



For Immediate Release

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COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND IS HELPING MEET EMERGENCY NEEDS THROUGHOUT SOUTHWEST MT

(April 24, 2020) -- Launched only four weeks ago, the Southwest Montana COVID-19 Response Fund, a collaborative fund created by the Bozeman Area Community Foundation (BACF) and Greater Gallatin United Way (GGUW), announced nearly \$70,000 in grant awards to organizations working throughout Southwest Montana to address the health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. (List of recipient organizations is below)

To date, the fund has raised over \$300,000 -- with \$150,000 in donations from the community generously matched by challenge grants from AMB West Philanthropies, the Morgridge Family Foundation, the Mysun Family Foundation and an anonymous donor.

“We are deeply grateful for the support the fund has received, both from individuals and our major donors. We are in this together and this fund is a testament to our collective desire to care for those most vulnerable at this challenging time” noted Bridget Wilkinson, Executive Director of BACF. “It really is inspiring.”

As members of the SW Montana COAD, GGUW and BACF are actively working with community leaders, local government, public health, and emergency management officials to monitor and respond to the immediate and evolving needs of the region resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. All requests for funding are reviewed and approved on a rolling basis by the Donor Steering Group which is comprised of members of the following organizations – Greater Gallatin United Way (staff and board), Bozeman Area Community Foundation (staff and board), SW Montana COAD (Communities Organizations Active in Disaster), AMB West Philanthropies, Bozeman Help Center/2-1-1, and Gallatin Valley Land Trust. Additionally, an advisory committee has been assembled to provide regional oversight, specifically designed to assist with questions surrounding need and the availability of additional funding in Park, Madison and Meagher counties and the communities of Belgrade, Big Sky and W. Yellowstone.

“Working with organizations and government representatives from throughout the region has really allowed us to make informed, timely decisions with regard to allocating funds” explained Danica Jamison, Executive Director of GGUW. “In the first round of grants we were able to provide meaningful support to organizations addressing homelessness, food insecurity, and domestic abuse as well as support individuals and families finding it impossible to meet their basic needs due to financial difficulties resulting from the economic shutdown and social distancing requirements.”

At this point in the current crisis, the Southwest MT COVID-19 Response Fund is focusing on providing aid in five primary areas of need: food/supply distribution, emergency housing, emergency financial assistance, health and wellbeing, and programs/supplies needed to support crisis response. Requests for support are being reviewed on a rolling basis with a goal of announcing new awards weekly. The fund has received over \$550,000 in requests for COVID 19 related support, which is approximately \$250,000 more than funds currently available. Donations to the fund may be made online through the GGUW's website, <https://www.greatergallatinunitedway.org/southwest-montana-covid-19-response-fund>.

Award recipients include:

Bozeman School District - To help offset meal delivery costs to get breakfast and lunch meals to low-income students in the Bozeman School District that did not have transportation to access these meals at pick-up locations.

The HRDC Warming Center - To ensure that HRDC can continue day shelter operations for homeless community members, which includes providing showers, laundry, food, and other hygiene services to those experiencing homelessness through May 15th.

REACH, Inc. – To implement the protocols for keeping our clients safe, purchase computers for the clients to use at their homes so they can have more contact and communication with their families and purchase as many supplies as we could access to follow the recommendations of the Gallatin County Health Department.

HAVEN – For shelter, support services, and HAVEN's general operating funds to meet shifting and increased survivor needs based on COVID-19 impacts.

MT Racial Equity Project – For their COVID-19 Crisis Fund to distribute emergency funds to Black, Brown, Indigenous, and people of color, LGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, and undocumented persons who are in financial crisis due to the coronavirus crisis.

Greater Impact – To meet the new needs of the community affected by COVID-19, including deliveries of necessities – groceries, formula, cleaning supplies, etc., house and vehicle repairs, financial assistance and other needs as they are identified.

Gallatin Development Corporation DBA Prospera Business Network – To assist business owners and non-profits with pivoting their businesses and applying for federal and state loans and grants.

Gallatin County Health Department Home Visiting Program -- Funding for purchasing supplies and materials for 130 kits for families with small children to be distributed by Healthy Gallatin Home Visiting nurses and social workers to quarantined and isolated families.

Montana Science Center – To print 3D masks, headbands, and other PPE equipment, as needed and requested, by many healthcare providers and health care nonprofits that need additional equipment.

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About Greater Gallatin United Way Greater Gallatin United Way's mission is to mobilize the caring power of our communities. We empower donors, volunteers, businesses, governments, nonprofits, and community groups to invest in neighbors and improve the quality of life for everyone in Gallatin, Madison, Meagher, and Park Counties. Working together, we identify the community's most critical needs and implement collaborative, innovative solutions. Learn more at www.greatergallatinunitedway.org.

About the Bozeman Area Community Foundation Established in 1998, the Bozeman Area Community Foundation is connecting people who care to causes that matter most to them. The Bozeman Area Community Foundation serves the areas of Bozeman, Big Sky, Belgrade, Manhattan, Churchill, Three Forks, and the rural areas in between. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed more than \$4.3 million dollars to 194+ local nonprofit organizations. Learn more at www.bozemanfoundation.org.

About SW MT COAD Officially founded in June 2018, the Southwest Montana COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disasters) is an association of local organizations assisting our communities to be mobilized and prepared for disasters including the COVID-19 pandemic through coordination, preparation, education, and implementation serving Gallatin, Madison, and Park Counties.