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MONTANANS GET A LIFT WITH THEIR FINANCIAL WOES

Helena, Mont. – Twenty-six families and individuals will receive much-needed financial help through \$43,000 in grants awarded this week by the Big Sky LIFT (Lifting Individuals/families with Financial Trouble) fund, administered by the Montana Community Foundation (MCF).

Supported by contributions from Yellowstone Club members and other donors in the Big Sky community, LIFT provides one-time “critical needs” grants to families and individuals who live or work in Big Sky, and who are struggling financially as a result of the area’s economic downturn.

LIFT was conceived by Big Sky residents and Yellowstone Club members as a way to help people who have been laid off as well as small business owners who have been hurt by non-payment for goods or services. It was announced on December 22.

“This is a great example of people in a community becoming aware of an acute need, and then stepping up to contribute not only dollars but their expertise and time,” said Linda Reed, president and CEO of the MCF. “In about one month’s time, the Yellowstone Club members created LIFT, worked with the Foundation to set up a structure and process, raised the money and got checks out to those in need, many of whom are in dire circumstances. This is a remarkable response to a community’s urgent needs.”

LIFT grants will support a range of critical needs identified by applicants, from help with groceries, medical expenses and children’s winter clothes to paying off a pawn shop in order to retrieve work tools that had been hocked for rent money.

The funds that were awarded this week represent the first cycle of grants. There will be additional grants provided to eligible applicants in February and March. The next deadline for submitting grants applications is February 16. Applicants can apply online at mtcf.org.

LIFT was initiated by members of the Yellowstone Club, but other members of the Big Sky community have embraced and supported the program. The Big Sky Town Center will host a “Winter Warm-up” event on Sunday, February 15 which will feature a raffle to benefit the fund. The event will begin at 4:30 p.m. at the Fire Pit Park on Ousel Falls Road.