

# Contributor



A beautiful evening motorcycle ride quickly turned into tragedy for Cara and Phil Piccono.

## Survivor of Near-Fatal Motorcycle Accident Credits Benefis Emergency Services for Saving Her Life

Ten years ago, Cara Piccono was on an evening motorcycle ride with her husband, Phil, when she was hit by a car in Great Falls. Riding behind her, Phil witnessed the horrific scene. “I couldn’t believe it. **I saw Cara flying up through the air, spinning like a rag doll.**” It seemed to happen in slow motion.

The severities of Cara’s injuries were grave. She had sustained massive trauma in the accident, with injuries to her brain, heart, kidney, and lungs, plus deep lacerations to her face, crushed ribs, scapula, a broken clavicle, and her heel was degloved.

**If it had taken just a few minutes longer to start treating Cara, she wouldn’t be here today.**

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“ I got off my bike and ran to Cara. She was laying there with her eyes closed and no response, nothing. **I thought she had died.** ”

Phil Piccono

Continued from cover

The Benefis Emergency Department (ED) team knew there was no time to spare. Cara was rushed into surgery. Phil gave permission to remove her kidney because it was so severely damaged. Cara was then kept in a medically-induced coma for almost two weeks.

“The staff and nurses were great, updating us all the time and telling us what was happening. The attention they gave her was wonderful.”

Phil Piccono



After 14 days, Cara began gaining awareness. The next big step was taking her off the ventilator to see if she could breathe on her own—the first two attempts failed. **The doctors said she had a 50/50 chance of making it.**

Thankfully, Cara pulled through. It was a long road to recovery, but everything turned around once Cara started breathing on her own. “It was the biggest relief,” said Phil. “Just the day before, I didn’t think she was going to make it, but she was out of the woods.”

“When I was in the ICU and couldn’t communicate, to see the fear, heartache, and stress on my family was unbelievable,” reflected Cara. “But at the same time, **to see the comfort that the nurses gave to my family, not just me as a patient, was amazing.** We will never forget their kindness.”

Thanks to the highly trained and skilled teams in the Benefis Emergency Department, Cara survived the accident.

“Benefis and her physicians saved Cara’s life.”

Phil Piccono

**We need your help so more lives like Cara’s can be saved in emergency situations.**

The Emergency Department at Benefis is undergoing a much-needed renovation and expansion project. We have almost met our fundraising goal for the ED project—**we need \$200,000 more to reach \$2.5 million raised!**

**Please donate to the ED campaign with your year-end gifts.** You will be ensuring the future of world-class, life-saving emergency care for years to come for our community and the entire Northcentral Montana region.

# Nursing Student One Step Closer to Becoming an RN Thanks to Benefis Foundation Healthcare Scholarship

Over the summer, 21-year-old Cori Enseleit worked as a scrub technician in the Benefis Health System Birth Center, gaining valuable experience she hopes to use as a nurse at Benefis one day. Thanks to the financial support she received from the Benefis Foundation, Cori will graduate with a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from the MSU College of Nursing in May 2018 nearly debt free.



“It seems like every college student I meet is forced to take out student loans. Winning this scholarship is a big deal for me.”

Cori Enseleit

Cori began her tenure at Benefis in food services while she was in high school, and after earning her CNA certification, she worked at Grandview Senior Living. She is continuing to work her way up by becoming an RN because she wants to contribute to the health and well-being of her community.

**“I feel very lucky to have won this scholarship,” said Cori.** “I have always known I wanted to help others by working in the medical field. It is humbling to know that there are people out there who want to help students like me achieve their dreams.”

**Cori is just one of 34 college students to receive healthcare scholarships from the Benefis Foundation** for the fall 2017 and spring 2018 semesters. In total, \$63,500 was awarded to these deserving students.

The Healthcare Scholarship Program at the Benefis Foundation is designed to assist with the development of skilled healthcare professionals. Dozens of scholarships are available to students who are pursuing a degree, certification, or advancement in a medically related field.

