



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF LEWISTOWN**

January 18, 2018

Dear Festival of Trees contributor,

This letter is inspired by key words – I am filled with passion as I write this and say thank you to you for being a part of this event!

Extraordinary! That is the word that first comes to mind with the 2017 Festival of Trees! Absolutely **extraordinary!** **Extraordinary** people, **extraordinary** items donated, **extraordinary** involvement by so very many people – it was an **extraordinary** experience and the Boys and Girls Club thanks everyone involved!

The night was one that I feel will always be considered one of the very best! Many people said to me, and I agree, that the items – both Silent and Live were **extraordinary** this year – some of the best, collectively, yet! And to prove this, we have numbers to show factual evidence of this statement! The event had 36 Live Auction Items (4 fewer than last year) and raised near \$19,000 more than the previous year. Silent Auction was comparable to this example as 170 items (30 items fewer than last year) were donated and \$2000 more dollars were raised! These numbers raised, even when we had less items donated, shows how very amazing each of the items donated were this year!

Live Auction bidders were **extraordinary** as well! Let us be honest – Auctions are nerve racking, because you may have the most unique, excellent, profound item(s) – but if you do not have two bidders willing to contribute a certain donation amount, it can be disheartening if that item does not bring what a donor wishes! **Thus not only thank you to the amazing artists and donors who designed and donated the Live Auction items, but applause to the wonderful donors who came and raised their bid numbers to take that special item home** and make significant and important gifts to the Boys and Girls Club programs and mission!

In addition, and certainly with very much **Gratitude**, we say thank you to our Auctioneers and MC! It has been spoken to me, many of times, how much fun and grand the auction and flow for the Festival was this year! People said they laughed, had fun and enjoyed going to such an entertaining event – and **I thank Jeff Jedlicka, Kyle Shobe and Chris Miller for being such great, good to the heart people to give their time to make this event such an amusing and lively time!** Your talent is something that is very special to share with us and we are very appreciative of you!

Our **Gratitude** continues to be extended to the most important group of people to thank: *The Committee of the Festival!* I feel that this is a great event to be a committee on, as it is for a short few months of the year – but those short few months are intense and filled with work, creativity and exhaustion to get it all done! Your work ethic and time contributed is priceless! Thank you to this group: Sherry Irish, Amy Miller, Diann DeRosier, Kayce Workman, Crystal

Tyler, Tracy Huck, Yoshie Barnett, Albert White, Cheryl Gillen, Andra Stone, Loni Handran, Jennifer Downey, Rose Swan, Lisa Pierce, Tammy Grindheim, Vickie Ungefug, Bertie Brown, Phyllis Smith, Laura Flugge, Becky Jackson, Bekhi Spika, Alice Green, Donna Strouff, Shirley Barrick and Lynn Lensing!

Blessing! My next word is written with pride but also shaking hands – as this **extraordinary** year for the Festival was a **blessing**, a **blessing** that will allow us time and strategic thought on how to move forward! The Club is facing a tough year – we have one grant of \$11,250 being cut from our budget and another grant of \$50,000 that goes to competitive writing for the upcoming cycle – thus we have many question marks as we move into our 2018 budget year and **the success of the Festival of Trees this year will allow us the room to think about things in a calm and focused fashion.** Thank you for this **blessing!** I am proud to work with a great Board of Directors who will help us as we move forward to make the best of all resources for these great kids!

Reflection: In **Reflection**, we want to mention some other great things about the 2017 Festival!

Thank you to **Bekhi Spika** who designed our first color program! And thank you to **Kelly Imaging of Great Falls** who provided this program complimentary to the event! Many compliments on this new addition to the event!

Greater MT Land Company's Duct Tape Challenge had a record number of Duct Tape Rolls donated! 103! Those kids are going to have sticky fingers putting together all sorts of fun projects with that duct tape!

Thank you to the Club's many **parents**, the **community members**, and especially the **Fire Department**. These great folks work intensely to set up, tear down and deliver trees!

We want to thank the Festival of Trees **Finance Committee team**: Alice Green, Donna Strouff, Shirley Barrick and Lynn Lensing! As this event grows – we put more work and pressures on you! You have always been so willing to try new things and we thank you!

Thank you to the many people who helped collect Raffle Prizes for the General Raffle! –as well as **Diane at 'The Connection'** and **Ike and Terri Waltari at 'Storfa's Service'** who provided the grand prizes for the raffle! This one dollar raffle continues to be a favorite of the event!

Thank you to the many confectioners who contributed treats to the **Sweet Treat table!** **We had a record year of sales** and Betty Yaeger says it was because everyone outdid themselves on the amounts of sweets contributed! Your work paid off – as we sold just under \$700 in treats. Thank you to Laurie Bentley and Betty Yaeger who organized this fun treat at the event!

HCR's ornaments had record sales! People loved that Moose! Special thank you to Gary Landers, Jeremy Long and all of the great employees at HCR who make this ornament possible!

Thank you to those who got out your \$20 bill at the Festival for the special auction to get laptops for the homework room and other educational needs at the Club! **Great news: the laptops have been ordered** and once our very special Tech guy, Lyle Mackey, gets back from his well-deserved holiday vacation and has them all programmed – they will be in use for the kids at the Club! Let the learning begin!

We had fun this year with our Vanas (the young gals who attend and help show off trees and the items surrounding the trees) – this year we had **special attendees; four BG Club Alumni**. Thank you to Kristin Durbin, Hayden Potter, Kinsey Irvin and Aubree Handran.

Thank you to **Terri at the Eagles Club** for always being so great to work with on food!

Thank you to the many sponsors of the event! We have **47 Monetary and In Kind Sponsors** who give generously to help make this event a success!

Special thank you to Jean Rogan, Studio Milan and Dayla Newton of Clearwater MT Properties who did **special additions to the Silent Auction**: Jean's Window Decorating Project where local artists decorated windows for the Silent Auction; and the Adopt a Tree program made possible by Dayla Newton and Kelsi at Studio Milan; where people could Adopt a Small Tree and donate to the Festival's Silent Auction.

Lastly, thank you to the **Board of Directors of the Boys and Girls Club**. These folks give a generous amount of personal time to assure that your local Boys and Girls Club is a success. They are required to volunteer the night of the event and help to give honest and sometimes tough feedback on how the event can be better. I appreciate our Board very much!

I am bound to have missed many lovely people who played key parts, and I am so sorry for that – you are all loved (please do call and yell at me so that I don't miss you on other important communications).

In the end, I want to say in a celebratory voice that we had our best Festival of Trees of our 17 year history.

The event netted \$12,000 above what was made last year, and \$11,000 over what was budgeted. The net total amount of \$73,000. Again, this is a very amazing blessing as we are moving into a year that has many question marks – Thank you! Blessings to you all in this New Year!

Sincerely,

Abby Franks
Club Director, Proud Committee Member of Festival of Trees

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