



BLACK HILLS AREA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

EMPOWER SERVE GROW

IMPACT REPORT

2023



Barb Keene, Nicole Schlabach, Deana Heisler, Liz Hamburg, Karabeth Borresen, Chris Huber, Carrie Robley

Together in Service

Impact Report 2023

The Black Hills Area Community Foundation improves the quality of life across the beautiful Black Hills region, spanning Butte, Meade, Lawrence, Pennington, Custer, Oglala Lakota, and Fall River counties. To do this, the Community Foundation manages a diverse collection of funds, directs resources to grow positive change, and leads discussions about pressing regional concerns. Each year, the Community Foundation releases an Impact Report to highlight how our partners, staff, and donors empower, serve, and grow our community together.

Audited 2023 financial statements will be available at bhacf.org after the completion of our annual financial audit.

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Staff & Board of Directors

Message from CEO & Board Chair

Liz Hamburg, 2023 CEO

Steven Helmers, 2023 Board Chair

This has been an exciting year of transitions for the Black Hills Area Community Foundation. Early in the year, Liz began working with the Board of Directors for her transition to retirement by year end. Very thoughtful conversations and planning led to the promotion of Chris Huber, Director of Philanthropy for the past two years, into the CEO role beginning January 1, 2024. Having the luxury of a highly qualified internal candidate provided a smooth transition and ample time for a robust onboarding process. This continuity in leadership inspires confidence with our donors, our staff, and our Board.

With Liz's departure and Chris's promotion, we began conversations with a very targeted candidate to fill the Director of Philanthropy position. We are thrilled to add Eric Zimmer to our staff in this role. Eric has been very involved in community needs and in the profiling of philanthropic organizations across the country through his previous work with Vantage Point Historical Services, Inc and as a professor at the University of Montana in Missoula. Eric will be a wonderful and impactful addition to our team.

Our work addressing affordable housing needs has been substantial for the past six years. Through conversations with the Ellsworth Development

Authority last year regarding the additional pressure created on our housing market by the expansion of Ellsworth Air Force Base, our Foundation has led conversations to request federal funding that would, if awarded, help to capitalize Strategic Housing Trust Funds for Rapid City, Ellsworth Development Authority, and other communities within the Black Hills. Our request for funding included letters of interest and support from eleven municipalities within our footprint. We are grateful to our South Dakota legislators in Washington for their support and advocacy. We also held a Housing Summit in October of this year hosting over 100 participants to engage in discussions around housing needs, barriers to development, and the complex components that impact our area. This summit has catalyzed many conversations and interest throughout the region.

Through funding we received from the Bush Foundation in 2022, we have hired a new staff member to focus on housing. We are thrilled to add Greg Litton to our team. Greg will focus on managing our housing initiative, The Strategic Housing Trust Fund in Rapid City, and expanding this successful model to other Black Hills communities. Greg comes to BHACF with significant experience in banking, real estate, and has a law degree. He is the perfect fit for this new role.

Since 2020, we have recognized the need for a new location. Our space downtown was perfect at the time of our move in 2016, but we outgrew our space and had two people working remotely full time. We were made aware of a new building in Founders Park and with the help of some of our donors, we moved our office to a lovely new location with space for all staff and room to continue to grow. Please stop by and visit us at 243 Founders Park Drive, Suite 102.

The Black Hills Area Community Foundation is well positioned to continue to grow as the leader in philanthropy for our seven-county region of the Black Hills. It is a privilege to play a role in the continued success of this impactful organization.



Steven Helmers (left) and Liz Hamburg (right)

EMPOWERING GENEROSITY

Together with our financial partners, the Black Hills Area Community Foundation empowers generous donors to achieve their charitable goals. We love to celebrate strong partnerships, enduring legacies, and meaningful gifts.

Giving Circles



Black Hills by Choice

\$50,000 in grants in 2023.

\$331,679 in grants since 2013.

2023 Recipients:

- Youth & Family Services
- Working Against Violence, Inc.
- Black Hills Playhouse
- Teammates
- Wambli Ska
- OneHeart
- Chamber Music Festival
- Sequel
- Rapid City Public School Foundation
- Youth Philanthropy



Southern Hills by Choice

\$32,000 in grants in 2023.

\$176,990 in grants since 2017.

2023 Recipients:

- Growing Roots
- Casting for Recovery, Inc.
- Children's Home Society of SD
- All Nations United
- Hot Springs Ministerial Association
- Custer School District
- Hot Springs Scout Center
- The Mammoth Site



Northern Hills by Choice

\$11,000 in grants in 2023.

\$26,000 in grants since 2022.

2023 Recipients:

- Northern Hills Recreation Center
- Sturgis Little League
- Lawrence/Meade County Teen Court
- Artemis House
- Meade County Senior Citizens Center



Socialize & learn with a community of givers.



Make grants together that support the nonprofits in our region.



