

CAUSES THAT MATTER



30 YEARS BUILDING
A BETTER WYOMING

Small Town, Big Science

Grantmaking from the WYCF Sublette Local Board

“Destiny joined the Big Piney High School Robotics program when she was a freshman. She worked one-on-one with a professional engineer as her mentor – they designed, wired, and built robots together. The experience was life changing and now Destiny is pursuing a degree in electrical engineering.

“We take anyone and everyone,” says Steve Nelson, a retired teacher at Big Piney High School. Often his students tell him they don’t know anything about robotics. He replies with, “I didn’t either when we started.”

Playing with Robots

It all started in 2006 when Steve took his students on a class trip to see an inventor. They saw him building and “playing” with robots and were excited. The students thought it was fun.



“Can we do that? Play with robots?” the kids asked Steve. About a year later, the Big Piney High School Robotics program became an afterschool club, and the students started competing in robotics matches.

While robotics may be new to you, students across the country are using their brains, teamwork and imagination to outwit their opponents.

During the school year the Big Piney team builds a robot with very specific rules and requirements. They take their robot to competitions where the robot must perform specific tasks in a three-on-three match. The teams move through the brackets, in fun and sometimes intense competition.

The team didn’t make it to the world championships this past year, but the impact of the competition and the pride of the team is lasting.

“They built a robot they were proud of,” says Steve. “and they learned a lot building it, which was a lot of fun.”

For some students, like Destiny, the experience is more than just fun, it’s life changing.

“The robotics team gave me enough confidence to apply to college to pursue my degree,” says Destiny. “The team was the best thing I’ve joined and have been a part of in my life thus far.”

Students travel to regional matches each year. In the past, the team has even qualified for the world championships in Houston. The team used a grant they received from WYCF to cover registration costs of their regional competition in Denver this past year.

Because of
your generosity
12 students
were able
to compete.



Grain for Good

Saylak Family Unrestricted Endowment Fund

Like so many of you, Blake and Katrina McGee believe that every person should have access to healthy food. That's why they started a tiny nonprofit called Solstice Acre in Laramie.

It all started when Blake and Katrina McGee decided to build a brick oven in their backyard. Blake baked bread for friends and family and it was so popular that the McGee's took their hobby to the farmer's market. The loaves of dense, crispy bread always sold out before the market was over.

Their work is straightforward and full of goodness: make artisan bread that feeds Laramie's hungry community members.

The McGee's found success but wanted to do more for their community. Soon they focused their efforts on giving back. And in a big way.

They made the decision to donate their whole-grain artisan bread to the Laramie Soup Kitchen and Feeding Laramie Valley (FLV). They soon realized need was greater than what they could produce, so they turned to the Wyoming Community Foundation for a grant.

Because of your support, Solstice Acre was able to purchase a grain mill that helped them increase production.

The story could easily end there, but it doesn't. The McGee's wanted to do even more. They had a larger goal – one that would support a completely different group of people.

A Path to Empowerment

You see, Blake and Katrina's son has autism. The two know how difficult it can be for those with disabilities to gain the experiences needed to make it in the real world. To feel empowered to work.

Passionate about creating opportunities for those who need a bit more guidance or time, the McGee's started an apprenticeship program using the Department of Rehabilitation.

Employees with disabilities not only receive wages, employers like Katrina and Blake support and mentor the person hired to help them achieve their greatest potential.

"It's really a win-win," says Katrina. "We get an extra hand and also get to mentor these young people as they learn skills that will help them in the workplace."

The impact of Solstice Acre is felt community-wide and because of your support, even small nonprofits like Solstice Acre, are making a big impact in their community.



The McGee's started baking bread for fun, but soon realized the difference warm bread makes to those who are hungry.

STATS AND FACTS

90 Loaves of bread Solstice Acre can make in a week.



2 Number of apprentices who have gained work experience through Solstice Acre.



Proceeds from sales at the summer farmer's market that are donated to the Soup Kitchen and Feeding Laramie Valley.

\$2,500



Number of community brick ovens Solstice Acre hopes to build in the future to give everyone access to fresh baked bread.

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A Love for Libraries, and For Doing Good

McMurry Library Endowment Fund

If you have visited a Wyoming library, you've been impacted by Carol McMurry. Carol was a generous, caring woman who was passionate about making each community she touched better.

For most of her career Carol had been a librarian. After she retired, she continued to devote her time to these important public spaces. She not only treasured reading, she believed libraries, especially small-town libraries, added to the heart of a place.

It wasn't unusual to find Carol stacking books as a volunteer at her

local library. It's easy to imagine her thumbing through the pages of well-worn novels before sliding them into place. She'd chat with library staff and patrons. She was an incredible volunteer.

As a champion of libraries and librarians, Carol did even more to support these great community hubs. She created the McMurry Library Endowment Fund at the Wyoming Community Foundation in 2000. The fund has impacted a library in every county since.



Carol McMurry believed in making a difference.

Continued on back page

It was a blessing and privilege to know and love Carol - so grateful for her library support and commitment.

Beth Worthen

Thank you for everything. The McMurray Grant helped me complete college! Holly Bauer

We will strive to honor Carol's memory in what we do every day! Frances

There is a piece of Carol at the heart of every library in Wyoming. Samira

Carol's commitment to Wyoming's libraries has helped shape how we impact our state. Thank you! ☺

Lisa Scroggins
Natrona County

Thank you for all the times you have helped us

Clairie Francis
Luna Co Library

Recently, Wyoming librarians paid tribute to Carol.

The McMurry Library Fund has helped librarians with continuing education, has expanded library collections, and helped build innovative projects like makerspaces and even a bike library.

The people who have been on the receiving end of her generosity (and there are hundreds), have immense gratitude for all she's done.

In June of this year, Carol passed away. It was heartbreaking to learn that such a kind, caring person was no longer with us. Her legacy of generosity will live on forever though, through the giving that continues from her endowed fund.

These Albany County librarians are just one example of those who have benefited from Carol's generosity. Her legacy will continue for years to come.

THE MCMURRY FUND SINCE INCEPTION:

605 Number of grants to librarians for continuing education from the Carol McMurry Library Fund.



25 additional grants given to support everything from purchasing books, to building makerspaces.



UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2 - 3

Wyoming Afterschool Alliance
11th Annual Statewide Conference:
Empowering Children's Future

Little America Hotel, Cheyenne, WY

Register at:

wyafterschoolalliance.org

October 10 -13

Wyoming Women's Foundation's
Wyoming Women's
Antelope Hunt
Dinner and Auction

6pm Cocktails
7pm Dinner

Ranch at Ucross, near Buffalo

Tickets:

wyomingwomensantelopehunt.org



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THANK YOU! Look inside to see
the difference you've made.

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