



The Pollinator

fall 2022



**Healthy Acres
Healthy Communities
Foundation**

**BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

- Bill Caras, *Chair*
- Melanie Bengtson
- Kari Brittain
- Bev Gutman
- Charlotte Guay Iverson
- Kayla Mascari
- Ken Stolz
- Loni Waters

MCWDE STAFF

- Jerry Marks,
Department Head
- Bryce Christiaens,
Manager
- Jean Jenkins,
Foundation Coordinator

***Pictured above:** Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation board members, Missoula County Weed District and Extension staff, and volunteers gathered in October to support the Exploration Center and Rocky Mountain Gardens.*

Missoula County Commissioners honor Jerry Marks with building naming of future Exploration Center

On December 8, the Missoula County Commissioners recognized Jerry Marks' lifelong dedication to agricultural education and community building by naming the future home of the Missoula County Weed District and Extension and its partners in his honor. **The Gerald W. Marks Exploration Center and Rocky Mountain Gardens**, currently under construction at the Missoula County Fairgrounds, will be the premier center for scientific education and community-centered learning in the Rocky Mountain West.



Marks, who began his career as a Missoula County Extension Agent in 1969, has been instrumental in creating the vision for the Exploration Center. The project is the culmination of years of planning and dedication by Marks and the many others he brought onto the project. Marks envisioned a center for hands-on community learning in Missoula after visiting an education garden in Wyoming in the early 1990s. He worked with his team at the Weed District and Extension, Missoula County Commissioners, the Missoula County Fairgrounds, Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium, Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation and Missoula Conservation District to create something bigger and bolder than he first witnessed. At the groundbreaking on May 14, 2021, for the 29,000-square-foot center and 2.5-acre education gardens, Marks celebrated his 80th birthday with hundreds of friends and supporters.

Generous community members help build a place to GROW

On a sunny October evening more than 130 Missoula community members, from rural and urban backgrounds, came together to support the Exploration Center and Rocky Mountain Gardens. The evening raised important funds for the development of the Rocky Mountain Gardens, 2.5 acres of education gardens that will be part of Exploration Center campus, and also celebrated the naming of the Exploration Center boardroom for 4-H and the agricultural community. The highlight of the evening was the bidding on a 1955 red Willys Overland Pickup donated by Jim and Bonnie Mountain. We began the evening with a \$50,000 goal and ended with over **\$100,000** in gifts and commitments. We thank all the supporters for their generosity in helping us build this place to GROW in Midtown Missoula.



Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation board members and campaign steering committee members took the lead on this event with

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Generous community members...

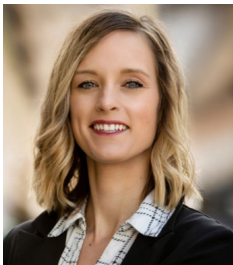
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brothers Shane Clouse and Shawn Clouse, PhD emceeding the event and providing entertainment. Many thanks to board chair Bill Caras and John Rimel for their committee leadership and board members Bev Gutman, Kari Britain, Charlotte Iverson, and the many staff and volunteers including the Blackfoot Valley Cattlewomen who shared their passion for this new destination and made this event a success.

To learn more about the Exploration Center and Rocky Mountain Gardens and how to contribute, contact Jean Jenkins at jenkins@healthyacres.org, 406.370.0441.

Welcome new board members:

Kayla Mascari



Kayla is a financial and investment banking analyst with Bank of Montana specializing in multifamily underwriting. She is currently sitting for the CPA examination. Kayla enjoys spending time with her family outdoors and hopes to visit all 50 states before her kids graduate high school.

Loni Waters



Loni is co-owner of Garden City Florascaping, where she manages the office, garden installation projects and maintenance. She is an avid gardener and famous for her amazingly large vegetables, loves to cook and hikes nearly every day.

Legacy Giving

Gifts to support our work make a lasting impact on our children, our culture and our community. Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation is a nonprofit 501c3. Please consider making a bequest by naming HAHCF in your will and/or trust. If you are 70½ or older, IRA contributions can be made directly to HAHCF, are not taxable to the donor and HAHCF will receive the full amount of your gift. For more information on how you can be a part of securing a vibrant, healthy future for generations, contact Foundation Coordinator Jean Jenkins at 406.370.0441 or jenkins@healthyacres.org.



The Lettuce Grow Farmstand provided vegetable and herb starts resulting in an abundant harvest.

The Farmstand is a hydroponic system that can be used indoors and outdoors and doesn't require land to grow your own food. Sarah looks forward to growing culinary herbs in the Lettuce Grow Farmstand in the new demonstration kitchen at the Exploration Center and using the bounty in programming.

New program: Climate Resiliency Education

This spring the Missoula Weed District and Extension Office created a new program and position: Climate Resiliency Education. "I am excited to create and grow this new program with our community and the many groups already working in the important field of climate change," said Sarah Holden, the Weed District and Extension's new Climate Resilience Educator. For one of the program's first initiatives, Health Acres Healthy Communities Foundation was the recipient of a Lettuce Grow Farmstand through a Whole Foods Kids Foundation partnership with Lettuce Grow.

Join the
Buzz!

Check out construction in progress at:
[JoinTheBuzzMissoula.org](https://www.jointhebuzzmissoula.org),
scroll down and click on the Live
Construction Feed button.



**Healthy Acres
Healthy Communities
Foundation**

The Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation is dedicated to creating an engaged community that cultivates vibrant, thriving urban and rural lands for future generations by providing philanthropic support to the programs of Missoula County Weed District & Extension in the areas of land management, youth development, and family and consumer sciences.