



A Dream Brought to Life Celebrating Bob and Greta Mathis

By Luke Gladis



For 40 years, people have come to Eagle Mount in search of accessible adventures, connection with others, inclusion, and retreat. It's not uncommon to see folks in Bozeman wearing Eagle Mount hats, skiers in our program gliding down the mountain, or enthusiastic volunteers bubbling over with stories. Our community members speak of how people of all abilities are recognized and included, with the support of programs like ours. Here in the Gallatin Valley, Eagle Mount brings the community together, creates opportunities, and breaks down barriers. This year, we're looking back on the rich stories that made us who we are today.

Perhaps the most notable story is that of Bob and Greta Mathis. A decorated Air Force pilot and air controller in the Korean War, Robert Mathis returned to the US to earn a Master's degree at the University of Illinois. There, in what has been described as love at first sight, he met Greta Gay, and the two were married on April 13th, 1952 in Bozeman.

Bob went on to pursue advanced degrees in electrical engineering and a distinguished career as a United States Air Force four-star general, and Greta earned degrees in child development and social welfare.

Bob and Greta had committed their lives to the service of others, and in 1982, after Bob's retirement from the Air Force, they decided to invest their energies into serving people with disabilities in Montana.

"They were the most kind and generous people, and they just were thankful to the Lord for all that they had been given and they wanted to help others" says Pat Whitlock, a friend of the Mathises and swim instructor at Eagle Mount for three decades. Starting out, Bob and Greta recruited the help of Greta's brother Hank, and friends Rick Stout and Cyndi Fonda to start a camp and ski program with 70 participants and 80 volunteers.

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These programs began to gain momentum and attention in the community, and in 1986, Glenna de Rahm donated a 10-acre piece of property just south of town, which would become Eagle Mount's campus. By 1989, Eagle Mount was serving 471 people in programs including downhill and Nordic skiing, swimming, and camps for children with cancer.

It is because of the kindness and work ethic of the Mathises that we can do this work in the community in 2022 and beyond. The culture of southwest Montana continues to be enriched by their legacy and belief that everyone should have access to this beautiful place. Today, we serve more than 750 participants per year with the help of an equal number of volunteers, and our program is sought after by families from all over the nation. As we celebrate our 40 year anniversary, we continue to imagine the excitement and growth that the next 40 years will bring.

As she looks around at the program her friends began so long ago, Pat Whitlock remarks, "I wish they were still around to see that what they started has come to fruition. That would be my dream."



Life Change at Big Sky

A Family Trip Turned Lifelong Relationship

by Rob Taishoff

Our family was first introduced to Eagle Mount 15 years ago on a ski trip to Moonlight Basin. Jackie was 5 years old and still couldn't walk. She was watching her little brother Jamey learning to ski and asked for "her turn to ski". We had no answer for her.

One of the ski instructors overheard us and told us about Eagle Mount. The next day a young lady named Meredith arrived with a baby sit ski and got Jackie out on the mountain. This was the beginning of an awesome Journey for Jackie and our family.

Through my family foundation, we have continued to support and grow the destination Eagle Mount Ski Program at Big Sky. Eagle Mount has been an amazing partner in helping us to realize exponential growth over the last 15 years. Now that I have joined the Board of Directors, I'm even more excited to help Eagle Mount achieve even greater success across all of its programs in both Bozeman and Big Sky.

Programs like Big Sky Ski are life-altering for the participants and for their families!



Rob, Jackie, and Sarah Wolf at the dedication of "Jackie's Place," Eagle Mount's Ski Office

Celebrating Maggee Harrison

By Kevin Sylvester



In 2002, Maggee Harrison moved to Bozeman and quickly became involved in Eagle Mount's adaptive horsemanship program. A life-long rider, few understand the human/horse connection like Maggee. Growing up in Connecticut, Maggee began lead lining on a horse at age 2.5 and began riding independently at age 6. After being persistent with her parents, she was given her first horse at age 8.

With her husband Bob and son Ren, Maggee moved to Bozeman from Washington D.C. in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks and Bob's retirement from federal service. Upon Maggee's arrival to Bozeman, she quickly became an inaugural member of Eagle Mount's "Top Hands" a dedicated group of horsemanship volunteers who serve as program advisors.

In 2009, after nearly 8 years as a Top Hand, Maggee joined the Eagle Mount staff as the adaptive horsemanship program director. Her 2009 cover letter noted, "My approach to horsemanship has always been predicated on the belief that these animals are true athletes who must be cared for and conditioned to maximize their talents. Therapy horses are unique in the horse world. There are few horses that I have known outside of therapeutic riding programs that could endure the task of safely guiding a rider surrounded by three humans in the gentle, methodical, and often repetitive fashion that is required of them."

Over the last 13 years, Maggee has brought compassion, grit, and an indelible work ethic to her role as the adaptive horsemanship director. She has overseen a growth in the program, an increase in ridership, updates to facilities, and has been a national voice in the therapeutic riding community through her involvement with PATH In't – the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship.

