



20 UNDER 40

JULY 2023

RECOGNIZING 20 OUTSTANDING
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
UNDER AGE 40





CONGRATULATIONS

**to Mountain Health CO-OP's
Blair Fjeseth for being chosen
as one of Helena's 20 Under 40
business professionals!**



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Presenting the 2023 class of 20 Under 40

MATTHEW KIEWIET | Independent Record

The Independent Record and Helena Chamber are proud to present 20 stalwarts in our community who are all under 40 years of age.

These are people nominated by their peers – several times over in some cases – for demonstrating and exemplifying outstanding leadership in business, philanthropy and community.



Whether they are business owners, program directors, health care workers or educators – just to name a few – their day doesn't end after clocking out from their day jobs.

This group of Montanans understands which components of a community are most critical: people.

Whatever the cause may be, these honorees have not only gone above and beyond the call in assisting those in need, but also connecting with people on a personal level.

Narrowing the field down to just 20 was difficult.

If you nominated someone who wasn't chosen this year, please reach out to us again next year if their age allows.

And without further ado, here are this year's 20 community powerhouses under the age of 40.

Please join the IR and Helena Chamber in congratulating them.

JULIA BRYANT

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 32

After Julia Bryant got a taste of Montana while living in Butte during her college years, she said, she couldn't imagine living anywhere else.

"Helena has so many beautiful lakes, and since my husband and I are both from coastal cities, we jumped at the chance to live lakeside," Bryant said.

In addition to spending time at the lake during the summer, Bryant's hobbies include trips to the ski hill in the winter with her family. She appreciates good films, quoting those films and frequenting local shops like The Red Hen and Sage & Oats Trading Post.

OCCUPATION

As the AVP of marketing and community development, Bryant currently leads the marketing team at Intrepid Credit Union and has the opportunity to work within the community as a liaison for the organization.

She's also a co-owner of The Virago Collaborative, a female-focused co-working community nestled between the Vanilla Bean Bakery and Slate Architecture in the Sixth Ward. She has three incredible partners who all bring something different to the business and Bryant said they surround themselves with dozens of members who inspire them personally and professionally.

In previous jobs, Bryant served in the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Office of Indian Affairs for many years under the leadership of former Gov. Bullock — a time she truly treasured in her career. She said she is very proud of the projects she had the opportunity to work on, the team she collaborated with, and the communities she was able to serve during that time.

"I will never forget standing on the Capitol steps as all of our state's tribal flags were raised for the first time," Bryant said.

Bryant said she values the importance Intrepid Credit Union places on giving back and supporting local nonprofits. Every day she is connect-

ing with individuals who are working to elevate our community — and it feels great to be involved, she said. Bryant also values creativity, and said Intrepid Credit Union allows her to think outside of the expected, and market in new and exciting ways.

Somewhere down the road, Bryant hopes to retire early. She said that after a great career in her field, she wants to start a nonprofit and start working all over again.

"I never want to lose my drive to stay involved and I never see myself stopping," Bryant said.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

At Intrepid Credit Union, SERVICE is a core value to our culture and gives me the opportunity to partner with some wonderful organizations like the Helena Farmer's Market, Nami, ExplorationWorks, the Helena Symphony, and Lewis and Clark Humane Society.

I am also very involved with the Montana Ambassadors and lead the Helena Chapter. The Montana Ambassadors advocate for our state in economic development, business retention, and recruitment.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

The best thing about living and working in Helena is our people. We have so much talent here in Helena and it shows from the local shops to our incredible symphony. We have access to trails, lakes, and a ski hill within miles; What could be better?

What else should people know about you?

I love meeting with my business group every Thursday at the Virago Collaborative and feeling so inspired by the work each of them are doing to build their businesses or nonprofits here in Helena, and still give back to the causes that are close to their hearts.

That's what sets us apart: our people.



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM

RAINI KEATING



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 33

Raini Keating was born and raised in Helena. Her favorite hobby is hiking outdoors with her husband and three sons.

OCCUPATION

Keating co-owns the Grateful Bread Bakery and Café with her husband, Riley Keating. Keating says she's a baker by trade, but also has a bachelor's degree in business management.

"I love baking nostalgic family recipes and sharing them with others," she says.

Keating's favorite part of the job is bringing fresh baked goods to the community for birthdays, holidays, or just because. She says she loves "bringing a smile to somebody's face with a beautifully crafted dessert."

In the future the plan is to open more kiosk locations.

"We have already opened the Grateful Bread Bookery and Café inside the library," says Keating. "We plan to keep our business ever changing and growing."

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

As a business we work with neighborhood pantry to donate dinner rolls for holiday baskets, we have also donated baked goods to the Helena Chamber of Commerce, Central school, Helena Literacy Foundation and more for auction events.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Helena is such a wonderful area to live, work and volunteer in because of the people. People in the community are so willing to help others and so appreciative.

What else should people know about you?

I love being a business owner in Helena, and I couldn't do it without my business partner and husband. I get to do what I love daily. I am grateful and honored to be represented in this category.

Carroll College

Congratulations to our

**20 UNDER 40
SAINTS**

Tony Dalton '12

Chris Walker '11

Maria Demaray '07

Mary Williams '13

Blair Fjeseth '10

Tyler Zimmer '16

You continue to make us proud as our motto says,
"Not for School, but for Life."



www.carroll.edu

DR. MATTHEW GOLDES

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 34

Matthew Goldes' family moved to Helena when he was a baby, and he grew up here until leaving for college, so he considers himself pretty much a native. And his hobbies back that up: He lists snowboarding, water sports, hiking, biking, fishing, camping, gardening, music and outdoor recreation as ways he enjoys spending his free time.

