



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Sitkans Step Up for Pandemic Response



Long before anyone in Sitka was diagnosed with COVID-19, the community mobilized to address local impacts of the pandemic. In mid-March, Sitka Conservation Society (SCS) created the Sitka Mutual Aid network to help meet needs for groceries and household goods during the pandemic. Within 24 hours, dozens of volunteers had signed up, and the network was delivering food and supplies to Sitkans who needed assistance. Since then, at least 75 residents have volunteered to help with shopping and deliveries. SCS raised nearly \$30,000 in cash and in-kind donations for the project through June, including but not limited to gifts of locally-caught fish and meals donated by restaurants. Local artist Jerrod Galanin donated jewelry for a raffle that raised \$7,800. As of late June, the network had distributed more than \$25,000 in food assistance to local households. When asked why this was a priority for Sitka Conservation Society, which primarily works to protect the Tongass National Forest, Chandler O'Connell explained that food security is a critical element of building a sustainable community. "How can we thrive as a community if people are going hungry?" she asked. To volunteer or donate, visit www.sitkamutualaid.com

Another group of Sitkans stepped up to meet local needs for masks. Over three weeks, Lauren Allen organized 57 volunteers to make and deliver masks. As of late June, the group had provided about 2,000 home-sewn or assembled masks. "It was a lot of work but incredibly rewarding," says Allen. To volunteer, request a free mask, or donate fabric, supplies or funds, please visit the Sitka Mask Makers Facebook page, www.facebook.com/AlaskaMaskMakers

Sitkans are also donating funds to help their neighbors who are less fortunate. One anonymous local donor sent their entire \$1,200 federal stimulus check to Sitka Legacy Foundation, explaining that they wanted the funds to benefit the community. Others have contributed to the AK Can Do fund for Sitka. To give, visit sitkalegacy.org/donate/



Local aid volunteers with bags for distribution to households

Donor Profile: Larry Calvin



Larry Calvin says that he wasn't a very good student in the Sitka school system, but he ended up "doing okay in the school of hard knocks." Calvin, who moved to Sitka with his family in 1941, was the first professional scuba diver in Sitka. He worked on the airport, on construction of the O'Connell bridge, and on marine salvage projects. He was also a "boom man" on the logs at the pulp mill, a commercial fisherman, and owner of Baranof Building Supply. "Most of my life has been complete serendipity," he says, "but I did a few things right. The biggest one was marrying my dear Maryanne." Calvin credits his late wife with managing their money well.



Calvin has been generous in sharing his savings from a lifetime of hard work with the community. He is happy to support Raven Radio, Sitka Fine Arts Camp, Sitka Historical Society, Sitka Sound Science Center and Sitka Legacy Foundation, because these organizations "take care of Sitka." He gives directly from his required minimum IRA distributions, which provides tax benefits. For more information about tax-advantaged giving strategies, contact Elizabeth Miller at The Alaska Community Foundation, emiller@alaskacf.org

Sitka's Endowments are Growing



Thanks to generous donors, our community funds are growing. Since Sitka Legacy Foundation was established in 2013, contributions have allowed us to leverage an additional \$346,000 in matching incentives from The Alaska Community Foundation and Rasmuson Foundation, including \$85,000 in 2020 alone. We now have more than \$523,000 in our permanently endowed fund for grantmaking, and \$130,000 in our endowed fund for operating expenses.

We are grateful for our donors who have continued giving during the pandemic. So far, we have received more than \$25,000 in gifts this year. Rasmuson Foundation and ACF will match gifts to our operating endowment fund that supports SLF's long-term sustainability at a 1:1 basis up to \$25,000 through December 31. There is also a special matching incentive for planned gifts declared through the end of 2020; please contact Robin Sherman, rsherman@alaskacf.org, for more information. Thanks to the generosity of Rasmuson Foundation and ACF – your gifts keep growing!

Board Member Profile: Pam Steffes



Pam Steffes learned about giving back to the community from her parents, Adeline and Jim Burton. Her mom was an active member of the Alaska Native Sisterhood, and her dad volunteered with the Sitka post of the American Legion. “They were always giving their time and energy,” she remembers.

Pam’s family moved to Sitka when she was six, and she has lived here ever since. She graduated from Sitka High School. She received her bachelor’s degree from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, and her medical degree in optometry from Pacific University in Oregon. Pam practices optometry for SEARHC at Mount Edgecumbe Hospital and in other communities statewide. She is Raven moiety of the T’akdeintaan clan of the Snail House in Hoonah. Her Tlingit name is Waakisteen.

