

CAUSES THAT MATTER



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Connecting to Nature, Connecting to One Another

Casting for Recovery

“It’s not just about learning to fish,” Mary Turney, program coordinator of Casting for Recovery, points out. “It’s about the medical and emotional impacts of having had a breast cancer diagnosis.”

Every summer, women with breast cancer come to Absaroka Ranch near Dubois to learn to fly-fish. Some are in treatment, others in recovery. Each has her own story. But as they learn about stream maneuvering, fly tying, and fish behavior, they also experience solidarity that many did not expect.

Most Casting for Recovery participants are not interested in a typical support group. Very few have ever attended one. But Casting for Recovery is not typical. The women who gather connect to each other by first connecting to nature. At the heart of the weekend’s discussions, meditations and celebrations is an opportunity to spend time outdoors with some of the few people who truly understand what a participant has gone through.

What else makes Casting for Recovery unique? It’s free. For women whose medical history may have cost

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A CfR angler and guide practice casting.

STATS & FACTS

Only **12** of the **126** participants had previously attended a support group session.

Recovery benefits the survivor, her family, her employer and the community.



Retreats include sessions led by psychosocial facilitators, medical facilitators sharing innovations in treatment, and fly fishing instructors.

Statistics show **support** and **education** hasten the healing process.



A Second Chance at a Forever Home

Black Dog Animal Rescue

Auggie seemed hopeless. The stray, a miniature Australian shepherd, was deaf, and his deafness had made him anxious and high-strung. The family that found him believed he was untrainable.

Auggie was trainable, though. He just hadn't found the right handler yet. That handler turned out to be an inmate at the Wyoming Medium Correctional Institution in Torrington.

For nine weeks, Auggie lived in the Correctional Institution. He kept a regular routine, learned good manners, and received agility training. Inmate and dog learned to work with each other through a unique system of hand signals, and Auggie excelled.

The training Auggie got from his inmate handler was his first step toward a bright future. This opportunity came through the Preparing Adoptable

Companion K9s (PACK) Program. PACK is a

partnership between Black Dog Animal Rescue (BDAR) and the Correctional Institution. It enables inmates and dogs to build a relationship and improve each other's quality of life. While the dogs get ready for their forever homes, the inmates learn new skills and contribute to an important program.

Through PACK and other foster programs, BDAR can continue to offer alternatives to shelters and euthanasia for animals with complex needs. BDAR brings staff, volunteers and foster handlers together to give animals like Auggie a chance at a good home.

Placing animals with hosts, whether inmates or in homes, "replicates a real-life home for pets.... It's their native environment," says executive director Britney Wallesch.

Yet before BDAR, no such program existed in Wyoming. Britney remembers "that there was a need in Wyoming that wasn't being met." She worked hard to sell community members in Cheyenne and across the state on the good an organization like BDAR could do for cats and dogs that needed a home, and built a nonprofit that has helped thousands of animals. Recently, BDAR has created an agency endowed fund with the Wyoming Community Foundation, giving the organization ongoing security.

Now, Britney observes, BDAR is truly embraced by the community. BDAR's PACK Program is also thriving and building a legacy. Inmate handlers have begun training new members of prison staff in dog handling,

so that those staff members can in turn train future inmate handlers.

The PACK program gave Auggie's story a happy ending. The skills he learned from his handler made him so adoptable that he was sought after by several families. He now lives happily with a new family in Wyoming, and by all accounts, Auggie is thriving.



Auggie and his new family.

STATS & FACTS

The PACK program helps around **70** dogs annually

Dogs live with **9** handlers for **31** weeks

 A new class of dogs graduates every **3-4 weeks**

BDAR works with shelters in:



- Cheyenne
- Casper
- Laramie
- Rawlins
- Gillette
- Riverton
- Sheridan
- Torrington
- Green River

A Legacy of Literacy

Sue Jorgensen Library Foundation: Wyoming Reads

Every September, around 30 of Casper's most dedicated educators, volunteers and other community members gather to make an important decision. There is lobbying; there are debates. Participants argue passionately, trying to persuade each other to choose one option over another. Then, at the end of this process, there is a vote.

The all-important outcome of this vote is a group of six books. These are the books that every first-grader in the state will choose from as part of Wyoming Reads, an annual literacy project created by the Sue Jorgensen Library Foundation.

Every May, children gather for the Wyoming Reads celebration to receive their very own copy of the book they selected from the original six. What began as a small local celebration in 1996 has since spread across the entire state. This incredible growth is only possible because of donors like you.

As it has grown, the program has gone from success to success. In 2020, Wyoming Reads received a State Literacy Award from the Library of Congress. This year, founder John Jorgensen has been honored with the University of Wyoming's Carol Mead Leaders in Literacy Award.

But for John, Wyoming Reads is not about the laurels it has collected. It is a deeply personal cause.

Sue's Legacy

John's late wife Sue was a remarkable educator. Holding a Ph.D. in special education, Sue created the University of Wyoming elementary education program at Casper College. Sue passed away tragically in 1996. Thinking of their five children, John recalls that he

“wanted to come up with something for them to remember their mother by – not just being sad that they had lost their mom, but ‘here's what she stood for.’”

“Two of the things she was most passionate about were literacy and

“Two of the things she was most passionate about were literacy and small children.”



John Jorgensen tells first-graders the story of the Good Queen Sue.

small children,” John says. A program like Wyoming Reads “was kind of an easy fit.”

Twenty-three years after that first event, Sue lives on in an extraordinary way. At this year's celebration in Casper, a sunny day created a special air of excitement. At the Nicolaysen Museum, John told a fairy tale about the Good Queen Sue, ably acted out by high schoolers. Local celebrities read to groups of children at the Natrona County Library. Later, John formally received his Leaders in Literacy Award.

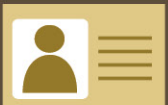
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STATS & FACTS

Nearly
1,500
volunteers
are involved

Every year over
7,000
hardback books
are distributed
annually to
Wyoming
1st-graders

35
celebrations
occur across
the state



Children receive a library card if they didn't already have one



“Connecting to Nature” continued

them both time and resources, this is essential. And, as a Wyoming Community Foundation grantee, this truly life-changing experience is possible because of donors like you.

Changing Lives, Giving Back

Mary is proud to share stories of women whose lives have been changed by Casting for Recovery.

One participant, “Vera,” arrived angry and aloof. Her cancer had made it impossible to pick up her young child, and her bitterness was palpable. Her dark glasses and drawn-down hood created a barrier to the other anglers. She avoided talking in sessions. When she did speak, it was with resentment.

Then Vera went out fishing with one of the guides. Mary recalls vividly what happened next. When Vera returned, she walked straight up to Mary. From her height of six feet, Vera reached down and clasped five-foot-two Mary’s shoulders. Looking Mary in the eye, she said simply, “I feel whole again.”

Vera now volunteers every year with Casting for Recovery. She and many others have become supporters of a cause they care deeply about. With your support of programs like Casting for Recovery, you have shared in Vera’s story, and in her passion for improving the lives of others.

“A Legacy of Literacy” continued

After a difficult year, this was an especially momentous day—and it was only possible because of you, because of John, and, of course, because of Sue.



First-graders are rapt as Jenn True from Hilltop Bank, Casper, reads to them

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UPCOMING EVENTS

October 7-10

Wyoming Women’s Antelope Hunt

wywf.org/

wyomingwomensantelopehunt/



May 16-18, 2022

Rescheduled!

Wyoming Nonprofit Conference

Casper, WY

wycf.org/nonprofitconference

Thinking about planned giving? Contact Vickery Fales Hall (vickery@wycf.org) for more information.

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



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