

Excerpt from: *To Joy in Life* BSK40 Reflection

By: Kevin Sylvester, Eagle Mount Executive Director



2025 Big Sky Kids at Big Sky Resort.

Our Big Sky Kids oncology camp director left in April to take care of her mom. I hastily volunteered to lead our Big Sky Kids' Adventure Camp, a 9-day camp for 11 to 18 year-olds who have all experienced childhood cancer, most still in active treatment. Fourteen campers came with a parent. A handful of past campers came back as counselors. I wasn't aware of the identity some people have to Big Sky Kids.

Simply put, the kids were amazing. There was a grace and softness they extended instantly to one another. I was nervous early on if the 11-year-olds and the 18-year-olds would get along. Their collective cancer treatments made age seem trivial. A lodging partner shared how respectful and grateful the Big Sky Kids were; I heard that multiple times from vendors and groups. I was told later that by the second night, campers were staying up late and sitting around talking about their cancer. Parents continued to express how grateful they were to see their children around other kids that knew the experience.

I learned more about childhood cancer and am sad to think of what went unspoken. I learned how much school is missed because of months spent in the hospital. How chemo affects the brain and how it often creates a learning

disability. I didn't know that some will never be able to conceive because of their treatment's sterilizing effect. I didn't know that when legs are cut off, the raw end of the bone still tries to grow out, often in spidery splinters. Most kids try to put up with as much pain as they can before another round of surgery. Endless surgeries remove them from school, activities, and socializing with their classmates. The thought of hacking off diseased limbs conjures up images of Civil War field medicine. Modern medicine should have made these barbaric practices obsolete by now.

In a way, it's easy for us to love on these kids. Their parents are just as big of superheroes though, they just don't elicit the same easy compassion. At times the parents shared a dark sense of humor. They joked about endless nights spent in hospitals or recanted their interactions with aloof doctors. I bet all the kids know which of their veins are the best for blood draws. The parents too shared a collective spirit that can only be forged after hearing your 8-year old baby has cancerous

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Makenna, Sara, Mariah, Kate at Yellowstone National Park with Big Sky Kids.

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Thank You Otto Bremer Trust



Carol and Wilbur in front of the new round pen.

Thanks to the generosity of a lead gift from the Otto Bremer Trust, Eagle Mount's Adaptive Horsemanship program now has a covered round pen as part of our facilities! The new 60-foot pen sits between the Storey Mills Horsemanship Education Center and our hay barn, with easy access to the arena and pastures. This addition will expand our programming, allowing staff and volunteers to get horses ready for classes and provide space for one-on-one lessons while a larger class takes place in the indoor arena. We're incredibly excited about this addition to campus and the opportunities for program expansion and enhancement that it offers. Come by to check it out!

Calling All Snowsports Volunteers!

We are excited that ski season is just around the corner! Every year, Eagle Mount's Snowsports programs - downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing - thrive thanks to our dedicated volunteers. Join us on the slopes to share the love of skiing, connect with the community, and create lasting memories for our participants. Each year, 500+ Snowsports volunteers are needed. Sign up now at eaglemount.org and help us make this season unforgettable.



Clara with volunteers at Big Sky Resort.

Family Engagement



Moms Night Out in August.

Family Engagement was filled with joy and connection this summer. From the unforgettable adventures of Family Camp to the thrilling memories of Family Rafting, every moment was truly special. Moms Night Out wrapped up the summer with lots of laughter, blooming flowers, and a strong sense of community at Gallatin Valley Botanical at Rocky Creek Farm. As summer comes to a close, Adult Night Out is back in full swing, and with the Moms Yoga Retreat just around the corner, our family adventures have only just begun!

Aquatics Update

Construction has begun on the Tim and Mary Barnard Aquatics Center roof repair project! Stay tuned to eaglemount.org/program/aquatics for the most up-to-date information. We are excited to welcome Maggie Lowry back into the water as Aquatics Program Director. Maggie has been with Eagle Mount for more than twelve years in the Aquatics and Family Engagement programs. Few people know our programs and participants better than Maggie! We are so grateful to have Maggie lead this transition and reinvigorate the program when the renovated Tim & Mary Barnard Aquatics Center reopens in 2026. More information on the pool roof repair to come!



Maggie Lowry, the new Aquatics Program Director.