Thanks to the generosity of many donors like you, the Benefis Foundation has awarded more than 580 students with \$1.1 million in scholarships since the program began in 1998.



“I am so glad I have chosen to become a nurse,” commented Cori. “Someday I will give back to this fund and make sure future students get the same help that I did.”

**Please consider supporting the Healthcare Scholarship Program with your next gift to the Benefis Foundation.** Your generosity will help students like Cori earn their degree and help our community gain skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals.

Cori, a fifth-generation Montanan, hopes to put her education to use in the community that she knows and loves by working as a nurse at Benefis.

# Meredith and Anthony Semenza Find Healthy Ways to Grieve at Camp Francis

When twins Meredith and Anthony Semenza were just 10 years old, they lost their father, Trevor, in a car accident. Learning to grieve after such a tragic loss is difficult at any age, but the Semenza family found a resource that has helped make the most difficult time in their lives a little less painful: the Benefis Peace Hospice Children's Bereavement Program and Camp Francis.

**Camp Francis serves as a sanctuary for children like Meredith and Anthony.** It's a safe place for kids to share their feelings about losing their loved one and to learn to let go of their sadness. For the past two years, Anthony and Meredith attended Camp Francis in early June, where they opened up about the loss of their father and learned how to grieve.

**"I didn't realize other people were also going through grief like mine," Meredith explained. "It is nice to know that we are not alone."**

Meredith and Anthony loved their time at Camp Francis and all of the fun activities, from drumming, hiking, and water fights, to special ceremonies and sitting around the campfire sharing memories.

"I liked going into the tipi at Camp Francis to relax," said Anthony. **"I learned that there are more ways to get out my anger than through violence."**

Their mother, Angie, noticed a real difference in both her children. "Anthony was calm. He found a way to release his energy and work through his aggression," said Angie. "Before Camp, Meredith held in her grief for a long time. She was trying to take care of me and Anthony. But she learned to acknowledge her loss and start the grieving process."

“ The staff and volunteers at Camp Francis were incredible. They knew exactly what to say and how and when to say it. ”

Angie Semenza

Even though both Meredith and Anthony were nervous and anxious about leaving their mother for four nights, by the last day of camp, they didn't want to leave. **"Everyone is so nice and understanding," said Meredith. "They're really like a family."** Angie marveled at how enthusiastic and happy they were: "they chattered about camp the whole drive home."



Anthony and Meredith found solace in sharing memories of their dad around the campfire at Camp Francis.

When asked if they would recommend Camp Francis to other kids, Anthony said, **"Go! You'll make friends and get help learning how to grieve."**

Camp Francis is a completely free service for families in Northcentral Montana. **Please consider supporting the magic that happens at Camp Francis with a donation.** With your help, children will continue to get the help they need and will have the joy in their lives reignited.

# Camp Francis Receives \$23,000 from Alice Lee Lund Charitable Trust

Over the past three years, Camp Francis has received more than \$23,000 from the Alice Lee Lund Charitable Trust.

Alice Lee Lund, or Ali, was a resident of Missoula and had a special interest in bettering the lives of those around her. **She established the Alice Lee Lund Charitable Trust before her passing in 2001 to assist charitable organizations with funding.**

Ali had the foresight and diligence to establish a trust that would continue to work for charitable organizations long after her death.

The Law Offices of Church, Harris, Johnson & Williams, P.C. in Great Falls manage the Lund Trust and select the beneficiaries each year. Several organizations receive funding from this trust each year, honoring Ali's vision of helping others.



Ali especially loved helping children, animals, and seniors through her philanthropic giving.

