

PALMER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



OVER
\$70,000

Granted since 2018

MEET OUR GRANTEES



FRIENDS OF SUTTON LIBRARY

\$3,000 AWARDED FOR YOUTH ARTS AND WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Sutton Youth Arts and Wellness Program provides year-round activities for youth ages 11-18. The program is dedicated to physical, outdoor activities as well as art. The library engages younger children with story times, after-school programs, and summer reading programs. The preteen and teen youth program promotes healthy, sustainable living ideals through organic gardening, sports, drug and alcohol prevention, and cooking classes. Their goal is to provide Sutton youth with resources and guidance to unleash their potential.

The yearlong Youth Arts and Wellness Program expands to include activities twice a week during the summer focusing on outdoor activities and arts. It offers area youth the opportunity to connect with their community while learning skills that promote a healthy lifestyle and benefit their community. \$3,000 was awarded to Friends of Sutton Library in 2022 to buy supplies and cover activity fees.

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WE PROVIDE OUR YOUTH
WITH CONNECTIONS TO
COMMUNITY, TO MENTORS,
AND TO EACH OTHER



THE PALMER ARTS COUNCIL



BAILEY PIANO RESTORATION

\$5,000 AWARDED TO RESTORE A PIECE OF PALMER'S HISTORY

The Palmer Arts Council is restoring the historic Bailey Piano. The 1949 Baldwin D concert grand piano has a rich history in Palmer and is believed to be the first grand piano ever in the Mat-Su Borough. Dr. Clarence Bailey bought the piano directly from the Baldwin factory in Ohio as a gift for his fiancée. When the Baileys left Alaska in the 60s, the piano was given to The Palmer Independent School District. The piano moved around from school buildings, churches, and the fairgrounds. It has been used for numerous performances from community choir performances to Miss Alaska pageants. It was even played by Three Dog Night, Johnny Rivers, and Ronnie Milsap during concerts at the Alaska State Fair.

The piano needs significant restoration work due to the years spent in non-climate-controlled spaces. The Palmer Arts Council will use the \$5,000 grant along with other money raised to restore the piano. Once restored, the piano will be housed at the Palmer Senior Center, where it can be enjoyed by a wide range of community members during special events and performances.



ALASKANS FOR PALMER HAY FLATS

\$5,000 AWARDED IN HONOR OF ED RASMUSON

Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats conserves the natural and cultural resources of the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge through development projects and educational materials and programs. Their efforts teach about the wonders of wetland ecosystems, migrating birds, the seasonal ebb and flow of wildlife, and its integral part in human resource provision and game management.

In 2022, the Mat-Su Health Foundation (MSHF) gave PCF a generous donation in memory of Ed Rasmuson, philanthropist and long-time chair of the Rasmuson Foundation. PCF chose to give \$5,000 of the MSHF donation to Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats to honor Ed Rasmuson's support of outdoor recreation in his own philanthropic giving.



FORGET ME NOT QUILTERS OF ALASKA



QUILTS OF VALOR

\$1,000 AWARDED FOR QUILT FABRIC

Forget Me Not Quilters of Alaska is a volunteer group that makes Quilts of Valor for veterans in the Mat-Su who have been touched by war. Their goal is to bring comfort and healing while showing appreciation for the veteran's devotion to our country. The comfort often comes late in life for veterans and allows them to share new stories with their families. This helps the veteran release some of their trauma and allows the family to better understand "triggers" that might affect all their lives.

The more than 200 quilts created annually by Forget Me Not Quilters of Alaska are made from donated funds. In 2022, PCF gave \$1,000 to Forget Me Not Quilters of Alaska to purchase fabric for their heirloom quality quilts. The quilts are awarded to local veterans at events in the Mat-Su Borough throughout the year. The quilts bring joy to our veterans, help promote healthy family relationships, and provide comfort for those affected with PTSD.

