Greetings From Mike

After record-breaking snowfall this past winter, Mother Nature still isn’t giving us a break. Judging from news reports, you may be experiencing similar unpredictable weather as well. Due to the dangerous spring storms with high winds, lightning and hail, we’re holding more fire and evacuation drills than usual at the Heritage Living Center. During our latest drill, it took 7 minutes to evacuate 40 elders plus staff. That’s pretty good when you consider how many are in wheelchairs and using walkers.

This May, Neil Andrew, a long-time donor from Ohio, surprised the elders with a generous gift from his heart. He bought nearly 60 bags of steer manure and a truckload of flowers from the greenhouse at St. Labre Indian School. Then he and Richard Miner, our maintenance supervisor and HLC employee Erica Hayes, filled 12 wooden planters with the manure and planted colorful flowers. They also made an 8’ x 8’ vegetable garden box, bought and planted it with vegetables.

“I was amazed!” Richard says. “I thought we’d be doing the work, but Neil was right in there getting dirty. He was out in the heat pulling weeds and planting right along side us. It was meaningful to me to see him working so hard to make the elders happy. It was good knowing he cared.”

But that wasn’t all. Word got out and...
around and the residents were thrilled when the Greenhouse manager donated even more flowers for HLC. Neil then made sure that all the residents who wanted a pot full of flowers could have them for their decks and patios. The next day all the residents could be seen busily planting their flowers and tending their vegetables.

Neil also sponsored a flower pot contest. The elder who grew the biggest and best pot of flowers this summer would win 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes. What an uplifting way to start the summer! Despite some bad weather in May, or “the Planting Moon” as the Cheyenne call it, the residents needed to enjoy the month of May, or “the Planting Moon” as the Cheyenne call it.

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In frontier history, we recognize the names of famous Indian chiefs and warriors, but how often do we read about the patient wives standing beside their famous husbands? They are usually referred to as “squaws,” a denigrating, despicable term, which should never be used to describe these brave souls who suffered the most during Northern Plains warfare. As their ancient customs weakened and their homelands were taken away, their ancient culture weakened and their ancient customs were taken away, most stood as silent witnesses to a history not of their making.

Heritage Living Center resident elder, JoAnn “Estatoto” (Blue Eyes) Elliott, is a member of Sitting Bull’s Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. In this article she graciously shares the story of her Assiniboine great-grandmother, Susan Kills Wood, the daughter of Chief Got Wolf Tail and his wife, Walking Blue Mane.

The story begins with Susan’s birth in 1843, during epidemics of smallpox, cholera and whooping cough that swept across the plains killing thousands of tribal people. Battles with U.S. soldiers annihilated thousands more. As Indian girls witnessed the humiliation and death of their tribal fathers and brothers and the extreme poverty on fenced reservations, they often became prey to immigrant soldiers stationed at Western forts.

Amidst this upheaval in tribal living conditions, 16-year-old Susan survived somehow, but her childhood didn’t last long. Henry Archdale, an English soldier role into camp one day and “bought” her. Eight years later, Archdale, by then a trader, “went away and didn’t come back.” That was the last Susan saw or heard of Archdale, who left her with a toddler and a small baby. Susan never found out where he went.

Looking for a way to provide for her small family, Susan took to the road, traveling to St. Louis, stopping at Fort Buford along the way. Records show that an epidemic spread through the fort and Susan Archdale had gone on a buying trip to St. Louis, stopping at Fort Buford along the way. Susan contracted the disease and died. He was buried in the military cemetery.

Susan went back to her tribal camp, but she was again sold, this time to a German Army Scout named Jacob Wirth. Her second life of bondage began with a foreign stranger who could not speak her language.

In her lifetime, Susan and her Indian husband lived a life of destitution and danger. Jacob Wirth went hunting in the mountains one day, leaving Susan and her youngest children alone along the trail, sitting in a wagon full of buffalo hides. Smelling the hides, a hungry grizzly attacked. With her young ones screaming and clinging to her, Susan faced the furious bear, allowing the bear to charge. When he stood up and roared over her with his mouth wide open, she fired her pistol up into the bear’s mouth, hitting him in the brain. The huge, ferocious bear fell dead at her feet.

Another ordeal showed this mother’s incredible bravery in the face of danger. Jacob Wirth went hunting in the mountains one day, leaving Susan and her youngest children along the trail, sitting in a wagon full of buffalo hides. Smelling the hides, a hungry grizzly attacked. With her young ones screaming and clinging to her, Susan faced the furious bear, allowing the bear to charge. When he stood up and roared over her with his mouth wide open, she fired her pistol up into the bear’s mouth, hitting him in the brain. The huge, ferocious bear fell dead at her feet.

By the early 1890s, the constant loneliness, toll and strain had aged Susan and she finally evolved against Jacob Wirth. Something happened when Jacob Wirth and his well-to-do wife sat across the other side. It was a day their children would never forget. Susan died at the age of 75 in 1918. Most stories about the selfless courage of Native women have faded into the past but today, we remember Susan’s many sacrifices. Nobody really knew her joys and sorrows, but one look at Susan’s face and you can see what words cannot tell.
As mentioned in Greetings From Mike, lightning and hail storms have hammered eastern Montana this spring.

Left: HLC resident Edna Seminole and her son Vincent share a lighter moment with Mike Skaggs.

Right: April showers bring joy from youths attending a Heritage Living Center outing.
For many years, Father Emmett wrote about gift annuities in his newsletters to you. Back then and now today, a charitable gift annuity is a good way to give for many donors. With the stock market setting record highs and interest rates historically low, you might find that a gift annuity is a “win, win, win” way to give to Soaring Eagle. A “win” for you as it will produce a fixed income for the rest of your life. A “win” also for you in that it can provide tax savings. And, a “win” for the Heritage Living Center elders who benefit from your generosity that provides assisted living services.