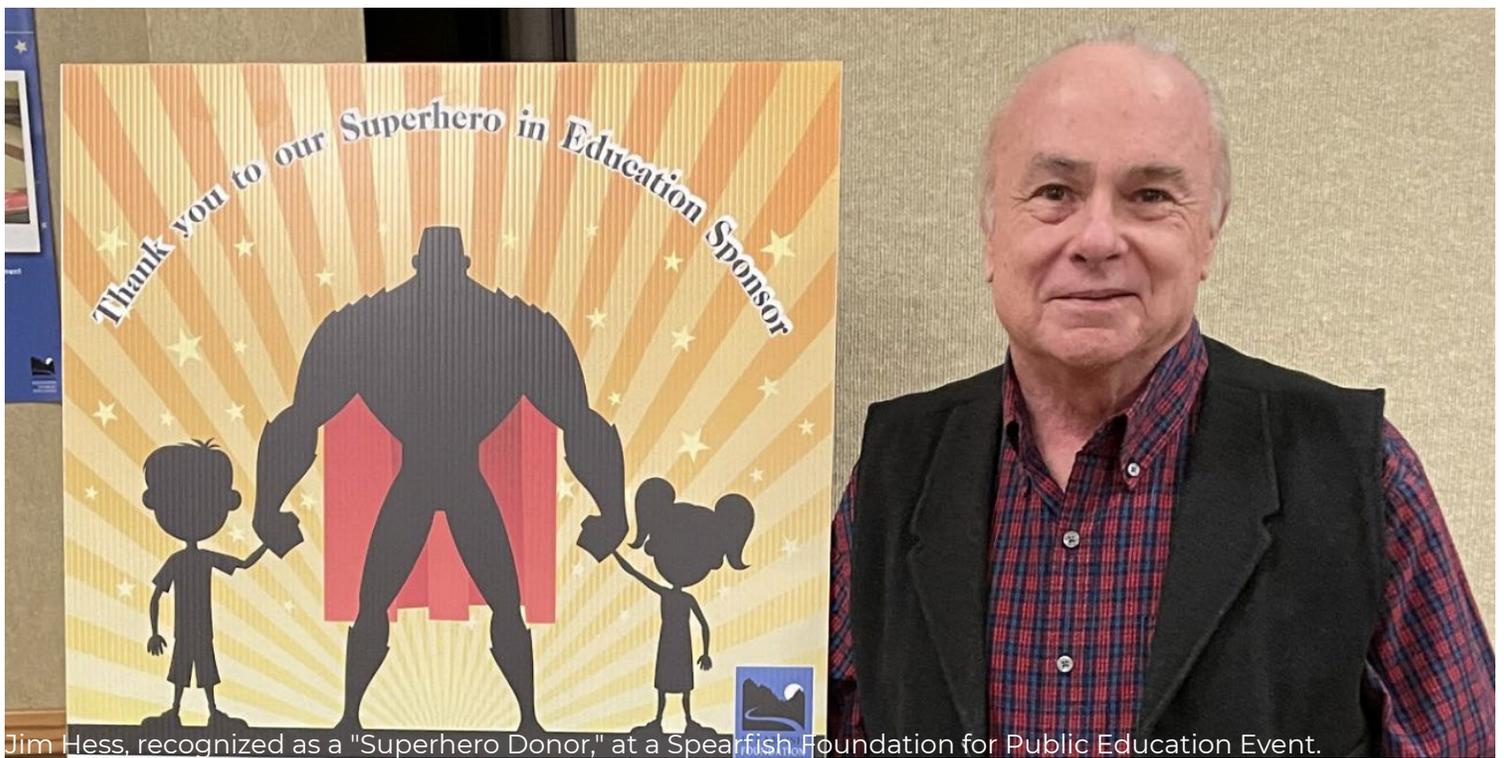
Educate friends about Black Hills philanthropy.

Learn About **Giving Circles**

Giving Circle members gather at annual events to direct collective grants, exchange information about charitable causes, and learn about regional nonprofits together.

Visit bhacf.org/giving-circles or call 605-718-0112 to join a giving circle or learn more.





Jim Hess, recognized as a "Superhero Donor," at a Spearfish Foundation for Public Education Event.

A Boundless Legacy, Crafted with Purpose

Jim Hess's legacy reflects a lifetime of igniting endless impact.

On early mornings, Jim Hess collected used golf balls from a golf course in Spearfish to resell at his convenience store. It was "double duty," he told family and friends, because he enjoyed the exercise but also made a profit to donate to a charitable cause.

Hess, the late businessman, counselor, and Black Hills State University professor, uplifted countless individuals in his lifetime. He believed in giving people the opportunity to succeed, using his generosity to unleash others' potential. Now, his legacy will continue that work forever.

At the Black Hills Area Community Foundation, Hess's legacy sparks limitless

impact by perpetually supporting the community he called home: the Northern Hills. Starting in 2024, Hess's endowment will enable a yearly grant process, supporting innovative, long-term projects at Northern Hills nonprofits forever.

"He really believed in the community, and he wanted to see these nonprofits get a chance," said Hess's former colleague Cheryl Anagnopoulos. As his endowment continues to grow, so will the Community Forward Grant, creating an ever-expanding wave of impact.

His legacy "multiplies and multiplies and multiplies. That gives me goosebumps just

thinking about that,” said his cousin Denise Webster. “It’s exponential—it’s humongous. That’s what he wanted.”

Hess’s legacy also amplifies the impact of the Northern Hills by Choice giving circle, with his matching dollars set to double members’ contributions for several years. In 2023, his legacy enabled an infusion of \$11,000 total into Northern Hills nonprofits.

In addition to supporting nonprofits, Hess initiated the Make a Difference Scholarship at Black Hills State University, where awardees must manage a long-term project to benefit the campus or the local community.

“He didn’t mind giving a hand up, he just didn’t like to give a handout,” Anagnopoulos remembers. Hess worked hard to afford the privilege of helping others succeed, and he wanted the recipients of his generosity to do the same.

His legacy "multiplies and multiplies and multiplies. That gives me goosebumps just thinking about that."

- Denise Webster, cousin of Jim Hess

For example, Hess was known for helping his employees get out of difficult situations, so long as they put in the effort. He knew “they just need a little patience, a little help, a little kindness to get a new start,” said Doris Deis, his friend and former co-worker.

The same generosity extended to Hess’s students. He encouraged them, validated



Jim Hess and friend Doris Deis

their strivings, and earnestly shared his wisdom.

Years later, former students would contact him to say, “You taught me in this year, and this is how you changed my life.”

From Hess’s life and legacy, we learn that acts of kindness – small and large – open the doorway for people to make a difference in the world, in ways that may continue forever.

“We need more people like that, and thankfully we do have people like that,” Webster said. “And that’s why our community gets expanded and grows in the right direction.”

Interested in Leaving a Legacy?

Call 605-718-0112 or connect with Eric Zimmer, BHACF Director of Philanthropy, at eric@bhacf.org.

Impact by the Numbers in 2023

Together, fundholders and The Black Hills Area Community Foundation direct a diverse collection of grants and scholarships to serve our region each year.



Areas of Impact



*These numbers reflect a cumulative overview of all grants and scholarships directed by fundholders and the Black Hills Area Community Foundation in 2023.

Scholarship Awards

The Black Hills Area Community Foundation partners with families and businesses to support students looking to earn a higher degree of education. The recipients represent some of the most resilient and inspiring students our community has to offer.