OCCUPATION

Goldes is a general surgeon. He earned his medical degree through the University of Washington's WWAMI program and did his general surgery residency at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida. In the summer of 2022, he completed his training and began as a general surgeon at St. Peter's Health.

"I always knew I wanted to return to Montana after training," Goldes said. "The stars aligned, and I was able to return to my hometown to practice."

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

While in residency, I participated in beach cleanups with Clean Miami Beach. In Helena, I have participated in tree planting through Growing Friends of Helena as well as highway cleanups with Wild Montana, the Wild Divide Chapter.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I like the geographical location of Helena and all of the different outdoor activities that are right outside. It is so nice to get outside of the city and enjoy the great outdoors so quickly. That is something I took for granted until I moved away for my education. Also, Helena has a unique population, and I like the people I meet and get to take care of.

What else should people know about you?

There are so many things I love about surgery. I enjoy the procedural aspect and getting to work with my hands. I like the mix between procedures, clinic and inpatient care. I enjoy the interactions I have with other providers. But my favorite part is the positive impact I am able to have on people's lives.



BRIDGET PACK, INDEPENDENT RECORD

TYLER ZIMMER



COURTESY PHOTO

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 29

Tyler Zimmer grew up in Washington state, and his mother is from Butte, but he says Helena has “truly become home” since moving here in 2012 to attend Carroll College.

He enjoys skiing, hunting, fishing and hiking, “in that exact order.”

OCCUPATION

Zimmer is the chief information officer at Intermountain in Helena, helping to “navigate the many challenges that Intermountain and behavioral health care providers across the state face.”

He was originally hired at 24 as the organization’s database administrator, and then moved into fundraising and development after he had the opportunity to secure sponsorships for Festival of Trees, Helena’s annual community Christmas celebration.

Now he’s focused once more on data and IT, which is a great opportunity to assist with the success of the organization in a different capacity, he said.

Zimmer said he’s grateful for the many opportunities he’s had to advance his career in the organization, and especially for his “incredible mentors and colleagues at Intermountain,” who helped him tackle the many challenges he’s faced and without whom this individual recognition wouldn’t have been possible.

Zimmer said his favorite part of his job at Intermountain is the mission: healing through healthy relationships.

“In my own personal life I’ve really come to find that so much more is achievable when a great group of people is invested in solving the problem,” he said. “The same is true for the hundreds of children, families

and adults we serve every day. We get to walk alongside our clients and supporting that work has been one of my greatest privileges. Also, I see working at Intermountain as a form of ministry and that is deeply fulfilling.”

As for goals for the future, Zimmer said he just wants to serve the community as best he can, wherever he’s useful.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with?

I volunteer for several races around town. (Shoutout to Vigilante Runners!) I was a Big Brother for a year. Plus, I try to do one volunteer activity for the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers every year. Also, I’ve spent over 50 evenings either cooking for or hanging out with children in Intermountain’s residential treatment program.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

The scenery and the people. I am an avid trail runner, hiker, skier and hunter. Almost everybody in Helena uses the land for something, and that is easily my favorite part about living here. Plus, I would be remiss to not mention the great brewery scene!

What else should people know about you?

I have a podcast that I do as a hobby, it’s been fun and there are some great people from Helena who have come on as guests. You can find it anywhere you listen to podcasts. It’s called “We’ll Consider It.”



 **intermountain**
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Congratulations

20 Under 40 recipients, including our very own Tyler Zimmer! Thank you for making our community great.

.....
Intermountain.org | 406-442-7920

MEAGAN MILLER

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 36

Meagan Miller was born in Helena and grew up in Great Falls, but she moved back to Montana's capital city when she was 10 and has resided here ever since.

Miller said she loves gardening and landscaping. She also has three cats, and enjoys hanging out with them while watching TV and reading. Her hobbies also include bird watching, wildflower identification, macrame, painting, drawing, writing and taking Muay Thai classes for conditioning and self-defense.

She said she also converts her paintings and drawings into digital art.

"I have a curiosity for artificial intelligence art and that has led me to create art, interior design and architecture using an AI art generator," Miller said.

OCCUPATION

As lead interior designer at CWG Architecture and Interiors in Helena, Miller said her job is to "create indoor spaces that are functional, safe and aesthetically pleasing by determining space requirements while following building codes."

She said she selects items, such as paint colors, lighting and materials. She assesses room needs and furniture based on size and use, then drafts and helps create the construction documents that builders use to construct the building.

Miller said she's always known since she was a child that she would do something creative as an adult.

"I have a curious mind and gravitate toward art and design. In school, I wanted to take classes like art, photography, music and drafting," she said. "As a teen and young adult, I loved taking walks downtown to admire all of the historic buildings."

When facing challenges on the job, Miller said she overcomes them with as much grace and patience as she can, realizing she can't control all aspects or the people she works with. She said as long as healthy boundaries are set and there is clear communication, anything can be overcome.

Miller said her favorite parts of the job are the people she works with and the clients.

"I love to see clients get into the creative aspects of their projects and hear all of the design ideas they have," she said. "I make sure to incorporate their ideas with my understanding of design into projects because



BRIDGET PACK,
INDEPENDENT RECORD

at the end of the day, it is their project and I want them to be proud of the work they put into it."

