

Philipsburg Area Education Foundation

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 27
October 2026

Philipsburg Area Education Foundation (PAEF) was founded on December 7, 1999 to provide and expand education opportunities for the residents of Granite County. Since its inception, PAEF has awarded over \$500,000 in scholarships and grants through direct donations and interest earned on our endowment fund. Our donor list continues to grow, providing a variety of scholarships, grants and awards to Granite County residents from the 4th grade through adulthood. We greatly appreciate every contribution, and thank you for your confidence in us to administer all donations.

2026: Year in Review

On Monday, April 20th, the Philipsburg Area Education Foundation (PAEF) awarded over \$80,000 in scholarships to Granite County residents to pursue education and training beyond high school.

It is our mission to provide educational opportunities by collaborating with generous donors who invest in our community. As our economic health depends on a skilled workforce, we pursue funding for K-12 students, college and vocational students, and adults returning to training. Our goal is to help people gain the skills necessary to work and raise families here in and near Granite County.

Now in its 27th year, PAEF strives for sustainability through fundraisers, an education endowment, and direct contributions. If you are interested in investing in education in our community, please visit our website at www.paefmt.com or contact any board member directly to discuss how your philanthropic goals may align with our mission.

Congratulations 2026 Scholarship Recipients!

Ella Tallon, John Manke Memorial Scholarship \$500, attending Olympic College

Payton Wiant, Commander Bernard J. O’Rourke Scholarship \$1000 and the Bales Good Samaritan Award \$500, attending University of Montana

Wyatt Pyle, Butts Family Scholarship \$500, attending Montana Tech

Benjamin Bradshaw, Tom Hood Leadership Scholarship \$1000, attending ATP Flight School

Elizabeth Perry, Statler Family Scholarship in Memory of Theo Statler \$2000, attending California Baptist University

Hayden Reed, Munis Family Memorial Ranchers Scholarship \$1500, attending Montana State University

Kadence Watkins, Rose & Thomas Brogan Scholarship \$2000, attending Montana State University

Cruse Furlano, Eik Family Scholarship \$500, Ezra R. Gentry Memorial Scholarship \$500 and David Rouse Memorial Scholarship \$500, attending Montana Tech

Meredith Ross, Granite County Medical Foundation \$1000 and Granite Alumni Scholarship \$500, attending University of Montana

Elizabeth Prince, Granite County Medical Foundation \$1000, attending University of Montana

Roland Muhly, Leipheimer Family Scholarship \$1000, attending Montana Tech

Ramsey Smith, James Grassey Scholarship \$1000, attending Northwest College

Megan Hicks, Rose & Thomas Brogan Scholarship \$2000, attending Montana Tech

Kimber Parsons, Marletto Family Scholarship \$5000, Flint Creek Childcare Scholarship \$500 and the Bales Good Samaritan Award \$500, attending Sheridan College

Cooper Bradshaw, Marletto Family Scholarship \$5000, attending Brigham Young University

Austin Knoeller, Vern & Anne Steffan Scholarship \$500, Larson Scholarship \$1000 and the Ranch at Rock Creek Scholarship \$5000, attending University of Montana Western

Addison Lilyquist, Richard and Joyce Molteni Scholarship \$500 and the Ranch at Rock Creek Scholarship \$5000, attending Montana State University

Grayson Tenesh, PAEF Board of Directors Scholarship \$1000 and the Ranch at Rock Creek Scholarship \$5000, attending Oregon State University

Hazel Sawfer, Mzee Mibili Kipara Ranch Scholarship \$5000 and the Ranch at Rock Creek Scholarship \$5000, attending Miles City Community College

Brooke Hicks, Mzee Mibili Kipara Ranch \$5000 and Marletto Family Scholarship \$5000, attending University of Montana

Cyleigh Langton, Mzee Mibili Kipara Ranch Scholarship \$5000, attending Montana State University

Kylie Walker, Mzee Mibili Kipara Ranch Scholarship \$5000, attending Montana State University

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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WRITING CONTESTS

Each year, PAEF facilitates 4th through 10th grade writing contests. Each winner receives a monetary award. For elementary contests, our PAEF Grade School Coordinator, Janet Hauptman, works with teachers to help students write essays and enter competition with others in their grade level. Grade school contests are sponsored by Flint Creek Free & Ancient Masons Lodge 11. All four elementary schools are invited to participate and awards are made by grade level. Their topics are community, patriotism and philanthropy. You may reach Janet at hauptman@blackfoot.net.

