



## Greetings from Mike

**“Happy Herb” Bear Chum really had something to smile about** when we hung a large photo of Father Emmett in the front lobby of the Heritage Living Center this December. The portrait was created by Father’s longtime friend and photographer, John Warner, who designed the image using a photo of Father he had taken when HLC first opened 13 years ago. Sitting on Father’s lap is his beloved little dog Fergie.

There was an air of excitement, almost a reverence, while the Maintenance Director, Rich Miner and assistant Myron Bement carefully mounted the framed portrait to a prominent place for all to see. Herb called me over and you can see from the look on his face that the Cheyenne Kit Fox leader was well pleased. In the years to come, the carpeting under the portrait will be worn thin from those who will stand in front of it with silent prayers.

Herb recounted how Father had invited him to be one of the first Cheyenne elders to move into HLC with his late wife Marie. We sat and reminisced about the good times, the laughter and the pow wows at which Herb was the Master of Ceremonies. We also talked about

traditional ways and healing. Herb is quick to say how much the elders appreciate the donors who have made his home at HLC possible.

As the steward of the money you send, I am pleased to report that two critical projects have been completed.



*"Happy Herb" tells Mike about Cheyenne traditions.*

*continued, page 2 >*



*Our maintenance crew gets it right.*

The new boiler/mechanical room was finished after delays in getting components shipped to our remote location. By God's grace, we made it through some of the coldest early winter weather that Ashland has seen in many years. With some "duct tape and baling wire" and lots of ingenuity, our staff and contractors kept the elders' apartments warm

and hot water flowing. Our urgent pleas to donors helped us with this critical emergency cost. We cannot thank you enough!

After more than a decade, we finally wore out our old Toolcat – an all purpose utility vehicle we use every day to clear snow, mow brush to protect us from wild fires, haul equipment and tools, remove trash

to the landfill, forklift and even transport residents and staff up our steep hill when the ice is so slick a regular car won't make it. Old Toolcat kept breaking down and we questioned the wisdom of repair expenses. Our faithful donors like you came through for us and we are eternally grateful. The new Toolcat was delivered on December 4th and it hasn't been idle a day since.

We are grateful for your generosity. I'm moved beyond words to express my thanks. If it were possible, the elders and I would give you a hug to show our gratitude. We invite you to visit us next summer so that we can thank you in person. There are many things to see and do in our area, such as visiting Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills and Yellowstone Park is not far away.

I hope in the New Year 2015 that you will remember the First Americans with your continued support of the Old Chief's Dream and Father Emmett's humanitarian legacy. God bless you for your loving care.

With a grateful heart,

Mike Skaggs

# Journey to America

Maria A. Sisolak, HLC Resident Attendant and Medication Management CNA became a proud U.S. Naturalized Citizen in 2013. Becoming a citizen was one of many milestones in Maria's amazing life.

Maria stands less than 5 feet tall but she has a mighty spirit. She was born near the Ring of Fire in the Philippines, a zone of frequent earthquakes. Her earliest remembrances were the brutal murders of her three uncles, killed by terrorists. At 7 p.m. every evening, the bombing raids would begin on her village. She and her family ran to the center of a corn field with their water buffalo and huddled in fright until the gunfire stopped at 4 a.m.

She lived with 6 members of her family in a small, one-room shanty made from bamboo and grass. Often, all they had to eat was rice and salt. Despite the cruel violence, Maria walked 3 miles round trip to school stepping carefully around the lifeless, bloody bodies of people killed in the night raids. "It was

horrifying," she remembers and it left a lasting impression of death and destruction, yet Maria is a courageous survivor.

Maria's wise, beloved grandparents worked hard to pay for her education by raising pigs because they knew that a woman in her country without an education could do nothing. After Maria graduated from high school she applied for a scholarship to a Jesuit University to study social work. After completing her education she began working for a program called Apostleship of the Sea, set up by Pope John Paul II.



*Maria goes out of her way to help others.*

In 1996, Edward Sisolak, an American Maryknoll Lay Missioner, came to work with blind, deaf and handicapped people. While there, he visited her program. When she first met him, Maria's first reaction was: "He's a Godly man." She came to admire his goodness and after some years, Maria and Edward fell in love. It was a dream come true when in 1999, she flew to New York to marry him.

Two days later, they moved to



Ashland, Montana, quite a move for a woman who had come from another part of the world. In 2007, Maria began working at the Heritage Living Center where she says, "I found my calling." She loves to help the resident elders and is known for her hard work ethic and kindness to everyone. Wherever she is needed, you will find her there. A devout Christian, Maria especially appreciates reading scripture in the Prayer Circle in the Chapel, which was so close to Father Emmett's heart.

