

# Contributor



## Premature Baby Colt is Now Healthy and Happy Thanks to the Generosity of Others

Ledger Family Received Much-Needed Help from the Angel Fund, Gift of Life Housing, and NicView Cameras

“ Even with all the scary things that were happening, the doctors and nurses were all amazing and I wouldn't have changed anything. It was the best experience it could have possibly been, given the circumstances. ”

Davin Buffington

On October 6, 2017, Davin Buffington delivered her son, Colt, via emergency C-section, eight weeks before his due date. Weighing in at just 3 pounds and 15 ounces, Colt and his mom would face several frightening challenges over the following months.

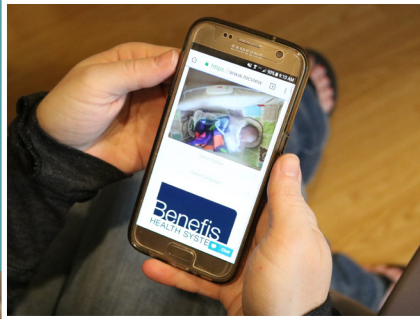
Thankfully, the Buffington family received invaluable help from the Angel Fund, Gift of Life Housing, and the Benefis NicView cameras, providing comfort during this distressing time.

Colt spent 47 days in the Benefis Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) so he could receive expert care as he suffered through apnea episodes and digestive issues.

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After giving birth, Davin spent five days in the hospital receiving treatment for pre-eclampsia and HELLP syndrome. She was readmitted to the hospital several times due to gallstones and was diagnosed with antiphospholipid syndrome, which was causing blood clots in her kidney and spleen. During this time, she was separated from Colt in the NICU, which made a painful experience even worse.



“All I wanted was to see my baby. The NicView camera came in so handy, it was very comforting to be able to log on and see Colt whenever I wanted.”

When Davin’s husband Casey returned to work, he was able to feel closer to Colt thanks to the NicView camera. They were also grateful to give their out-of-town family members access to the NicView camera so they could virtually meet the new baby.

Staying at Benefis, an hour-and-a-half away from their home near Ledger, was hard on the entire family including Colt’s older siblings, Jaxon and Cashlyn. The Buffington family felt blessed to have the opportunity to stay at Gift of Life while Colt was in the NICU.

“ Our paperwork for Gift of Life was already filled out for us, all we had to do was sign. To not have to worry about the expense of a hotel when you are already worrying about the life of your child was amazing. ”

Davin Buffington

Once Colt was discharged, only three days passed before they were back in the Benefis Emergency Department. Colt was experiencing severe health problems and was flown to Spokane to receive more advanced treatment for what was suspected to be Hirschsprung’s Disease. Fortunately, it was a treatable milk protein allergy. They were supported by the Angel Fund, which helped cover costs from flights and lodging

Eight months later, Colt is healthy and doing wonderfully. “He’s rolling everywhere and smiles at everybody.” The Buffington family hopes their story will inspire donors to aid more families in need. “No matter what size, your donations will mean the world to someone. Lots of people asked us what they could do to help after Colt was born—donating to these programs is something that truly helps.”

“ The emergency trip to Spokane was very unexpected. I didn’t even have a change of clothes, but we had to get on the plane immediately. It was such a relief to receive that gift from the Angel Fund. ”

Davin Buffington

### We need your help.

It costs over \$4,600 each year to service and support the NicView cameras, and 14 more cameras are still needed to equip each NICU room. Please donate to the Benefis NICU fund online at [www.BenefisFoundation.org](http://www.BenefisFoundation.org) or use the enclosed giving envelope.



# More Than \$370,000 Raised at Mayfaire for Children's Bereavement Program

Thanks to the tremendous success of the Mayfaire 2018 fundraising events, grieving children in our community will continue to receive support services from the Benefis Peace Hospice Children's Bereavement Program **completely free of charge.**

Coping with the death of a loved one is one of the most difficult hardships in life. When a child experiences the loss of a significant person, they are facing a lifetime with a piece of their heart missing.

