to work in impoverished rural communities in Honduras. A third of the children in these communities suffered from chronic malnutrition. Since the pandemic, increased poverty has caused widespread hunger. Our focus this year has shifted to one thing: raising money to feed the most vulnerable families. missoulamedicalaid.org



Montana 4-H Foundation, Inc.

The Montana 4-H Foundation has met the challenge of working both remotely and on campus to provide support to Montana 4-H. The way in which communities usually do things like operating county camps, fairs, and other events has changed drastically. Through it all, 4-H continues to provide communities with continuity and contributes to community cohesion. A summary of key findings from a survey of 4-H families and volunteers resulted in the following: 1,000 youth and adults surveyed. 68% of respondents continued to participate in 4-H since March 28th 70% of participants worked on individual projects and/or attended club or project meetings virtually or in person. 64% of volunteers focused on helping with 4-H project work, club meetings and social media interactions. montana4h.org



Montana Association for the Blind, Inc.

"Find another way": Faced with vision loss, members of the Montana Association for the Blind are champs at adapting. Covid canceled our month-long, live-in Summer Orientation Program, where students learn skills to maintain independence. We planned an autumn workshop to start students on the basics, like cane use, cooking, tech: a covid spike canceled that, too. Undaunted, we're visiting students individually, helping them find tools and techniques that work for them. Meanwhile, members have continued to meet virtually to share tips and encouragement. Since we don't drive, transportation to meetings has been a challenge for us: conference calls and Zoom have actually enabled more people to participate and learn from each other. mabsop.org



Montana Audubon

As we look back on our accomplishments in light of a pandemic, we are proud that we didn't make excuses but rather leaned in to new opportunities to make an impact in conservation in our state. We feel honored and grateful to be able to continue our work during these difficult times as stewards of this conservation movement and keep it moving forward regardless of the obstacles we face. mtaudubon.org



Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Covid-19 has hugely impacted the child care industry. Child Care providers are struggling with meeting the health and safety standards – health checks every morning for parents and children, daily cleaning procedures, and social distancing issues. A single positive test of a child or employee requires the facility to close for 2 weeks. We have been helping facilities meet these standards and sharing what is working for one facility with other facilities. We have been processing grants for families who cannot take their children to child care. Child care is essential for the strength of our community and economy. mtchildcare.org



Montana Discovery Foundation

We believe that education and recreation opportunities on National Forest Lands should be accessible. They are a perfect place to get exercise and socially distance during Covid-19. We provide opportunities in all seasons for people of all ages to learn about and enjoy YOUR public lands. montanadiscoveryfoundation.org



Montana Free Press *

At a time when Montana's legacy newspapers are furloughing staff and reducing coverage, Montana Free Press has succeeded in dramatically increasing our editorial output and offering new delivery methods to provide readers the news, information, and analysis they need during the COVID-19 pandemic. We've reallocated resources and taken risks to provide this critical public service. montanafreepress.org



Montana Food Bank Network, Inc.

Over the past six months since the initial statewide shutdown to combat COVID-19, Montana Food Bank Network and its partners have seen an unprecedented increase and fluctuation in need for emergency food assistance in our state. Overall, MFBN has distributed 69% more food from April 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020 compared to the same time period in 2019. State-level data analysis provided by Feeding America has projected three possible food insecurity scenarios for the end of 2020, beginning of 2021 timeframe. Best case scenario based on projected increases in unemployment and poverty rates results in a projected food insecurity rate of 11.3% or an additional 11,000 Montanans experiencing food insecurity, totaling 120,000 food insecure people. Worst case scenario is a projected food insecurity rate of 15.5% or 56,000 additional Montanans experiencing food insecurity totaling 165,000 food insecure people. mfbn.org



Montana Generational Justice Foundation

In a time where Covid-19 is killing many in our older populations, many Montanans have not completed their basic life documents such as durable medical and financial powers of attorney, basic will, declaration of homestead or beneficiary deed. These documents are necessary to protect every Montanan where they become mentally or physically disabled or are deceased. Our organization focuses on the life planning process documents for all Montanans especially low income, veterans, seniors Native Americans. mtgenjustice.org