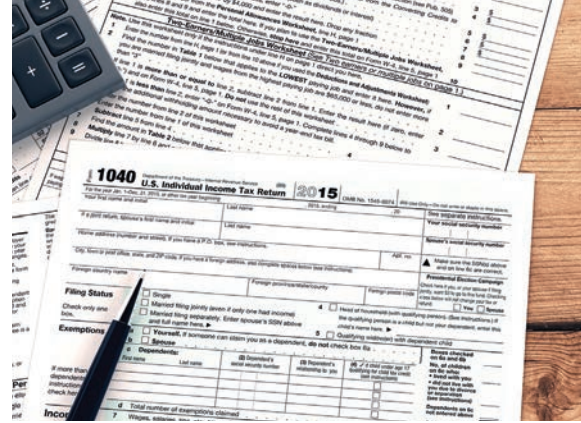
## What is a charitable trust?

With a charitable trust, donors can set assets aside for one or more charities while providing income for themselves or others as Ali did. The trust can pay income while the donor is living and then benefit designated charities after the donor passes away.

The wishes of which charities receive gifts and how the gifts are distributed are carried out by designated trustees.

This is a wonderful way to ensure your generosity lives on for years to come and that important charities continue to receive your support.

There are many types of charitable trusts. Learn more about which may be right for you and your family by visiting with your attorney or our planned giving expert, Marilyn Parker, at (406) 455-5836.



## Impact Lives and Reduce Your Taxes

When you make charitable gifts to the Benefis Health System Foundation, you will make a meaningful difference in the lives of your neighbors and community members. **You can also reap tax benefit rewards.**

## IRA Rollover Charitable Gifts

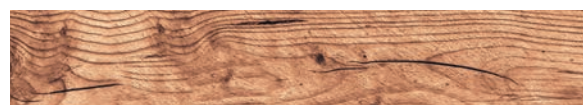
If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make a gift directly from your traditional or Roth IRA and reduce your taxable income.

An IRA rollover charitable gift will also count toward your required minimum distribution. Check with your IRA administrator or your tax advisor, or contact us at the Benefis Foundation to learn more.

## Montana Endowment Tax Credit

The Montana Endowment Tax Credit is available if you give to qualified endowments like those within the Benefis Foundation. This substantial tax credit is available to individuals and businesses in Montana.

**Call Marilyn Parker at (406) 455-5836 for more information on how these tax-wise charitable gift ideas can help people in your community and reduce your taxes.**





Annie hopes to inspire others to transition into hospice care early in their end-of-life journey to take full advantage of the comforting services.

## Annie Wilson and Her Late Husband Doug Received Immeasurable Gift from Benefis Peace Hospice

November 5, 2017, marks one year that Annie Wilson has lived without her beloved husband, Doug. Annie, Organizational Development Specialist at Benefis, and Doug, IT Solutions Analyst at Benefis, found each other later in life and were acutely aware of how fortunate they were to experience such pure love and happiness. But after just five blissful years together, **the dreams they'd envisioned for their life together were cut short by Doug's cancer diagnosis.**

After 15 months of enduring multiple surgeries, emergency trips to the ER, and at times excruciating pain, Doug Wilson passed away from penile cancer at the age of 52. For the last five weeks of that journey, Doug received care from Benefis Peace Hospice, something Annie considers to be an incredible gift.

“Benefis Peace Hospice gave us peace of mind.”  
Annie Wilson

Once Annie and Doug made the decision to stop his cancer treatments and transition into hospice care in late September 2016, they were amazed by the resources made available to them. **“We didn't feel alone at home anymore,” said Annie.**

Doug immediately received a much-needed, in-home hospital bed, and Annie no longer had to worry about managing Doug's medical care because they could rely on his nurse, Amanda. “I could text or call Amanda with my questions any time if I needed help,” said Annie.

“The exemplary care Doug received was focused on keeping him comfortable and protected from infection,” commented Annie. “Even though we knew Doug would not recover, the care he received was profoundly healing, for both of us.”