Children grieve differently than adults, and unfortunately, childhood grief is often overlooked. They need permission to take a break from their grief and have fun without feeling guilty. **Most importantly, they must be reminded that they are not alone.**

The Benefis Peace Hospice Children's Bereavement Program does just that. It provides a supportive and safe environment for kids and helps guide them through the cyclical process of grief.



“ Our generous Mayfaire donors are giving grieving children in our community the remarkable gifts of hope, joy, and healing. ”

Terry Preite, President of Spectrum, Regional Relations, and Philanthropy at Benefis Health System

On May 11, our devoted golfers braved the rain during the charity golf tournament at Meadow Lark Country Club. The PathWise Partners team won the tournament and the inaugural Mayfaire Cup. Guests at the Mayfaire gala on Saturday evening bid on 87 silent auction and nine live auction items. The Company Men from Los Angeles then dazzled guests and filled the floor with dancing.

More than 60 area businesses generously supported Mayfaire and the Children's Bereavement Program this year; visit [www.benefisfoundation.org/sponsors](http://www.benefisfoundation.org/sponsors) to see the full list.

Over the past 19 years, Mayfaire has raised more than \$4 million for improvements and special services that benefit the Northcentral Montana community.



“ Camp is a special thing to my heart. Without camp, I don't know where I would be. Thank you. ”

Camp Francis camper

Thank you to our compassionate Mayfaire sponsors and donors and our dedicated volunteers and committee members. Your gifts are helping to keep these services available to the children of our community and region!

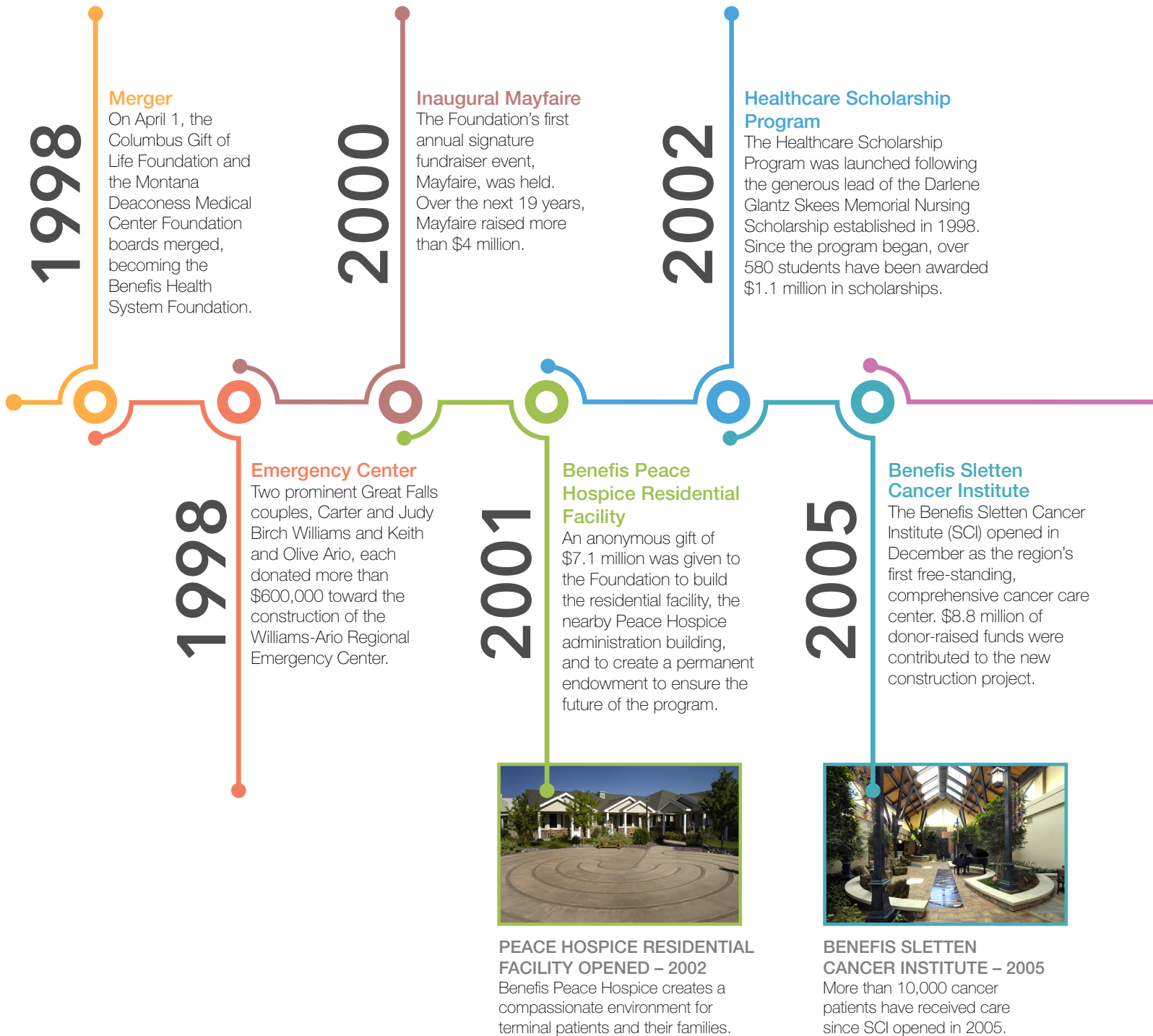
If you would like to support the Children's Bereavement Program, please donate online at [www.BenefisFoundation.org](http://www.BenefisFoundation.org) or use the enclosed giving envelope.