Montana History Foundation

At the Montana History Foundation, our response to Covid-19 is helping the many community museums and history organizations across the state get through this difficult time. Some have had to stay closed, and those that have been able to open are seeing fewer visitors. As a result, they're seeing a decrease in revenue. Coming up on November 1st, our annual grant cycle will open. 2021 will be the first time grant funding can be used for staff salaries (at a 50% match) as a response to Covid-19. mthistory.org



Montana Legal Services Association

Civil legal aid at the Montana Legal Services Association is an essential, emergency service helping people access housing, food, and safety during a health and economic disaster. MLSA is open and helping clients – 49% of our intakes have been COVID-19 related, affecting 2,556 clients and their family members so far. Our COVID-19 specific legal resources on MontanaLawHelp.org have had a 52% increase in unique site visitors, including an unemployment benefits page and an interactive link to a letter to a landlord to avoid eviction. Vulnerable Montanans are seeking assistance with unlawful evictions, orders of protection for violent reactions to severe pandemic stress, unfair denials of SNAP food benefits for hungry families, pandemic scams, and improperly restricted access to Medicare and Medicaid healthcare. The need for legal assistance will not end when the pandemic slows: job loss, health impacts, increased demand for public benefits, domestic abuse, and loss of housing will increase the number of Montanans needing civil legal aid for many months and likely years into the future. mtlsa.org



Montana Meth Project

Given our emphasis on online and social tactics, we have been able to adapt our strategies as the world changes. In the spring of 2020, during the height of the pandemic lockdown, we quickly produced an 8-part video series of at-home resources to reach those in drug recovery and others struggling, providing accessible support tools and resources to our worldwide online community. montanameth.org



Montana Natural History Center

The Montana Natural History Center has accepted the challenge and opportunity of COVID-19 using innovative programming. We successfully transitioned our science and nature educational programs from in-person to online in order to serve our audience safely. In a typical year we impact approximately 10,000 people. Since March, we've already connected with well over 17,000 people of all ages throughout Montana and across the country. montananaturalist.org



Montana Spay/Neuter Task Force

We continue working to empower people challenged by lack of money to care for their pets. Now, more than ever in the age of Covid, individuals, families, and seniors need the comfort of a pet, who asks for nothing more than love, comfort, good food, and good health. Task Force cannot hold big events, but offers financial assistance to help spay and neuter. If they want to help cut the numbers of unwanted and neglected animals, we want to help. montanaspayneutertaskforce.org



Montana Supporting Military

This has certainly been a challenging year for MT Supporting Military in supporting our deployed troops. We have not been able to hold our annual fundraisers, and donations are way down. These issues result in us being low on care package items, and funds for postage. We had to cut back on care packages. Care packages are a huge morale booster for troops, knowing that folks back home are thinking of them. We sent patriotic cards made and written by several people around the state. As more Montana troops deploy, we will do all we can to let them know Montana supports them. mtsupportingmilitary.org



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

Even in difficult times, MWCC is continuing to serve watershed conservation partners across Montana to provide communities with funding, training, and resources that support land and water conservation. Since the pandemic began, we've provided over \$40,000 to organizations for capacity and adaptation efforts, and in the fall of 2020 we reenvisioned our Watershed Symposium to host over 200 conservation leaders virtually for 3 days. Through ongoing support, we will continue expanding our efforts to support conservation for all Montana communities. mtwatersheds.org



Montana Wilderness Association

Montana Wilderness Association unites Montanans to protect our wildlife and wild places. We're protecting habitat for lynx, grizzlies, and elk, standing up to oil and gas development, protecting clean water, and maintaining the trails that connect us to the outdoors. We've been bringing Montanans together for more than 60 years. Even if we can't do it face to face right now, you can still count us to defend Montana's wild public lands no matter what. 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