Today, after many happy years together, Ed and Maria have a 14 year-old son named Joshua and twins, a boy and a girl, Jacob and Sarah. Maria is the "go to" person for Cheyenne elders and staff. She is a valuable member of the Soaring Eagle family and we are grateful for her gentle, caring touch. We will never let you go Maria!

# Are You Ready For A Wild Ride? Hold On To Your Hats!

By Renee Sansom Flood

HLC resident Robert Leader Charge is a descendant of the famous Lakota warrior, Chief Leader Charge. He calls himself a “catch colt,” meaning that he pretty much raised himself and had a lot of fun doing it.

Since he could walk, Robert lived life on his own terms. His Sioux mom married a white man named Bob Leedom, a town Marshall. When just a young boy, Robert started making money as a fancy dancer at Indian rodeos. He was kicked out of Flandreau Indian School and from there he was sent to Fr. Flanagan’s Boy’s Town in Omaha, Nebraska. One night he jumped over the fence and was gone. He ran away from home 5 or 6 times and in the spring he’d ride in box cars on freight trains and when he got to where he was going, he’d send a post card home to prove he was there.

Every summer Robert joined the rodeo circuit where he said, “I had the best time of my life!” It was the 1950s, a great era to be young and free. “Five of us guys would jump into a 52 Dodge station wagon. The car smelled like a horse barn,”



*Life was an exciting ride to remember.*

Robert remembers. “We didn’t wash our shirts all summer. Everything was thrown in the trunk - saddles and boots covered with bull and horse crap.”

He won money and spent money at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, Sheridan, Wyoming, Fort Worth,

Texas, and at the Calgary Stampede.

He was in 20 professional rodeos riding broncs and bulls. Robert is proud that, “At the Bull-A-Rama in Texas, I rode nine bulls in one day. I made a living at it for 4 years.” Along the way he broke both collar bones at the same time and had to wear a brace with his arms sticking straight out, plus broken knee caps, ribs and probably a lot more broken bones he’d rather not remember.

After the rodeos, young cow girls would come around.

“They were very fast,” Robert recalls, but the handsome Lakota didn’t complain. At that time Robert often saw the World Famous Champion Saddle Bronc Rider, Casey Tibbs. Tibbs always had a lot of women following him around. One night in San Angelo, Texas, one of Casey’s

girls left with Robert Leader Charge and it made Casey furious. Pulling a knife, he yelled, "I'll get you, you blanket Indian!" He was a super star but I got his women," Robert chuckles.

There's one rodeo Robert never forgot. In Kansas and he drew the last bull of the night called Blue Bell Wrangler, a mean Mexican fighting bull. "He wanted to eat me," Robert winces. "I got bucked off and started to run. I looked back and the bull was right on top of me so I laid down flat," Robert remembers. "The bull's horn went into my pocket and he jerked his head up. He tore half my jeans off. My pants were around my ankles. I didn't care about the bull. I grabbed dirt to cover my bare legs."

The rodeo clown ran over to help him and said, "There's only one way out of here. Walk!" The crowd was screaming with laughter. "My picture was in the paper next day." But by then the embarrassed Indian bull rider was gone. But not before a local store gave him a brand new pair of jeans. "To this day I never wore a pair of Wrangler jeans again!" he laughs.

In the next years Robert was kicked out of Marty Indian School. At one school, a priest drove a 1929 Dodge. Robert decided to take a joy ride one night. The result was a



*Lakota Chief Leader Charge*

serious meeting with a judge and an army recruiter. Robert was given a choice - either serve 15 years in jail or join the Army in the Korean War.

Robert Leader Charge joined the 82nd Airborne Army Paratroopers off the Islands along the coast of

*continued, page 2 >*



*Robert Leader Charge*

Korea.

Bravery was in his blood. Always a daredevil, he became a fire team leader of 6 men, enduring harsh temperatures to machine gun pockets of enemy resistance. After 18 months, Robert took grenade shrapnel in one leg during heavy fighting and earned a purple heart. The doctors told him he would never walk again. That's all he needed to hear. After almost a year of deep knee bends in the hospital, Robert says, "I walked out of that place and I didn't even limp! But Robert had changed. "I grew up in the Army," he says. His outlaw days were over.

For the next 30 odd years Robert went right to the top of his game. He started off as the Town Marshall for Winnebago, Nebraska, then became a U.S. Marshall. From there he became a State Deputy Sheriff and an FBI Graduate in 1982, serving on a BIA Federal Swat Team.