A Season of Growth and Gratitude Executive Director Message

It's fall! Back to school has happened, leaves are falling, and you can almost smell that cold smoke in the air. Ski season will be here before we know it, and I hope to see you on the slopes! We do need extra help with ski volunteers, so please consider joining us. Eagle Mount has been soaring lately! Because of some very generous leadership gifts from Tim and Mary Barnard, Sue Pederson, Suzanne Wilson, the Otto Bremer Trust, the Harnish Foundation, and the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, we recently closed on adjacent property to expand

Eagle Mount's campus and a significant portion of funds have been committed to repair the Barnard Pool. We look forward to sharing more about our capital campaign as we kick off 2026 and hope you will join us as we build a *Bridge to Our Future* and continue to make Eagle Mount an exceptional place for people of all ages with disabilities and young people experiencing cancer. Thank you for your continued support and involvement. Here we go!

Kevin Sylvester, Executive Director



How It's Growing

Summer Horticulture Recap

By: Finn Connors, Adaptive Arts and Horticulture Director

This summer, our little Eagle Mount garden has been abuzz with activity. Aside from growing all sorts of veggies, herbs, and flowers, we've hosted a stand every week at the Farmers' Market at Lindley Park. In total, 17 participants, 24 volunteers, and a group of our friends from Counterpoint enjoyed the fruits of the Horticulture Program.



Avery Groneberg and Gerrie Beck working in the garden together.

In our garden, each participant cultivated their own raised bed to grow whatever they wanted, and each one turned out unique. Some participants, like Ruth, Billy, and Becky, carefully arranged a variety of veggies. Others, like Mariah and Aaron, dedicated their beds to flowers like zinnia and cosmos. Daniel, Syvel, and Remy planted a mix of both veggies and flowers, while Danielle filled hers with a monocrop of summer squash. Todd is growing the cutest little watermelons! The rest of the garden is a shared space

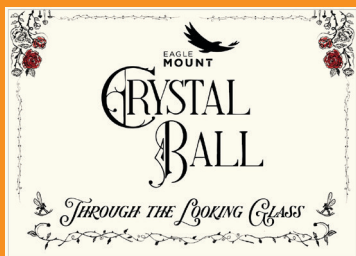
that we plant and harvest together. We started out the season with fresh lettuce, snap peas, and radishes. As the summer went on, we harvested beets, parsley, and cucumbers. Lately, we've been enjoying corn, tomatoes, and summer squash. Soon, we'll dig up our potatoes!

A highlight of the garden is our "Sunflower Patio." Mammoth sunflowers, more than 8-ft tall, tower over a set of chairs on our newly-installed patio, creating a shaded space to sit and enjoy the peace of the garden. Its been a space for visitors to relax, participants to find quiet rest from tending the garden, and even Eagle Mount staff to take a break from the office grind. What a wonderful space to bring people together!



Ruth enjoying the Sunflower Patio.

Featured Event: Crystal Ball



Get ready to step through Alice in Wonderland's Looking Glass for a night that's equal parts magic and impact! Eagle Mount's Crystal Ball, the Gallatin Valley's original and most elegant black-tie gala, transforms the Armory Hotel in Bozeman into a wonderland of sparkle and purpose. Save the date and don't be late on **November 8!** You'll be whisked away into an evening where laughter, glamour, and generosity collide - all to make Eagle Mount adaptive adventures possible.

More info at eaglemount.org/event/crystal-ball



Big Sky Kids in 2025 (Continued from Page 1)

tumors on their brain. I am overwhelmed with the respect I felt for the parents. They are operating on a different level altogether.



Conall, Claire, and a KOA representative enjoying Hyalite.

This camp brought people together to share an experience through recreation. Some were nervous or even scared to raft the Gallatin River, and they all pushed beyond their hesitations. Confidence grew over the week. We did a high rope climbing course and it was great to see everyone encouraging each other. We need more positivity like that for one another. The activities we did were fun, no doubt. But they were only

spaces to create a closer group, to provide a moment to try something new. To learn, to break down, to be in life's mystery, together.

Big skies are places for big hearts and big dreams. Thanks for a piece of your heart to make this all possible, and here's to big dreams!



Oliver Cole and Kevin Sylvester in Yellowstone National Park during Big Sky Kids' Adventure Camp in July 2025.

Thank You Big Sky Kids Sponsors!

This year, our Big Sky Kids' Adventure Camp celebrated its 40th year! Over the past four decades, over 600 campers and their parents have experienced the healing power of the big skies. Many groups, business, and partners have made Big Sky Kids possible over the years through donated time, experiences, products, or services. Thank you to the Harnish Foundation, Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, many individuals, and the following businesses and groups that made this 40th anniversary camp possible, and the many others not listed below that have helped over the years. Your involvement is sincerely appreciated.