NAMI Montana

At the beginning of the pandemic, NAMI Montana ran a public advocacy campaign to expand access for telehealth services through Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance. NAMI Montana helped NAMI affiliates around the state problem solve how to continue providing NAMI support groups and education classes in their communities. Video conferencing and Zoom platforms became an option for affiliate group facilitators to conduct their groups and continue to provide that support to people with Mental Illness and their families. In early spring, the country was experiencing a shortage of protective equipment. NAMI Montana used its experience working directly with manufacturers to source a variety of protective masks for distribution through the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). NAMI Montana also worked through the Oro y Plata Foundation and Hopa Mountain to source and distribute masks for rural and tribal communities across Montana. As spring turned into summer, the country began experience a shortage of COVID-19 testing swabs. With the support of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana and Montana DPHHS, NAMI Montana was able to source and deliver 250,000 COVID-19 testing swabs for use in Montana DPHHS's testing facilities. namimt.org



NeighborWorks Montana

COVID-19 has caused a financial hardship for many in Montana, making it difficult to pay housing expenses. NeighborWorks Montana has partnered with the state of Montana to provide assistance to people needing help filling out the application for the Emergency Housing Assistance program, offered by the state, getting funds into the hands of Montanans most affected by COVID. nwmt.org



Pride Foundation

As Covid-19 began to impact Montana people, businesses and communities, Pride Foundation worked to mobilize resources and created the Crisis Community Care Fund. Regional officers, including Quinn Leighton in Montana worked to better understand how our most vulnerable communities were being impacted including; people of color, people who are immunocompromised, people with HIV/AIDS, youth, older LGBTQ adults and transgender people. Since the beginning of the CCC Fund, Pride Foundation has awarded almost \$700,000 across all five states and just short of \$50,000 in Montana. pridefoundation.org



Queen City Ballet Company

Queen City Ballet Company, like so many, has made a paradigm shift in its mission. From being a ballet performance oriented organization, to suddenly being a non-performing entity; it's been a mindshift for the Board, but more so for the dancers. With no audience for our Company Dancers to perform before, we as a Board have surfed Instagram, the Web, Facebook, and other social media platforms to see how other dance companies from all over the globe are providing dance training, jobs, and performance opportunities for their dancers. What we found is that creativity abounds in these trying times, that's for sure!

One of our projects was to provide funding to the individual dancers so they could compete in virtual competitions. This allowed them to show their solo or pas de deux and be judged virtually. Our dancers were quite successful and received high marks.

Our second project, which we are now in the midst of, is the creation of a short video loosely titled "A Day in the Life of QCBC Dancers". We aim to capture their disciplined and ambitious training routine/schedule even while knowing they will have no performance outlet to show their passion and talent. For several of these senior dancers, this will be their magna opus, and our hope is that the video will be a souvenir for their year in COVID, and also a video for us to generate donor interest for our non-profit. 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



Spay Montana*

Thousands of animals were affected all over Montana. For every animal we didn't do at least seven animals were born. Cats outbreed dogs so on average there would have been an average of 28,000 life births that occurred because of clinic cancellations. The dog population most likely did a bit better although still staggering numbers especially on our Native Nations. Estimated number of births range from 19,000 – 22,000. This is such a sorry state of affairs and will take us years to catch up. One of our biggest challenges was to keep our clinics safe and disease free and not become a massive spreader. It involved changing our entire clinic protocol. Eliminating hundreds of volunteers, banning children under the age of 18 and limiting owners into the clinics. All cats were curbside, no owners allowed, and dogs were limited to one family member only to assist in their recovery. The clinic medical costs skyrocketed with many of our induction drugs becoming more difficult to get. Our PPE, (surgical gloves, masks, gowns) were next to impossible to get. One of the most challenging parts of the year was weeks and weeks of planning a clinic in a community only to have to cancel it and reschedule, then rescheduling only to cancel again. Our entire year has been spent doing this. spaymontana.org