Today, Robert is a quiet man who loves spending time with his grandchildren. In his later years he's had 3 heart attacks, 5 bypasses and a pacemaker for 6 years. When asked if he has any regrets he answers, "Not many," with a wry smile.

*Having fun is Edna Seminole's secret to staying young.*





*Bertha Hogan  
lights up the  
dining room  
with her  
Christmas  
smile.*

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DETACH, MOISTEN GLUE STRIP AND SEAL

# Thank You, Donors!



Our new Toolcat is a life saver! It is definitely the most important vehicle we have at HLC. First and foremost, it allows us to make a fire line around the buildings, keeping us free from fire during dangerous lightning storms in the summer. In the winter we can keep the parking lot and the road up the hill plowed from black ice and heavy snow accumulation.

The Toolcat is useful in many other ways such as lifting heavy tools or hauling equipment. We were able to design Father Emmett's beautifully landscaped gravesite with natural rocks by using the Toolcat. We are deeply grateful to our donors for making the purchase of a new Toolcat possible.

Staff and elders were thrilled with the completion of the new Boiler/Mechanical room. This important project wasn't an easy fix. It cost much more than the original estimate and we were plagued with delays in shipping components to our isolated location.

The residents were patient when we had to shut off the hot water at times during the reconstruction. They now feel more secure knowing there is no longer a danger with the boilers after they were relocated to the first floor with easy access. Their apartments are warm, they can enjoy warm baths and their clothes and linens are washed in hot water. The boiler room repair was made possible with the generous help of caring donors.





# Thinking About Your Will in the New Year

Welcome to a New Year 2015! January gives us a time to reflect, get a fresh start and accomplish tasks we keep putting off. One of those tasks might be writing down your final plans for your property when you no longer need it. A “plan” can be accomplished with a well-written will or trust.

Wills and trusts are two tools used in crafting an estate plan. Some plans can be quite simple and others very complex. Just a little time spent with an attorney might be all it takes to write a plan that can put your mind at ease about what happens to your property at a future date. For some people with complicated financial matters and family situations, it may take a team of planners (lawyer, accountant, financial advisor) to accomplish what you want.

Many people avoid writing a will because of uncertainty about the future. The opposite is true. Having a will helps “map out” a plan for later years and gives more certainty about the future and peace of mind today.

## What if I Already Have a Will?

If you have a will that is great. Much of the work is done. All

that may be needed is an update to make sure your plans reflect the way your life is today. But, what if some time has passed since your will was written? Many of life’s events can change what our future plans need to reflect. Have you had any of the following occur in your life or the lives of loved ones?

- Death of a spouse
- Marriage or divorce – yourself or your children
- Second marriage
- Birth of children or grandchildren
- Death of children or grandchildren
- Death, physical relocation or losing touch with those you had previously designated as Personal Representative, Guardian, or Health Care or Durable Power of Attorney
- Adoption of children or

grandchildren

- Graduation from college of children or grandchildren
- Retirement or starting a second career
- Buying or selling real estate
- Changes in investments or assets



- Selling a business, adding a business partner, ending a business partnership
- A significant change in health or loved one’s health
- Long term health care plans and changes

- Changes in long-time friendships
- Changes in charitable interests

If some of these listed items have occurred since you wrote your will, now may be a good time to consider how your plans might be affected by some of life's events. While having a will is key to accomplishing many of life's goals, keeping your plans up to date is equally important.

### **Where Do I Start?**

Like most projects, the will-writing process is difficult to start. Begin with four blank sheets of paper and at the top of one piece write People, on another Property, then Plans and finally Planners. On each sheet write down names, assets, what you want to happen with your property and the people you know who can help you carry out your plans. You don't need to create a long or complete list. It is okay to have some gaps or not know exactly what you want to happen. The planners you listed can help you with that. Make an appointment with a qualified estate planning attorney. You and your spouse, family member or a close friend might want to go together. Good attorneys have helped many people in this process, so they know how to guide you. Remember to be efficient and thorough during your time with your lawyer.

### **Including Charity in Your Plans**

If you are charitably-minded, giving to your favorite causes can add a satisfying dimension to your estate plan. How you choose to make a charitable bequest depends on several factors, including family relationships, property values, how disposable or non-liquid your assets are and your charitable interests. You will want to select charities that will be around for a long time. Some charities are short-lived by design. Be careful about leaving bequests to charities that might not exist in future years. Give consideration to the following ways to make a charitable bequest.