2023 Scholarship Recipients



Sierra Hopp
Alexis Jane Dzintars Memorial Scholarship



Benjamin Lust
Amanda Hoffmann Smith Memorial Scholarship



Alexis Bohndorf
Arete Morsching Scholarship in Memory of Kevin J. Morsching



Noah Schaeftbauer
Arete Morsching Scholarship in Memory of Kevin J. Morsching



Dylan Marsh
Arete Morsching Post 22 Scholarship in Memory of Kevin J. Morsching



Grace Schildhauer
Black Hills SD Engineering Society Scholarship



Greyson Deveries
Black Hills SD Engineering Society Scholarship



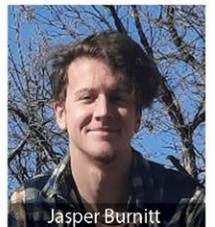
Jacie DeVries
Deerfield Store Scholarship



Roger Barrett
Elevate Rapid City Workforce Development Scholarship



Arianna Schild
Elevate Rapid City Workforce Development Scholarship



Jasper Burnitt
Harold & George "Elbert" Newton Music Memorial Scholarship



Allison Jacobs
Hosie Main Memorial Scholarship



Shelby Smith
Hunter J. Lewis Memorial Scholarship



Ivy Grace
Jamie Zepp Memorial Scholarship



Jenna Bohnenkamp
Joyce Bedingfield Memorial Nursing Scholarship



Evan Viergets
Julia Beth Jacobson Memorial Scholarship



Weston Woodward
Lloyd Aman Workforce Development Scholarship



Kaiden Darling
Mark Champman Memorial Scholarship



Megan Snyder
Patterson Scholarship



Megan Zhu
Sarah Stevens Memorial Scholarship



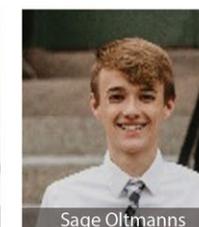
Spencer Wasmund
SDM Triangle Alumni Legacy Scholarship



Jaxson Dueland
SDM Triangle Alumni Legacy Scholarship



Paul Winker
SDM Triangle Alumni Legacy Scholarship



Sage Oltmanns
SDM Triangle Alumni Legacy Scholarship



Vivian Valadares
The Walt Award Scholarship



Janet Kahler (left) and Deonne Kahler (right)

The Joy of an Unexpected Gift

A mother and daughter felt uplifted and inspired after directing a spontaneous giving circle grant.

Janet Kahler and her daughter Deonne gave an impromptu gift at a Black Hills by Choice giving circle event in June of 2023. When the collective grants were announced, the pair exchanged a knowing glance from across their table and made an instantaneous decision.

Moments later, the Kahlers funded a request from Wambli Ska Okolakiciye, a Rapid City nonprofit dedicated to supporting

Native American youth and their families. Members of giving circles typically direct grants through a popular vote, but some philanthropists like Janet and Deonne fund additional requests.

In this case, the Kahlers' grant purchased supplies for youth to craft traditional clothing and regalia—a step toward helping Native American communities reclaim cultural practices and reconnect with their roots.



Black Hills by Choice event at the Dahl Arts Center on June 6, 2023.

“I knew it was the right thing to do,” said Janet, a longtime Black Hills resident, who emphasized that she’d like to learn more about Native American communities in the region. Deonne agreed, saying “I was personally really happy to help them. That kind of culture and experience has to live on.”

Later that evening, the pair left the event feeling uplifted and inspired. It’s often said, Janet noted, “but when you give, you get back a lot more.” In this case, it felt energizing to learn about Wambli Ska’s mission and then meet one of their needs.

Adding to the positive energy, the giving circle cultivated a sense of community. “There’s something about being in a room physically with people who share your values that is so important, and it keeps you going,” Deonne said. “It gives you a little hit of energy and hope.”

These little infusions of hope become especially important amid life’s challenges. As Janet said, “There are so many crazy things happening in the world that I could really let myself get down if I didn’t do things like this.”

“What are you curious about? Where is the energy for you? Then, just go toward that, and good things start to happen.”

- Deonne Kahler

Together, the mother and daughter duo aim to quietly exemplify how people can impact the world — whether it’s through giving resources or volunteering their time.

Along the way, they share the joy and fulfillment that comes with giving back.

“I’m always telling people,” Deonne said. “What are you curious about? Where is the energy for you? Then, just go toward that, and good things start to happen.”

Working Together For Clients' Peace of Mind

Those who create estate plans have one goal in common.

“You create a plan because you love someone,” said Tamara Burke, owner of Financial Benefits in Spearfish and a Financial Adviser with Eagle Strategies LLC.

Burke collaborates with the Black Hills Area Community Foundation to ensure her clients' estate plans honor the people and causes that they care about most. Ask yourself, she said, “Rather than writing this check to the IRS, would I rather give it to charity?”

“When you write a check to the government, 90 percent may go to administration, and only 10 percent to practical applications. Whereas if you find the proper charities,” which the Foundation does, “90 percent can go to people and programs,” she said.

“You create a plan because you love someone.”

- Tamara Burke, Owner of Financial Benefits and a Financial Adviser with Eagle Strategies LLC.

She appreciates how the Foundation keeps track of the charitable landscape to advise donors. “The Foundation is doing due diligence,” she said. “Today, these are active charities, but the Foundation is doing that stewardship to make sure they stay effective in the community.”



Financial Adviser Tamara Burke

Donors customize their giving to suit their needs, which includes remaining anonymous if desired. “Or, you can decide, this is a memorial to my husband – I want him to be honored,” Burke said.

The Foundation also maximizes the power of the compounding dollar, she noted. Donors can combine their funds into investment pools, realizing economies of scale for a larger impact.

Ultimately, Burke's relationship with the Foundation helps give her clients peace of mind. They trust that their advisers and the Foundation will fulfill their wishes, taking care of what matters most.

One client who created a fund at the Foundation, Burke remembers, breathed a sigh of relief after a financial planning meeting. He took a deep breath and said, “Everything is going to be okay.”

GIVING TO GROW

Our donors' generosity grows positive change, made possible by the critical work of our nonprofits and charitable partners. The far-reaching impacts of philanthropy flourish all around us.



A child dancing at Wambli Ska Teen Center in Rapid City.

One Dance at a Time

The creation of traditional regalia, supported by a Black Hills by Choice grant, builds confidence and community at nonprofit Wambli Ska Okolakiciye.

It's easy to catch a dancing bug at nonprofit Wambli Ska Okolakiciye. It may start with trying on a fancy shawl, choosing a dance style, or crafting traditional bead work. From there, dancing in a weekly wacipi, or powwow, opens a door to long-lasting benefits for kids, teens, and their families. Based in Rapid City, Wambli Ska uses cultural practices to provide structure, stability, and love to Native American youth.