As far as her goals for the future go, Miller said first and foremost is living a fulfilling life doing the things she loves with the people she loves. She said her family is the most important aspect of her life. She also hopes to one day become a licensed interior designer and architect and become a partner at CWG, and ultimately work with the partners at CWG to help provide low-income housing in Helena.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

I am fortunate that CWG volunteers at

Helena Habitat for Humanity and Helena Food Share every year and I get to be involved. It has been an amazing experience. When volunteering for Helena Habitat for Humanity, I was tasked to build walls, set trusses, install sheetrock, install roof sheathing, set braces, fill holes, clean up nails and screws, paint walls, install door and window trim, lay sod, install vents, install flooring, build porches and any other task that were needed for a specific project. When volunteering for Helena Food Share, I sorted and loaded family boxes for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The boxes were filled with turkey, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, desserts, and snacks. The boxes are wheeled directly to the vehicles of community members. The Helena Food Share goal is to provide 2,500 meals during the holidays. Exploration Works, 2018. I provided a color palette based on the new branding packet. After the pal-

ette was confirmed CWG volunteered with other sponsors in Helena to paint the interior of Exploration Works to provide a brighter and more inviting space. Helena 6th Ward Garden Park, 2017. CWG volunteered with other sponsors around the Helena area to design a centralized public garden park in the 6th Ward. This park includes gazebos, planters, walkways with descriptions of the flora and fauna, and a playground. I am an American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) Intermountain Chapter member. 2016- Present. I have also been involved in the Women's Leadership Network Helena, Montana Biz to Biz, and Toastmasters Club 487. I am currently applying for Leadership Helena and hope to be a member soon.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

What I like best about living in the Helena area is that you can drive for 20 minutes in any direction and be in the seclusion of the mountains. Although Helena isn't a big city, it is always good to get out and into the fresh mountain air. What I like best about working in Helena is how many connections I have made with local businesses and business owners, and the friendships I have made throughout the years. What I like best about volunteering in the Helena area is seeing how truly devoted the leaders of these nonprofits are. Their passion influences me to want to help the community even more. Some of the most kind-hearted people I have ever met worked for Habitat for Humanity. Their dedication to making sure everyone has a home is inspirational.

What else should people know about you?

When I was younger I thought that success was not made for someone like myself. I finally had the realization that I could not have a fulfilling life with my daughters living in low-income housing and trying to provide for them living paycheck to paycheck. It was unfair to them and myself when I knew I could do better for us. I registered for college courses when I was 26 years old. When I registered, I was pregnant with my youngest daughter. I delivered her on June 27, 2014, shortly after I turned 27. I was registered and back to class in August 2014. I realized that success was within my reach and all I needed was to believe in myself.

MOLLY LITCHFIELD

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 35

Molly Litchfield moved to Helena with her husband seven years ago.

She said she enjoys traveling both within the U.S. and abroad, with a goal to visit every continent in her lifetime.

Other hobbies include spending time with her husband, hiking, reading, spending time with her two labs, going to the movies and enjoying a good craft beer at out amazing local breweries.

OCCUPATION

Litchfield has been an RN for nine years, focusing on surgical nursing, and is currently the senior director of perioperative services at St. Peter's Health in Helena.

She said she's served in various roles, including as the OR educator, manager, director and now overseeing procedural services including OR/recovery/sterile processing, same day services, endoscopy and cath lab/specials. She said when she started out as a nurse, she had no ambition to go into leadership, but kept finding herself in these roles.

"I see now that leadership is a natural fit for

me, and I enjoy the challenge that it brings," she said.

But Litchfield said leadership is hard, and is often thankless and draining. She said she tries to keep as much balance as possible in her life, and has made traveling a priority as it offers new perspective, instills gratitude and keeps you adaptable.

"It takes practice to create boundaries and to try and remember as much as possible what is really important at the end of the day; your relationships with your family, your friends, and most importantly, yourself," she said.

Despite the challenges, Litchfield said she loves the people she gets to work with, and is grateful for the humor, love and support they give. She also loves that her job can have a positive effect on the lives of others, including co-workers, staff and patients.

Litchfield's goals for the future include continuing to travel, as well as getting more involved in advocacy and local civic governance.

Q&A

What community service or

volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

I participate in various SPH Foundation activities on occasion, along with being a foster for animals from the Lewis & Clark Humane Society. This year I have fostered seven puppies, and look forward to helping more animals in the future.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I appreciate that this is very much a small town, but has so many amenities of a larger city. Helena is in a beautiful location, and has a very relaxed vibe. There is also a very strong sense of community and history in Helena that I enjoy.

What else should people know about you?

I was born on Friday the 13th, I am an enneagram 8, I love animals, I also have a degree in political science and history, and love spending time with people who make me laugh.



COURTESY PHOTO



CONGRATULATIONS

MEAGAN MILLER
20 UNDER 40

We are so proud of the exceptional leader you are. Your dedication to your craft and community is truly inspiring!



Architecture
+
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CWG-architects.com

MARY WILLIAMS

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 33

For Helena native Mary Williams, creativity is key.

In addition to serving as the site administrative assistant for FAST Enterprises, she owns her own photography business, and enjoys acting and table top gaming.

"As long as I have my husband, our cats and my camera, there's nothing I won't be able to do," Williams said.

OCCUPATION

In her role with FAST Enterprises, Williams makes sure all the software engineers that work in Montana have what they need to do their jobs.

She said she started with the company after being laid off from her previous employer in the fall of last year and found FAST on a whim.

"I applied and in five days I had a new job and have never looked back," she said.

Williams said her favorite part of the job is that no two days are the same. She said one day she'll be planning events and the next day she's onboarding new hires or making new connections in town for various volunteering or event opportunities.

"I love being able to be the person that my management and staff rely on to get things done," she said. "The highest compliment I've received yet is 'Ask Mary. She knows everyone.'"

