



Contributor

Support families who must travel for their children's medical treatment. Just return the enclosed giving envelope or donate online. The Angel Fund Endowment can help support this wonderful program long into the future. Gifts of \$1,500 or more to the endowment can qualify for the Montana Endowment Tax Credit.

Angel Fund Helps Weir Family After Devastating Wreck

Everything changed in a second for the Weir family when they collided with a truck between Great Falls and Belt.

Jen Weir and her youngest children Weston and Wakely, now 8 and 7, were terribly injured in the wreck. Wyatt, 10, and his dad, Tyler, did not survive. "The three of us who survived are very blessed to be here today," Jen said. "Ultimately, none of us should have made it that day."

Donors to the Benefis Foundation's Angel Fund and 221 Children's Fund helped members of the Weirs' extended family be with Weston and Wakely at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle while Jen recovered at Benefis. They had no time to pack and needed last-minute lodging, as well as meals and necessities.

"Angel Fund does help families. It's a really cool program — a blessing when the unexpected happens," Jen said. "It makes you feel very humble to have all this support. I expected my little hometown of Grass Range to be supportive, but I had no idea Great Falls would be so wonderful. It was amazing how many people stepped up, even across the state and country."

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Jen Weir

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The whole family was so close to dying in the wreck, but help arrived immediately in the form of Benefis doctors and a nurse, Benefis Mercy Flight, and personnel from rescue and military agencies.

Weston had five broken bones, multiple rib fractures, blood on his lungs, a ruptured spleen, and a severe traumatic brain injury. Wakely, too, had a traumatic brain injury that required opening her head, plus a broken clavicle and unstable breathing. Jen had a traumatic brain injury, plus a lacerated liver, collapsed lungs, 14 fractures to her ribs, and a damaged aorta.

Wes and Wakely’s brain injuries were so severe they needed care in Seattle. Mercy Flight flew the children there — their first airplane rides.

“Mercy Flight saved the kids’ lives getting them to Seattle,” Jen said.

Jen hopes the wreck reminds people to take another perspective on life, knowing how quickly everything can change and to appreciate the good things in their lives.

“Something good has to come out of it,” she said. “I know it’s changed perspectives on how to live and how to treat other people. I hope people are more aware miracles can happen.”

Jen has kept faith in Weston and Wakely’s recovery. When she recovered enough from her own injuries to join her children in Seattle, doctors told her to brace for the worst. The odds were against Weston’s survival, let alone recovery.

“Here it is, not even a year later. I’m excited about his future,” she said. “God is good.”

Wes returned home in July. In September, Wes said his first words since the wreck, “Ni Way!” (Night, Wakes!) A few weeks later he managed actual sentences – sentences that showed his sense of humor, sassiness, and love for his family.

Six months after the wreck, Wes remembered people he knew before his injuries. He can count to 20. He thumb-wrestles visitors and plans to be a dinosaur for Halloween. His therapists have him standing again and feeding himself.

Though he has only just regained the ability to speak and has a big mountain left to climb, **Weston wanted to share his own message for donors who helped his family and the doctors who saved his life: “I’m grateful, too.”**



Mayfaire Donors Help Bring Women's and Children's Center Home

A special piece of art up for auction in the Benefis Foundation Mayfaire 2021 fundraiser honored the "heroic efforts" of Benefis staff who fought for the life of a patient and friend dear to the heart of renowned local artist Tom Gilleon.

The painting was a highlight of the 22nd Mayfaire, which saw the return of the gala after last year's COVID-19 precautions scaled back the event.

Mayfaire 2021 raised an incredible \$380,000 toward building the state-of-the-art Benefis Women's and Children's Center.

Benefis Foundation's signature fundraiser included a golf tournament at the Meadow Lark Country Club, the gala, and – new this year – a wine tasting event.

We are so grateful for the generosity of our sponsors and donors who supported Mayfaire this year!



Benefis Employees Dig Deep to Make an Impact for Those in Need

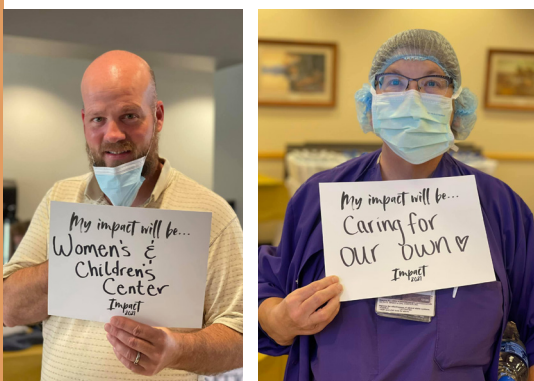
Seeing the work of Benefis Foundation firsthand always inspires generous giving among our employee supporters. That was true even as they battled through the second pandemic year.

