SOARING EAGLE
A Public Charity

Summer/Fall 2026

signals

A Summer of Painted Horses



The Northern Cheyenne Morning Star flag is raced across the Little Bighorn Battlefield grounds during this summer's 150th anniversary of the most famous fight during the Indian Wars. The annihilation of George Custer's 7th Calvary command shocked a nation preparing to celebrate America's Centennial on July 4, 1876. *Top image;* Nineteen tribes traveled from near and far to gather as one on land along the Little Bighorn River for the historic June 25th anniversary. Planned for months in advance, a massive Tipi Encampment was erected almost overnight for the week-long event.

Greetings from Kay!



The galloping charge from below led up to the highest ground, where riders circled their horses clockwise as resounding war-cries and lulus carried across the Montana landscape.

The summer of 2026 was chock full of visual memories that will last forever in the hearts and of the elders at the Heritage Living Center. The 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn was an event attended by over 4,000 Natives from two dozen Tribes across the West. The battlefield's grounds vibrated under the weight of so many Native Americans. There were historians and authors too, who had prepared for the last big occasion at the national monument for a long time to come. For unsuspecting travelers who had stopped by, I imagine they are still having trouble recounting what they witnessed.



The highly anticipated event spanned over five days. Tribes converged along the Little Bighorn River on privately-owned land, four miles from the battlefield's monuments and national cemetery. There, a massive tipi encampment came to life, precisely on the same ground the Cheyenne and Lakota's were settled across when they were attacked on June 25, 1876. Within the village of perhaps 8,000 Natives, some 2,000 warriors, confident in their numbers to protect their families and way of life. Only eight days earlier Crazy Horse and Two Moons had sent General George Crook's army of 1,200 soldiers in retreat to resupply and tend to their wounded after a sprawling six-hour fight on Rosebud Creek, 30 miles south of where George Custer's 7th Calvary would attack them today. Custer never received word of Crook's retreat. Had Crook been able to continue north, it is speculated his army would have met up with Custer to change the course of history.

The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument is located close to home for us; just 20 miles from the Northern Cheyenne Reservation's Western border and 60 miles from the Heritage Living Center. The rest of those who came for the anniversary events traveled from faraway lands. Two hundred Lakota's began their journey to the battlefield weeks before, riding horseback from their South Dakota reservations. The 150th was going to be a big deal. Tribes and the park service had made plans for months.

The encampment was a surreal sight in the morning light. Dozens of the tallest canvas tipis manufactured rose high in the sky, their poles extending ever higher. Tribes celebrated with song, speeches and ceremony. At night we would walk around and stare at it all in wonder.

...On the day of the actual anniversary, Native Americans overwhelmingly outnumbered the attendees the park. Nothing was solemn about it. This was a true celebration of their cultures, their heritage. They came to proudly celebrate their historic victory over the United States army that shocked a nation as it was preparing for its own celebration; America's Centennial in 1876.



Many of the riders were young, riding bareback, packed in tightly, while their horses seemingly knew what to do.

We witnessed a scene on such a sweeping scale you would think only Hollywood could produce it. The thunderous power and speed of galloping horses and riders electrified our senses. Men, women, boys and girls were mostly on bareback horses, and by the hundreds they suddenly appeared, gathered down below our hilltop. Just as suddenly they burst forward at full speed across a rising terrain of swooping ravines and ridges, tribal flags flying, racing to reach to top of the nearby ridgeline. War cries and lulus echoed from our hilltop; a rising crescendo as waves of emotion overcame us one and all.



A young rider bellies onto his horse after an evening drink from the Little Bighorn River.

After reaching the hilltop, the riders circled clockwise as their horses kicked up dust into the Montana sky. Then, the riders fanned out their horses and ponies across the ridgeline in a broad frontal formation. Without warning, they spurred their horses and charged downhill directly toward us. It was both frightening and magnificent. It appeared they were going to ride straight through us. We braced as we saw riders yank the reins at the last second, bringing their musclebound horses to a hoof-pounding halt only feet from an old ranch fenceline between us.

Coupsticks were presented to relatives by the riders as we mingled together, listening to a megaphone being held by speakers standing in the field of prairie grass. My aunt, HLC resident Roberta Lonebear, is a ceremonial woman entrusted with sacred duties by the Cheyenne people. She watched it all unfold in wonder, then shared an observation I knew in my heart was true. "The horses," she said, "they knew. They knew what was going on."

If you have a moment, please visit www.soaringeagle.org. Under the News section, you'll find a revised version of my letter about the 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, along with a gallery of photographs you won't want to miss.

