



Sarah Broussard, left, accepts the Jean Howard Memorial Award from Bill Howard for Halt Cancer at X, a program of Montana Equestrian Events. (Heidi Desch photos/Whitefish Pilot)

Mike Jenson, center, presents Mike Koopal and Lori Curtis with the Whitefish Lake Institute the Russ and Mary Jane Street Community Service Award.

Katie Ward and Gloria Nelson, representing Project Whitefish Kids, accept the Doris Schumm Community Spirit Award from Linda Maetzold.

Checks for the community

Whitefish Community Foundation awards \$122,000 in funding to nonprofit organizations

By HEIDI DESCH
Whitefish Pilot

Check and after check was handed out to 35 nonprofit organizations last week during the Whitefish Community Foundation's community grant awards ceremony.

The 2017 grant cycle gave more than \$122,000 in funding to several groups during the event at The Lodge at Whitefish Lake.

Ken Wessels, the foundation's board chair, noted that the foundation has grown exponentially since it was founded 17 years ago and the evening

was just a small part of what the foundation gives each year.

"We give away somewhere between \$3 million to \$5 million annually to well-deserving community efforts," he said.

Three special awards accompanied by a \$2,500 grant were presented at the beginning of the evening.

Project Whitefish Kids received the Doris Schumm Community Spirit Award for their work to build a new playground and pavilion at the Smith Fields sports complex expected in 2018.

Foundation vice chair Linda Maetzold recognized Project Whitefish

Kids for its commitment to the community by developing and maintaining the complex that counts more than 40,000 visitors annually.

"This is for their years of service to Whitefish," she said.

The Whitefish Lake Institute received the Russ and Mary Jane Street Community Service Award for their dedication to protecting Whitefish Lake from aquatic invasive species.

Mike Jenson, board member emeritus, presented WLI with its award noting that the award is fitting because the Streets felt the lake was a special

place worth protecting. Jenson commended the work of the institute to implement a comprehensive zebra and quagga mussel prevention program for Whitefish Lake.

"The goal of this program is to safeguard Whitefish Lake and downstream water resources from the introduction of aquatic invasive species," he said.

The WLI was also a recent recipient earlier this spring of the foundation's Major Community Project Grant in the amount of \$38,500. The funds also will go toward the institute's aquatic

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invasive species prevention program.

Halt Cancer at X, a program of Montana Equestrian Events, received the Jean Howard Memorial Award to continue their work supporting cancer outreach and research.

Bill Howard presented the award in memory of his wife noting the many projects they supported together in Whitefish before she passed away from ovarian cancer.

"When you park there they don't charge you, they take a donation of \$10," he said. "That money goes back into the Valley. Since it was established \$325,000 has been given."

The foundation's annual Community Grant Program has awarded over \$1.5 million to local nonprofits since the program was established in 2000.

The Community Grant Program was previously the major granting program of Whitefish Community Foundation. In 2016, program was

redesigned to complement the Great Fish Community Challenge, which has raised over \$2.5 million in two years to benefit local charitable organizations.

"There is still a need for the Community Grant Program to help fund important charitable projects that are not part of the Great Fish Challenge," said

Linda Engh-Grady, President of Whitefish Community Foundation. "The Great Fish Challenge is currently limited in the number of nonprofits that can participate. The Community Grant Program provided grants ranging from \$500 to \$4,000 and is a source of support for small projects or nonprofits, as well as new nonprofits that do not fit the larger Great Fish Challenge campaign structure."

The Whitefish Community Foundation Grants Committee is currently reviewing 53 applications from nonprofits interested in participating in the 2017 Great Fish Challenge. The foundation will increase the challenge to benefit 45 nonprofits this year.

Groups who

received grants from the Community Grant Program include, Casting For Recovery, Childrens House Montessori, city of Whitefish Parks and Recreation, Civil Air Patrol, Climate Smart Glacier Country, Columbia Falls-Whitefish high school swim teams, Family Forestry Expo, Farming for the Future Academy, Flathead Area Mountain Bikers, Flathead Audubon Society, Flathead Food Bank, Flathead Land Trust, Flathead Rapids, Flathead Spay and Neuter Task Force, Gateway to Glacier Trail, Montana Equestrian Events, Montana Kayak Academy, NW Montana Veterans Stand Down, Olney-Bissel School District, Ravenwood Natural Science Center, Riding

in Insulin, Samaritan House, Special Olympics of Montana, The Patrol Fund, Whitefish Animal Group, Whitefish Arts Council, Whitefish Community Center, Whitefish Community Garden, Whitefish Community School, Whitefish Housing Authority, Whitefish Library Association, Whitefish Performing Arts Center and Whitefish Shines.

The Whitefish Community Foundation is dedicated to fostering philanthropy, building endowments and helping donors and nonprofits benefit the community. For more information about the community foundation, visit www.whitefishcommunityfoundation.org or call 406-863-1781