At the middle school level, students are invited to write essays about the benefits of living in a rural community. This contest is sponsored by the Keith and Ken Graybeal Family. The 9/10th grades write an essay which is assigned in early spring of each year. This contest is sponsored by Blackfoot Communications and PAEF Board of Directors. All contest criteria are evaluated in accordance with Montana Standards for Language Arts at grade levels. Participation is voluntary for teachers to include in their regular class activities. If teachers choose not to participate, students are welcome to compete on their own by sending their essay directly to PAEF. Evaluation is coordinated by our Middle and High School Writing Coordinator, Holly Graybeal. You may reach Holly at holly.graybeal@gmail.com. Information and forms for all writing contests are available on our website at www.paefmt.com.

CONGRATULATIONS to the 2026 Writing Contest Winners

4th Grade Contest -- What is Community?



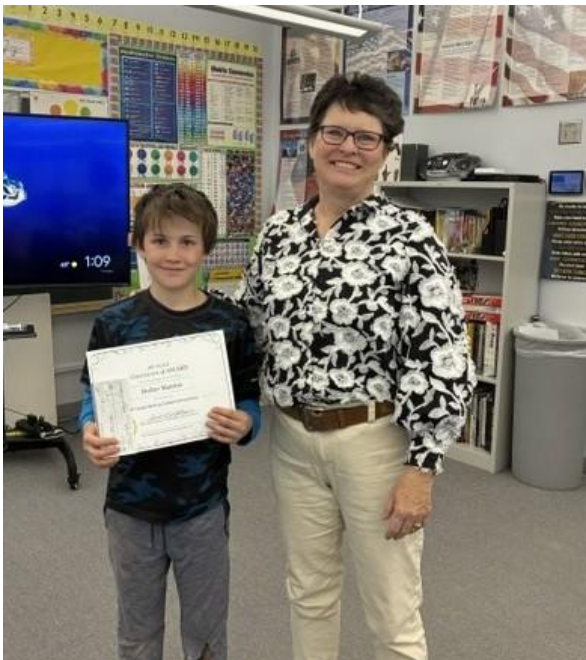
4th grade essay contest winner for Philipsburg. Waylon Roof 1st place.

5th Grade Contest -- What does Patriotism mean to me?



5th grade essay contest winners for Drummond School. Charlie Shields 1st place, AnnaBell Bailey 2nd place.

6th Grade Contest – If I was a Philanthropist, what would I do?



Helmville 6th grade essay contest winner, Holter Mannix 1st place and Contest Coordinator Janet Hauptman



6th Grade essay contest winners from Drummond School. JJ Yates tie for 2nd place, Mikkelsen Yakos 1st place, Teacher Keeley Chrest, Aubrey Bolster tie for 2nd place

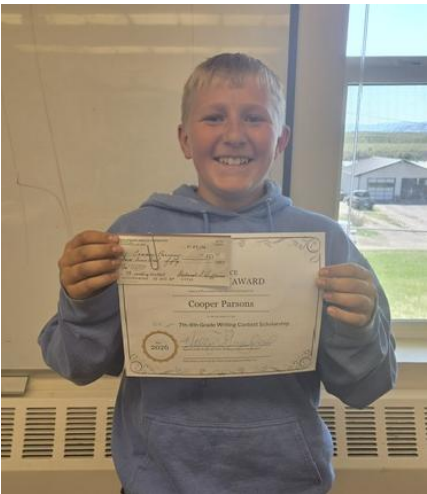


Hall School essay contest winners: Jayce Niebel 1st place; 5th Grade, Lance Cleveland 1st place; 4th grade, Calvyn Cleveland and Kreedynce Clark tied for 1st place; 6th grade.



4th Grade essay contest winners for the Drummond School. Ailynn McNiven 1st place, Teacher Rosa Ostler, and Sawyer Legg 2nd place.

7/8th Grade Contest – Cooper Parsons



9th/10th Grade Contest – Claire Whitten

PAST SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS – WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

PAEF’s continued mission focuses on assisting local students, helping them succeed in life with a quality education and training. Annually, we highlight graduates of high schools in the County, who have received scholarship assistance through PAEF. We proudly highlight, Eric Bohrsen of Granite High School and Sydney Phillips of Drummond High School.