Longtime Eagle Mount volunteer, Cathy Cooper, noted "Maggee and I met and became friends at Eagle Mount over two decades ago. We both volunteered together in the horse program. We also served as two of the original members of the newly-formed Top Hands committee. In those days it meant hauling horses, mucking stalls, Special Olympics, shared meals and hotel rooms, trail rides, and wonderful camaraderie. Maggee is a focused, creative, hard-working, and kind woman who had the vision to make Eagle Mount's equine program not just the best in Montana, but one of the best in the nation. Brava!"

In March of 2022, Maggee hung up her riding chaps and retired from Eagle Mount. Thank you, Maggee, for your involvement with Eagle Mount's horsemanship program over the last 20 years. We wish you all the best in this new chapter. Happy trails!



The Mission in Action

Spotlighting John and Heidi Parkes

By Anna Smoot

In many ways and for many years, John and Heidi Parkes have been synonymous with Eagle Mount. Their constant advocacy and change-making generosity make them among Eagle Mount's greatest champions.

More than 25 years ago, John and Heidi first joined the ranks of Eagle Mount volunteers through serving meals for Big Sky Kids camps. Then, when Linda Griffith knocked on John's door asking for help with a fundraising endeavor, he jumped at the opportunity to help bring the success of Billings' Playhouses on Parade project to Bozeman. The project is still remembered fondly for its impact at the Western Rendezvous.

John served on the board from 2000-2005, and as President 2001/2002. Heidi served on the board from 2013-2019, and as President 2015/2016. Throughout the years, John and Heidi have been truly present, diving into too many projects to name and attending every event they could, including nearly every Western Rendezvous and Crystal Ball since the early 1990s. They served as honorary chairs of the Crystal Ball in 2019 and they currently chair Eagle Mount's 40th Anniversary committee.

John and Heidi are both Montana natives who have lived in Bozeman since 1991. They enjoyed raising their two daughters, Hannah and Rachel, here. Heidi has been a Real Estate Broker since 1992. John retired in 2017 as Chief People Officer & Co-Owner of Murdoch's Ranch & Home Supply, preceded by a long career in human resources. Together, the Parkes are perpetual volunteers who dedicate their time and board service to many organizations in the community including Special Olympics, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the United Way, and Bozeman Health Foundation.

"Inclusion is everything. If we can celebrate differences... we can continue to make the world a much better place"

To Heidi, the Eagle Mount campus is a special place. She fondly remembers the grand opening of the Tim and Mary Barnard Aquatics Center as a day filled with joy and promise. Her face lights up when she talks about how the campus has expanded to offer a wide array of opportunities for recreation for so many in our community. Heidi was honored to be on the board when Eagle Mount founder Bob Mathis passed away; witnessing the pomp and circumstance surrounding his service and the installation of the bronze eagle that welcomes people to campus. Heidi finds joy in the big and small things, tearing up remembering the many years of cheering on and getting to know Eagle Mount participants.

For John, being Santa for Saturday Night Out for many years helped to root his connection to Eagle Mount's mission. It was a special opportunity to encounter the energy, ear-to-ear smiles, and pure wonder that Eagle Mount offers to participants.

But, as John says, "that same excitement and sense of belonging are present at so many events. It's impossible to find a reason not to be involved."

They haven't just been part of the fun though. John and Heidi have proven time and again that they are dedicated to making Eagle Mount as great as possible.

John has played instrumental roles in numerous fundraising endeavors, bringing friends and colleagues together to support Eagle Mount's mission through sponsorship, giving, and unique in-kind support.



When The Today Show visited campus, it was John that helped bring together more than 100 volunteers from Murdoch's and numerous vendors who donated meaningful items and gifts to fill the vehicle and provide for activities years later. During her board service, Heidi played a critical role in advocating for accessible infrastructure improvements including renovations of the Mary Peterson Community Room and campus kitchen. She also prioritized competitive staff wages which today keep Eagle Mount among the most well managed nonprofits in our community.

Looking ahead, the Parkes aren't going anywhere. "No matter the event we have attended, participated in, or facilitated, we were always met with a smile or a sense of appreciation from everyone in the room – staff, participants, and volunteers," John says. "We've learned and witnessed so much from working with Eagle Mount: the power of empathy and gratitude, a spirit of giving, and a level of confidence in what Eagle Mount's services and programs offer to the community. These connections and impacts make it all the more worthwhile to remain involved."

In closing, John and Heidi exclaimed, "Eagle Mount's next 40 years will bring continued success. Inclusion is everything. If we can celebrate differences of those who are not like us, we can continue to make the world a much better place. It's our honor to continue to spread the life-changing mission that Eagle Mount offers for many years to come!"



SAVE THE DATE



GIVE BIG GALLATIN VALLEY

May 5-6, 2022

Eagle Mount is participating in this year's Give Big community giving day. On May 5-6, Gallatin Valley will rally behind nonprofit organizations of all kinds on the biggest philanthropy celebration of the year. Mark your calendars and look for us around town.

