

Generous Legacy - January 2016 Newsletter

Greetings!

Happy New Year & thank you for your on-going interest and commitment to the Flathead Community Foundation.

Special Tax Bill Includes Extended Help for Charities *Provision Permits Tax-Free Charitable Transfers from IRAs*

On December 18, Congress passed the PATH Act, which renews and makes permanent the Charitable IRA provision of 2006 and makes it easier for Americans to give to causes they care about. This provision has the power to help local charities strengthen their communities, by allowing individuals to roll over up to \$100,000 annually from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to charity, without being federally taxed.

It is a win-win for people who would rather give to charity than pay taxes and for the nonprofit organizations they choose to support.

Thanks to decades of deliberate saving, some of today's retirees have more money in their IRAs than they need for daily living expenses and long-term care. Charitable individuals and couples have expressed interest in giving the funds to charity; but income tax must be paid on all withdrawals, which reduces the value of the gift. Others are concerned about designating their children as IRA beneficiaries, since that may draw unintended tax consequences.



For larger estates, a good portion of IRA wealth goes to estate taxes and income taxes of beneficiaries. Experts estimate heirs may receive less than 50% of IRA assets that pass through estates. A provision in the federal law extends this special option: transferring IRA assets directly to charity. By going directly to a qualified public charity such as the Flathead Community Foundation, the money is not included in the IRA owner's income and-most important-is not taxed, preserving the full amount for charitable purposes.

Annually, holders of traditional IRAs who are at least 70½ years old can make direct charitable transfers up to \$100,000. Individuals may exclude the amount distributed directly to an eligible charity from their gross income. The Flathead Community Foundation can help donors execute the transfers and choose from several charitable fund options for their gift. Note: Donor Advised Funds do not qualify for tax-free IRA transfers.

This is a powerful opportunity for anyone interested in establishing a permanent legacy in the community they love - a chance of a lifetime to make the gift of a lifetime.

Through philanthropic services, strategic grant making and community leadership, the Flathead Community Foundation helps people support the causes they care about, now and for generations to come.

Crown of the Continent Choir Concerts

- *January 16th at 2:00 pm--Flathead Reservation Human Rights Coalition Martin Luther King event, St. Ignatius
- *January 18th at 7:00 pm--Love Lives Here Martin Luther King Celebration at Whitefish Performing Arts Center, Whitefish
- *January 19th at 7:00 pm--Love Lives Here Martin Luther King Celebration at Flathead High Auditorium, Kalispell

The Hockaday Museum of Art

- *January 7th-"Free and Wild" at the Museum.
- World-renowned wildlife photographer Donald M. Jones will host special tours, book signings, exhibition walk-throughs and offer one-on-one conversations to share photography tips and anecdotes.*

Women Who Wine of the Flathead

- *January 5th at 5:30 pm-Kalispell at Bestow Heart & Home
- *January 19th at 5:30 pm-First meeting of new Bigfork chapter at Frame of Reference

If you have an Upcoming Event or news about your organization, please send it to the newsletter editor Mona Charles at mcharles@centurylink.net or call 261-9163.



Join us this Sunday, January 10th for Groovin' on a Sunday Afternoon.

Featuring John Dunnigan

Tickets \$10 in Advance - at Electric Avenue Gifts or Great Northern Gourmet in Bigfork or purchase online at www.bigforkcenter.org.

What's Groovin' on a Sunday Afternoon?

- * An intimate musical experience with the valley's best musicians at the beautiful lobby at the Bigfork Center.
- * Socialize with friends and listen to great music, only 100 tickets per event.
- * Food & Beverage are available for

FCF Board Member Spotlight Mike Smith



How long have you lived in the Flathead?

We've been in Kalispell since 2007. My wife is from Helena and we had been vacationing in Bigfork for 10-12 years. At the time we had 4-year-old twins and a 3-year-old, and decided we wanted to raise them in Montana.

What do you do?

I am the Retail Lending Manager for Glacier Bank, responsible for all consumer-related lending.

What does the Flathead Community Foundation mean to you?

It's the opportunity to be involved in an organization that helps numerous non-profits. That's important to me.

Why have you committed to serving on this board? What do you see as your special gift or contribution to the Foundation? To the community?

I think it's important for Glacier Bank and me to be involved in an organization that supports our non-profit community. My contribution is bringing organizational experience to help the Foundation Board develop and improve our processes. Creating a strong community foundation has its challenges, and we're working to get on the right foot building for the future. We're always striving to improve.

What do you see as the Foundation's role in the community?

Our role as an organization is to help generate ongoing funding for non-profits and to give charitable donors the ability to create a legacy. The community foundation is simply the vehicle; it is the philanthropic donors and non-profits who must create our community's charitable future.

What do you see (or would you like to see) as the future of the Foundation?

I would like us to be a robust organization whose strong combination of employees, volunteers and Board members can provide excellent leadership, education, and funding opportunities for non-profits. I would like to see the Foundation grow significantly in its funding capacity.

What would you like the public to know about the Flathead Community Foundation?

We need the support and participation of our community. I think this is a challenge -- helping the public understand that the Foundation needs their help in financing day-to-day operations. We have monthly expenses for our staff and the services we provide. In addition to financial support, we need volunteers for Board service and administrative assistance.