Williams said she's "wickedly supported" by the staff and management at FAST, and when issues arise, they're able to talk them out quickly and get them resolved.

"There's a great open door policy with FAST and I feel like I can talk to anyone I need anytime I need to," she said.

As far as goals for the future, they involve a lot of creative endeavors. She said she imagines that the musical theater podcast she co-hosts with one of her best friends in Portland will take off, and they're getting asked to re-

view new shows and interview Broadway stars.

She also hopes to be a photographer on the set of some fabulous movie or photographing places far and wide.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with?

Intermountain Children's Home (Tyler Zimmer) has invoked FAST in several volunteer opportunities as well as partnering with them for Festival of Trees for several years.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Helena has always been home for me. I love being able to see folks that I've spent my whole life with grow up and change and it's wildly rewarding to see us all transitioning into these new stages of life. Helena is the type of town where you can simultaneously meet someone new and reconnect with someone you've known for years in the same evening and I'll always love it for that. I've always felt supported being here, socially and creatively. No matter where I go, Helena will always be home.

What else should people know about you?

In addition to my day job, I also have my own photography business (Photography by Mary Williams) and being able to express myself through this medium for the last decade or more has been equally as rewarding as my day job has been in less time. I've always had a passion for it and once my mom passed away, my dad didn't know what to do. So he asked me and the rest is history. To quote my dad: "I can't say that I failed because I didn't try. So what I have to do is try, and that makes all the difference."



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM

AUSTIN HYNDMAN

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 30

Austin Hyndman was born and raised in Helena, where he picked up a passion for raising cattle, family, music and entrepreneurship.

“My first business was a way for me to use my knowledge and skills to begin my journey as an entrepreneur,” he said. “The expertise I acquired during my first couple of years was extensive and opened my eyes to the bigger world of business.”

Hyndman said his first experiences allowed him to branch out and begin exploring other areas Helena would benefit from bringing into its economy.

OCCUPATION

Hyndman is the owner/operator of Silvertip Sprinklers & Landscaping, Silvertip Development and Silvertip Storage.

He said there are many aspects of his job that he enjoys, but one of his favorites is building relationships with others in many different areas of the trades.

“When you have good working relationships with your subcontractors and employees the business benefits and the community benefits,” he said.

Moving forward, Hyndman plans to continue keeping standards high for the work done in Helena and the surrounding areas.

“I want to make sure to keep bringing the best quality of services and respectfulness that this community deserves,” he said.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with?

I am involved in several activities and organizations in Helena and the surrounding area. Donations include: Carroll College Athletic Department, Boy Scouts of America, Helena High School Soccer, Wyatt Winfield Trade Scholarship, Montana City School and Disabled Veterans Golf Tournament. Organizations include: HBIA, Helena Chamber of Commerce and Montana Registered Contractor.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

The thing that I like best about the Helena area is that it's still a small-town, close-knit community. Whether it's the fact that I know my daughter's kindergarten teacher because I landscaped his home or the amount of people that have went from customers to friends for myself and my crew.

What else should people know about you?

I am a husband and a father of four daughters. My family is the most important thing to me. I work many extended hours and they are very supportive and know at the end of the day it is all for them. Silvertip wouldn't be what it is today without the amazing employees we have, including my wife and my brother. We all work together and really make it a true family business.



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM



Matthew
Hughes



BLAIR HASEMAN

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 35

Blair Haseman may not have grown up in Helena, but she's here to stay.

"I've lived here almost 13 years, married a native Helena — Brian Haseman — and had our three children here. Helena is my forever home!" she said.

Like so many here, she counts her favorite hobbies as including anything active and outside. "I especially love running, mountain biking, skiing, hiking, swimming, paddle boarding and chasing my kiddos!" she said.

OCCUPATION

Haseman is executive director of the Helena-based nonprofit organization Girls Thrive, which aims to inspire girls in grades six through 12 to empower themselves through a variety of physical activities and lessons designed to promote self-confidence, self-esteem and positive body image.

"We offer three seasonal sessions and a Summer Confidence Clinic throughout the year to provide opportunities for girls to thrive, learn, grow and be active, all within a positive and nurturing environment," she said. She holds a master's degree in community health from the University of Montana.

"Growing up, I was very fortunate to have opportunities to participate in a variety of physical activities. Despite the many challenges my youth brought, I was always able to persevere through my strength, confidence and community that I built through those activities. Later recognizing this exponential benefit that my opportunities brought, I wanted to make sure every girl could have this opportunity, all housed within one program," Haseman said.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

Since 2015, I have been working as an unpaid executive director with Girls Thrive, and it's truly been the most rewarding experience. Our team has enhanced my life in ways I didn't know were possible. As my family grew (rapidly, thanks to our twins), we were able to hire our first paid employee. I am so proud of the powerful work our program and operations manager, coaches and dedicated board of directors team does.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Our community here in Helena is unlike anywhere else I've ever lived. The support, enthusiasm, partnership and overall willingness to help is completely unmatched. In fact, the vast majority of our fundraising comes from local businesses and donors. We love, and feel eternally grateful, that Helena recognizes the valuable work we are doing to improve the lives of our participants.

What else should people know about you

My family and friends are truly my greatest joy, and quality time with them is a privilege. I am a dedicated wife and mama of a vivacious 5-year-old and 2-year-old twin-a-does. Our family loves to be adventurous and enjoy all that Helena has to offer. If you see some kids running, biking, (insert sport) wild, in opposite directions, with two exhausted parents, that's probably us! Please stop and say hi!



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM

MATTHEW HUGHES

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 31

Matthew Hughes is mostly a lifelong resident of Helena. He was born in Missoula, but his family brought him to Helena “immediately,” he said. And he spent eight years in Great Falls, returning to Helena in 2004.