Doug received hospice care at home for four weeks before he was admitted to the Benefis Peace Hospice Residential Facility on East Campus. It took Annie a

Annie greatly appreciated the calm and peaceful environment of Benefis Peace Hospice residential facilities. Annie also noted that the care team was especially affirming and comforting, "Doug was always respected; they cared about him as a person."



few days to let go and let the staff attend to Doug's needs. "I would have been overwhelmed at home caring for Doug by myself at that stage," reflected Annie. "Hospice allowed me to just be with Doug, which was the biggest gift we could hope for, beyond recovery."

“ The hospice staff was wonderful and very responsive. I hit the button, and they were in the room immediately. ”

Annie Wilson

For the next 10 days, Annie could simply be Doug's wife. The hospice care team went above and beyond to make Doug comfortable, even buying malt to make his milkshakes extra special. They provided expert care around the clock until Doug passed away on a Saturday.

"It is difficult to try to convey just how impactful donations to Peace Hospice are," said Annie. "Every act of generosity on behalf of hospice, whether it's financial or your time as a volunteer, is like dropping a pebble in a pool. It creates ripples of gratitude that reach lengths the donor won't ever see."

It is because of the generosity of donors like you that Benefis Peace Hospice provides a compassionate environment **to terminal patients and their families.**

**Please help ensure the future of Benefis Peace Hospice with a donation today so hospice patients continue to receive the highest-quality care during their final days.**



Read more of Annie and Doug's touching story on the Benefis Foundation website:  
[www.BenefisFoundation.org](http://www.BenefisFoundation.org)

Benefis Health System Foundation is grateful to the many caring donors who support our mission of improving and enhancing healthcare services in Great Falls and Northcentral Montana.

**Your generosity has a direct impact on the health and well-being of families across Montana.**

Donors listed gave gifts June 1 - September 30, 2017.

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# Thank you for supporting Benefis Foundation!

# Benefis Emergency Department Saves Local Great Falls Resident

## In Return, She Finds a Creative Way to Support New ED Campaign



Marillyn Thomas, a lifelong resident and fierce supporter of Great Falls, has been healed by the quick, expert care of Benefis Emergency Services more than once in recent years. **“The care I received in the emergency room was a godsend,”** said Marillyn.

After seeing a presentation on the plans to remodel and expand the Benefis Emergency Department (ED) and the need for additional support to make it the most advanced trauma center in Northcentral Montana, she was determined to return the favor.

**By making a significant property donation, Marillyn found a creative and mutually beneficial way to support the ED project.**

Marillyn made a partial gift of the former Thomas Dean & Hoskins, Inc. (TD&H) building located near the Benefis East Campus in honor of her late husband, Tom Harris Thomas, one of the founding partners of TD&H. This building was built in 1960 and is valued at more than \$720,000.

“It is very important to upgrade the healthcare people receive, and this amazing new emergency department will do just that,” said Marillyn.

This gift recognizes the Thomas family’s dedication to and love for the Great Falls community. Tom served as the chairman of the Deaconess Hospital Board of Directors, and Marillyn served on many community boards, including Family Services and Great Falls Receiving Home.

“A city the size of Great Falls needs a state-of-the-art ED like this.”

Marillyn Thomas

In addition to helping the community, donating this property is also a weight off Marillyn’s shoulders. “Getting everything lined up in my estate and putting my plans in order is my gift to my son and daughter,” said Marillyn. “I also received some monetary compensation and excellent tax benefits, but most importantly, it’s a valuable gift that will support the Great Falls community.”

Because of Marillyn’s generosity, the former TD&H building will have new life and the opportunity to serve the community through Benefis for many years to come.

**Want to learn more about donating property? Contact Marilyn Parker, Executive Director of the Benefis Foundation, at (406) 455-5836.**



We need your help funding the new Benefis Emergency Department: please donate today using the enclosed return envelope or online at [www.BenefisFoundation.org](http://www.BenefisFoundation.org).