During the Impact 2021 employee giving campaign, 46% of employees donated \$457,353 to the Foundation, to United Way, and to other local nonprofits.

Employees chose among causes such as the Angel Fund, which helps the families of children who must travel for further treatment, the Caring For Our Own Fund, which supports employees in crisis, or Children's Bereavement, which puts on camps and other programs for grieving children. Others directed their contributions to whatever has the greatest need.

David Dattilo, who works in telemedicine and serves on the Impact committee, says he gives because he can.

"My favorite program to donate to is Camp Francis because I cannot imagine the lifelong trauma, heartache, and sadness those children will have to face," he said.



Impact 2021 Top Three Supported Funds

- Angel Fund
- Caring For Our Own
- Women's and Children's Center

Can you help?

Benefis employees who give to the Impact campaign understand that no matter the size of their gift, every contribution makes a difference. You can help ensure patients and their families continue to receive the assistance they need.

Visit [Benefis.org/Foundation](https://www.benefis.org/foundation) to donate to your favorite fund today.



Women’s and Children’s Center Opens in December

Even before the last wall was painted and the final provider moved into her new office, the new Benefis Women’s and Children’s Center welcomed two moms who have been part of the campaign since the beginning.

For KC Beall, mom to Rydell and Grady, the center will mean communication and collaboration among providers for all-around better care for her and her children.

Lindsay Somerfeld, who anticipates taking her four children, ages 3 to 13, to the center, called the place a “healthcare home.” She says that’s “what all moms want for their family. Having love and care united to make it feel like a home for your children’s growing years.”

She knows how good our women’s health team is. They took her through four births and three miscarriages and fertility treatment with support, sensitivity, and loving care.

Lindsay says the Women’s and Children’s Center will provide easy access to the best doctors in the region, “who can provide us with all our needs in one specialized area.”



This dedicated center will truly change the way women and children in our community access care.

The goal of the center is to meet a need in caring for young families in northcentral Montana. This center is about prioritizing women and children, about showing that their health and well-being is important to Benefis and to the entire community.

The Benefis Women's and Children's Center, a three-story outpatient clinic, has risen along 10th Avenue South thanks to the generosity of donors.

Loyal and first-time donors, local clubs, and young professional donors who maximized a matching grant combined for nearly \$4 million in donations to build the center.

Thank you to all who carried this campaign to the finish line for people like Lindsay and KC and their children and all the moms and children who will need us in the years to come.

In the year ahead, we hope you will be our guest at the new Benefis Women's and Children's Center to see for yourself what the amazing things donors have done for Montana families.

Your Savings. Your Legacy. Your Gift.

If you are 70½ or older, you can make philanthropic gifts from traditional and Roth IRA accounts without it counting as taxable income.

- Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to support northcentral Montanans through their healthcare journeys.
- May satisfy some or all of your required minimum distributions for the year.
- Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions.
- Make a gift that is not subject to the deduction limits on charitable gifts.
- Use your rollover to make existing payments on an existing pledge to Benefis Foundation.

To make such gifts, the money needs to come directly from an IRA to a qualifying charity such as Benefis Foundation. For those with check-writing privileges on their accounts, this may be the most efficient way to make gifts directly from an IRA.

Please check with us, your IRA administrator, or your tax advisor for more information.

Have you remembered to support your favorite fund in your estate planning? The Foundation can be a beneficiary or partial beneficiary of a life insurance policy, IRA, or property. Some ideas for your year-end giving:

- Land and other real estate
- Commodities
- Gifts from an IRA
- Appreciated stock
- A paid-up life insurance policy you no longer need

Ask about ways to leverage the Montana Endowment Tax Credit to reduce state income tax. We'd love to share information about that program on gifts that can provide an income stream for you and your family. **Please call Benefis Foundation at (406) 455-5836.**



With Smart Giving, the Munsons Maximize Their Charitable Impact

When friends are struggling to figure out how to cope with cancer treatment and the logistics of being away from home, Shelby-area wheat farmers Larry and Hazel Munson tell them to check out Gift of Life Housing, which provides a free place to stay for people who travel to Benefis for cancer treatment.