AK WILDBIRD REHABILITATION CENTER

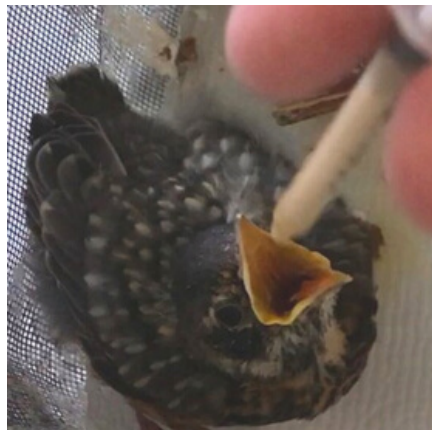
\$1,000 AWARDED PREDATOR-PROOF OUTDOOR FLIGHT CAGES

The Alaska WildBird Rehabilitation Center (AWBRC) is the only wild bird rescue center north of Anchorage. AWBRC rescues and rehabilitates wild birds from the Palmer area and around the Mat-Su Valley. Once the birds are healed, they are released to the same area. AWBRC conducts educational programs with live wild birds for schools, libraries, and public events and serves as an information center for our community. They support the public by answering questions about the birds they see in their yards or helping them when they find an injured bird.

PCF awarded \$1,000 to Alaska WildBird Rehabilitation Center to predator-proof their outdoor flight cages. The flight cages are used for final strengthening and flight development of birds following rehab, or for baby birds who are ready to fly. The new mesh barrier will keep out small animals who might steal food or harm a bird in rehab.

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**THE HAPPIEST PART
OF ANY REHABILITATION
IS THE RELEASE**





ALASKA FAMILY SERVICES



CRISIS SHELTER FENCE EXPANSION

\$3,000 AWARDED TO EXPAND OUTDOOR AREA

Alaska Family Services (AFS) was founded in 1979 in response to the need for domestic violence support services in Mat-Su. Today they offer over 20 programs that support families and build healthy communities and provide services to over 10,000 individuals annually. Their 32-bed crisis shelter is the only domestic violence and sexual assault shelter in the Mat-Su.

Research shows that access to sunshine and views of nature provide healing effects for those recovering from trauma. For residents of the shelter, the fenced backyard is their safe space to be outside. The outdoor space provides an area for reflection, connection with nature, and a place for children to play. With a grant of \$3,000, AFS expanded its fenced outdoor area in 2022 to maximize the outdoor space for residents. The fenced yard includes raised garden beds, a small greenhouse, a swing set, and outdoor toys and games.



BRIGHT LIGHTS BOOK PROJECT

\$1,500 AWARDED FOR BOOKSHELF MATERIALS

Bright Lights Book Project (BLBP) distributes free books throughout the Valley and Alaska. In 2021, BLBP saved 20,000 books from being shredded or pulped at Valley Center for Recycling Solutions. The books are available for free in bookcases throughout Palmer and Sutton. Their focus in 2022 was to get books into the hands of area school children.

To accomplish this goal, BLBP partnered with Mat-Su Career and Technical High School to have shop students build the bookcases. PCF provided \$1,500 for materials. The 12 new bookshelves will be placed in highly trafficked areas in schools throughout the Mat-Su Borough.



VALLEY MOUNTAIN BIKERS AND HIKERS



MONKSHOOD DESCENDER TRAILS

\$6,000 AWARDED TO BUILD MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS

Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers (VMBaH) builds and maintains sustainable hiking and biking trails throughout the Mat-Su Valley. They are also responsible for organizing numerous events to engage and inspire our local community in the outdoors. To support their endeavors, PCF granted \$6,000 to VMBaH in 2021 to develop three new downhill mountain biking trails in the Government Peak Recreation area. Their goal is to develop various trails to keep our riders local and attract non-local riders to our area. The new trail designs will allow beginning mountain bikers the opportunity to develop their riding skills and confidence. Advanced riders will enjoy the technical trails with flows, berms, and jumps.