Eric Bohrsen, Medical Intern 2026
Granite High School, Class of 2015 | Son of Hans and Carol Bohrsen

Eric grew up on a ranch on Willow Creek near Philipsburg and wisely used his PAEF scholarship at Montana State University, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in Biochemistry. Prior to medical school, Eric worked for over 5 years as a Biochemist at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in Hamilton, MT in partnership with MSU-Bozeman. He is currently in his third year of medical school with the University of Washington WAAMI Program and he is completing a rural medicine rotation in Hamilton. Eric’s goal is to return to Philipsburg as a Family Medicine Doctor where he can treat his favorite patients, “Rural Montanans”. Granite County is honored by Eric’s accomplishments. One day soon he may very well be doctoring patients in our area, paying it back.

Sydney Phillips, Project Engineer at Southland Industries 2026
Drummond High School, Class of 2021 | Daughter of Dean and Brooks Phillips

Sydney grew up in Helmville and used her PAEF scholarship at Montana Technological University (MT Tech), graduating in 2026 with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. She is now a Project Engineer at Southland Industries working on mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems for commercial buildings. She loves her job and career choice. At Montana Tech, Sydney was recognized for her contributions to both the campus and the Butte community. She enjoys her spending with her family and friends. She is a success story and makes us proud.



PAEF BOARD of DIRECTORS MEMBERS EXPAND



Our Board of Directors are community volunteers, all of which have jobs, families and community responsibilities. We share the chores required by every organization: communications, finance and taxes, fundraisers, and working to make our county a great place to live and raise children. No one who participates in the governance of PAEF receives remuneration of any kind, but many THANKS are given! We currently have eight members as we strive to represent all of Granite County and Helmville, a feeder school into our school district.

This year we welcome **Mr. James Grassey** of Philipsburg to the PAEF Board of Directors.

Mr. Grassey is an experienced commercial pilot who flies Trans-Pacific routes and now makes his home near Philipsburg. James is also a PAEF donor and currently serves as Chair of the Granite County Airport Board. With his leadership experience, aviation expertise, and broad industry perspective, James is a great addition to PAEF as we continue supporting Granite County students. Please join us in welcoming James to the PAEF team!

HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR 2026 DONORS!

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Marletto Family Trust | Sue & Leonard (Pinky) Eik | Jon Statler | Betty Munis & David Neu |
| Tom & Joyce Hood | Spencer & Sue Huffman | Myrna & Ed Leipheimer | Dr. Thomas Bales |
| Dr. Rich & Joyce Molteni | Helen & David Rouse | James Grassey | Patrick & Renee Cloney |
| Sheila Butts | Charlene Bucha | Mannix Brothers Ranch | Brooke Billadeau Miller |
| Sue Sweeney | Tyler Gentry | Shawn O’Rourke | Carol Billadeau |
| Eric & Bonnie Sue Nord | John & Theresa Gentry | Philipsburg Rotary | Heidi Hinkle |
| Ben & Samantha Larson | Flint Creek Childcare | The Ranch at Rock Creek | Blackfoot Communications |
| The Mzee Mibili Kipara Ranch | Chris Cooney | Gem Mountain | |
| Flint Creek Ancient Free and Accepted Masons Lodge #11 | | Granite County Medical Foundation | |

Donations made after October 1 will be reflected in the next year’s newsletter.

Education is important for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Marian Wright Edelman, American activist for children’s rights

PHILIPSBURG AREA EDUCATION FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT—LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD

PAEF is looking to secure educational scholarships for Granite County for the long-haul. Our endowment fund has been administered by the Montana Community Foundation (MCF) since 2004. Each year, we are able to give several thousand dollars in scholarships for vocational training and college based upon a 4-5% interest distribution on the endowment. Investment into our endowment enables donors to invest funds now for scholarships to use in perpetuity – a lasting legacy of contribution. With an investment of \$25,000, PAEF can give a \$1,000 scholarship in perpetuity. Often times, this type of investment is in memory of a loved one – a way to keep their presence in our community. This investment can be made all at once or over a period of time.

Currently, our endowment value is over \$300,000 ensuring program viability for many years to come. We endeavor to increase our endowment fund so we may offer educational scholarships long into the future. Our goal is to add \$2000 each year to the endowment through fundraisers and small donations accumulated throughout the year.