Janet and Deonne Kahler, a mother and daughter pair, supported this mission by funding a giving circle grant to purchase supplies for regalia craft nights. With a wide selection of supplies—feathers, bells, beads, ribbons, and more—kids and teens build one-of-a-kind outfits to showcase at the powwow.

The creative freedom that comes with selecting regalia items builds confidence, said Caylee Martinez, Youth Advocate at Wambli Ska. “I think it’s beautiful because once they get confident in their regalia, then they start to say, ‘I want to make my bells, I want to make my belt, I want to start sewing and beading and make my own moccasins,’” Martinez said.

When the community celebrates the dancers’ self-expression, their confidence grows even more. JC Killspotted, MC of the weekly powwow, has witnessed this transformation. “People who come here may not know how to identify themselves,” he said, but after getting involved, “they break out of that little shell, the defense mechanism, and soon, the kid who wasn’t talking is over there singing.”

Many kids find mentors and positive role models in the community. Martinez remembers how she grew up learning how to dance alongside older girls who led by example. “Seeing the older ones gave me inspiration, like, ‘I want to be just like her,’ which made me want to keep in touch with my culture,” she said.

Once kids and teens start dancing, they come back regularly to improve their outfits and their skills. Eventually, it’ll come time for them to mentor the next generation. At Wambli Ska, it’s clear that the real impact extends far beyond bells and beads. Just like in dancing, one step always leads to another.

“There’s more at stake than just ‘Hey, let’s dance.’ It’s a mindset on actually belonging and actually feeling comfortable within your skin.”

-Chris White Eagle, President of Wambli Ska Okolakiciye.

Building a Better Future With Affordable Housing

Housing costs continue to rise with population growth in the Black Hills. As a result, tight budgets force some families to compromise basic needs like food or healthcare. Many families need affordable housing to save enough money for a down payment on a home.

Affordable housing means that housing costs, including utilities, account for no more than 30% of household income, as defined by the Black Hills Area Community Foundation.

The Community Foundation helps families build a better future by leading the Rapid City Strategic Housing Trust Fund. The initiative extends low-interest loans to developers to help them construct affordable units. The Community Foundation continues to expand this model into other Black Hills communities.



Many partners support the Community Foundation's housing initiatives, including the John T. Vucurevich Foundation, the City of Rapid City, The Bush Foundation, Elevate Rapid City, numerous businesses and individual donors.

Rapid City Impact: 505 Below-Market Units

As of January 2024, the Rapid City Strategic Housing Trust Fund has assisted, or will assist, in the creation of 505 below-market units in Rapid City. More units are anticipated across the Black Hills area.

Rapid City Housing Data 2023

Buying

\$422,411

The median list price for a home in Rapid City.

Renting

\$1,230

The average monthly rent of an apartment in Rapid City.

Source: Elevate Rapid City Housing Dashboard reflecting December 2023 numbers.

More Than an **Affordable Place to Live**

The Radiant offers affordable housing and more to Rapid City families.



Photo courtesy of Cody Lere Photography

On any evening at The Radiant, a new housing community in Rapid City, you'll hear warm laughter and vibrant chatter as residents connect. Whether for potlucks, resident council meetings, birthdays, or game nights, there is always something happening to bring neighbors together.

The Radiant is the first completed affordable housing project supported by the Black Hills Area Community Foundation's housing initiative, the Rapid City Strategic Housing Trust Fund. The Community Foundation was proud to partner with Midwestern housing

nonprofit CommonBond Communities, the John T. Vucurevich Foundation, and many other local partners for the project.

In August of 2023, CommonBond's The Radiant opened its doors with 30 affordable units priced at below-market rates, along with 12 market-rate units, for Rapid City families. The price of the below-market-rate units depends on residents' income levels, with affordable homes available for those earning between 30-60% of the Area Median Income.

In addition to providing stable, affordable housing, CommonBond Communities also offers supportive services, called Advantage Services, to residents. These individualized services are free and include help accessing food and transportation resources, employment and financial coaching, rent relief for housing stability, and more.

"When you have the stability a home provides, you can really focus on building your future and that is what our services help people do. They help residents become stable, independent, and get where they want to go in life," said Karissa, the Advantage Services Coordinator at the new site, who is always eager to work with residents.

By pairing affordable housing with wraparound services, The Radiant meets a critical regional need while supporting the long-term success of Rapid City residents.

Visit theradiantapts.com to learn more about The Radiant housing community.



Photo courtesy of Cody Lere Photography

Keeping the **Engine Running**

Investing in operational maintenance — known as capacity building — keeps the wheels of our nonprofits turning.

Imagine an executive director at a local nonprofit discovers her organization's computers need costly and unplanned upgrades. Without this technology, the nonprofit isn't fully equipped to fulfill its mission. Now, the director must adjust the budget, leaving little wiggle room for the next unexpected expense. For this organization, changing community needs may require many more budget adjustments. This is a common and inevitable scenario for many nonprofits.

Much like a business, nonprofits must invest in technology, market their programs, and train their staff. However, unanticipated expenses and tight budgets make it difficult to invest in these basic needs. Our nonprofits work with our community's most vulnerable populations and address complex, dynamic issues. They need a robust toolkit to meet these challenges and uplift the place we all call home.

"If you think of a nonprofit as a car, capacity building could be compared to the car maintenance. If you delay or neglect maintenance, your car is eventually going to have issues."

- Carrie Robley, BHACF Director of Community Impact

2023 Capacity Building Grants

24 Grants

Awarded by the Black Hills Area Community Foundation to regional nonprofits in 2023.

\$104,329

Total awarded to regional nonprofits for capacity building in 2023.

Grants Support:

- Evaluation of programs
- Partnership development
- Strategic planning
- Board engagement
- Marketing and donor engagement
- Technology needs
- Staff development

Learn about grant opportunities at bhacf.org/grants.

A Stronger Team at Rapid City Arts Council



The Rapid City Arts Council team in 2023

Recent leadership transitions led to high employee turnover at The Rapid City Arts Council. What was needed to improve retention? The Council needed to invest in training and team-building activities, but they lacked the funds in their operating budget.