The Munsons do more than sing the praises of the program. They also support it financially through Benefis Foundation.

By now the Munsons' broker knows to call in December to check in on the charities the couple wants to support. Minimum distributions need to be set by the last day of the year and go directly from an IRA account to charitable recipients such as Benefis Foundation.

When Hazel was in cancer treatment that included daily radiation and chemotherapy for six weeks, the Gift of Life House became their home off the farm.

"I could never have done treatment and gone home and back 100 miles each way," Hazel said. "I was just totally worn out. With Gift of Life, I could wake up, walk over to treatment, and not have to travel two hours there and two hours back."

"It worked well, and they took good care of us," Larry said.

The Munsons have given faithfully to Benefis Foundation, and other causes, since turning 70½ and needing to make minimum distributions from their IRA accounts.

"I never see the money, and there's no tax to be paid by either party," Larry said. "I believe it's a good way to give more than you could otherwise."

The Munsons don't usually designate what they'd like their donations to Benefis Foundation to support but said the Gift of Life has a special place in their hearts.

Scholarship Donors Help Butte Medical Student Develop Expertise to Serve Montanans

As he worked alongside Benefis physicians, medical student Keiffer Hepola of Butte learned how to think and act like a doctor – as well as how to practice medicine with compassion and enthusiasm for each day.

The experience also reaffirmed his desire to return to Montana when he becomes an orthopedic surgeon, he said, and “serve the great communities of Montana that have raised me.”

For the first time this year, Benefis Foundation donors provided scholarships to medical students in addition to the more than \$100,000 donors provided to healthcare students.

Keiffer, a fourth-year medical student, received \$5,000 from the David and Tanya Cameron Medical Education Endowment Scholarship. He’s one of three students who received \$12,500 in medical student scholarships.



“ This scholarship has made an incredible difference in helping me to pursue my goal of becoming an orthopedic surgeon. ”

Keiffer Hepola

“As a fourth-year medical student, I am currently completing audition rotations at hospitals with orthopedic surgery residencies across the country. The scholarship has helped in paying for housing at these locations, transportation, and finally applying to numerous residencies, which can easily add thousands of dollars in addition to my tuition costs.”

Keiffer is a Montana State University graduate with a degree in cell biology and neuroscience. He was one of five Montanans in the first group of students from the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine (ICOM) to come to Benefis for their medical student rotations.

The David and Tanya Cameron Medical Education Endowment Scholarship he received is designed to assist medical students while also boosting Benefis’ recruitment and retention efforts. The scholarship is for students who have clinical rotations at Benefis, with preference to ICOM and WWAMI Regional Medical Education Program students, as well as future students of Touro College Montana. Touro and Benefis leadership broke ground on the new medical school in Great Falls in October.

“I heard Benefis has good mentors and good patients to learn from,” Keiffer said. “I went to ICOM because I knew I wanted to come back to Montana.”

Sletten Cancer Institute Will Continue to be a Light for Patients and Families

For more than 15 years and thousands of patients, Sletten Cancer Institute's medical teams have provided cutting-edge and compassionate care.

Each patient's cancer care is personalized to fit their specific condition and designed to give them the best possible outcome. Our state-of-the-art care makes us one of Montana's most comprehensive and advanced cancer facilities.

Benefis Health System is the only hospital in central Montana with a CoC accredited cancer program, recognized by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer for high-quality, comprehensive cancer care.

SCI also is designed to make patients feel comfortable and welcomed through special touches such as the cozy fireplace and support services like genetic counseling, rehab therapies, massage, financial assistance, an image center for wigs, and support groups.

Now the SCI must adapt to provide the highest level of care for the next patients who will walk in our doors tomorrow and those who will turn to us in the next 15 years and beyond.

In the year ahead, we'll share with you some of the challenges we face toward that goal such as a cramped pharmacy space and extended wait time for infusions because of demand outstripping space available.

We hope our Sletten Cancer Institute patients can count on your support once more. Stay tuned!



Your gifts will make a family's medical journey easier to bear.

Yes, I'll help those in need from my community receive vital care!

Please accept my gift:

- in the enclosed giving envelope.
- as an online donation given today at Benefis.org/Foundation.