

Eagle Mount & Bozeman Parks: Uniting for Inclusive Summer Fun

BY BRITTANY YELEY

Summer in Bozeman got a lot more inclusive thanks to the new partnership between Bozeman Parks and Recreation and Eagle Mount.

EXPLORE! Camp became a collaborative effort between Bozeman Parks and Recreation and Eagle Mount this summer at Story Mill Park. Aimed at 8 to 11-year-olds, the camps ran Monday to Friday, offering a wide range of activities centered around revolving weekly themes. For example, campers had a blast during the 'backyard campout' theme, where they learned how to make solar ovens, flyfish, and shoot archery.

**"Both organizations really wanted to make this happen and open up opportunities for more people in our community."
-Jamie Saitta**

For years, Bozeman Parks and Recreation has been committed to making camps more inclusive. However, limited training and staff resources made it challenging to fully open up their camps. The partnership with Eagle Mount turned out to be the key they needed to unlock this goal. "Having inclusive summer camps is a benefit to everyone," Jamie Saitta, Recreation Manager for the city of Bozeman, stated. "They can break down barriers, increase confidence, and show how we can improve inclusion



EXPLORE! Camp gathers at Story Mill Park

across our programming. It's our hope that this partnership continues and grows."

Eagle Mount brought valuable expertise to the table, including disability awareness and coaching concepts, while Bozeman Parks contributed their strengths in group facilitation and camp games. Patrick Quinn, Eagle Mount Recreation Director, highlighted the significance of this collaboration, stating, "Not only are we partnering to create more inclusive spaces, but we combined forces to share strengths with the city."

Flexibility and adaptability have been the cornerstones of this partnership. Both organizations were ready to pivot and adjust on the fly, ensuring that all campers felt comfortable and engaged.

The impact of this partnership goes beyond this summer's camps. For Eagle Mount, supporting and working with the community is paramount. Quinn said, "This camp is important because disability shouldn't be siloed into singular organizations. Eagle Mount should support and work with our community - interdependence is the long-term goal."

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The 12th Annual Digger Days

The 12th annual Digger Days was a great success. This year, the event reached new heights with nearly 6000 participants and more vendor booths than ever before! Digger Days was made possible by our generous sponsors and the dedicated support of approximately 100 volunteers. These volunteers were comprised of both Eagle Mount volunteers and equipment operators. Attendees of all ages were able to operate the controls of mighty construction equipment as well as indulge in delicious food trucks and explore sponsor booths with fun activities and giveaways.

The success that comes with Digger Days every year showcases the strength of our community's support and dedication of our volunteers. As we reflect on our achievements and areas for growth, we remain committed to making each future Digger Days even more enjoyable and impactful for all involved.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and supported Eagle Mount's mission, to our volunteers, and to our sponsors. See you next year!

Have pictures from the event? Email Aidan Young at ayoung@eaglemount.org or call 406-602-4426



Genuine Ice Cream's truck supplied cool treats

Architectural Excellence Meets Community Impact: The ThomBagg and Eagle Mount Partnership

BY BRITTANY YELEY

The ThomBagg architectural firm in Bozeman, Montana works hard to make each client's vision a reality – including Eagle Mount's. Established in 2015, the firm has deep roots with the Eagle Mount campus. Co-owners Neal Baggett and his business partner Jeffrey Thompson began work on the original campus expansion – designing the amphitheater and being on the grounds design team.

“Having disabilities ourselves, we see the value of people with disabilities recreating and we want to support that.” Neal said. “Jeff and I are very active, recreating in the Bozeman community year-round – so being involved in expanding the Eagle Mount campus is a natural extension of that mutual interest.”

Through their initial projects, ThomBagg demonstrated not only their professional prowess but also their genuine commitment to making a positive impact. As a result of their dedication to Eagle Mount's mission and values, Neal was invited to join the Eagle Mount board. Currently, ThomBagg is the firm working on the design of the Horsemanship Education Center.

For Neal, the connection with Eagle Mount is deeply personal. His love for the organization began as a participant, and he credits Eagle Mount for helping him through architecture school. During a challenging time, he found solace and purpose by being continuously involved in projects at Eagle Mount, which fueled his drive to pursue his education further. If you're intrigued by ThomBagg's exceptional work and wish to learn more, be sure to visit their website at thombagg.com or reach out to Neal directly at nbaggett@thombagg.com. Their passion for turning dreams into reality is bound to make your architectural visions come alive.



