



STRUGGLING WORKING FAMILIES GET "LIFT" FROM BIG SKY DONORS

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Helena, Mont. – Workers and families in the Big Sky area impacted by the recent economic downturn will get a "lift" thanks to some local donors and the Montana Community Foundation (MCF).

Concerned about the impact of recent layoffs and business closures on the local workforce, several Big Sky residents joined with MCF to create an emergency relief fund called Big Sky LIFT (Lift for Individuals/families with Financial Trouble). LIFT is the brainchild of Loren Bough, a Big Sky resident who has been joined in this effort by CrossHarbor Capital Partners, an investment firm with holdings at the Yellowstone Club.

"We invite other members of the Big Sky community to contribute to LIFT," Bough said. "The economic downturn has taken many of us by surprise and LIFT offers a helping hand to those individuals and families most impacted."

LIFT will make one-time "critical needs" grants to eligible applicants experiencing financial crises due to layoffs or other economic circumstances. The grants will provide immediate help with such essentials as medical expenses, food, utility bills and rent.

The LIFT fund will be administered by the MCF, a statewide philanthropic support organization headquartered in Helena. Applications will be reviewed by an advisory panel of local community members.

"Communities all over Montana are suffering from the economic downturn and layoffs by major employers. Working families are feeling the brunt of these hard times. Some individuals in Big Sky decided to do something to help those families in greatest need, and reached out to the Montana Community Foundation for guidance," said Linda Reed, president and CEO of the MCF. "We are pleased to partner with Big Sky LIFT. It is an inspiring example of how people in a community can work together to give those who need it most a lift up."

To be eligible for a LIFT grant, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Live or work in the Big Sky area
- Recently laid off OR hurt by the bad economy
- Can demonstrate financial hardship

Grants will be available in amounts up to \$1000 for individuals and \$2500 for families. Applicants may apply by contacting the MCF at 406-443-8313 or by submitting applications online at mtcf.org. Applications will be accepted between now and April 1, 2009.