He cites following the University of Montana Grizzlies as his favorite hobby, along with “golfing, hiking, going four-wheeling on ATVs, paint-balling, fishing and hunting.”

OCCUPATION

Hughes works at Shodair Children’s Hospital in the maintenance/security department and helps out as a mental health tech as needed.

“My previous jobs were in construction, and I wanted something that was more steady and with hours that allow me time to spend with my three children and providing me a way to advance,” he explained. “Also, Shodair has given me the ability to work directly with the children, which is very rewarding.”

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with?

I am a captain for Baxendale Fire Rescue. This has led to many opportunities to give back to the community. As an example, I provided fire protection for the recent drag races. On the Fourth of July, I provided our fire truck for the kids to check out at Centennial Park. I also took the truck to Shodair to show it to the children. Last year I was able to help out with the FFT1 classes for the new volunteers. I also drove a fire engine in the Parade of Lights.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I like Helena because the outdoor activities are limitless. I like the size of Helena as it doesn’t have the issues of a large city



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM

but still offers a lot. I like being able to get to work quickly. When someone is in need, the community steps up and provides in all different ways and forms. I like being able to shop locally. Helena has a great family vibe.

What else should people know about you?

I am a single father of three amazing children, a son and two daughters. I enjoy spending time with them. I enjoy helping others.

A colorful graphic with a light blue background and a white cloud. At the top, it says "CONGRATULATIONS" in large, bold, black letters. Below that, "MIMI" is written in a similar font, followed by a red heart icon. To the right, a quote reads: "Muriel is honestly the heart of my daycare. Giving 100% to each child, each employee, & parents each and every day!" Below the quote is the name "-Wendy Murphy". At the bottom, there is a row of six cartoon children holding hands, and the text "LITTLE ANGEL DAYCARE & PRESCHOOL 4075 N. Montana • Helena • 406-442-9737".

CONGRATULATIONS
MIMI ❤️

“Muriel is honestly the heart of my daycare. Giving 100% to each child, each employee, & parents each and every day!”
-Wendy Murphy

LITTLE ANGEL DAYCARE & PRESCHOOL
4075 N. Montana • Helena • 406-442-9737

BLAIR FJESETH

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 35

Blair Fjeseth has been a bit of a nomad in her life, but she's spent the most time in Helena and considers it home.

"I was born in Kodiak, Alaska; moved to Washington State, then to Maui, Hawaii," she explains. "I went back to Washington for high school at Cashmere High School and then landed in Helena for college at Carroll."

Asked about her hobbies, she replied, "I don't know if parents have hobbies outside of children?" She added quickly, "Besides being their No. 1 fan, I love photography, writing and being outside."

OCCUPATION

Fjeseth is senior vice president and chief of staff for Mountain Health Co-Op. The co-op is member-governed, meaning customers are also owners of the company. It's a nonprofit company that invests profits back into those they serve.

"A few things we've reinvested our profits into are offering most insulins, heart medications, anti-depressants and inhalers at zero cost to our members," she said. "We help with member travel for care, give \$100 for our folks to see a dentist and other amazing things that truly help those in our communities."

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

I sit on the Montana Chamber of Commerce Board, I am the chair-elect for the St. Peter's Health Foundation Board, I work closely with Carroll College on a variety of projects. I've had a column for over five years in "Montana Parent" magazine and was on the YWCA and PowerHouse Montana Boards.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I love that people in this community care about one another. I love that we are big enough for diversity and a variety of perspectives, but yet, we are small enough to feel safe and have a "small-town feel." I like knowing the names of the folks at Van's; I like walking down the walking mall and being greeted with a "hi" as you pass strangers.

What else should people know about you?

I'm humbled to be in this group of amazing people listed alongside me. I am fortunate to be part of a great community with tremendous support. Also, I love you, Nell, Olan, Sven and Andy.



COURTESY PHOTO

DR. LOGAN SKELLEY

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 35

Dr. Logan Skelley is originally from Joplin, Missouri.

In his free time, Skelley enjoys playing tennis, hiking and biking outdoors.

OCCUPATION

He is co-owner of Guardian Dermatology PC with wife Janey Skelley PA-C, who also works in dermatology.

He completed his undergraduate studies at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York; his medical degree at the University of Kentucky; his internship at Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie, Indiana; and his dermatology residency and surgical fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He is both a general and surgical dermatologist, meaning he can treat patients of all ages with all skin conditions.

He is Helena's first, and only permanent, double board-certified dermatologist and fellowship-trained (Mohs) micrographic dermatologic surgeon.

"As a skin cancer specialist, I really enjoy getting to care for my patients with complex and high-risk skin cancers," Skelley said. "Particularly, and as a reconstructive surgeon, I take tremendous pride in repairing what was damaged or removed after the treatment of a skin cancer with Mohs surgery. Being able to blend the science and art of medicine in my daily work is very rewarding."

Skelley, along with his wife Janey wanted to start their own dermatology clinic in Helena to elevate the standard of care for area residents and provide their unique expertise, which previously was not present in the community. In 2021, Dr. Skelley and Janey started Guardian Dermatology,

P.C., and they have been proudly providing high-quality skin care to thousands of patients since opening their doors.

Skelley said the key to overcoming challenges is effective communication, whether it's with patients, staff, vendors or even colleagues.

As far as future goals, Skelley said he'd like to see Guardian Dermatology continue to expand its services and range.