# BENEFIS HEALTH SYSTEM FOUNDATION

## Celebrating 20 Years of Generosity

2018 marks the 20th anniversary of the Benefis Foundation. The list of accomplishments and milestones achieved over the past two decades is truly remarkable.

Donors like you have made an extraordinary impact on the health and wellbeing of countless lives. We are fortunate to have such compassionate donors that continually give to the Benefis Foundation so that others may heal—thank you.



### EAST GIFT OF LIFE – 2006

Combined with the West Gift of Life facilities, there are a total of 22 apartments, 6 short-stay rooms, and 14 RV spaces offered to Benefis patients year-round, completely free of charge.



2006

#### East Campus Gift of Life Housing

The East Gift of Life Housing Center was built directly behind the Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute, offering free lodging to Benefis patients who live outside of Great Falls.

### SOUTH TOWER – 2009

The 252,000 square-foot South Tower provides state-of-the-art space for several departments, plus 99 private patient rooms.



2009

#### South Tower Construction

A total of \$3.5 million of donor-raised funds was provided for the \$85 million, seven-story South Tower construction project. With this expansion, Benefis fulfilled its number-one request from patients: all private rooms.

2015

#### Benefis Memory Care Unit

Donors contributed more than \$800,000 for the Benefis Memory Care Unit project. Benefis Eastview was remodeled to create a new unit specifically designed for residents suffering from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

2008

#### Darcy's Hope

The first Darcy's Hope Teen Retreat was held for teenagers who have experienced the death of a significant person in their life. The Benefis Peace Hospice Children's Bereavement Program helps children learn how to cope with their grief in healthy ways, all at no cost to families.

2013

#### Benefis Peace Hospice Expansion

\$1.57 million was raised to expand the Peace Hospice Residential Facility—the project was completely funded by donations. Eight inpatient rooms were added along with an elevator to access the basement.

2018

#### Emergency Department Expansion

Donors contributed \$2.5 million to the \$12.5 million Emergency Department Expansion Project. After the new construction and remodeling is complete, the size of the ED will nearly double in size.



#### NEW EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT – 2018

This crucial construction project features an innovative design that will allow more efficient, patient-friendly care with shorter wait times.



# Benefis Foundation Moves into Building Donated by Long-Time Supporter



In late June, the Benefis Foundation office moved to its new location on Benefis East Campus. The Thomas Building, located at 1200 25th Street South, was donated by Great Falls resident Marillyn Thomas to support the new Emergency Department capital campaign.

Marillyn made the gift in honor of her late husband, Tom Harris Thomas, one of the founding partners of TD&H Engineering.

Just down the street from Benefis Medical Office Building 4 and the Benefis Orthopedic Center of Montana, the Thomas Building has been remodeled to accommodate the needs of the Foundation staff, board members, and donors.

