

THE FOUNDATION

May 2021

Inside

Big Dreams, Big Need: Students cross the finish line thanks to scholarship support

Coming Up

- **May 10** - Summer session begins
- **May 31** - Memorial Day, offices closed
- **July 5** - Independence Day (observed), offices closed
- **Sept. 25** - 2021 Wine & Food Festival



Haylee Koon
Senior

"I have always wanted to teach music, but without scholarships, I may not have been able to reach those goals."

Donor support made my dream degree possible

MSU Billings has been an excellent opportunity for me to continue my education at the collegiate level. I chose MSU Billings because the student-to-teacher ratio is great, and it feels like I can get to know my professors and peers. The smaller school experience helps students feel like they matter, which was one of the most significant factors in my decision.

Like me, many of my peers rely on scholarships to help us along the way to reach our goals. Most of us would not be where we are today without the vital support of donors who continue making those scholarships happen. I am a first-generation college student from Sunburst, Montana. I will be graduating in May of 2021 with a double major in music education and music performance. The Charles Beardsley Undergraduate Endowed Scholarship for Music that I received has helped me reach my goal of graduating college with my dream degree. I have always wanted to teach music, but without scholarships, I may not have been able to reach those goals.

I want to thank those who support scholarships and continue to encourage that level of giving. I cannot begin to express just how much your support means to MSU Billings students who receive these scholarships. You, our donors, are making a difference. I hope that through your continued support, future Yellowjackets receiving these scholarships will also get a chance to fulfill their educational goals.

Tune into "Campus Connection," viewable at msubfoundation.com/newsandinformation/campus-connection/ or comm7tv.com, to hear more about my journey as a 'Jacket student and, soon, a 'Jacket alumna.

Photo courtesy of Ben Stevens

As of Spring semester 2021, 89% of MSUB college seniors are engaged in so

Dollar\$ and Sense: Why scholarships are essential to MSU Billings students

Let's face it, college is expensive. The rising cost of tuition and fees is taking a toll on students nationwide.

Here at MSU Billings, we understand the enormous financial burden students shoulder. We also know that an MSU Billings education can position students for success long after leaving our classrooms.

In 2019, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that Americans with an associate degree had median weekly earnings of \$938 compared to just \$746 per week for those who have a high school diploma. Americans with a bachelor's degree stood to earn \$1,248 per week.

Those are compelling figures, but it gets even better if that degree comes from MSU Billings. According to 2017 report from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, City College graduates have a 97 percent job placement rate and earn an average starting salary of \$55,000 – that's \$5,800 more per year one year after graduation compared to other public two-year Montana colleges. University campus graduates have a 94 percent job placement rate with an average starting salary of \$49,654. Compared to other public four-year Montana colleges, our university campus grads earn \$4,500 more per year one year after graduation.

You can see that, despite the cost, earning a

It is never too late to pursue your calling

In 2019, I decided to take the plunge and enroll at MSU Billings in the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling graduate program. Going back to school at age 45 was one of the best decisions I have ever made. As a non-traditional student, I knew I would need financial assistance to help me achieve my goal of becoming a licensed counselor. Being awarded the John Self Rehabilitation Counseling Endowed Scholarship not only helped me financially but gave me the confidence that someone saw potential in me.

Throughout my personal and professional life, I have seen firsthand how mental health affects us directly or indirectly. Many people struggle internally with mental health issues that often go unnoticed, so I wanted to do my part to bring awareness to the issue and help those in need. To be a champion and a voice for those navigating mental health issues is a calling I found later in life. MSU Billings and the professors in the graduate program have not only taught me more than I could have ever imagined, but they have also served as mentors and role models.

The John Self Rehabilitation Counseling Endowed Scholarship has pushed me to represent myself, MSU Billings, and the memory of Dr. Self in the best way I know how and that is to help those struggling with mental health problems.

No matter your age, do not be afraid to pursue your dreams. I am beyond grateful and appreciative to receive this gift. I hope that anyone who chooses this graduate program will be afforded the same generosity and support as this scholarship.

Courtesy photo



Mark Lambott
Graduate Student

"[A scholarship] not only helped me financially but gave me the confidence that someone saw potential in me."



ome type of internship, research, service learning or study-abroad program.

college degree remains a solid investment. But we must remove financial barriers to success.

In this edition, you will read how students Haylee Koon and Mark Lambott realized their educational dreams because of scholarship support.

You'll also read about Neil Beyer of Elephas Real Estate Group, who is leveraging his professional success to change the lives of economically challenged students.

Knowing the financial burden students face, the university is prioritizing scholarship development. Make your gift today by calling 406-657-2244 or visit www.msubfoundation.com.

Once again, thank you for your support.

"...an MSU Billings education can position students for success long after leaving our classrooms."

Bill Kennedy
President & CEO



Corks & Cuisine: W&F 2021 slated for September

By Jeanne Moller

Senior Development Officer

We are thrilled to announce the 2021 Wine & Food Festival is a go! Mark your calendars for a night of celebration Saturday, September 25, 2021, in the Montana Pavilion at MetraPark.

Yes, you read that right. The 2021 Wine & Food Festival will be this fall at the MetraPark. It is a new date and new location. As you know, the MSU Billings Foundation put its signature fundraiser on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so we are excited for the opportunity to gather to raise dollars for students at MSU Billings. Our hard-working and creative planning committee, co-chaired by Norma Cleveland Boyd and Cynthia Arneson, has decided to focus efforts on one spectacular night of elegant gourmet dining, popular auctions, and an outstanding selection of wines.

As we prepare for the September 2021 event,

your safety is our number one priority. As such, COVID-19 safety measures will be in place for your protection, including masks for all our guests. We will provide more details as the time draws closer.

In the meantime, be on the lookout for this year's Saturday night lineup and ticket information at www.msubfoundation.com/wine-food.

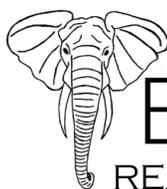
This one-night-only event is just for this year, but we promise it will be the Wine & Food Festival you know and love. We look forward to gathering with you in September.

Looking ahead to 2022, we plan to have the Wine & Food Festival May 9-14, starting with pre-events featuring exceptional winemasters, chefs, and presenters. We'll cap a week of festivities with our traditional Friday night wine tasting and the "Grand" finale Saturday night featuring a gourmet dinner and live auction. Like you, we are eager to return to "normal" – and all the fun a typical Wine & Food Festival entails.

Donor leads by doing, establishes student engagement award

Neil Beyer is a staunch supporter of MSU Billings and higher education. He believes that an educated citizenry is in the best interest of Billings, Montana, and the country.

Beyer is a residential Realtor®, and founder of family-owned ELEPHAS Real Estate Group brokered by eXp Realty. He feels strongly about sustaining and supporting Billings' vibrancy by investing in growth and development opportunities as a community real estate professional. To that end, Beyer decided to donate 10 percent of his commission from every real estate transaction to the ELEPHAS Civic Leadership Award, which recognizes degree-seeking MSU Billings students for their civic leadership on campus and in the community.



ELEPHAS
REAL ESTATE GROUP

Before running a real estate business, Beyer was the International Studies Marketing and Outreach Specialist at MSU Billings. He was tasked with enriching the campus and community by increasing global

diversity through international outreach and recruitment efforts. In that role, Beyer witnessed the power of engagement – students growing as leaders to make their campus and community more vibrant.

The ELEPHAS Civic Leadership Award is his way of supporting MSU Billings and making higher education accessible and affordable. Beyer encourages others to invest in the future by committing resources, time, or talent to support MSU Billings students.

www.msubfoundation.com

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