"Our goal is to be the community's dermatologic leader today, tomorrow and in the future," he said.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

We are proud to be involved with several local organizations. Over the last few years, we have been involved with the Governor's Cup, the Prickly Pear Land Trust Don't Fence Me In Trail Run, the Helena Symphony, and the Helena Education Founda-

tion. I have also been an invited lecturer to students at Carroll College on several occasions.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

While the land is captivating, the Helena community and its people are what I like best about the area. I grew up in a town just like Helena, and I always knew I wanted a similar setting to raise my family one day. I feel very fortunate to be a part of the Helena community and to get to care for its members every day.

What else should people know about you?

I am extremely honored to be recognized in the 20 under 40 segment. However, I would like everyone to know, there is no "Dr. Skelley" or "Guardian Dermatology P.C." without my supporting family, each and every team member at the clinic, and most importantly my amazing and loving wife, Janey.



GINNY EMERY



Congratulations

to **Dr. Skelley** for this much deserved recognition for your hard work and dedication to providing the best care for our patients!

CHARLIE MCKAY

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 39

Charlie McKay has made his way around Montana. Born in Great Falls, he lived in Missoula as a child and Bozeman as an adult before he made his way to Helena. Today, he cites rock hounding and outdoor conversation as his favorite hobbies.

OCCUPATION

McKay is the executive director at Aspen Adult Services Inc.

“When Helena Industries closed, my team was running the Supported Employment division, and we were displaced along with all the clients. I started Aspen Adult Services so that we could say YES more,” he said. “Our main administrative team has over 75 years of experience in the field, and nothing is more important to us than providing caring and consistent services to our friends and neighbors with disabilities.”

Q&A

What community service

or volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with?

Aspen has involvement with God’s Love, St. Peter’s Hospital, First Lutheran Church and Mount St. Helena Church.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

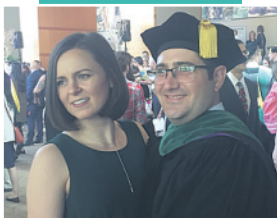
I love the mountains! We are so lucky to have all the clean air and water access that we have. I enjoy living in this historic community, with its amazing architecture and friendly population.

What else should people know about you?

Montana is in my heart, and I cannot imagine living anywhere else. I believe that we are special. That Montana breeds a hearty and robust character that has not been crushed by the weight of too many neighbors. We care about each other more here, and I believe that this really is the last BEST place!



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM



Congratulations Matthew Goldes!!

**Selected as One of Helena’s Top 20 Under 40.
Your hard work has paid off!**

Welcome Home and Congratulations Matthew!!
All of us at Associated Dermatology are so proud of you!

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CHRIS WALKER

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 34

Kalispell native Chris Walker enjoys working in the law, saying his favorite part of his job is a tie between his co-workers and the intellectual challenge of the work. But it's not just work he enjoys; walking, hiking and getting outside are among his favorite activities.

OCCUPATION

"I am an attorney who specializes in estate planning, probates, real estate and business law," Walker said. "When my wife and I started a family, she suggested law school instead of pursuing a career in diplomacy."

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with?

Rotary Club of Helena. I also attend Cub Scouts with my son.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I've always loved that Helena is nestled right up in the mountains. Helena is growing but more slowly than other Montana towns; it continues to offer exciting new businesses while maintaining that "small town" feel.

What else should people know about you?

I am easy to talk to and happy to listen.



GARY MARSHALL,
BMGPHOTOS.COM

An advertisement for Silverman Law Office. The background is a scenic view of a lake and mountains. In the top left, there is a logo for Silverman Law Office with the text "SILVERMAN LAW OFFICE" and "ESTABLISHED 1978". The word "Congratulations!" is written in large white letters across the top. Below this, two portraits of attorneys are shown in dark, angled frames. On the left is Tony Dalton, a man in a light blue checkered shirt. On the right is Chris Walker, a man in a dark suit and glasses. Below the portraits, their names and titles are listed. In the bottom left, contact information is provided: "20 UNDER 40 WINNERS", "Specializing in tax law, estate planning, business law, probate, litigation, and real estate", "CONTACT US:", "406-449-4829", and "www.mttaxlaw.com".

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TONY DALTON
Associate Attorney

CHRIS WALKER
Senior Associate Attorney

DR. JAMES VERLANIC

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 37

Anaconda native Dr. James Verlanic says he enjoys outdoor activities including fly-fishing, rafting, golfing, skiing, hiking, horseback riding, and is a very avid hunter, including archery and rifle big game hunting and upland and waterfowl hunting with his two German shorthaired pointers.

OCCUPATION

Dr. James Verlanic is a general surgeon at St. Peter's Health, providing operative treatment of a wide range of conditions, such as hernias, gallbladder disease, appendicitis, bowel obstructions, colon cancer, diverticulitis, skin cancer, hiatal hernias/GERD, venous disease, and trauma.

After graduating from Montana State University, Verlanic said he wanted to pursue a career that would allow him to live and work in Montana that involved the sciences and provide the biggest positive impact he could make on the people of Montana.

He attended the University of Nevada Reno Medical School. In medical school, Verlanic said he fell in love with surgery and the operating room and subsequently did his surgical training at the University of New Mexico.

Verlanic said the life of a surgeon is inherently filled with a wide array of challenges, but overcoming them is made possible by the support of his co-workers and family.

"I have an amazing group of partners in the General Surgery group that are all incredibly supportive and always willing to help each other out with tough cases," he said. "And the foundation that keeps everything running smoothly and makes it all possible is the ever present support of my amazing wife."

He said he "absolutely loves" the technical aspects of performing surgery in the operating room, as well as the exciting nature of some of the high acuity cases they see. But his favorite part of the job is seeing his patients after surgery and hearing how much better their life is and how thankful they are for the care he's provided them.