I think we struggle with how to ask for operating money because our mission is to build funds and charitable support for the entire Flathead community. Creating permanent funds for local nonprofits is not a heart-touching mission, although it does ensure the sustainability of organizations that touch many hearts and serve important needs. It is hard when you are a resource for numerous non-profits to get people to understand your own need for their help.

Look at what Whitefish has been able to do when people donate money to their community foundation. We don't have that volume yet, but we're working hard to build it. It takes a long time, and I know we've got two great staff members in Lucy Smith and Lisa Schnee. My challenge is how to keep them excited and engaged when it's a tough, tough position they're in.

Thank you Mike for your dedication to the Flathead Community Foundation!

purchase during event.
* Support non-profit beneficiary that receives a percentage of proceeds at each show.

Groovin' Partners for ALL Shows: 406 Woman Magazine; Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts; Flathead Community Foundation; and Northwest Artist Syndicate

FCF Staff & Board

Staff

[Lucy Smith](#), Executive Director
[Lisa Schnee](#), Director of Operations

Board of Directors

Mike Smith, President
Gina Benesh, Vice President
Ty Weber, Treasurer
Melinda Morton, Secretary
Marc Lorenzen
Jeffery Lewis
Heidi Escalante
Jim Rafferty
Clint Ekern



FLATHEAD
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

345 First Avenue East
Kalispell, MT 59901
406.756.9047
info@flatheadcommunityfoundation.org
www.flatheadcommunityfoundation.org

Your donation to the Flathead Community Foundation supports our mission to ensure the good of the Flathead forever, by strengthening local nonprofits and connecting generous donors with the causes they care about most. Make a difference.

Current Funds at the FCF:

- Abbie Shelter Endowment
- CASA for Kids Endowment
- Care Farm Challenge
- Child Bridge Endowment
- Crown of the Continent Community Choir
- Flathead Community Foundation Endowment
- Flathead Food Bank Endowment
- Glacier Symphony & Chorale Endowment
- Foys-Herron Park Endowment
- Hockaday Museum of Art Endowment
- Humane Society of NW Montana Endowment

Fund of the Month Paws to Play

Paws to Play's mission is "to create for our dog friends a safe, natural environment where they can experience life off-leash and enjoy the freedom of running and socializing with other canines."



Debra Franciosi, a member of the Paws to Play steering committee, said, "Kalispell is the population and geographic center of the Flathead Valley. We have a lot of dogs in our community and we have a lot of people who want to obey the rules, but they also want to be able to play with their dogs off-leash.

"The city is growing and space is getting gobbled up. We need to identify a safe and legal place for this to happen. There certainly is an interest."

Currently Hugh Rogers Wag Park in Whitefish is the only off-leash dog park in the Valley.

Paws to Play's immediate goal is to identify a site for the dog park. The city of Kalispell has suggested two possible locations, but both present major concerns. One area is very small and probably would not meet the community's current and potentially expanding needs. The other site is an undeveloped property previously was a dump by the river, Franciosi said, and "that would, of course, involve EPA studies and similar issues."

Paws to Play hopes people in the community might offer land to be set aside for a dog park.

The group is actively fundraising to create its vision of a large area for dogs to romp with paved pathways for accessibility for people with disabilities. Franciosi added that money is need to pay for the basic requirements including fencing, trash receptacles and ideally, a clean water source for people and animals to drink.

"We're on our way in terms of fundraising but it's little bit by little bit," Franciosi said. In addition to private and corporate donations, the group will begin applying for grants as soon as the park's location has been identified.

"The dog park has the potential for being a great recreation area and community gathering place for people who may or may not even have dogs," Franciosi said. "And we certainly have a lot of people coming through the area as tourists and visitors."

The Hugh Rogers Wag Park in Whitefish, which has been recognized as one of the top dog parks in the country, has been very helpful sharing information and their experience. The Wag Park has "great acreage, including an area for smaller dogs, a big romping area, an agility obstacle course kind of thing, paved pathways and a picnic area as well," Franciosi enthused. "They've looked at the rules that need to be in place for a safe environment for the animals, dog owners and the neighbors in that general area. They've been successful in their fundraising-that's a great model and they've been very helpful telling us the things that need to be considered."

The public's response has been very positive. Hundreds of people and their pets attended the group's Doggie Days event

- Kalispell Boulder Project
- Kalispell Golf Association
- Lighthouse Christian Home
- NpDP Endowment
- NW MT Forest Fire Lookout Endowment
- Paws to Play Dog Park Project
- Ravenwood Outdoor Learning Center
- Sunburst Community Foundation Endowment
- Women Who Wine of the Flathead (Giving Circle)

Donate



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last September in Lawrence Park held in partnership with Kalispell Parks and Recreation. An event held at Kalispell Center Mall also had a great community response. Community businesses have also been quite supportive of Paws to Play.

"People are really excited! I can't think of a single negative thing that's been said."

Franciosi stresses the importance of spreading the word about the park and Paws to Play is developing more community events.

For more information or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit www.pawstoplay.org or visit them on Facebook.

You make the difference. We make it happen.