Susan G. Komen Idaho Montana

Through donations Susan G Komen Idaho Montana has been able to help more women access the breast cancer care and services they need. We have been able to help those in treatment with their daily living expenses as well as help those who have had changes in their insurance get the routine screenings they need. More women in Idaho and Montana are in need and your financial support is greatly appreciated. komenidahomontana.org



Windhorse Equine Learning*

We resumed classes June 8, following the spring lockdown. We were able to continue classes and camps this summer and fall, serving 60 kids. For the first time, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we designed a new class for teens with anxiety. The class included interactions with horses and taught strategies for coping with anxiety, including breathing techniques, meditation and journaling. The goal was for these youth to find relief from their anxiety through mutual understanding, support from peers and mentors, being in the presence of and learning how to work with our gentle horses, and learning skills they can use to alleviate their anxiety outside of the Windhorse setting.

The class consisted of middle or high school youth that self-described as being anxious or having anxiety. It met in six 2-hour sessions in the summer and was offered completely free to participants. In offering our pilot program this summer, Windhorse partnered with two professors in MSU's College of Education, Health, and Human Performance to conduct research to demonstrate the class's effectiveness in reducing anxiety. We measured levels of anxiety before and after each session through student self-assessments as well as qualitative interviews with students. There were noteworthy improvements in participant anxiety levels after the implementation of this program. All but one participant experienced dramatic improvements in anxiety scores. We plan to build on our success and serve more teens with anxiety in 2021.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety disorders are the most common mental health disorders of childhood and adolescence. Nearly 1 in 3 adolescents will meet the criteria for any anxiety disorder by the age of 18. Recent surveys conducted since the onset of Covid-19 in March indicate a marked increase in mental health concerns among teens. In a survey of 1500 teens conducted by Harris Poll, 7 out of 10 teenagers said they were struggling with their mental health in some way. windhorseequinelearning.org



Send your donation to:
Montana Shares
PO Box 883
Helena, MT 59624

Print name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

____ 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 2020/2021 PLEDGE FORM

- ____ 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
- ____ Friends of the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula
- ____ Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument
- ____ Great Falls Community Food Bank
- ____ Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter
- ____ Holter Museum of Art
- ____ Jeannette Rankin Peace Center
- ____ K9 Care Montana
- ____ Last Chance Community Pow Wow
- ____ Lewis & Clark Humane Society
- ____ Mai Wah Society
- ____ Missoula Medical Aid
- ____ Montana 4-H Foundation
- ____ Montana Association for the Blind
- ____ Montana Audubon
- ____ MT Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- ____ Montana Discovery Foundation
- ____ Montana Food Bank Network
- ____ Montana Free Press
- ____ Montana Generational Justice Foundation
- ____ Montana History Foundation
- ____ Montana Legal Services Association
- ____ Montana Meth Project
- ____ Montana Natural History Center
- ____ Montana Spay/Neuter Task Force
- ____ Montana Supporting Military
- ____ Montana Trout Unlimited
- ____ Montana Watershed Coordination Council
- ____ Montana Wilderness Association
- ____ Montana Wildlife Federation
- ____ NAMI Montana
- ____ NeighborWorks Montana
- ____ Pride Foundation
- ____ Queen City Ballet Company
- ____ Rural Employment Opportunities (REO)
- ____ Spay Montana
- ____ Susan G. Komen Idaho Montana
- ____ Windhorse Equine Learning
- ____ Undesignated

WRITE IN NON PROFITS (must be a 501(c)3)



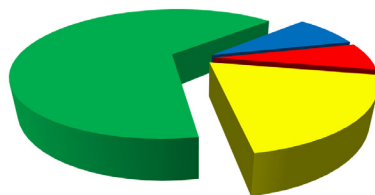
Yes! Please cut this newsletter apart.