He said in the future he hopes to continue to expand what surgical procedures they can offer to patients without having to leave Helena and continue to push the limit of what is possible through mini-



BRIDGET PACK, INDEPENDENT RECORD

minally invasive approaches.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

I am a member of multiple wildlife con-

servation/outdoor organizations including Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Ducks Unlimited, the Wild Sheep Foundation, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Helena is such an idyllic location, especially for my family. I love the unend-

ing outdoor activity options of the area, proximity to friends and family, and the fantastic community of people we've become a part of.

What else should people know about you?

My wife and I have five kids which includes two sets of twins! I played center for MSU, Go 'Cats!

TONY DALTON



GARY
MARSHALL,
BMGPHOTOS.COM

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 35

Tony Dalton is a native of Moab, Utah, who originally discovered Helena when he moved here to attend Carroll College in 2010. "I have left twice but am back for good," he added.

He said his hobbies are a mix of indoor and outdoor activities, listing rafting, hiking, playing basketball, playing with his kids and his dog, reading and writing among them.

OCCUPATION

Dalton is an attorney with Silverman Law in Helena.

"I enjoy helping individuals prepare for and traverse difficult situations," he said. His first job was at a firm in New Mexico before he accepted the position at Silverman.

"I enjoy helping people solve stressful problems, move forward in their lives, and develop the best plan for their unique situation," he added.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with?

I coach my son's tee-ball team, volunteer at my church teaching nine-11 boys, and participate in Rotary Club.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

The balance between the amenities of a growing town and the access to mountains, lakes and the great outdoors.

What else should people know about you?

Father of two, married 11 years and counting, Carroll College graduate.

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MATTHEW E. GOLDES, MD
General Surgery

A Helena native, recognized for his comprehensive care, gentle demeanor and for going above and beyond for every patient he encounters.



JAMES VERLANIC, MD
General Surgery

Recognized by his colleagues as a caring and hardworking individual, who does everything in his power to ensure each patient receives outstanding care.



**MOLLY LITCHFIELD,
MBA-HM, BSN, RN CNOR**
Senior Director of
Perioperative Services

Recognized for her community involvement, authenticity and her genuine approach to her staff which is leading St. Peter's surgical services to top performance

And congratulations to **Blair Fjeseth**, Vice Chair of the St. Peter's Health Foundation Board of Trustees.



St. Peter's Health

ERIN GOOD



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 30

Erin Good grew up on a farm and ranch outside Chester and moved to Helena in 2016. She calls herself “a huge fan of having fun while hanging out with friends and family,” adding she enjoys movie nights, dinner parties, board games as well as video games and outside fun like kayaking, tennis, hiking, camping and hanging out on a boat.

OCCUPATION

Currently, Good is primarily part of the recruitment team at Pinion (formerly Anderson ZurMuehlen), providing support in marketing, branding, social media, sourcing and campus recruiting. She also leads the firm’s request for proposal (RFP) process, ensuring quality and consistency in each formal proposal that goes out the door.

“My favorite part of my career is the people – my colleagues who I work and collaborate with on a daily basis, the people I interact and network with through recruitment efforts and local events, and the students I connect with at campus events,” Good said. “I truly enjoy working with our people and having the opportunity to help the recruitment team build on this talented and fun group.”

Q&A

What community service or

volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

I currently serve on the board of Life Houses, an organization focused on providing a safe living environment for young adults in the Helena community that empowers them to reach their full potential. I also lead the Pinion auction team in Helena, collaborating with several nonprofits in the area and providing in-kind auction services to assist with fundraising events.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

After growing up in the country and going to school in a small town, I appreciate Helena’s small-town feel and the close-knit community. My favorite part is the proximity to outdoor recreation – I can go on a hike or go kayaking, and it only takes about 15 minutes to get there.

What else should people know about you?

Never underestimate a farm and ranch girl. I learned a lot while growing up on a farm and ranch, including operating heavy machinery, and I have the utmost respect for those who make agriculture their life. It’s hard work, and I continue to put that hard work ethic into my daily life and take nothing for granted.

Congratulations, Erin Good



20 UNDER 40 2023 Honoree



pinionglobal.com

CASSIE ELLIOTT

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 30

Originally born in Kansas, Cassie Elliott moved to Helena when she was 13 and graduated from Capital High School in 2011.

She is the mother of three children, and they enjoy spending time outside and traveling.

OCCUPATION

As program manager for Helena Area Habitat for Humanity, Elliott coaches, interviews and selects low-income families for their Mutual Self Help homeownership and repair programs in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development.

Elliott said the process begins with the financial education and prescreening of over 200 applicants, then moves on to selecting a group of four to six applicants who are able to financially take on a mortgage and willing to commit to building their home and the homes of their neighbors. She said this also involves managing expectations during the building of their homes.

Seeing firsthand what a decent, affordable home can do for a limited, low-income family led her to this career path, Elliott said.

"I was a single mom, with three kids, stuck in substandard living conditions and working as an essential worker through the pandemic, with a dream to own a safe and decent home for my children," she said.

After participating in the program and building her own home in 2020, her position became available in 2021, and Elliott said it's been the perfect fit. She said since living in her own home, she has become financially stable, her children have done better in school, and they are able to enjoy life, and she said being able to give others the same opportunity has been incredibly rewarding.

Elliott said the biggest challenge for her in this position is not seeing enough done to overcome the housing crisis in her community. The current income limit for their program is \$78,650 annually. If you are below this, you are considered "low income."