Big Sky Kids: A Summer of Big Adventure

BY ERIKA DRIVER

This summer started by hosting our 38th annual Big Sky Adventure Camp. A 10-day camp where 11-18 year olds impacted by cancer from all over the U.S. get a taste of summer in Montana. Eleven campers, each with a parent, joined us for white water rafting, horseback riding, taking lifts to the top of Big Sky ski resort, a guided tour through Yellowstone, and glamping in Idaho. Long-time volunteers Ed Barry, Dr. Dan and Karla Cartwright joined us this year, bringing years worth of traditions and fun.

In July, we hosted our 22nd annual Camp Braveheart, a camp for 5-10 year olds and their families at Hyalite Youth Camp. Families were able to connect and relax on the beautiful reservoir. Our Recreation team brought kayaks and canoes for us to enjoy for the week. There were lots of games, arts and crafts, and campfire songs led by past director Lauren Grover and past camper Silas Rea. Our Adaptive Arts and Family Engagement team led a friendship bracelet making activity and paleontologists joined us from the Museum of the Rockies for an incredible fossil presentation.

Also in July, we hosted the 9th annual Flight Camp. Made possible by Summit Aviation, 4 campers turned into pilots spent the week find their wings. The week started with the campers needing to make an emergency landing in Livingston due to lightning. The fun continued with morning flights over the Gallatin Valley, to Ennis, Dillon, Virginia City, Bear Trap Canyon and Helena to learn basic aircraft maneuvers. Ground school helped educate them further on the flight controls, aerodynamics and the secret of landings. Tours of the Warbirds Museum and private hangers in Driggs Idaho had the campers in awe. A final flight over Yellowstone National Park closed out the amazing week. Campers have earned 10 hours in their flight logbook to jumpstart the hours towards a pilot's license.

Ending our summer programming was the 24th wet and wild Young Adult Retreat (YAR). It rained, hailed and snowed during the week as 11 campers headed to Yellowstone



White water rafting with Big Sky Adventure Camp Families

National Park. A 7-day camping adventure included sightseeing in the park, white water rafting, Old Faithful, hot springs and a night in tipis. We also had the opportunity for a guided boat tour on Yellowstone Lake, the largest lake in the U.S. above 7,000ft.

Young adult cancer survivors can discover new things and challenge themselves in their current stage of health and ability. These campers return year after year and have truly created a YAR family.

These camps could not happen with the ongoing support of our incredible community. We are grateful for the food, activities, and lodging accommodations donated by generous and compassionate local businesses and organizations. Without supporters like you, these no cost, amazing opportunities would not be possible for young people impacted by cancer. Thank you for your ongoing support of Eagle Mount and the Big Sky Kids program!



9th Annual Flight Camp with Summit Aviation



Families from all over the country gather in Big Sky



Eagle Mount & Bozeman Parks (Continued from Page 1)

The success of the pilot camp has only fueled ambitions. Jamie Saitta said, "This year we're piloting with just our 8 to 10 year-old age group, but the hope is that we continue to partner and offer programming year-round and next year - make this more robust and offer this for all age groups."

Bozeman Parks and Recreation and Eagle Mount have set a powerful example of what can be achieved through collaboration and a shared vision of inclusivity. This joint effort has opened doors for more children in the community to experience the joy and growth that summer camp can offer. As we look ahead to the future, the potential for expanding this partnership and making a lasting impact on the lives of all community members, regardless of age or ability, is incredibly promising.

So, here's to an **inclusive** and **exciting** future for summer camps in Bozeman!



EXPLORE! Camp offers a summer of inclusive activities

Breaking Ground: Adaptive Horsemanship Education Center

BY KEVIN SYLVESTER

Horseback riding is one of Eagle Mount's earliest program offerings and today is an activity that is synonymous with the organization. Each year, over 150 riders improve their self-confidence, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and social skills through the human-horse connection, not to mention the core strength, balance, and coordination that is developed through riding. Horseback riding is part of the heritage of Montana and the history of Eagle Mount.

This year, we have undertaken a project that is all about providing an excellent experience for our participants: building The Adaptive Horsemanship Education Center! This project expands the existing teaching facilities from a 650 s/f, one-room gear-up space into a 2,650 s/f purposefully designed center for our riders.

Did you know that our Adaptive Horsemanship Program is recognized as a Premier Center through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship? As one of only a handful of Premier Centers throughout the country, this expansion helps realize this premier experience for our participants.

The total fundraising goal for this project is \$1,200,000, with \$950,000 budgeted for the construction and the equipment of the new Horsemanship Education Center and \$250,000 to establish an endowed fund for long-term support of the program.