Annual Report

2019 Financial Report

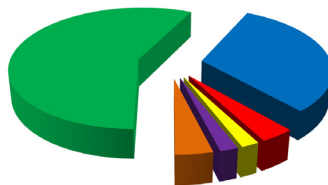
Revenue - \$322,399

■ Collected Contributions to Members..	\$212,155
■ Fundraisers	\$26,502
■ Dues	\$21,564
■ Other Income	\$62,178



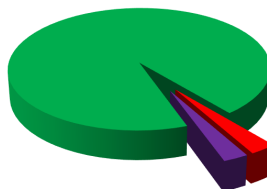
Expenses - \$315,841

■ Distribution to Members	\$180,332
■ Personnel	\$99,270
■ Accounting	\$11,572
■ Rent	\$6,024
■ Printing	\$6,089
■ Other	\$12,554



Organizational Program, Administration & Fundraising Percentages

■ Program Expenses -	94%
■ Fundraising Expenses -	3%
■ Administrative Expenses -	3%



New member applications accepted this winter

If you know a nonprofit interested in applying to participate as a member of Montana Shares in the 2023-2022 campaign, have them contact the Shares office for the criteria, requirements and application packet. Deadline: March 1st, 2021.

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 web site. 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 2019 fiscal year, our IRS Form 990 reflects a low 5.5% fundraising/general management expense compared to revenue. Our IRS 990 and audited financial statements are posted on our web site. 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.

Donors pledged \$242,836 for campaign year 2020 and \$230,908 for campaign year 2019. 100% of campaign contributions stay in Montana. Fifteen percent is withheld from collected contributions for program support. 7.1% of our pledges were uncollectible. 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.

Montana Shares is a partnership of Montana-based nonprofit groups devoted to improving the quality of life in communities throughout the state. Our members promote, protect and preserve our state's human, animal, cultural and natural resources. They work on issues concerning women, children, families and seniors, health and hunger, the environment, arts and culture, education, domestic and wild animals, social justice and human rights. The purpose of Shares is to work with and on behalf of our members to promote and support their programs, provide training, technical assistance, consultation and financial support on a year-round basis and, thereby, to help them expand and diversify their programs that serve Montanans. Contributions received at Montana Shares further serve to accomplish these purposes.

Council Officers - 2020-2022

President - Nikki Andersen
Vice President - Kelley Willett
Secretary - Darbie Hess
Treasurer - Bernie Ongoy-Franks
Past President - Dave Chadwick

Montana Shares at-large members and term ends working on behalf of all members of Shares:

Nikki Andersen, Helena 5/22
Carissa Beckwith, Helena 5/22
Dave Cooper, Helena, 5/21
Darbie Hess, Helena 5/22
Mary Wright, Helena, 5/21

Council members Individual (representation) (term ends)

Nikki Andersen (At-large member) (5/22)
Carissa Beckwith (At-large member) (5/22)
Dave Cooper (At-large member) (5/21)
Bernie Franks-Ongoy (Disability Rights MT) (5/22)
Darbie Hess (At-large member) (5/22)
Bill Mathews (MT Food Bank Network) (9/22)
Michelle Rogers (NeighborWorks MT) (5/22)
Ann Rupert (Bridgework) (5/21)
Kelley Willett (Montana Trout Unlimited) (5/21)
Kelsey Dalton Watts (L&C Humane Society) (5/22)
Mary Wright (At-large member) (5/21)



Montana Shares Staff

Bill Crane, Executive Director
Kristi Paulsen, Office Manager
Jami Welsh, Accountant

Member of:

Community Shares USA
communitysharesusa.org



Montana Nonprofit Association
mtnonprofit.org



Montana Nonprofit Association



*Please read this
Covid-19 Issue!*

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sharesreport

A newsletter and annual report
from Montana Shares, a
partnership of Montana-based
nonprofit groups devoted to improving
the quality of life in communities
throughout Montana

www.montanashares.org

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Thank you to Montana Shares 2020 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 33 fabulous prizes including 14 prize packages, raised \$29,504. Thank you to our hard working members', staff, our council and friends for your help and support. Thank you one and all! The winners of the 2020 raffle drawing were notified following the 9/18/20 drawing and their names are posted on our web site. Visit montanashares.org home page, go to Fundraising then Annual Raffle for the raffle results.