What is a Gift Annuity?

A charitable gift annuity is a way for Soaring Eagle’s donors to make an important gift and enjoy income and tax benefits today and in the years ahead. After giving cash or stock, you or a loved one you select receives fixed income payments for life. When the gift annuity is funded, the payment rate is fixed. The rate never changes and the payments continue as long as the recipient lives. It’s a reliable income that you can’t outlive.

**Tax Savings**

Based on sound financial calculations and estimates accepted by the IRS, part of a gift annuity will be used for charitable purposes and the donor is able to take a federal, and possibly state, income tax deduction in the year of the gift. If the charitable deduction is too great to use in the first year subject to tax rules, any unused portion can be carried forward during the next five tax years.

Additionally, part of each annuity payment may be free of income tax for a period of years. If the annuity is funded with capital gains property, then the capital gains tax can be spread over a period of years. The amount funding an annuity may also be free of state and federal gift and estate taxes.

**Funding an Annuity – Cash or Securities?**

Most donors fund a gift annuity with cash. It is an easy way to transfer an asset. The donor writes
An overlooked asset that may be a better option to fund a gift annuity is appreciated stock. The stock market has set some records in recent months. Investors have seen some remarkable gains on their investments and along with those gains can come a sizable capital gains tax when a stock is sold. Donors can fund their gift annuity with appreciated securities by transferring the stock to Soaring Eagle in exchange for the annuity. Usually, the gift is made at a lower cost than reporting the capital gains. Transferring stock to Soaring Eagle is relatively easy. We have instructions that we can send to you for transferring gifts of stock.

**Act Today for Favorable Rates**

Charitable gift annuities can offer favorable fixed rates compared to other returns and you have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping others with your gift. Check out the current rates in the table on the next page. If you are interested in funding your annuity with cash, please indicate a dollar amount you would consider. If you think you might fund an annuity with appreciated securities, please include a note estimating the current market value and your cost basis. (Note: We do not need to know the company name of the stock or number of shares.) To learn more about a Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity and how one could work for you, please call or write to us and request our free booklet, “Giving Through Gift Annuities” at Soaring Eagle, Attn: Mike Skaggs, P.O. Box 879, Billings, MT 59103, 406-256-8500.

The information in this newsletter is presented to Soaring Eagle’s donors and friends to provide general information and encourage charitable giving. Soaring Eagle is a public charity incorporated in the state of Montana and does not engage in rendering legal, tax, financial, or any other professional advice. Consult your professional advisors as it pertains to your individual situation. Consult an attorney if your plans require the creation of or revision of a will or other legal document. Tax deductions vary based on numerous factors including personal financial circumstances, tax codes, and applicable federal discount rates, which can change each month. Charitable gift annuities may not be available in all states.

**I receive high fixed payments from my Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity!**

“I learned that I could receive a good return with a gift annuity. I asked Soaring Eagle to send me information illustrating the benefits of the gift annuity. It was free and with no obligation. It was straightforward and simple to complete, so I sent $10,000 for a 7.2% annuity. Now, I can count on my payments for the rest of my life and help care for Cheyenne elders at the Heritage Living Center. I received a tax deduction when I set up my annuity. Best of all, part of each payment is tax-free.”

To learn more about the benefits of a Soaring Eagle gift annuity, please use the coupon in this newsletter or call or write Mike Skaggs at 406-256-8500, Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103.

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**Annuity Rates**

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Lower two-life rates are available. Please contact us for information.

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**Your Will Keeps on Giving**

Please use one of the following sample forms of bequest when preparing your Will:

A. Giving a Specific Amount - “I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, the sum of $________.”

B. Giving a Specific Property - “I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, (identify specific property, example: 500 shares of XYZ stock).”

C. Giving a Percentage - “I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, ___% of my estate.”

D. Giving the Residue - “All the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, I bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana.”

E. Giving a Contingent Bequest – “I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, my bequest to (name of intended recipient) should he/she not be living or be able to accept my bequest.”

The above are sample forms only. Consult your attorney when preparing any legal document.

To learn more about giving to Soaring Eagle through your will, request our free booklet “Giving Through Your Will” by writing or calling: Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103 406-256-8500.
Reminisce with Father Emmett

Twelve Years Ago...

In 2002, Father Emmett shared in the newsletter about his good friend, John Woodenlegs:

In 1981, my friend, Dr. John Woodenlegs, died at the age of 71 years. The visionary leader had worked as a cowboy, road worker, coal miner and rancher. He also served as President of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe from 1955-1968. John was the first Native American to receive an honorary degree from the University of Montana, a Doctorate of Humane Letters.

In the 1960s and 70s, I had the pleasure of working with John to provide a factory where 150 tribal employees held full time jobs. For many of them it was the first time they had regular paychecks and were able to buy cars, furniture and new clothes for their families.

Like Chief Dull Knife before him, John valued education. “The time is past,” he told his tribe, “when we have to keep living in some old, broken down way . . . Education is the key to our future.”

As Tribal President, Woodenlegs started off with a small education budget, but ended up with a full college budget for Dull Knife Memorial College, located in Lame Deer, Montana. He had lived to see his dream come true. “We have been mistreated in the past,” he told graduates, “but we can forgive and forget because God forgives all people.”

John Woodenlegs was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson to the National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty in 1966.

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**SOARING EAGLE ANNUITY**

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Birth date(s) of annuitant _______________   E-mail_________________________________

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This is a non-binding proposal. Upon receipt of actual payment for an annuity, a formal contract will be mailed. For more information call (406) 256-8500.

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