To give to Eagle Mount during Give Big and for more information, head to givebiggv.org and search "Eagle Mount"



WESTERN RENDEZVOUS

Friday, June 10 - Cyndi Fonda Riding Center

Help us kick off summer with Western Rendezvous! Come and enjoy raising your paddle to support our mission in the live auction and kicking up your boots to live music by the Western Skies Band. Seating is open to a family-style setting, with reserved tables for eight and ten available. Tickets are available at eaglemount.org and at the door.

For more information, visit us online or email events@eaglemount.org



DIGGER DAYS

Saturday, August 27, 2022 - Off Dollar Drive in Belgrade

Join us this summer at Digger Days! Bring your family and come experience life in the driver's seat of the biggest, baddest construction equipment under the shadow of the Bridger Mountains! Kids of all ages are welcome. Tickets will be available starting August 1 and at the door.

For more information, visit us online or email events@eaglemount.org



SUMMER 2022 PROGRAM GUIDE OUT NOW

There's nothing like a Montana summer! The best way to stay up-to-date on participating and volunteering with Eagle Mount is to reference our Program Guide. Included is information about program days, times, and costs, along with policies and details about applying. We hope to see you on the trails, at the river, and on campus throughout the summer months.

See the Program Guide at eaglemount.org/programs



EAGLE MOUNT CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

We are celebrating our 40th Anniversary all year! Events, activities, and initiatives are being planned to celebrate participant accomplishments, thank our volunteers, and recognize the communities that have supported our mission over the past four decades. Join us as we honor our past, embrace our present, and envision our future.

Follow on social media and get on our email list on eaglemount.org



BECAUSE OF YOU

Participant Spotlight



Michael Ripley
2022 Horsemanship Rider of the Year

"Michael Ripley moved to Bozeman with his family in 2018 when he was 21 years old. He immediately set out to make a life for himself and it wasn't long before he found Eagle Mount. The first program Michael signed up for was adaptive horsemanship and that was such a positive experience that he continued to sign up for other programs, eventually participating in aquatics, adventure days, family hikes, adult night out and more. Michael has experienced notable improvements in his core strength and balance from the regular exercise provided by adaptive horsemanship and aquatics. He has also made many social connections and just had a lot of fun. Michael's life has been undeniably enriched by Eagle Mount." -Dawn Ripley



Ocean Sullivan
Eagle Mount Dance Project

"Our daughter Ocean was 7 years old when we moved to Bozeman, and we were sad to learn she could not participate in the Bridger Bowl ski lessons due to her seizure disorder... then we discovered Eagle Mount. Since then, Ocean has enjoyed the ski program, aquatics, and horsemanship, as well as summer adventure days. Her favorite new Eagle Mount activity is dance class. Ocean says, "I love to dance with Hayes." As parents, we love that dance class happens at the Eagle Mount community room (no travel and no equipment needed) and allows us to gather with other Eagle Mount participants and families. The smiles are contagious." -Phoebe Koch



Diekhans Family
Camp Braveheart 2021 & Spring Fling 2022

"Camp Braveheart was more than just a getaway in the mountains in our beautiful state of Montana. It was our chance to connect to other families who could completely relate to our experience of helping our son survive pediatric cancer... Our son was 2 1/2 when diagnosed with leukemia and he was almost 6 years old when he finished his treatments. At Camp Braveheart, he was able to realize there were other kids who had ports, went through chemo treatments, and at times, had to live far away from home for therapy... Our family came back from Camp Braveheart with warm hearts and huge smiles." -Kelsey Burgmaier Diekhans



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Challenges. We Have
Adventures.**
EAGLEMOUNT.ORG

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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 \$2,000,000, Eagle Mount needs your support to make our mission come alive. Donations of \$10,000, \$1000, \$100, and \$10 each make a special impact on the work we are able to do. **Thank you for the important gifts you give!**

Sponsor

Sponsors support Eagle Mount's mission, underwrite specific Eagle Mount programs, and also make Eagle Mount's premier events possible. We are grateful for the more than 150 corporate, foundation, individual and family sponsors who partner with us each year. **More info: eaglemount.org/sponsor**

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.

Eagle Mount Specialty Plates

For just \$20 per year, you can proudly display your support for Eagle Mount. Remember us when you register or renew your Montana plates this year!

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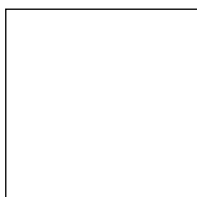
You shop, Amazon gives. When you shop at www.smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate a percentage of your order to Eagle Mount when you choose us.

Thrivents Choice

You can direct an annual contribution through your Thrivent Financial member services to Eagle Mount.

Employer Matching Gifts

Many companies offer a matching gift program to encourage philanthropy among their employees. You may be able to double, or even triple, the impact of your gift! Check with your Human Resources department to see if your employer has a matching gift program.



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