After receiving a Capacity Building Grant from the Black Hills Area Community Foundation, The Council provided professional development, training resources, and networking opportunities to their staff.

Amazingly, after these investments, a survey showed a 50% increase in the number of staff who felt the organization was moving in the right direction. Staff members were twice as likely to recommend The Arts Council as a great place to work.

“The seemingly simple initiatives funded by the grant have allowed us to operate much more cohesively around how we accomplish

our mission,” said Jacqui Dietrich, Executive Director of The Rapid City Arts Council. As well, “there’s been a dramatic increase in the quality and quantity of programming our team has been able to offer,” leading to more community participation, Dietrich noted.

Among other positive outcomes, the grant enabled leadership to refresh a three-year strategic plan, and the staff boosted volunteer recruitment using skills learned from online training.

“There’s been a dramatic increase in the quality and quantity of programming our team has been able to offer.”

- Jacqui Dietrich, Executive Director of The Rapid City Arts Council.

“We’re always looking at how to re-imagine our organization to have the most benefit for the community. Having that focused funding to put toward initiatives like staff development is really critical,” Dietrich said.

Life Skills Learned Onstage

Joanna Mechaley enjoys what many consider to be their number one fear: public speaking. As a former actress turned Marketing Manager at Matthews Opera House, Mechaley credits her comfort before an audience to years in the spotlight.

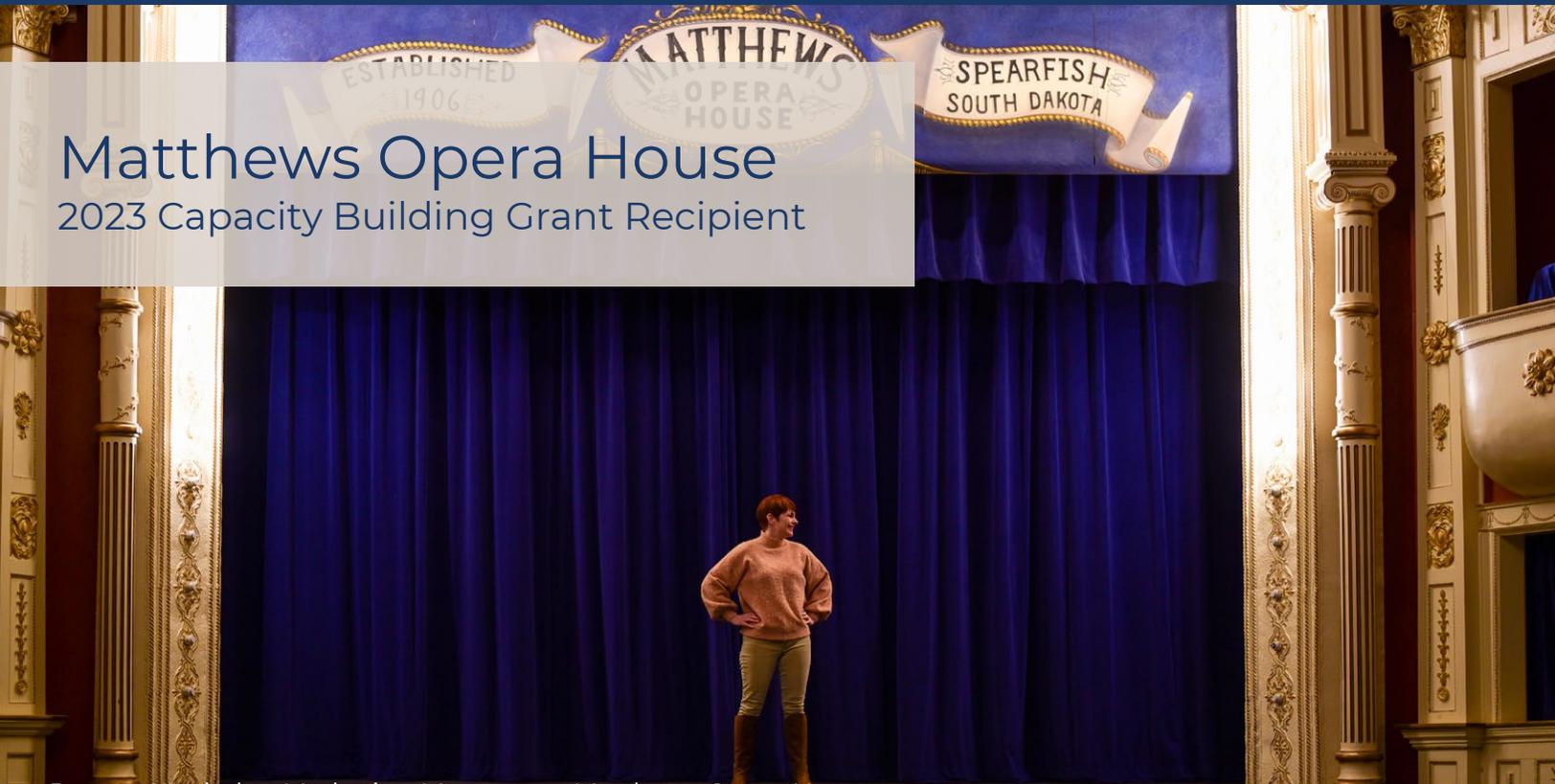
However, it's hard to feel confident if the stage lights fail. Mechaley recalls how that happened once during a performance at Matthews Opera House. To ensure that critical technology is reliable, the Community Foundation directed a Capacity Building Grant to the Opera House in 2023.

This funding streamlines productions, allowing performers to focus on their personal and professional growth. For many, this means honing their social skills. Acting taught Mechaley the art of active listening and how to respond to subtle cues, both verbally and with her body language.

"Theater teaches you how to overcome your insecurities," she said. "If you're feeling a little on the spot, you learn some adapting coping skills to put on that face and get through a period of time."

Cast members also learn how to form strong friendships. When rehearsals start, it's common to see kids sitting alone, Mechaley said. But later, "once you get them reading through scenes, you see a comfort beginning to build. They are having fun with each other, finding people like themselves."

Mechaley delights in watching the personal growth of other performers. It all comes together at the end of a show, when the ensemble stands confidently in the spotlight, receiving applause from their family and friends.



Matthews Opera House
2023 Capacity Building Grant Recipient

Finding Connection in Theater

Highschooler Mariana Pitlick, who grew up acting on the Homestake Opera House stage, says the performing arts have deepened her connection with herself and others in the community.