Central Valley Fire
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Fishing Bridge
General Store

Delaware North
Slippery Otter Pub
West Yellowstone
Smoke Jumper Base
Holiday Inn West
Yellowstone
Playmill Theatre
Museum of the Rockies
Eagle Mount Board
The Jump
Karst Stage
Chad Gibson



Big Sky Kids visiting the West Yellowstone Interagency Smoke Jumpers.





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Support Eagle Mount

Join us in creating opportunities for adventure, joy, and connection.

Visit eaglemount.org.

When you give to Eagle Mount, you're opening the door to adaptive recreation — helping us break down barriers for people with disabilities and offer, life-changing recreational experiences.

Participate: At Eagle Mount, we believe your abilities are meant to soar. Whether you're climbing a rock wall, hitting the slopes, splashing in the pool, or riding the trails — we're right there with you. Through our action-packed camps, months on the ski slopes, and year-round programs, we open the door to Montana's unmatched outdoors for people of all ages with physical, developmental, or cognitive disabilities, as well as for young adventurers facing cancer. Ready to spread your wings? eaglemount.org/participate

Donate: Eagle Mount's wide range of programs, activities, and events are powered by the generosity of donors like you. With an annual budget of over \$3.2 million, every donation — whether \$10, \$100, \$1,000, or \$10,000 — fuels our mission. Every dollar matters. Every gift makes an impact. eaglemount.org/donate

Sponsor: Our sponsors help bring Eagle Mount's mission to life by underwriting programs and supporting our signature events. With more than 150 corporate, foundation, individual, and family sponsors joining us each year, our community continues to grow stronger. Partner with us — and help make the extraordinary possible. eaglemount.org/sponsors

Volunteer: What's more valuable than your time? Eagle Mount runs on the energy, passion, and commitment of our volunteers. Whether you're assisting with a program or sharing your expertise, you are the heart of our work. THANK YOU to all who give their time to make a difference. Join in the fun! eaglemount.org/volunteer

Cash gifts, gifts of appreciated stock, grants, sponsorships, bequests, volunteer hours, and in-kind donations all make Eagle Mount programming possible.

Eagle Mount Specialty Plates

Remember us when you renew your Montana vehicle registration, and sport an Eagle Mount license plate for \$20 per year.



Appreciated Stock

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Because of You

Participant Spotlights



Alan: Arts Participant

Alan starred as Jack in our Arts Program production of *Jack and the Beanstalk* this summer. He came to every theater practice eager to practice his lines and make sure he was ready for the performances. Alan is always encouraging of his fellow participants, remains dedicated to his role, and brings a light-hearted energy to every theater practice.

Jamie: Recreation Participant

Jamey embodies an unrelenting spirit of adventure, embracing every Eagle Mount activity to stay active outdoors. From skiing to mountain biking to paddling, he thrives in all seasons. As we head into winter, Jamey's excitement builds for hitting the slopes once again!



Stefania: Horsemanship Participant

Originally from Romania and now living in West Yellowstone, Stefania has been riding at Eagle Mount for three years. Her instructors love having her in class and enjoy watching her progress. Eagle Mount is proud of Stefania as she has learned to ride independently on her favorite horse, Wilbur. In her free time, Stefania likes to make and sell key chains.

 Interested in participating? Learn more or sign up today at eaglemount.org

Digger Days Recap

We hosted our 14th annual Digger Days on August 22nd - 23rd. It was a fun-filled day with more than 4,000 attendees. People of all ages enjoyed access to different construction equipment and even helped drive excavators, dump trucks, and road rollers. Many participants left saying "this was the best day ever." We want to give a huge shout out to our presenting sponsors SIME, TMC, D&D Trucking, Knife River, Modern Machinery, Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, CAT Workwear, CK May Excavating, and Core & Main for making this such a memorable day.



Thank you for an incredible Summer Concert!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Eagle Mount's Summer Concert! We hope you had a fantastic time soaking in the great music and celebrating our amazing community. We enjoyed great music from Lost Canyons, Madeline Hawthorne, and The Dead and Down. We still have some limited-edition concert merchandise left. You can still get a concert t-shirt, limited-edition poster, or Eagle Mount's PDGA-approved disc golf disc. Buy your gear while it lasts: <https://eaglemount.square.site>

