

New Polson Boys & Girls Club to Open on Schedule Early September

Since ground-breaking in September 2019, construction crews have been working steadily through the fall and the mild winter constructing a beautiful new Polson Boys and Girls Club (B&G) facility. Now Aric Cooksley, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of the Flathead Reservation and Lake County, predicts the 22,000+ square-foot facility will have its grand opening in early September right on schedule for the beginning of the fall B&G after-school program.

Crews are finishing the exterior siding and will begin work on interior classroom/activity areas, kitchen and attached gym. When finished, the Polson B&G Club will accommodate at least 200 kids ranging from first grade through high school. Areas will be clearly specified for grade schoolers, middle schoolers, and high school teenagers.

The attached gymnasium will provide space for basketball, volleyball, and indoor pickle ball. In addition to B&G Club kids using the gym, it will be available for league teams and tournaments for groups unaffiliated with B&G Club. It all adds up to encouraging more recreational sports and more kids being physically active. It also provides space for future adult teams and leagues.

For close to ten years, the Polson B&G Club was grateful to be able to convene in the basement of St. Andrews Episcopal Church where space was limited to

30-40 kids with a long waiting list for admission.

Working parents needed a safe place for their children during after-school hours. In September 2019, Polson School District made available the much larger lunchroom/multi-purpose room and some classrooms at Cherry Valley for the B&G Club after-school program.

The move has proven to be a double blessing. Enrollment has increased to an average of 65 kids per day and the larger space has been a "dry run" for the staff and kids alike as they can expand the previously limited B&G Club programs in preparation for the move to the new facility.

The B&G Club Campaign Committee worked hard to raise the funds for the \$5 million cost and is grateful for the generous community response. Toni Whealon, president of GPCF said, "The best investment we can make is the education and values we provide for our children. Our board of directors was pleased last year to give \$100,000 from a special reserve fund for a facility to benefit Polson area kids for years to come."

The Campaign Committee must raise \$250,000 to reach their final goal. Anyone wishing to make a tax-deductible gift can send a donation to Boys & Girls Club of the Flathead Reservation and Lake County, P. O. Box 334 Ronan, MT 59864. If you have questions, Aric Cooksley can be reached at 493-2312.



2020 Passion for Polson Annual Dinner on Tentative Status

The annual GPCF Passion for Polson Celebration is tentatively set for Thursday, August 6 at The Barn on Finley Point. We will continue to monitor CDC and State

of Montana recommendations and will make a final decision to hold or cancel the event in mid-June.

Watch the GPCF website for updates.



Richey named Montana B&G Club Youth of the Year

Congratulations to Jesse Richey, regular attendee at the Ronan Boys & Girls Club, for being named Montana Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year. He will represent Montana at the Regional Youth of the Year competition in Dallas, TX, at the end of August.

It all began on the local level with an application process similar to a college entrance application. Jesse wrote three essays on citizenship, leadership, and community needs, submitted a transcript of his grades and a résumé of his involvement in school and community, and then gave a three minute memorized speech which was followed up with a question-and-answer session by a panel of judges.

After being named local B&G Club Youth of the Year, Jesse moved on to the state competition. This is usually an event with other competitors at the state capitol, but this year Jesse and others made their presentations via the internet, an even more challenging process. Once again Jesse was the winner.

Every level of the Youth of the Year competition provides the winner with scholarship funds. We wish Jesse the very best of luck as he competes at the Regional level and possibly moves up to the National level. We know Jesse will be a great representative of our local and state Boys & Girls Clubs.

Polson Rotary Marks 80 Years; Celebration In “The Works”

2020 has been a year of changes and adaptations! This summer, for example, in exchange for the annual Chili Cook-off fundraiser put on by the Polson Rotarians, the Club is putting its energy into celebrating its 80th anniversary.

The intent is two-fold: one, to celebrate the anniversary but, secondly, to show appreciation for our local businesses that have been so hard hit with the COVID-19 pandemic and to thank them for their many years of support. The plan is to close Main Street and invite the public to a street party for food, music, and activities for kids. Business owners will be encouraged to keep their doors open.

Rotary asked the Greater Polson Community Foundation (GPCF), to collaborate with a donation to help pay for the event. The GPCF directors voted unanimously to do so. The date will be announced when it is safe for large gatherings. Watch for the date!

Sarah Beck Joins GPCF Board

The GPCF is pleased to welcome Sarah Beck who recently joined our board of directors. Sarah has lived in Polson for the past 25+ years, originally hailing from the Philadelphia area.

She's raised three adventuresome boys here and has been a real estate broker since 2002. She was involved in the development of the new Polson Youth Soccer complex, and is currently a film judge for the Flathead Lake International Cinemafest (FLIC). She loves hanging out with family and friends, running, skiing, travel and podcasts.