Government Peak Recreation Area is visited by thousands of trail users every year. These new trails provide a valuable recreational experience to Valley residents and will boost our local economy as mountain bikers come to hone their skills and seek new challenges.

HATCHER ALPINE XPERIENCE

\$5,000 AWARDED FOR SKEETAWK BUILDING FOUNDATION

Skeetawk was formed in 2015 by a dedicated group of community members who had a vision of bringing lift-access skiing to Hatcher Pass. The dream was finally realized in December of 2020 when Skeetawk opened. While Skeetawk is a regional ski area, the majority of visitors are from Palmer and Wasilla. "We aim to improve the lives of all residents of the Mat-Su Valley." To further expand operations, Hatcher Alpine Xperience is building a permanent ski patrol building at the top of the Skeetawk ski area. In 2021, PCF granted \$5,000 to build the pilings for the ski patrol building and deck.

In addition to serving as a warming facility for staff and patients, the building will expand available opportunities in Hatcher Pass. In the summer it will serve as a base for mountain biking operations, and be available for a variety of events from education and instruction to music festivals. When not being utilized for operations, the upper patrol building and deck will be available as a unique lodging space. The piling foundation and deck will allow Skeetawk to expand and improve its services providing greater benefit to Palmer and surrounding communities.

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**WE AIM TO IMPROVE THE
LIVES OF ALL RESIDENTS
OF THE MAT-SU VALLEY**