Funding for the Opera House, like the Capacity Building Grant the Opera House received in 2023, helps give other young people the chance to discover these connections for themselves.

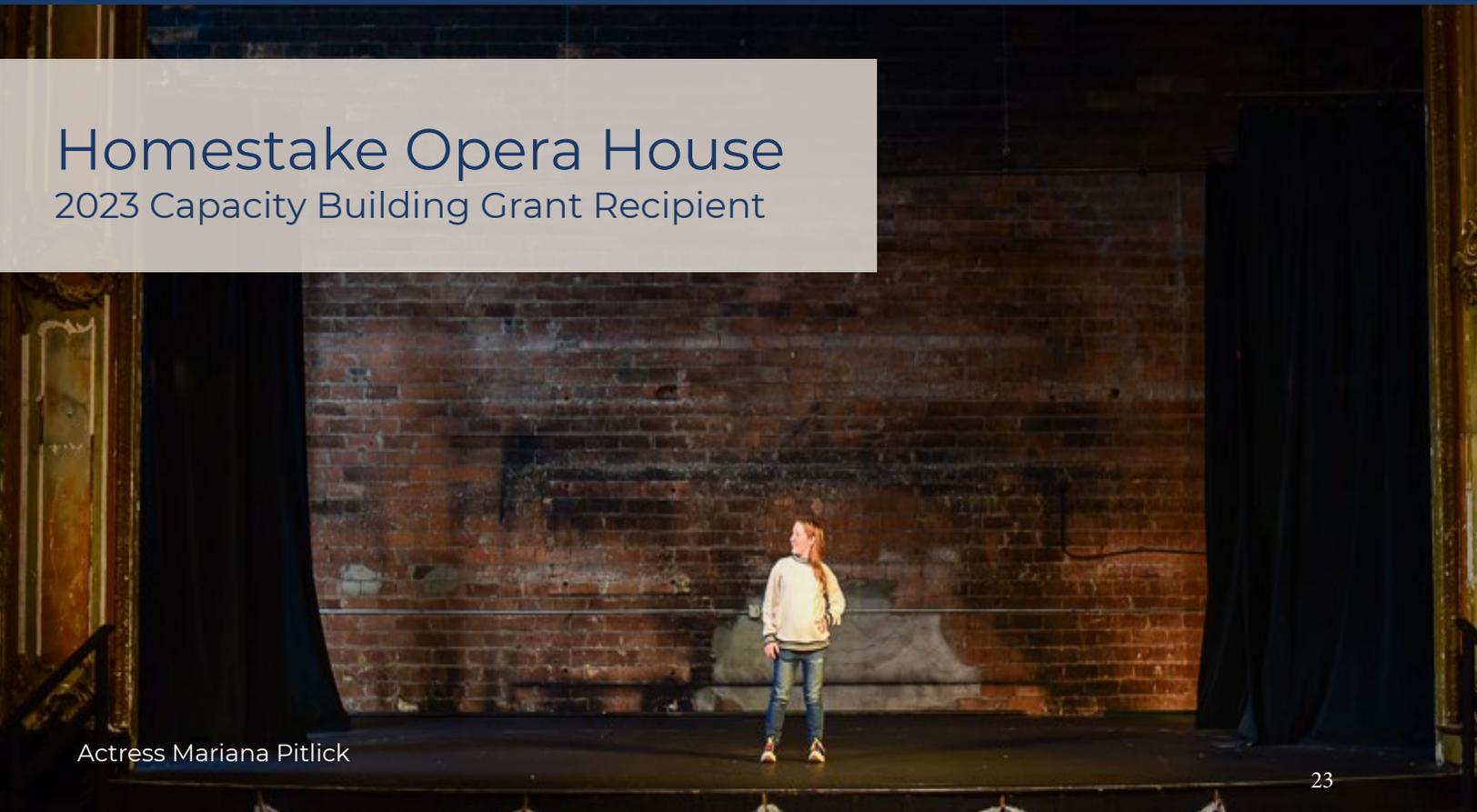
Pitlick discovered her true self and passion for making others laugh through the performing arts. At the same time, immersing herself in the complex mental states of her characters has helped her understand her own emotions.

“When I was young in those formative years, there were many big, grand emotions that I wouldn’t have been able to process the same if I wasn’t in theater,” she remembered.

It takes true courage to express those emotions onstage, but that vulnerability forms a critical link with others, she said. “If the person in the audience is able to recognize that emotion within themselves, it forges a connection greater than words.”

Actors must also connect with their characters’ stories and struggles, expanding their understanding of the world. Pitlick emphasized how she’s learned about new cultures by researching her characters’ backgrounds.

Pitlick says, “thank you” to those at the Opera House who have “helped me realize things about myself, helped me realize the importance of connecting with others in order to make a better world for everyone.”



Homestake Opera House
2023 Capacity Building Grant Recipient

Science in the Southern Hills

The \$16,000 grant will fund a shade structure to support a free summer camp for kids at The Mammoth Site.

Visitors to the Mammoth Site in Hot Springs open a doorway to fascinating discoveries about paleontology among the largest concentration of mammoth remains in the world. Starting in 2024, The Mammoth Site will invite children ages 8-12 to make their own discoveries by opening a free, multi-day summer camp.

The goal is to expand kids' comfort with—and access to—science. “Summer programming can get expensive, but we didn't want cost to prohibit kids from being able to participate in science,” said Seth Vandenberg, Science Educator at The Mammoth Site.

In support of the camp, the Black Hills Area Community Foundation directed a \$16,000 grant for a structure to shade a simulated dig site. Under the shade structure, children will excavate, record, and interpret a fossil site filled with bone specimens.

This type of experience “helps kids realize that science isn't something to be afraid of – it's a bunch of dedicated people working together trying to answer questions and find solutions. Our hope is that kids realize they can be part of that process,” Vandenberg said.

Even if the kids don't find a passion in paleontology, the experience may spark their interest in other fields like medicine or geology. In this way, the camp may ignite a broader journey of fulfillment and engagement for youth in the Black Hills.

“We don't want there to be anything blocking kids from becoming a scientist if they want to be one.”

- Seth Vandenberg, Science Educator at The Mammoth Site





Connecting Services with Survivors

The \$50,000 grant purchased a passenger van to expand Working Against Violence Inc's services on Pine Ridge Reservation.