Our communications director, John Warner, has worked with Father Emmett and Soaring Eagle since the beginning, and I was pleased to bring him on full-time. A veteran photojournalist, John has had his work published in many well-known magazines, including National Geographic more than a dozen times.

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Greetings

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Following the Little Bighorn festivities was the annual Chief's Powwow outside of Lame Deer over the July 4 holiday weekend. Thanks to you, we hosted an early evening meal for all elders attending the powwow. A free meal of hearty homemade sandwiches and sides under the shade of our large canopy is a relaxing time for the elders, while casually awaiting the evening grand entry into the arbor. When I say "Thanks to you" is to say you allow us to be good neighbors throughout the community we serve, sharing your goodwill to all Cheyenne people.

Great News! We have completed the major project of replacing all 20 second-floor decks that you gave so generously to us to have done. The original wooden construction of the decks added exterior accents to the architecture in Father Emmett's vision of the building's design (Father Emmett was a closet architect, of course! No surprise there.) The new decks are made with TREX, a low-maintenance composite crafted from 95% recycled materials, including plastic and sawdust. They turned out beautifully, and I couldn't be happier!

As each new deck was completed, I felt a deep sense of gratitude and relief. After 20 years, the original wooden decks seemed to reach the end of their useful lives all at once. I'm proud to share these improvements with you and show how your generosity helps us fulfill the promises we make when we ask for your support.

Just as rewarding is the joy you have provided the elders. Brand new beautiful digs just outside their sliding glass doors! Sitting up so high in the sky, to savor morning coffee alone or with a friend before breakfast. Clear air and endless views for miles around, overlooking our Tongue River Valley homeland. Thank you. God bless you!



Hundreds of spectators await the charge of riders. When the riders suddenly burst into view, the crowd erupted.



Northern Cheyenne Jaedin Medicine Elk, right, leverages rope while helping Oglala Nation's Terry Richards tighten the poles on Richards' tipi.

Before I go, I have to say how much I was moved and surprised, by your responses to a letter I wrote a few months ago. The letter was about the letters that you write to me, and how they moved me so! Almost all the letters I receive are handwritten by senior donors in your 70s, 80s, 90s and, two of you are over 100. I feel and love the beauty of it; a letter hand-drafted from scratch that was once a way of life for everyone, and still is for you.

Many of you are on fixed incomes, living in assisted living communities yourselves. Yet you find a way to continue donating what you can to us. The emotions I felt while writing that letter must have come through, because the outpouring of mail once again choked me up. We struggle to reach younger donors, and the plain truth is without our loyal, senior donors, we would not survive. Thank you for Keeping the Miracle on the Hill Alive!

Kay Medicine Bull

Kay Medicine Bull
Executive Director

HLC Happenings



Youngsters are off and running to grab Easter eggs placed throughout the Heritage Living Center grounds during our annual Easter Egg Hunt.

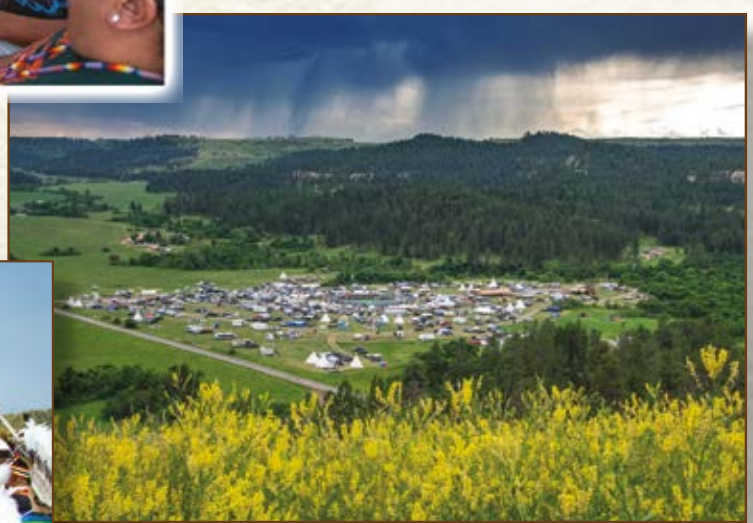


This delightful picture shows our energetic elders and staff visiting with Susie Tallwhiteman in a Billings rehabilitation center during September. Nothing to worry about; Susie had a minor surgery and is back on her feet!

63rd Annual Chief's Powwow, July 4th Weekend Moments









Clockwise from top left; Drummers sing while pounding out a song during Grand Entry. Mini Miss Northern Cheyenne Dorothea Wolfvoice, 7, offers a few words. A hike up steep surrounding cliffs (see background in the next picture) reveals an approaching storm above the powwow grounds. Evening Western light casts a glow over Grand Entry.