Fundraising for this project began in May of 2023 and we are pleased to report that as of September 15, 2023, \$900,000 has been committed to this project.

We are thankful for those generous donors who have contributed to the Horsemanship Education Center. We are honored that Sandee and John Mills have provided the cornerstone gift for this project. The center's name will honor the memory of their daughter, Storey, as well as Sandee's father, John Barry. When asked why she supported this project at such a significant level, Sandee expressed:



"Our world has become more confusing and stressful, especially for kids. I've seen Eagle Mount's Horsemanship Program heal in beautiful ways and it will continue to do so with support. I'm honored to be able to help Eagle Mount."

We are breaking ground this fall, with the Adaptive Horsemanship Education Center being completed in time for the 2024 Western Rendezvous on June 8, 2024. If you are interested in learning more about this project, please contact Kevin Sylvester at **406.586.1781** or **ksylvester@eaglemount.org**.

Coming Spring of 2024!



BECAUSE OF YOU

Volunteers Give us Wings



Geraldine | Horticulture Volunteer

Geraldine's journey with Eagle Mount began three years ago when she eagerly stepped in to lend a helping hand with the Horticulture program. Her previous experience teaching a Zumba class for developmentally challenged adults for 15 years in New Hampshire made her realize the immense joy and fulfillment that comes from working with individuals with disabilities. To those contemplating volunteering, Geraldine wholeheartedly encourages them to take the leap. She dispels the notion that one needs to be an expert emphasizing that all that's required is a willingness to help and get involved!



Oliver | Family Engagement Volunteer

When asked about how he got involved with Eagle Mount, Oliver's answer was simple yet powerful—his sister. Witnessing the transformative impact of Eagle Mount on his sister's life, Oliver was inspired to pay it forward. He recognized the tangible and significant benefits of the organization, which touched his sister's life in profound ways, and he desired to provide the same kind of support to others in need. In high school, Oliver joined the aquatics program as a volunteer. He quickly found himself immersed in the spirit of giving and continued to contribute as a Saturday Night Out volunteer, at the Sibling Camp, and in the Dance Program. To those who may be contemplating volunteering, Oliver encourages them to take the leap. He believes that there is a place for everyone at Eagle Mount and that one should never underestimate the impact they can make until they try.



Brogan | Horticulture Volunteer

Brogan's journey as a volunteer with Eagle Mount began last summer when she joined the horticulture program. Inspired by her mother, an occupational therapist, Brogan was drawn to the idea of working in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. She saw horticulture as a fantastic opportunity for individuals to engage and thrive. Her favorite aspect of volunteering at Eagle Mount? The people! Whether it's the participants, the staff, or her fellow volunteers, Brogan cherishes the opportunity to connect with individuals from different backgrounds.

Each year Eagle Mount needs nearly **1,000** volunteers to carry out our mission! Learn more or sign up today at eaglemount.org. Have specific questions about volunteering? Reach out to Max at mrabidue@eaglemount.org.

UPCOMING: THE CRYSTAL BALL

NOVEMBER 4, 2023



The Gallatin Valley's first and most elegant black-tie gala, Eagle Mount's Crystal Ball provides donors with an evening like no other. At this event, guests enjoy a hosted bar, a three-course dinner, both a live and silent auction, and an after-party with dancing and live music. On top of it all, The Crystal Ball provides vital support to Eagle Mount's mission and makes adventure possible!

Eagle Mount's Crystal Ball is Moving to the Armory! A big thank you to Montana Ale Works for an amazing **10 years** of partnership and generosity.

Interested in sponsorship or want more information? Email Aidan Young at ayoung@eaglemount.org or call **406-602-4426**



We Need Your Support!

Donations make Eagle Mount adventures possible!

A gift to Eagle Mount isn't just a gift to an organization - it's support for joy, adventure, connection, strength, confidence, and so much more!

Donate

Eagle Mount's wide array of programs, activities, events, and groups are made possible by the generosity of our community of donors. With an annual budget of more than \$3,000,000, Eagle Mount needs your support to make our mission possible. **Thank you for the important gifts you give!**

Sponsor

Sponsors support Eagle Mount's mission, underwrite specific programs, and make Eagle Mount's premier events possible. If your business is interested in sponsorship and marketing opportunities, contact Aidan Young at ayoung@eaglemount.org.

Volunteer

What's more valuable than your time? Eagle Mount is only possible because of the time and expertise of our volunteers. **THANK YOU!**

Participate, Volunteer, and Donate today at eaglemount.org

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

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