In the wake of the pandemic, nonprofit Working Against Violence, Inc. (WAVI) has seen heightened demand from survivors of domestic and sexual violence. In 2022, stays at its shelter increased by 22 percent, along with rising requests for transportation.

A passenger van, purchased with a BHACF Community Action Grant, allows WAVI to better serve not only those in Rapid City, but also those living on the Pine Ridge Reservation. "Because of the generous gift, we were able to purchase a van to allow for increased transportation of the women, children, and men we serve," said Linda Shroll, Executive Director at WAVI.

Within Pine Ridge, the van will help connect clients with case management and referrals, medical or legal advocacy, assessments, and more, Shroll said. Clients can now travel to and from Pine Ridge and a safe shelter in Rapid City if requested.

Community Action Grants are available to endowed agency fundholders each year. Visit bhacf.org/grants to view grant opportunities.

The increase in mobility also allows WAVI to partner with the Peaceful Means Project, a program established in part by the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. The program offers sexual violence prevention training and a support system to students in the Oglala Sioux Tribe and their families. In the process, survivors may disclose difficult experiences. WAVI provides emotional support and education to Peaceful Means staff and others who support survivors.

Altogether, the van strengthens WAVI's services and partnerships in a time of growing need. "We, at WAVI, are so thankful for the generous support provided by the Black Hills Area Community Foundation," Shroll said.

TOGETHER IN SERVICE

The Black Hills Area Community Foundation is dedicated to caring for the place we all call home. Our staff and Board of Directors work together in steadfast service to our donors, our nonprofits, and our community.

2023 Staff



Liz Hamburg
CEO



Chris Huber
Incoming CEO, 2023 Director of
Philanthropy



Eric Zimmer
Incoming Director of Philanthropy



Barb Keene
Director of Operations



Carrie Robley
Director of Community Impact



Karabeth Borresen
Director of Marketing



Greg Litton
Director of Strategic Housing



Nicole Schlabach
Operations and Communications
Specialist



Deana Heisler
Northern Hills Connector



When Disaster Strikes, **Gather for Good**

Ten years after the devastation of Winter Storm Atlas, the staff of the Black Hills Area Community Foundation looks forward to the future of disaster resilience and emergency preparedness.

Turn back the calendar to October of 2013. A bone-soaking rainstorm came first, then the moisture froze into multiple feet of snow, all compounded by high winds. October of 2023 marked ten years since Winter Storm Atlas ravaged western South Dakota.

Our community wasn't prepared for a blizzard so early in the season. Animals hadn't yet grown their winter coats. When the storm cleared, ranchers faced a devastating scene—thousands of livestock animals had died of hypothermia and exhaustion.

In response to the disaster, the Black Hills Area Community Foundation established the Rancher Relief Fund, in partnership with the South Dakota Cattleman's Association, Stockgrowers Association, and Sheep Growers Association, to compensate for livestock losses. Donations from around the world allowed the Foundation to direct over \$5 million to severely impacted producers.

Seven years after Winter Storm Atlas, the Foundation waged a hyper-local response to the coronavirus pandemic by filling critical resource gaps, like expanding internet hotspots for students and supporting local mask production. Now, Carrie Robley, BHACF Director of Community Impact, is taking a refreshed look at emergency planning to ensure the Community Foundation is prepared for the next disaster.

In 2023, Robley joined a cohort of Midwestern foundations called the Philanthropic Preparedness Resilience and Emergency Partnership. The group collaborates on best

practices and resources for disaster recovery and response. Carrie met with the group in Kansas during a summer conference. The members shared resources for mitigation and prevention, in addition to tools for waging a short-term response.

Disasters bring destruction, but they also provide an opportunity to “gather for good.”

- Carrie Robley, BHACF Director of Community Impact

With a pulse on local needs, the Foundation is well positioned to provide targeted support during the next emergency. “Since we are rooted in the core of the community, we can build a response from the inside out, considering the community's local resources and history,” Robley said.

The Foundation is also uniquely equipped to rapidly adjust its plan when urgent needs change or new needs arise. This agility helps the Foundation adapt to meet pressing needs, often before other support organizations can shift their operations to respond.

Disasters bring destruction, but they also provide an opportunity to “gather for good” as one community, Robley said. Using lessons learned from the Winter Storm Atlas and the coronavirus pandemic, the Foundation will continue to gather resources for good and direct crucial support to those who need it most.



Lessons from Liz

Liz Hamburg retires in 2023 after an extraordinary nine years as the CEO of the Black Hills Area Community Foundation. During her tenure as CEO, Liz earned a reputation as a trusted mentor and a graceful leader. To honor Liz, those who know her well have shared "Lessons from Liz" they've learned from her over the years.

“I’m grateful for the growth, stability and bright future that Liz Hamburg established for the Black Hills Area Community Foundation. Liz is an accomplished leader because she understands, and by example demonstrates, that the most meaningful work is achieved by fostering productive and trusting relationships. She inspires others to give their best to support a shared vision.”

- Steven Helmers, 2023 Chair of the BHACF Board of Directors

“One of the lessons I learned from Liz, is that you can actually build a plane while flying it! This is a phrase Liz used many times to describe how we were approaching the development of the Rapid City Strategic Housing Trust Fund.”

- Alan Solano, President & CEO at John T. Vucurevich Foundation

“When we recruited Liz to lead the Black Hills Area Community Foundation, we knew she was the right person to take the Foundation to the next level. Her knowledge of and commitment to Black Hills communities and her ability and willingness to engage in problem solving across a broad spectrum of issues has distinguished the Foundation as an integral partner in building the partnerships required to take on challenges in our region. Liz has further distinguished herself in her capacity to attract engaged board members and talented team members to fulfill our mission as a trusted philanthropic leader in the region.”

- Katherine (Kitty) Kinsman, Former Chair of the BHACF Board of Directors

“Liz has a special talent of bringing people together. She makes a difference when she is present or at the table. I so admire Liz’s depth of knowledge and her willingness to find solutions by understanding all the angles of every issue.”

- Terry Hermann, 2023 Vice Chair of the BHACF Board of Directors, 2024 Chair

“Since her return to the Black Hills from the West Coast, Liz has been determined to apply her diverse professional and life experience to improving the quality of life for the entire region. Liz has a unique ability to recognize, attract, and develop talent. Once she pursues an endeavor, Liz is virtually unstoppable. Her thought leadership, drive, and persistence made Rapid City and the Black Hills a much better place to call home.”