Syvrud Music Scholarship

Halie Smith, PHS graduating senior, is the first recipient of the June Syvrud Scholarship. Halie auditioned for the \$2,500 scholarship by performing an operatic aria. She will study music education at MSU in Bozeman, thus carrying forward the example of June herself who was an outstanding vocalist and music teacher in the Polson schools.

PHS Juniors attend STEM Academy with GPCF Scholarships

Two Polson High School juniors, Victor Perez-Carillo and Keith Erickson, each received a \$1,000 scholarship from GPCF to cover tuition for the five-day STEM Academy (science, technology, engineering, math) classes at Salish Kootenai College.

For three afternoons students study chemistry, biology, and college level statistics. The other two days focus on research techniques which require reading scientific journals and writing summaries of the information. STEM Academy, with a small student/teacher ratio, and narrowly defined subject matter, builds confidence and study habits that inspire students to continue on to college. Participants earn college credits which give them a jump-start toward a degree.

Please Consider This

Naming the Greater Polson Community Foundation (GPCF) in your will establishes your permanent legacy. Every gift to the GPCF permanent endowment fund benefits the community you love forever.

Third Graders Say Thanks at GPCF Board Meeting

Darcie Laud's third grade students were special guests at a GPCF board of directors meeting where they delivered a heartfelt thank you message for the swim lessons GPCF helps sponsor for second and third grade students in the Polson School District.

It also was a lesson for them in public speaking, as each child stepped up to say "thank you", and stated one skill they learned. Each related an especially fun water activity such as diving for pennies, diving through a hoop in the water, and cannon-balling during the first 8-week session of swim lessons.

The class was looking forward to completing the final 8-week session of swim lessons this spring which was cancelled when school was closed because of the pandemic. They will be perfecting their swimming skills when school begins again and lessons resume in the fall.



This highly successful program has received high praise not only from the kids themselves, but also from their parents, their teachers, and the staff at Mission Valley Aquatics and Fitness. Because of this two-year program, every Polson student will be safer because he/she has learned basic swimming skills.

Directed Gifts Received by GPCF Make a Difference

In these unprecedented times we have all been challenged to help those who are so devastatingly impacted by the Covid-19 virus. Through our website we have received many donations - a combined total of over \$30,000 directed to the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, the Boys & Girls Club, and Helping Hands Fund as Directed Gifts. Each of these organizations can, and does make a difference in the lives of so many who are greatly impacted by closures, and the loss of their jobs

and livelihoods.

If there is a local non-profit you'd like to help, please visit our website and use the secure GPCF donate button. We will get the funds to the organization. You can also mail a check to us with your directions. We are overwhelmed with the outpouring of generosity that makes such a huge difference to our community and we are so pleased to have the ability to quickly make a difference.



FLIC 2020: Another Rousing Success

The eighth annual Flathead Lake International Cinemafest, held the last week of January, set new records for over-all audience attendance both during the festival itself and during the following "Encore Week" when best-of-festival films are re-screened. Attendance was up 33% over last year, 133 films were submitted, and 40 filmmakers from around the world attended.

Jessica King, co-director of the Festival said, "We were so overwhelmed with support for one film featuring a local Native American personality that we added an additional screening at the conclusion of the festival. It was completely sold out at this scheduled screening, nearly sold out at the added screening, and its weeknight Encore screening was also very well attended."

King also said, "Filmmakers came from Great Britain, Germany, and South Korea, joining filmmakers from across the U.S. to converge in Polson and participate in Q & A's with engaged audiences. We were able to assist several filmmakers with their travel expenses due to the generous grant from the GPCF. We were also able to upgrade the quality of the awards given at our festival-capping Awards Show. Filmmaker experience is vital to FLIC's growth."

Another highlight of FLIC 2020 was increased financial support from more local businesses and individuals in Polson and Ronan which supplemented the grant from GPCF. Such support helps make FLIC one of the most outstanding small film festivals in the U.S. according to the filmmakers who attended.

The FLIC Committee is already soliciting and adjudicating films for FLIC 2021. See you at the movies!

GPCF Vision Statement

We facilitate and invest in the development of a robust and welcoming community where all have the opportunity to be healthy, educated, creative, productive, and prosperous.

Here are the people who help us realize our vision . . .

Donor list – November 1, 2019 to June 1, 2020

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Memorial list

Memorial gifts honor those who loved our community, and are invested in the GPCF permanent endowment fund.

- Bill Amass
- Joyce Cadieux
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- Elaine Cowan
- John Cowan
- Thomas Doherty
- Mildred Weber Hanson
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- Donald "Buck" Young

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