Legacy Contributions Building for the Future

Flint Creek Valley Arts Council

Philipsburg Area Education Foundation is pleased to announce the establishment of the Flint Creek Arts & Humanities Scholarship, an initiative dedicated to supporting arts and humanities education in our community that began over twenty years ago. This scholarship builds upon the efforts of the former Flint Creek Valley Arts Council, whose dedicated volunteers diligently worked to bring experiences like Jazz on Broadway, the Montana Repertory Theater, Shakespeare in the Park, and various artists to Granite County. Although there have been many volunteers through the years, initial organizers included Gaylene Jenson, Judy Paige, and Liz Willett. The organization dissolved in 2012, and recently its remaining funds were invested in the Philipsburg Area Education Endowment along with generous contributions from local art enthusiasts Sue Nord, Chris Cooney, and Sue Huffman to build a fund for education. Meredith McDonald, who initiated the transfer of funds, said, “We are proud to continue supporting the community’s access to the arts through this enduring legacy.” Eligible fields of study include, but are not limited to: fine arts, band, music, culinary arts, dance, drama, foreign language, journalism, metal or fiber art, writing, and education degrees with an intention to teach the arts or humanities.

HR Thrift Store

Beginning in the early 1970s under the direction of pioneers Peggy Collins, Dolly Page, and Agnes McDonald, the HR Thrift Store in Philipsburg has contributed thousands of dollars to the Granite County hospital and rest home. These contributions include computers and software, building remodeling and additions, beds, mobility equipment, and essential items for the emergency room, transportation, recreation, and kitchen services. The store has been an invaluable asset to our community for nearly 50 years, providing affordable clothing and equipment.

Dozens of volunteers have worked tirelessly to support the health and well-being of Granite County. Now, with a contribution to the PAEF Endowment, their hard work and legacy will continue for many years to come. Through this investment in the PAEF Endowment Fund, the HR Thrift Store Community Scholarship will support local residents pursuing careers in healthcare and help fund training for the next generation of caregivers.



HR Thrift Store President, Connie Schiedermyer and PAEF President, Sue Huffman

To apply for these scholarships and others, see our website in February 2027 – www.paefmt.com.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT in 2026

We have many wonderful donors who give in meaningful ways to our community and each year we are honored to share individuals or companies who contribute funds for scholarships.



Anthony Marletto is a resident on Rock Creek, who established the Marletto Family Scholarship. As one of our very first donors, Mr. Marletto has quietly provided financial assistance to over 50 residents of Granite County over the last 25 years. Tony was born and raised on a small family farm in Oregon, where he was taught from an early age to work hard. Intelligent in math, he studied business in college, and got a job washing cars at a Chevy Dealership in Oregon before working his way to the top as General Manager of the dealership. Taking a giant risk and leap of faith, Tony moved his family to Alaska and opened his very own Chevrolet Dealership, which over time, with good business sense and hard work developed into multiple dealerships. When he was ready to retire, he knew exactly what he wanted to do...own and operate a ranch on Rock Creek in Montana. And that’s where you will find him today, back to his roots, in a tractor improving his land and working as hard as ever, 6+ days a week.

Our hats off to you, Tony!

Expected 2027 Scholarships

Butts Family Scholarship: \$500 for a Granite County graduate (within three years of graduation) pursue vocational training or a trades program leading to certification or degree.

Commander Bernard J. O'Rourke Scholarship: \$1000 for a current-year graduate of Granite High School to engage in post-secondary education. Applicants should read Commander O'Rourke's biography at PAEFMT.com. An extra essay is required for this scholarship – it should state how the Commander's life and achievements influence your life goals and career choices.

David M. Rouse Memorial Scholarship: \$500 for a Granite High School graduate (current or past) to engage in post-secondary education with preference given to a current-year graduate.

Eik Family Scholarship: a \$500 scholarship for a Granite County student to engage in post-secondary education with preference given to current seniors pursuing vocational training.

Ezra R. Gentry Memorial Scholarship: \$500 scholarship for a graduate from Granite County, current year graduate or within two years of graduation, with preference for those pursuing trades or vocational training, OR union apprenticeship whereby funds will be awarded for tools and equipment. Applicants must submit a letter of interest along with two letters of recommendation in addition to the regular PAEF application. Financial need is a contributing factor.

Flint Creek Arts/Humanities: \$500 scholarship for a graduate of Granite County pursuing vocational training or fields of study to include, but are not limited to: fine arts, band, music, culinary arts, dance, drama, foreign language, journalism, metal or fiber art, writing, and education degrees with an intention to teach the arts or humanities. Although current graduates may apply, preference will be given to second semester or better students.

Flint Creek Childcare Scholarship: a \$500 scholarship will be awarded for a Granite County student pursuing early childhood development, primary education or childcare.

Granite High School Alumni Scholarship: \$500 for a Granite High School graduate (current or past) to engage in post-secondary education with preference given to a current-year graduate.