Pam learned about Sitka Legacy Foundation through her involvement with Sitka’s Rotary Club. She likes contributing to a local endowment that benefits the whole community. “We can’t give directly to every local organization, but supporting Sitka Legacy Foundation’s permanent endowment provides another way to do that,” she says. In addition to her involvement with the Rotary Foundation and Sitka Legacy Foundation, Pam supports the Sitka Music Festival and Sitka Fine Arts Camp. She has been on many medical missions to other countries, where she has been happy to see Rotary projects helping local residents.



“We can’t give directly to every local organization, but supporting Sitka Legacy Foundation’s permanent endowment provides another way to do that.”

— PAM STEFFES

Pam and her husband Scott Steffes have two daughters. Haylee attends Fort Lewis College, and Delainey is a senior at Mount Edgecumbe High School. She says her children started volunteering to help with Rotary projects as small children. She hopes their early memories of community cleanups instill the value of community service that Pam learned from her own parents.



Grant Spotlight: Health Summit, Chamber Team Up to Keep Sitkans Safe



Sitka Health Summit Coalition formed in 2007 to improve the health and wellness of Sitka through collaborative decision-making and direct action. Since then, the coalition has inspired and backed many successful initiatives, including the Hames Center, Sitka Farmer's Market, the Fish-to-Schools program, and the Sitka Community Playground. In 2019, the Coalition's efforts to create a healthier community for all residents received national recognition when Sitka won the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health prize.

With the advent of COVID-19, members of the Coalition discussed what role they could play in helping Sitka address new health challenges. They allocated \$5,000 of the \$25,000 RWJF prize to pandemic response. Their first project was assembling 50 "care kits" for Sitkans diagnosed with COVID-19. The kits include health information, household supplies, and gift certificates for assistance through Sitka Mutual Aid. The kits are designed to meet practical needs, as well as to convey that the community cares about residents who become infected with the virus.

Next, Coalition members focused on the health of the local economy. In partnership with the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, they developed a survey to ask local businesses, workers and shoppers about what they needed to work and shop safely during the pandemic. Then they developed a plan to assist local employers with reopening and operating, funded by a \$5,000 grant from Sitka Legacy Foundation and a grant from First National Bank of Alaska.

The Coalition's Safe Stores, Workers and Shoppers initiative launched at a virtual Sitka Chamber of Commerce meeting in May. Since then, the Coalition has provided assistance to 43 local workplaces that employ nearly 450 residents. Businesses receive public health information and supplies customized to their needs, including masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, disinfectants, and no-contact thermometers. Participating employers include private retailers, restaurants and offices as well as nonprofit organizations and government agencies. The Coalition also developed signs for businesses communicating policies on masks. Fourteen local volunteers have worked with the Coalition to assemble and provide supplies to workplaces.

Rachel Roy, Executive Director of the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, says that the Coalition's initiative has been extremely well-received by local employers. "Our businesses appreciated the information, supplies and extra support that the initiative provided during this critical time." Renee Trafton, owner of Beak Restaurant, reports that her business received reusable facemasks, a disinfectant spray bottle, and hand sanitizer. She writes, "it has been nice to have multiple facemasks, so we can change them often. It was great to have more cleaning supplies and especially hand sanitizer when it was not very available locally. I really appreciated the Safe Stores, Workers and Shoppers Initiative because it connected me with a community of people who were all working together to make being out in public a safe experience. I have felt confident in opening and in being out and about in Sitka because I know many business owners are proactively working to maintain a safe environment."

SLF Pandemic Response Grants

Each year, Sitka Legacy Foundation uses income from our endowment to make local grants. Our funds are managed conservatively to maintain principal and promote long-term, stable growth. This means that our resources available for granting have been modest to date. In 2020, however, we received a \$25,000 matching grant incentive for successful completion of our campaign to raise \$125,000 over four years. Given the urgent local needs created by the pandemic, our advisory board voted to use these funds for grantmaking in 2020. We also received a special gift of \$10,000 from Rasmuson Foundation for pandemic response. Since April 1, we have awarded \$27,200 in grants to respond to urgent community needs. These awards include:

- \$6,000 to Sitka Conservation Society to support free summer meals for Sitka's children
- \$5,000 to the Sitka Health Summit Coalition Safe Stores, Shoppers and Workers initiative to help local business operate safely during the pandemic
- \$5,000 to the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust to distribute locally-caught fish to households in need in Sitka
- \$4,000 to Youth Advocates of Sitka to support healthy summer activities for youth (matched by a \$4,000 grant from The Alaska Community Foundation)
- \$1,500 to Raven Radio Foundation for remote production equipment
- \$1,500 to Brave Heart Volunteers for technology to help clients communicate with their families while quarantining
- \$1,200 to Sitkans Against Family Violence for pandemic-related needs
- \$1,000 to the City of Port Alexander to assist residents with basic needs
- \$1,000 to Sitka Local Foods Network to subsidize fresh local produce for low-income households (matched by a \$3,000 grant from The Alaska Community Foundation)
- \$1,000 to Sitka Conservation Society for mutual aid

SLF Convenes Nonprofits to Address Pandemic Needs



In addition to making grants during the pandemic, SLF has been active in advocating for nonprofits to be included in the City's response and recovery plans. SLF program manager Robin Sherman has been representing the nonprofit sector on the Sitka Economic Resiliency Task Force and the City's CARES Act working group. SLF has held several virtual convenings of nonprofit leaders to gather information on their organizations' needs and solicit their ideas on community recovery projects. SLF also conducted a recent survey of organizations providing food assistance in Sitka to help inform the City's plans to use CARES Act funds for food security. We believe that these efforts will result in the City's CARES Act funds being spent strategically to benefit as many residents of the community as possible.

A Special Legacy from the Island Institute



Sitka Legacy Foundation is honored to receive a special gift of \$10,000 to our permanent endowment from the board of Island Institute, which is closing its doors.

Island Institute got its start in 1984, when a group of local residents organized the Sitka Symposium to tell stories about place and community. The annual event drew prominent and emerging writers from across the country to discuss environmental and community issues. In 1989, the Institute added a resident fellows program in literary arts, which brought 70 writers to Sitka over its lifetime. Fellows shared their work with the community through readings, workshops, community discussions and classroom visits. A literary journal, *Connotations*, began publishing the work of local writers and visitors in 1993. The same year, Island Institute convened local residents to talk about the impact of the pulp mill closure and build consensus around a new vision for Sitka's economy. In recent years, the organization focused on community resiliency. It also published *Notes from a Landslide*, compiling news coverage and meditations on the 2015 tragedy that claimed the lives of Elmer and Ulises Diaz and William Stortz.



Nonprofit organizations, like the individuals who create them, have limited life spans. After changes in leadership and much deliberation, the board of Island Institute recently determined that the organization had completed its life in Sitka. As much as our individual values can live on through legacy gifts, so can the missions of organizations. “In making the bittersweet decision to close the organization, we had to decide what to do with our remaining funds,” said board member Brenda Campen. “We decided that Sitka Legacy Foundation was closely aligned with the mission of Island Institute, so we were happy to transfer our funds over to see them continue to work in the community.”

Sitka Legacy Foundation thanks the board of Island Institute for its generosity, as well as the leaders of the organization for their vision.

Thank you, Island Institute! We look forward to funding projects in the spirit of your mission in years to come.

— SITKA LEGACY FOUNDATION

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Four ways to give to Sitka Legacy Foundation:

1. Make an online gift on our secure pledge page, sitkalegacy.org
2. Mail a check made out to ACF – SLF to us at P.O. Box 2354, Sitka, AK 99835
3. Make a pledge through Pick.Click.Give. when you file for your Permanent Fund Dividend
4. Contact program manager Robin Sherman about gifts of stock, real estate, IRA distributions or estate gifts, rsherma@alaskacf.org

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Sitka Legacy Foundation
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About Us



Sitka Legacy Foundation is building permanent endowments for Sitka and communities on Baranof Island. We are one of 11 local Affiliates under the umbrella of The Alaska Community Foundation. SLF's goal is to support local resiliency and self-reliance by promoting individual, family and business philanthropy and providing grants to local projects and organizations. Our permanent endowment funds are professionally invested to provide a reliable source of funding for the future, while generating income to benefit Sitka in the present.

Thank You



Sitka Legacy Foundation's permanent endowment has grown to more than \$523,000. Like the Alaska Permanent Fund, the principal of our endowment is not spent, but managed to provide yearly income that comes back to the community through grants to local causes. Your donation to SLF will generate long-term benefits for Sitka far into the future.