Right photo, HLC administrator Sable Kerzmann visits with elders during a late-afternoon meal we provided to all elders during one day of the powwow. A hefty homemade sandwich with sides and conversation is the just best, feeding souls before Grand Entry in the evening. It is another way of giving back to the community that you, and we, serve. Thank you for helping us be the good neighbors that we are!

DETACH, MOISTEN GLUE STRIP AND SEAL

And Finally...





HLC elders attended a showing in Billings of The Northern Cheyenne Healing Trail documentary during the Little Bighorn Film Festival in June. The film recounts the January 9, 1879 Northern Cheyenne massacre at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, and the current planning of a four-mile commemorative walking trail interpreting the historic event, and the resilience of the Northern Cheyenne People. The trail will connect the very impressive Northern Cheyenne Memorial, dedicated in 2016, to Fort Robinson, located four miles from the monument. The short film was produced in part by Soaring Eagle board member Major Robinson (inset), a renowned architect and creative/cultural design professional, along with HLC staff member Clara Ann Whitecrane. Mr. Robinson and Ms. Whitecrane, both Northern Cheyenne, were instrumental in building the Northern Cheyenne Memorial (Inset photo; Clara is seated middle, at the 2016 dedication). They are both presently part of the creative/design team for the Healing Trail project.

When is a Good Time to Write My Will?

Soaring Eagle has been blessed with many thoughtful donors who have reflected shared their successes with our Soaring Eagle Elders after you have already taken care of your loved ones. Final plans are sometimes difficult to consider but these plans usually can be accomplished with a well written will or trust document.

We are heading into the National Estate Awareness Week and we wanted to share the benefits of reflecting on the people we love, the values that guide our lives and how our generosity can contribute to serving our loved ones which we hope will include our Elder population here in Montana.

Wills and trusts are management tools used in crafting an estate plan. Some of the planning can be quite simple and others may be very complex. Just a little time spent with an attorney might be all it takes to design a plan that can really 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 including your lawyer, accountant and possibly your financial advisor to accomplish what you need.

Unfortunately, many people avoid writing a will because of uncertainty about their future. The OPPOSITE IS TRUE. Having a valid will helps "map out" a plan for later years and provides more certainty about the future and your peace of mind today.

What if I Already Have a Will?

If you already have a will, that is great. MUCH of the work is already done. All that may be needed is an update to current estate laws and to make sure your plans still reflect your current status today. But what if a good amount of 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 your loved ones?

Where Do I Start?

Like most projects, the will-writing process is difficult to start if you have not considered making this decision. I remember my mom saying that "you kids can fight it out" and that just doesn't align with our current Estate Laws and Probate.

I recommend starting with a four blank sheets of paper and write down the People we want to include on the first one, then Property, then Plans, and lastly Planners. On each sheet write down the 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, complicated list. It is okay to have some gaps or not know exactly what you want to happen. The professional planners you list can help you with the details. I recommend making an appointment with a qualified attorney that specializes in estate planning. You and your spouse, a family member, or a close friend might want meet 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.



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Including Charity in Your Plans

If you are charitably minded, giving to your favorite charity 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 – Many people think of property only as real estate or artwork, but leaving Soaring Eagle as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or including us as one of your beneficiaries of your retirement account (IRA or 401k type pension plans) can avoid tax consequences to your family heirs. Oftentimes, a donor may also give specific property to a local charity close to home and preserve cash for other 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 family and friends 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 purposefully planned. Without a will, state intestate succession laws take over and seldom can an estate without a will make a gift to charity. There's no time like now to consider the events and life changes you have witnessed and 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 us at 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.

New Higher 2026-27 Annuity Rates

One-Life Annuity beginning July 1, 2026

Age	% Rate	Age	% Rate
65	5.7	78	7.6
66	5.8	79	7.8
67	5.9	80	8.1
68	6.1	81	8.3
69	6.2	82	8.5
70	6.3	83	8.7
71	6.4	84	8.9
72	6.6	85	9.1
73	6.7	86	9.3
74	6.8	87	9.5
75	7.0	88	9.7
76	7.2	89	9.9
77	7.4	90+	10.1

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

"I learned that I could receive a good return with a gift annuity. It was even better than what my bank could offer me. I asked Soaring Eagle to send me information illustrating the benefits of a gift annuity. It was free and there was no obligation.

I was pleased to learn that a gift annuity was part gift and part investment. A future gift to help the Northern Cheyenne seniors and an investment to pay me a fixed income for the rest of my life.

The illustration they sent was straightforward and simple to complete, so I sent my gift for an annuity. Now, I can count on regular lifetime payments and help care for the elders at Heritage Living Center. Plus, I received a tax deduction when I set up my annuity. Best of all, most of each payment is tax-free."