"I have families who are teachers, caretakers, small business owners, state of Montana employees who are currently living in overcrowded, unsafe and unaffordable housing

just focusing on surviving and not able to enjoy life," she said. "It is truly sad."

Elliott said the best part of the job is making the call to the family that they have been selected for the home. She knows this is life-changing, and loves that she gets to change people's lives.

With eight homes currently under construction, and just selecting the next group of six for building in East Helena this fall, Elliott said her goal is to see Habitat doing more than eight homes per year.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

Our program is a volunteer based program, we work closely with the Helena community. Our volunteers provide the labor that is necessary to keeping our Habitat homes as affordable as possible.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM

in the Helena area?

The best thing about living, working and volunteering in Helena is the people that you get to meet, and the connections that grow with the community.

What else should people know about you?

I love the services that I get to provide to Helena and look forward to building more permanently affordable homes in the community!

Congratulations Cassie!

We're so proud of you!

From Staff and Volunteers at



Helena Area
Habitat
for Humanity®

20
UNDER
40

MARIA DEMARAY

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 38

Maria Demaray grew up north of Seattle on Whidbey Island.

She said her hobbies include skiing, hiking, anything related to interior design and hosting friends at her home.

OCCUPATION

Demaray is in her 15th year as a real estate broker. She said she helps clients find a house they can turn into a home.

“I was born into a family of home-lovers; my dad built homes, and my grandma decorated them,” Demaray said. “When someone is that passionate about their art, you can’t help but absorb it and want to follow in the same footsteps. It seemed like a natural fit for me to help people find a place to call home.”

Demaray said she overcomes challenges on the job by communicating through the tough spots and sometimes taking a step back from the situation to let it simmer and hopefully gain a different perspective. She said there are aspects of real estate that require you to be “on” all the time, so taking time to take care of yourself and refuel the reserves is really important.

Her favorite part of the job is when people open their lives to her.

“Buying and selling a home is a really intimate process; whether it’s welcoming me into their home to list it or asking me to find them their first home,” She said. “There is a huge level of trust that goes into the real estate process, I’m the lighthouse for clients, and I’ve never taken that for granted.”

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

The one that is nearest and dearest to me is Leadership Helena put on by the Chamber of Commerce. I really can’t say enough good things about it. I think it’s a fantastic program that really inspired me to get more involved, reignited my love for Helena and exposed me to so many different people, industries and nonprofits around Helena.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

In some ways, Helena is about 20 years behind Bozeman or Missoula, and I think that’s what I love most about it. What Helena lacks in trendy, I think it makes up for in community and peaceful living. Helena offers the quintessential “Montana lifestyle;” it’s slower paced, offers endless access to the outdoors and people are kind and neighborly. Helena is really something special, and it’s been amazing to see some of the new businesses opening up. It really feels like people understand Helena and while they want to add to it, they don’t want to change it.

What else should people know about you?

I plan on expanding my real estate team, build a few more homes (if my partner, Louie is on board) and hopefully someday own a 1985 Jeep Grand Wagoneer.



COURTESY PHOTO

MURIEL STRACENER

INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 36

Muriel Stracener is originally from Wolf Point on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation up on the Hi-Line. She moved to Helena in 2007. She said she enjoys “cheering my kids on a baseball/softball diamond, football field or soccer field depending on the time of the year,” as well as puzzles, fly fishing, floating the river, camping, gardening, photography and video games.

OCCUPATION

Stracener has a history of working with children. Currently, she’s a child care provider/lead teacher and manager at Little Angels Daycare & Preschool in Helena. Her

first job was for the city of Wolf Point as a softball coach, working with all age groups from 5 years old to 18 years old, “and I absolutely loved it! I also helped out in a small day care owned by Lisa Dunn in my hometown of Wolf Point, and it was there that I found my true love of working with kids in a child care setting,” she said.

Q&A

What community service or volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with?

In the summers, I work with the elementary-age kids in our summer program. It is

part of my work here at Little Angels, but we incorporate a lot of good deeds into our program. We set up a brownie and lemonade stand and donate the proceeds to the Humane Society. You can often find our group picking up trash at the parks we play at, which is four different parks a week throughout the summer.

My plan for next year is to coach my daughters’ softball team as I was unable to do so this year due to appointments, and I look forward to it immensely! I am always willing to offer a helping hand at practices because I truly believe it takes a village.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I fell in love with Helena the first time I ever came here. I came to a pole vaulting camp here in Helena when I was in high school, and I thought the area was so incredibly beautiful. I felt quite out of my element when I first made the move here. It was the first time I had lived off the reservation, first time I left the Hi-Line, first

time I had to make new friends as I grew up in Wolf Point my whole life. When I found Little Angels’ ad in the newspaper, I found my place here, and the rest is history. I love being able to fish in every direction you travel, I love the mountains, I love my career choice and the families/children/people I get to interact with daily, but most of all I just love Montana — all of it because it is God’s Country.

What else should people know about you?

I am a Native American woman, and I am enrolled in the Three Affiliated Tribes in New Town, North Dakota. I am me.

I had the honor of tutoring school age kids during the COVID pandemic while schools were closed. I and my boss, Wendy Murphy, tutored 10 hours a day until school resumed. This included helping kids get their homework done, getting kids online to attend meetings and maintaining a clean and sanitized environment so they did have a place to go during the closure.



GARY MARSHALL, BMGPHOTOS.COM



CONGRATULATIONS JULIA BRYANT!

Julia is a big asset to the Intrepid Team. She brings valuable experience to her position and adds vibrant personality to her projects. Her creative instinct and determination are a proven success and we appreciate her very much. From everyone at Intrepid Credit Union, congratulations on being named one of Helena's 20 Under 40!