**Specific Amount** – Naming a specific amount gives certainty to your bequest. For example, you can plan that Soaring Eagle will receive a specific amount through your will. This is probably the most common form of a charitable bequest. It will look something like: "To Soaring Eagle I give the amount of \$XX,XXX." You will want to be careful to do all you can to make sure funds are available for the bequests you make. A person who makes charitable bequests in this manner may want to update his or her will more frequently or when asset values change.

**Specific Property** – Giving a specific piece of property can be a wise form of making a bequest. This is especially true if the property can

be used by the charity, like land for a conservation group or artwork for a museum. Oftentimes, a donor can give specific property to a local charity and preserve cash for family and causes like Soaring Eagle.

**Percentage** – Stating a percentage of your assets or value of your estate can preserve a charitable bequest if your estate value varies or if a specific property must be disposed of in later years. By using percentages, your bequests remain intact although the values may fluctuate with the value of what you own.

**Give the Residue** – Many donors will take care of family first with specific bequests, amounts or percentages. After specific bequests to friends and family are satisfied, then a charitable gift may be made with what is left, otherwise known as the "rest, residue and remainder." By planning with this form of bequest, you can rest easy knowing that family and loved ones will receive their bequests before charitable gifts are made.

**Contingent Bequests** – Although you might complete a thorough estate plan, something might occur that makes it impossible to complete a gift to an heir. Possibly a loved one predeceases you or a relationship changes due to circumstances you didn't anticipate. A contingent bequest to Soaring Eagle can be

made if a named recipient is not available or able to accept a bequest.

A charitable gift in your will must be planned. Without a will, state intestate succession laws take over and seldom can an estate without a will make a gift to charity. You may want to consider the events and life changes you have seen and make it your goal for 2015 to write or update your will. We will be pleased to discuss with you or your advisors the ways in which Soaring Eagle can help you meet your charitable goals. For more information contact Mike Skaggs, CEO, Soaring Eagle, P.O. Box 879, Billings, Montana 59103, or call 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 own 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.*

Soaring Eagle  
**Annuity Rates**  
One-Life Annuity

Age	% Rate	Age	% Rate
65	4.7	78	6.4
66	4.8	79	6.6
67	4.8	80	6.8
68	4.9	81	7.0
69	5.0	82	7.2
70	5.1	83	7.4
71	5.3	84	7.6
72	5.4	85	7.8
73	5.5	86	8.0
74	5.7	87	8.2
75	5.8	88	8.4
76	6.0	89	8.7
77	6.2	90+	9.0

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



## 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.

**Chief Frank Walks Last** was raised by his blind grandfather, Richard, a Cheyenne warrior who fought Custer and his troops at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Frank loved and took good care of his aged grandparents in a one room log cabin with a dirt floor.

But in an important way they were rich because they had family. No amount of money could have purchased the peace of mind they had knowing they would die at home in their beloved grandson's arms.

But when Frank got old, the world had changed. His children worked and he was pretty much on his own. Harry Little Bird went out to Frank's cabin and



## Reminisce with Father Emmett Four Years Ago...

tape recorded him talking about his life before he died in 1976:

**"I'm always cold. I have to go to the bathroom in a can. Loneliness is with me all the time and it never goes away. When I pray it makes me feel good. It's like my grandparents are sitting beside me."**

I didn't hear that tape recording until many years

later. When Frank passed away, I was completely focused on the education of Northern Cheyenne children. That was my single goal for 40 years. I had no idea Frank was suffering all by himself way out on the reservation.

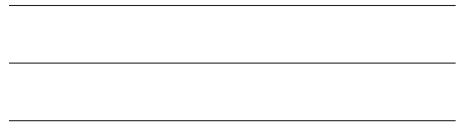
Frank would have loved the Heritage Living Center. The residents knew and respected Frank as an old Chief of the Northern Cheyenne Council of 44. Frank gave me advice about Cheyenne customs and I'll always be grateful to him.

Every morning, Cheyenne residents join me in our little chapel to ask, "Maheo," Creator God, to bless you and keep you safe and well all winter long.

Your beggar friend,  
Father Emmett Hoffmann



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*YES, I'm interested in a Soaring Eagle Charitable Gift Annuity.  
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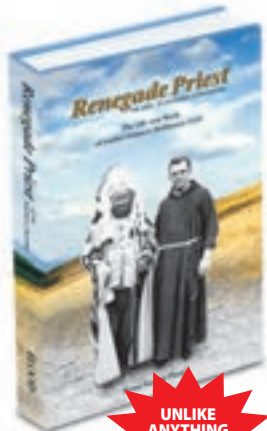
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date(s) of annuitant \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*(optional)*

Annuity Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Minimum annuity amount \$5000 (up to 2 names/birth dates allowed per annuity.)*

*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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