- Qusi Al-Haj, Deputy State Director/Air Force Advisor for Senator John Thune

“Liz’s legacy as a driving force for positive change in the Black Hills will continue to shape the Foundation’s work for years to come. Her perseverance has been truly inspiring, as she tackled challenges with unyielding determination. Through both triumphs and setbacks, she remained steadfast in her commitment to the Foundation’s mission and propelled it to new heights. Her ability to navigate complex situations with grace and determination is just one of the things I admire so much about her.”

- Chris Huber, 2023 BHACF Director of Philanthropy, 2024 CEO

Lessons from Liz Continued

Under Liz's stewardship, the Black Hills Area Community Foundation grew from \$14 million to over \$57 million in charitable assets and became an established leader in regional philanthropy. The BHACF conference room is now named in honor of the many ways Liz has uplifted our region.



“Professionally, I admire Liz for her success in growing the Black Hills Area Community Foundation and expanding its impact across the region. Personally, though, I will always appreciate Liz most for her willingness to share a good book with me on a work trip to ease my fear of flying. She never complained about me looking over her shoulder!”

- Julie Oberlander, Community Engagement Coordinator at OneHeart

“Liz’s tenacity and remarkable ability to deliver results that most can only dream of is truly inspiring. Her unwavering dedication has left an indelible mark on all of us. She set a high standard and her legacy will continue to inspire the community for years to come.”

- Michelle Schuelke, Community Enrichment Manager at City of Rapid City

“Liz has the rare grit and determination it takes to move the needle on what most see as too hard or impossible. Her drive, determination, and commitment to excellence while remaining humble will always be what I admire about her most. Whether it was revitalizing the Black Hills Community Foundation, her personal health and fitness, or the local tennis team she coached, she brings 100% daily and does not settle for anything less than excellence.

I have learned from Liz that no matter how difficult or hard the road ahead seems, you stay the course and you do it while being good to the people around you.”

- Audrey Beck, Staff and Research Assistant, United States Senate

“What I most admire about Liz is her ability to be unflappable even when she doesn’t like the direction a conversation or effort is taking. She continues to approach the issue with grace and gentle guidance and disarms people with her quiet charm. She has been a mentor and confidant for me over the years and I am grateful to call her a friend.

Liz taught me how to roll the dice and go against the grain (even when a good idea is being met with resistance), how to face tremendous adversity with hopeful realism, and to how to curate a fantastic team and be the best ‘boss girl’ possible.”

- Charity Doyle, Executive Director at OneHeart

“I am one of the lucky ones to have been a recipient of Liz’s guidance and mentorship. I can say, without hesitation, that meeting Liz truly changed my life. I met her at an important time in my life, and she was instrumental in setting me on the path I am on today. Liz showed me how to lead with compassion, integrity, and a generous sense of self. I will be forever grateful to her for that!

Liz has the rare ability to demonstrate to everyone around her how to be gracious and graceful under pressure, regardless of life’s challenges. These attributes are reflective of who she is and why, not only the community of Rapid City, but the state of South Dakota has lifted her up to be such a leader among those who are working to change things for the better. Few people in this world have impacted me, and the community I love so much, as Liz Hamburg has in her time at the helm. The Black Hills and South Dakota are better because Liz has been a part of it.”

- Jodi Litz, Former Colleague of Liz

2023 Board of Directors

The Black Hills Area Community Foundation is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who are representative of the community. Their leadership is key in maintaining the Foundation's mission and vision.

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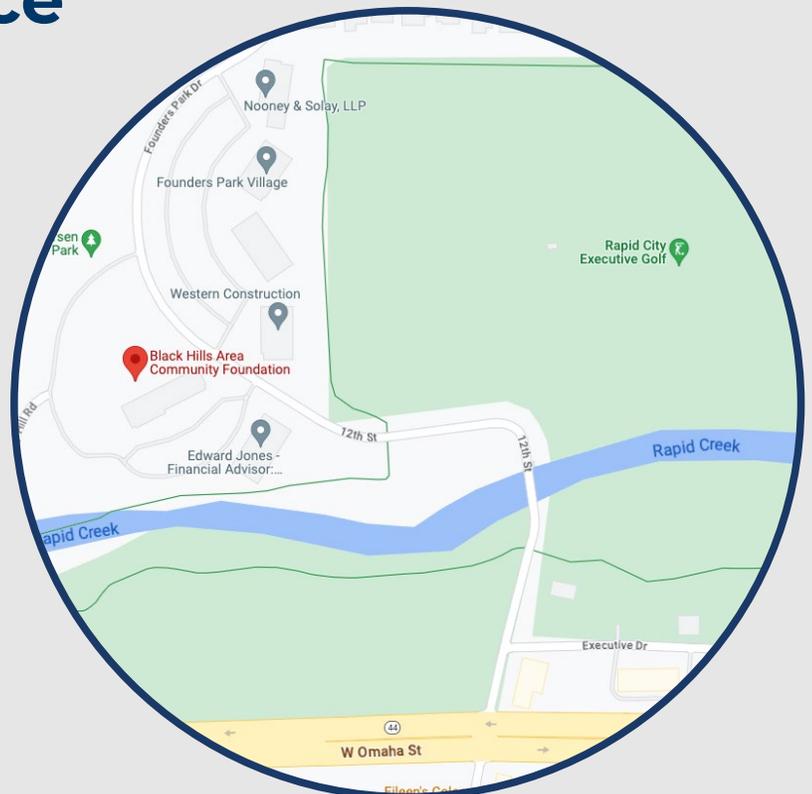
243 Founders Park Drive, Suite 102
Rapid City, SD 57701

Mailing address:

Physical address
Or:
PO Box 231
Rapid City, SD 57709

Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Phone: 605-718-0112





Our Mission

To invest in people and solutions that positively impact the Black Hills area by guiding philanthropic education, growing philanthropic capital, investing in charitable work, and managing select community initiatives.

- GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS
- FIELD OF INTEREST FUNDS
- DONOR ADVISED FUNDS
- FISCAL SPONSORSHIP
- LEGACY GIFTING
- AGENCY FUNDS
- ENDOWMENTS



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