“We are honored to make our new home in this building that was such a significant gift from Marillyn Thomas,” said Benefis Foundation Executive Director Marilyn Parker. “We are especially grateful that the Thomas Building features easier access for our donors and for those who are helped every day because of donor contributions.”

The Thomas Building features brand new paint and carpet, a welcoming reception area, additional storage space, and nice meeting spaces for Foundation board and committee members.

If you would like to learn more about donating property, please contact Marilyn Parker, Executive Director of the Benefis Foundation, at (406) 455-5836, or visit us at our new location!

After receiving life-saving care at the Benefis Emergency Department multiple times in recent years, Marillyn chose to support the ED campaign by making a significant property donation. “The care I received in the emergency room was a godsend,” said Marillyn.

Because of Marillyn’s generosity, the Thomas building will have new life as the home to the Benefis Foundation and will serve the Northcentral Montana community for many years to come.



# First Section of New Benefis Emergency Department Opens Thanks to Donors

On May 7, 2018, Foundation donors had the opportunity to tour the new section of the Benefis Emergency Department before it opened and began treating patients the very next day.

“Because of generous contributions from the community, we were able to make this the most patient-friendly emergency department possible,” said Kevin Langkiet, PhD, MSN, RN, Director of Emergency and Critical Care Services at Benefis Health System.



Benefis Foundation donors David and Tanya Cameron

“Every aspect of this project has been done with our patients and their families in mind. This remodel is for them—for the people who receive care in our emergency department and the people worrying at their bedsides.”

Kevin Langkiet

Meticulous attention to detail was put into the innovative design of the new ED, which is nearly doubling in size. Once the project is complete, the Benefis ED will be the largest emergency department in the state of Montana at more than 38,000 square feet.

“Our donors have helped fund several advancements that will have a direct impact on thousands of patients from Great Falls and the surrounding region,” commented Benefis Emergency Services Medical Director Dr. Bridget Brennan. “Each donation is helping to ensure the future of life-saving emergency care for years to come.”

The Benefis ED project would not have been possible without the generosity and support from the community. Benefis Foundation donors have funded an incredible \$2.5 million of this \$12.5 million project.



To learn more about the new Benefis ED, visit [www.benefis.org/new-ed](http://www.benefis.org/new-ed)



# Gift of Life Program Provided Home Away from Home for Lewistown Residents



When Tim Sorensen's late wife Marge was diagnosed with breast cancer 15 years ago, they were frantically searching for hotel rooms in Great Falls when another Lewistown couple told them about the Gift of Life Housing Center. After touring the West Campus Gift of Life facilities, same-day arrangements were made for Marge to have her own apartment while she underwent radiation treatment at Benefis for six weeks.

“After Marge’s cancer diagnosis, there was so much happening with her surgeries and treatment. Not having to worry about finding a place to stay was a big relief.”

Tim Sorensen

Donors to the Gift of Life Housing program make a huge impact on patients who must travel to Great Falls for medical care. **Thanks to the loyal support of the community, free housing at the Gift of Life apartments, short-stay rooms, and RV spaces are offered to Benefis patients.**

Tim and Marge were just two of more than 115 patients from Lewistown that have utilized Gift of Life Housing since the program began in 1992. “We’ve had several friends stay at Gift of Life. This program really benefits local people,” said Tim.

When Marge's cancer returned eight years later, they stayed at Gift of Life again. Sadly, Marge lost her battle to cancer in December of 2013.

“Marge and I were able to stay at Gift of Life because many people before us made contributions to build and operate the facilities. It makes me feel good to continue donating to Gift of Life to honor my wife Marge, and to make sure other people in need will continue to have the opportunity to use it.”

Tim Sorensen

“Gift of Life helps many people from a large area in Montana get the treatment they need at Benefis. I like to donate to both Gift of Life and the Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute because they are local causes and I know my contributions will help local people during their time of need.”

- Tim Sorensen  
of Lewistown



If you'd like to support Gift of Life Housing, please donate online at [www.BenefisFoundation.org](http://www.BenefisFoundation.org) or use the enclosed giving envelope.