

ROUNDHOUSE: Local foundation has extended its reach

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Sisters Art Works, a two-story building with offices and studio space for artists and those practicing the healing arts.

That same building is now owned by the Sisters Folk Festival, a repeat recipient of Roundhouse funds. The vision of that area of town becoming an arts district, however, didn't materialize.

One of Deggendorfer's dreams was to create a beautiful space where people could meet, create, and collaborate. The Roundhouse Foundation provided funds for 30 working artists to attend residencies or classes at world-renowned arts centers and report back on their findings of how their experiences could be replicated here in Sisters. The consensus opinion supported the concept of a campus-type residential setting where artists and others could work and collaborate.

Over the past several years, the mission of the Foundation has grown to encompass all types of creative problem-solving throughout Oregon's rural communities and tribal nations. Roundhouse now offers support in distinct yet interconnected areas that are fundamental for thriving rural communities.

In 2020, they granted over \$1 million to organizations and communities across rural Oregon in the following focus areas: arts and culture, 25 percent; environment,

agriculture, and fire relief, 11 percent; community development and education, 34 percent; and health and social services, 30 percent. Although that is the most granted in a year in the Foundation's history, they are on track to gift \$12 million in 2021.

This year alone, they have provided gifts of \$6 million to the High Desert Museum, \$2 million to the Oregon Coast Aquarium, and \$750,000 to Partners in Care for their new Hospice House.

One very noticeable characteristic of the Roundhouse Foundation can be found on their website. The current grant application process is designed to be simple and straightforward. They encourage applicants to contact them with questions.

According to the website, "The Roundhouse Foundation prides itself on collaborative and trust-based philanthropy; our organization seeks to ensure innovative ideas find encouragement and support. When organizations work together in partnership, communities benefit."

After Deggendorfer invited her husband, Frank, and daughter Erin Borla to join the trustees in 2014, big changes continued. Borla became the executive director of the Foundation in January 2020. She spends considerable time making site visits and meeting the personnel involved in the work of their many partners.

"We like to go to sites and see their enthusiasm," said Borla. "That allows for building synergy between us."

Deggendorfer calls it "work beyond the check,"

making visits, phone calls, and connecting partners with other funders and nonprofits. She explained the Roundhouse philosophy of philanthropy.

"We like to partner with other funders, so we are not the only funder," she said. "We don't want to be the 'only horse to ride.' Building networks and funding other funders can be game changers as we build a community of leadership. Where there are holes, we help build relationships."

The Foundation staff reviews all grant applications to be sure they meet the grant criteria, and pass those qualifying onto the grant committee, made up of members from across the state. They review and make final recommendations to the trustees for final approval.

When the Foundation purchased Pine Meadow Ranch as their headquarters in 2017 (*see story on pg. 23*), there were two employees. Today, between the Foundation and the Ranch there are 14 employees and counting, depending on the season.

There are two different grant programs available from the Roundhouse Foundation. Small grants under \$2,500 help support grassroots, innovative work and offer opportunities to explore and test new approaches and projects, which can then be replicated for broader impact. Applications are evaluated each month, with funding for the selected proposals usually disbursed within two to three weeks after the funding decision.

There are two open-call grant cycles, in the spring



PHOTO PROVIDED

A roundhouse barn at Pine Meadow Ranch is symbolic of the foundation headquartered there.

and fall of each year. The requested amount isn't to exceed \$100,000. Median awards range from \$5,000 - \$20,000. One open-call proposal a year may be submitted for programs that fit the Foundation's four focus areas and the eligibility guidelines (on the website). All proposals, regardless of the applicant's location, must have a clear and compelling benefit to rural Oregon.

Visit www.roundhousefoundation.org.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

for puzzle on page 20

6	7	3	5	4	1	2	9	8
4	5	1	9	2	8	3	6	7
2	8	9	3	6	7	4	5	1
9	1	2	8	7	5	6	3	4
8	4	7	6	3	2	9	1	5
5	3	6	1	9	4	7	8	2
7	6	5	4	1	9	8	2	3
1	9	4	2	8	3	5	7	6
3	2	8	7	5	6	1	4	9

Generations of collaborative spirit

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

"One of Mom's famous 'Gertisms' was, 'It is better to give with a warm hand than a cold one,'" Kathy Deggendorfer, founder of the Roundhouse Foundation, remembers.

In that spirit, Gert Boyle, the "one tough mother" of Columbia Sportswear fame, funded the Roundhouse Foundation in 2002. According to the Foundation website, "Gert was no stranger to challenges as she immigrated from Nazi Germany in 1937, took over Columbia Hat Company with her husband, Neal, and then quickly had to transition the family business after Neal's sudden death in 1970. Gert recognized the need for hard work and collaboration to ensure the family business and the greater community

was successful."

That success became Columbia Sportswear.

That hard work and collaborative spirit are evident in Gert's offspring of several generations. Deggendorfer has made a myriad of contributions to the community of Sisters and beyond while maintaining her own art career. Deggendorfer's daughter, Erin Borla, is a graduate of Sisters High School, Oregon State University, and George Washington University. She served as the executive director of Sisters Chamber of Commerce as well as being a wife and mother of two children. And she is now the Foundation's executive director.

"I live and work in Sisters, Oregon, and Mom was a frequent visitor," said Deggendorfer. "We love rural Oregon, its scenic beauty, and the creative

community of artists who live throughout our regions."

With Gert's death in 2019, the Foundation received a portion of her estate, enabling them to rework and broaden their mission and reach.

The name Roundhouse was explained by Borla:

"Kathy's father, Neal, used the phrase, 'Run to the roundhouse, they'll never corner you there.' Kathy's image of the roundhouse surfaces multiple times in many different iterations about change and community references. Tribal recognition and work Kathy has done in the South Pacific – the shape of the community spaces are round houses. Community comes together there to discuss and collaborate."

At Pine Meadow Ranch there just happens to be a round barn built by earlier inhabitants.

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