



**Sitka Legacy Foundation**  
An Affiliate of The Alaska Community Foundation

## New Season, New Initiatives



This spring, Sitka Legacy Foundation is celebrating growth - more grants, deeper partnerships, growing endowments, and an expanding vision for a resilient, connected community. Thanks to you, we continue to invest in Sitka's future in meaningful, lasting ways.

### **Growing Stronger: support for local food security**

Sitka Legacy Foundation is excited to strengthen local food security in Sitka and Port Alexander with new funding to support food access and local food systems. Through the Nourished Communities Food Security Grant Program in partnership with the Alaska Community Foundation (ACF), SLF is funding six projects to expand access to healthy food.



Our grant recipients are:

- City of Port Alexander – Community Garden Plots, \$1,500
- Sitka Food Coalition – Sitka Community Dinners, \$3,000
- Sitka Homeless Coalition – Hítx'i Sáani Food Processing & Meal Support, \$3,000
- Sitka Local Foods Network – ADA-accessible raised beds at Jarvis Street Community Garden, \$1,500
- Sitka Lutheran Church – Sunday Manna Meals, \$3,000
- Sitkans Against Family Violence – SAFV Community Food Pantry, \$3,000

These grants were made possible through a 2-to-1 match from the Alaska Community Foundation and generous support from First Bank, demonstrating how Sitka Legacy Foundation leverages its endowment to invest in resilient, community-driven solutions.

### **Annual Grant Cycle - one application, more funds!**

SLF's annual community grant program supports projects that address a wide range of local needs. Grants may fund initiatives including but not limited to health and wellness, education, the great outdoors, arts and culture, and community development. We typically prioritize meeting basic needs.

This year, we will be running the City and Borough of Sitka non-profit grant application process concurrently with our own. We met with local nonprofits this month to discuss our process and get feedback on goals for City grants. Stay tuned for a workshop on how to apply later in the summer.

- **Applications Open: August 24 – September 21**
- Awards Announced: November

Start planning your application - we look forward to supporting your work!

## Local Banks Support Grantmaking



Left to right: Jen MacDonald (SLF program manager), Chris Kowalczewski (SLF board), Sarah Allison (First Bank), Robin Sherman (SLF board), John Weitkamp (SLF board), Soren White (SLF board)

Sitka Legacy Foundation extends sincere thanks to Northrim Bank for its generous gift of \$5,000 and to First Bank for its contribution of \$8,750 in partnership with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines Member Impact Fund.

These grants will add to our pool of funds available to support the vital work of local nonprofits in 2026. We are grateful to the growing list of individuals and entities who trust us to make strategic decisions about meeting community needs.

## Business Matchmaker Spotlight: supporting recreation in Sitka

SLF Business Matchmaker Sitka Dock Company selected the Sitka Recreation Foundation to receive a \$500 discretionary grant, recognizing its commitment to accessible, community-centered recreation that fosters wellness, connection, and vibrant spaces for Sitkans of all ages. They plan to put this grant toward the City of Sitka Parks & Recreation Master Plan. This grant was made in appreciation for Sitka Dock Company's \$7,500 contribution through our Business Matchmaker program. Their generous challenge gift helped us raise \$52,000 to support local nonprofits. We are deeply grateful to Sitka Dock Company for



Left to right: Randy Hitchcock and Bart Meyer of Sitka Recreation Foundation accept grant designated by Sitka Dock Company owner Chris McGraw

demonstrating how strategic philanthropy can amplify community impact. Interested in becoming a Business Matchmaker? We'd love to connect. Contact us to learn how your business can invest directly in Sitka's future and help strengthen the organizations that make our community thrive.

## Join Our Legacy Society



We changed our name to Sitka Legacy Foundation in 2019 to emphasize our focus on the future. Legacy gifts are the cornerstone of a strong endowment. This year, we are launching our legacy society, made up of generous donors who pledge gifts that will outlive them. Our goal is to have at least 12 founding members by the end of the year.

By including SLF in your estate plans, you can:

- Create lasting community impact
- Support future generations
- Help sustain vital nonprofit work
- Feel good that your dedication to this amazing place will outlive you.

The easiest - but not the only - way to make a legacy gift is by including Sitka Legacy Foundation as a beneficiary of a retirement account or life insurance policy. Interested in learning more? We're here to help you explore your options. Please check out our [website](https://sitkalegacy.org/give-today/planned-giving) ([sitkalegacy.org/give-today/planned-giving](https://sitkalegacy.org/give-today/planned-giving)), contact us by email, [sitkalegacy@alaskacf.org](mailto:sitkalegacy@alaskacf.org), or [emiller@alaskacf.org](mailto:emiller@alaskacf.org), or reach out to one of our advisory board members (see next page).

Donors decide whether they want their identity as members of our legacy society to be shared. The following founding members of our legacy society have allowed us to share their names: Rob Allen, Anna Brecheisen, Chris Kowalczewski, Robin Sherman, Connie Sipe, and Soren White.