Granite County Medical Foundation Scholarships: two \$1000 scholarships for returning college students in healthcare – must be 2nd year or greater – one for upper valley and one for lower valley residents.

Thrift Store Community Scholarship: two \$1000 scholarships are provided for Granite County residents to engage in education or training in the medical industry, including but not limited to 2-to-4-year programs in nursing, mental health, emergency services, clinical and surgical technicians, medical administrative services, diagnostic services, and elder care. In addition to the PAEF application, this scholarship requires a 250 word essay about how volunteerism benefits the community and a resume with focus on volunteer work. Preference shall be given to previous year recipients.

J. Grassey Scholarship: a \$1000 scholarship is provided for a Granite County resident to engage in education or training in the aviation industry or the trades (construction, mechanics, plumbing, electrical, etc.)

Jon Manke Memorial Scholarships: two \$500 scholarships – one for Drummond High School and one for Granite High School – for graduates majoring in the healthcare field; preference given to nursing students.

Larson Woodshed Scholarship: one \$1000 scholarship for education or training to a Granite County graduate. Any graduate may apply, but preference will be given to students who pursue artistic endeavors in life, school and hobbies.

Leipheimer Scholarship: \$1000 scholarship for a Granite High School graduate (current or past) to engage in post-secondary education with preference given to students pursuing vocational training.

Marletto Family Scholarship: two awards (up to \$10,000) for Granite County students to engage in post-secondary education. Financial need is a primary criterion. Preference is given to a current year graduate. Proof of financial need is required.

Molteni Scholarship: \$500 scholarship for a Granite County student preparing for a career in healthcare.

Munis Family Scholarship: \$1500 scholarship for a Granite County resident to engage in post-secondary education or training with preference given to a student pursuing a career in agriculture.

Mzee Mibili Kipara Ranch Scholarship: two \$5000 scholarships for current Granite County graduates and two \$5000 for 2nd year or higher students in post-secondary education or training.

PAEF Board of Director's Scholarship: at least \$1000 for a Granite County resident to engage in post-secondary education or training. Character and academic potential are primary criteria.

Ranch at Rock Creek: four \$5000 scholarships are provided for Granite County current graduating seniors to pursue college or technical training. The scholarship requires a separate application which includes an essay and two letters of recommendation in a separate envelope to be forwarded to the donor for evaluation. Students should mention a bit about themselves and hopes for the future, any work experience (paid and voluntary), and contributions to their community. Preference is given to students who do not necessarily meet criteria for financial aid. GPA is NOT a factor.

Rose and Thomas Brogan Scholarship: one or two awards up to \$4000 for Granite County students who have attended college for at least one year and is majoring in Business, Economics or Mathematics.

Statler Family Scholarship in Memory of Theo Statler: \$2000 for a Granite County graduate to engage in post-secondary education with preference given to a student pursuing a degree in fine or performing arts and/or the humanities.

Tom Hood Leadership Scholarship: at least \$1000 for a Granite County student to engage in post-secondary education or training. Character and academic potential are primary criteria. Preference will be given to returning students – those enrolled in 2nd year or more.

All Granite County residents are eligible to apply for scholarships each year through an application process which includes writing essays, submitting transcripts and letters of reference. Generally, a scholarship committee assesses the applications and then funds are awarded based on established criteria. Some essays are evaluated by the donor and then PAEF facilitates the award. Some awards are made based on financial need; some are based on career interests, and all consider good character and potential for academic success. Residents can download application forms or check with high school counselors for forms. Please note some scholarships are for Granite COUNTY students and some are for Granite HIGH SCHOOL students. Some scholarships give preference to a certain type of training. Some scholarships are for all Granite County residents or students; some are for current graduates only. Visit www.paefmt.com for applications and requirements. **Do not use an old application**

form. Check the date on the top of the application! Scholarships may be added, changed or deleted throughout the year. Current year application will be available February 1. Deadline for submission is March 31.

Make a difference in our community – Donate to PAEF today!

If you would like to set up a donation for a one-time or recurring scholarship, please contact any PAEF Board member. If you would like to fund a specific educational project or training program in our community, we can help you make the donation through our organization. We PROMISE to be good stewards of your money!

Make checks payable to Philipsburg Area Education Foundation, PO Box 900, Philipsburg, MT 59858.

Philipsburg Area Education Foundation
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Local Postal Patron

This newsletter is made possible by a generous donation from PAEF Founder, Mr. Tom Hood.