Richard, Bainbridge Island, WA



I RECEIVE HIGH FIXED PAYMENTS FROM MY SOARING EAGLE GIFT ANNUITY!

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



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)."

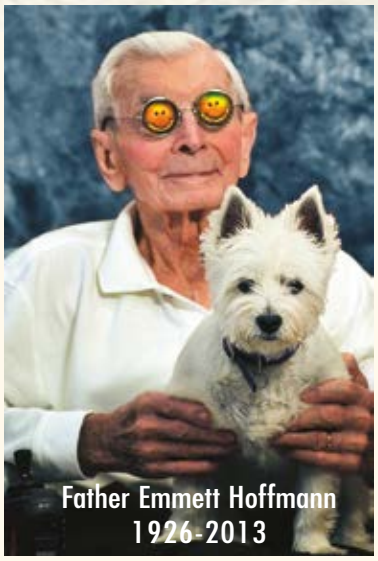
C. Giving a Percentage – "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, _____% of my estate."

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.


Father Emmett Hoffmann
1926-2013

Remembering why Father Emmett built the Heritage Living Center

Editor's note; Father Emmett had his whimsical side. While sitting for a portrait, he strikes a pose fitting for the smiley-face sunglasses he borrowed for a moment.

When I heard the tape-recorded words Charlie Sitting Man spoke to the assembled chiefs thirty years ago, "Let's go see Father Emmett, he will help us," it was as if he was in the room speaking directly to me. I could feel his presence again as if he had come back from the spirit world. One more time Charlie came for help as he had so often done during his lifetime. I could not ignore his request, because he was speaking for the needs of his elderly people.

It is only seven short years since I heard the recorded voices of Chief Sitting Man and the old chiefs expressing their concern for the suffering Cheyenne elders. Because of their words and your help, the Heritage Living Center is now rightly called the "Miracle on the Hill" above Ashland. As the first resident elders moved into their new home, your generosity fulfilled the hopes and wildest dreams of the old chiefs.

***In this 2004 letter,** Father is asking for help with our mortgage at that time. He also dreamt of building an endowment fund like he did with the first charitable organization he built, starting in the 1950s; the one he had turned into a very famous Native American institution before retiring. As he wrote at the beginning of this letter, Father was suddenly called out of retirement during one extraordinary, life-altering afternoon; hearing the Cheyenne chiefs pleading for his help. From that fateful day to the time of writing this 2004 letter, the Heritage Living Center had gone from an idea of immense complexity, to being built and occupied by forty resident elders and staff for a little over two years. Astonishing!*

Father continued – The summer months have gone by in a blur of activity, passing so quickly that I was seldom able to enjoy my favorite time – the dawn of each new day. When the sun rises over the Custer National Forest, bathing the hills and Heritage Living Center in ever-changing lights and shadows, the beauty of God's creation touches my soul. At least, during those glorious moments, the stress of paying bills and struggling to make mortgage payments seems less troubling.

Yet, I am keenly aware that we are fulfilling the old chiefs' vision of years past, when they longed for a home for Cheyenne elders. At last, the elders have a place close to family and friends, where our Cheyenne staff members speak to them respectfully in their own language. As a safety measure, we recently installed a special call system costing several hundred dollars, which enables them to use a signal button they carry with them. I was pleased some residents wear it on a lanyard around their neck in case they cannot reach the call button in their rooms.

The Cheyenne people have always been prayerful and close to God. Each day they join me in prayer as we ask "Maheo" the Creator and his Son, to bless you, our benefactors, in every way. Thank you and may His blessings be with you always..

Your beggar friend,

Father Emmett Hoffmann



Elders "Happy" Herb Bearchum and Edna Seminole display their new call alarms with Father Emmett in 2004.

Father Emmett always ended his letters with *"Your beggar friend, Father Emmett"* – He was blessed with humility, praying every day for each one of the Soaring Eagle donors, and he prayed more donors would join us to continue the work of helping and caring for the elders he loved so much.

THANKS
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PO BOX 879
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SOARING EAGLE GIFT INFORMATION REQUEST

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Email *(Promise we will not share)*_____

YES, I'm interested in a Soaring Eagle Charitable Gift Annuity. Please send me more information.

Birth date(s) of annuitant(s) _____ _____

Annuity Amount $ _____ *Minimum annuity amount $5,000 (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.

Please send to me the following:

___ Giving Securities ___ Giving Through Retirement Plans ___ Giving Through Your Will

How your Soaring Eagle donations are used



84% Caring for the Elders



New Giving Option

Text to Donate

Keyword "SOARING" to 41444