# Meet Our Advisory Board



Front row, left to right: Flori Davis, Robin Sherman, Lisa Antonio, Chris Kowalczewski. Back row, left to right: Rachel Worthey, Soren White, Jessica Ieremia, Ben Hughey, John Weitkamp. Not shown: Brie Darr and Suzi McClear.

Over the past six months, our local advisory board has expanded to 11 members, adding to our experience and skills. Our board volunteers range in age from 30 to 79, and bring diverse perspectives from lifetimes of living in Sitka and as relative newcomers to our community.

**Lisa Antonio** is from Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico. She moved to Sitka in 2018 and works as a family medicine doctor at SEARHC. She joined the SLF board in 2025.

**Brie Darr** is from Sitka. She left the community and returned to work for the U.S. Forest Service. She joined the board in 2026 after retiring from USFS.

**Flori Davis** was born in the Phillipines, but is a familiar face to anyone who has banked in Sitka for the past few decades. She currently manages the local Northrim Bank branch. She has volunteered with the Youth Advocates of Sitka, the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, the Filipino community, and Rotary. She joined the SLF board in 2026.

**Ben Hughey** was born and raised in Sitka and returned to town in 2020 after graduate school and work in DC. He serves as Executive Director of Sitka Trail Works and is on the Sitka Recreation Foundation Board of Directors. He joined the SLF board in 2025.

**Jessica Ieremia** was raised in Petersburg. She moved to Sitka in 2020 to take her current position as Sitka Public Library Director. She also owns Sitka Work and Rugged Gear with her husband. She joined the SLF board in 2021, having previously served as a volunteer on the Petersburg Community Foundation Advisory Board.

**Chris Kowalczewski** was born in England, and has lived in Canada and across the US. She first came to Alaska in 1972, initially lived in Sitka in the 1980s, and made it her permanent home in 2012. She used her training in architecture as The Foraker Group's pre-development program manager until her retirement. She also volunteers with Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter. She joined the SLF Advisory Board in 2020.

**Suzi McClear** grew up in Minnesota. She moved to Sitka in 1980, where she and her husband Rich were involved in establishing Raven Radio, and subsequently worked in community radio around the world. She has been on the SLF Advisory Board since 2023.

**Robin Sherman** grew up in New York and lived in Massachusetts for 25 years before moving to Sitka in 2015. She worked as the SLF program manager from 2017 to 2021, and returned as an advisory board member in 2025. She also serves on the Sitka Planning Commission.

**John Weitkamp** was born and raised in Granada Hills, California. He fell in love with Sitka when he visited on a cruise ship in the 1980s, and retired here in 2013. John is an enthusiastic fundraiser for good causes and previously served on the board of Sitka Rotary Club. He joined the SLF board in 2023.

**Soren White** was born and raised in Sitka, and returned after graduate school in pharmacology to take over his family's business, Harry Race & White's Pharmacy. He joined the SLF board in 2025.

**Rachel Worthey** moved to Sitka from Tennessee in 2021. She currently works for a subsidiary of Shee Atika, Inc., and serves as a Sitka Public Library Commissioner. She joined the SLF board in 2025.

## Checkout Conversations



Nothing makes John Weitkamp happier than raising funds for a good cause. One of his retirement occupations is having conversations with neighbors at our local grocery stores about how SLF's local approach to philanthropy strengthens our community. This year, these conversations resulted in gifts that allowed us to meet our \$10,000 matching grant challenge from Rasmuson Foundation by the end of March. Way to go! Thanks to everyone who stopped by to chat with John and left a gift. If you are new to our community of

donors, we look forward to getting to know you better. We have a little something fun for everyone who makes a gift to SLF at checkout and gives us their email address - once a quarter, we will select one of these "grocery store donors" to pick an eligible Sitka organization to receive a \$250.00 discretionary grant.

# Thanks to You, Our Endowments are Growing

In 2025, we received more than \$66,000 in gifts to our endowments from individuals, households, and local businesses, leveraging \$20,000 in matching grants from Rasmuson Foundation.

This year to date, we have received almost \$15,000 in gifts to our endowments from individuals and businesses and \$20,000 in matching funds from Rasmuson Foundation. A full list of our 2025 donors is available [here](https://sitkalegacy.org/donors) (sitkalegacy.org/donors).

The value of our endowments as of May 10, 2026 was \$1.475 million, with \$85,000 available to spend on grants and operations this year. The faster our endowments grow, the more we can do for our community. Want to help? You can make a secure donation on our [website](https://sitkalegacy.org/give-today/) (sitkalegacy.org/give-today/) or by using the QR code below, send a check to us at P.O. Box 2354, Sitka, AK 99835, or look for John Weitkamp at Lakeside!



Copyright © 2026 Sitka Legacy Foundation, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you have indicated interest in our mission. If you are not interested in receiving communication from us, please let us know and we will remove you from our list.