MAT-SU SKI CLUB

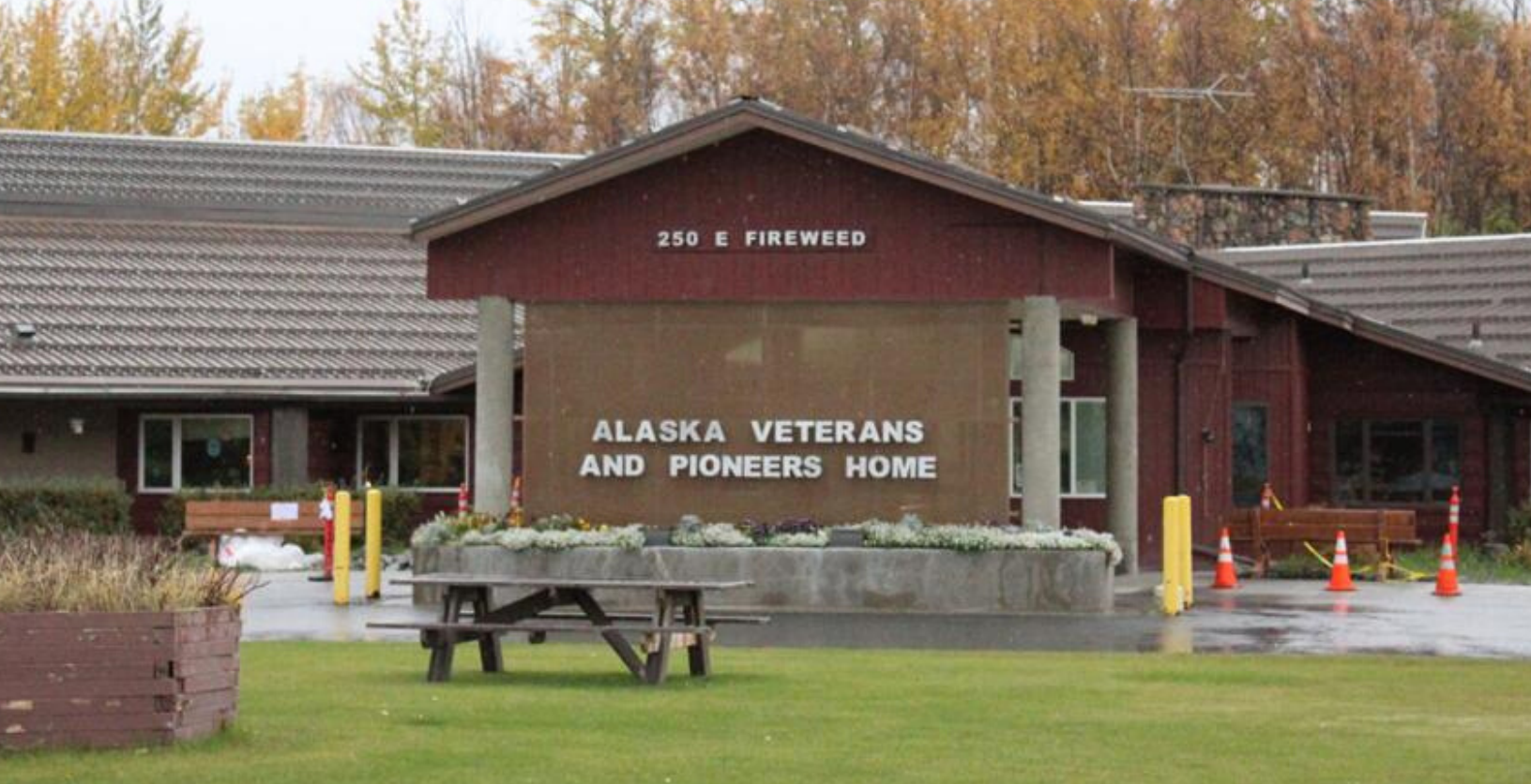


ADULT LEARN TO SKI PROGRAM

\$3,250 AWARDED TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT FOR STUDENTS

The Mat-Su Ski Club is always busy promoting Nordic skiing in the Valley. They are responsible for grooming trails in Hatcher Pass, hosting numerous competitive ski races, and teaching Nordic skiing to youth and adults. Mat-Su Ski Club experienced massive growth in its Adult Learn-to-Ski Program during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Their classes filled up fast, and they did not have enough equipment to keep up with demand.

In 2021, PCF granted Mat-Su Ski Club \$3,250 to purchase classic cross-country ski equipment for their adult program. Quality gear will help participants succeed and is crucial to their enjoyment of the sport. The new gear will ensure participants can focus on learning instead of struggling with ill-fitted or worn-out equipment. "People are more invested in their community when they have good trails and outdoor recreation opportunities to enjoy."



ALASKA VETERANS AND PIONEERS HOME

\$600 AWARDED FOR SCULPTURES ON OUTDOOR WALKING TRAIL

Veterans Retirement Home Funding is the nonprofit that serves Palmer's Pioneers Home. Their main purpose is to address the needs of healthy aging, quality of life, and social interaction for residents.

In 2021, Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home received a grant of \$600 from PCF to create three welded sculptures for their yard. The sculptures will be lit during the dark winters to encourage residents to enjoy the outdoor walk and view the lights. Developing features of interest in the back area of the Retirement Home will increase the residents' physical and mental health, particularly during the dark winter months.



ALASKA FARMLAND TRUST

"Protecting farmland is a tremendous benefit to Alaskans."



TELLING THE STORIES OF OUR PROPERTIES

\$2,000 AWARDED TO CREATE INFORMATIONAL VIDEOS

Palmer is known for its highly productive, well-drained soils. The mission of Alaska Farmland Trust is the permanent protection of Alaska's limited agriculturally viable soils. This is a crucial need in Palmer as families continue to relocate to the Valley from Anchorage, putting pressure for development on open spaces and active farming properties.

The mechanics of how they work towards achieving this mission is often misunderstood. To clarify how they protect our valuable agricultural industry, Alaska Farmland Trust is creating informational videos for each of its protected properties in 2021. The videos will demonstrate the benefits of placing conservation easements on farming properties and describe how donations are used to benefit our community and Alaska as a whole. PCF supported the creation of one of these videos with a grant of \$2,000.

CONNECT VETS OF ALASKA

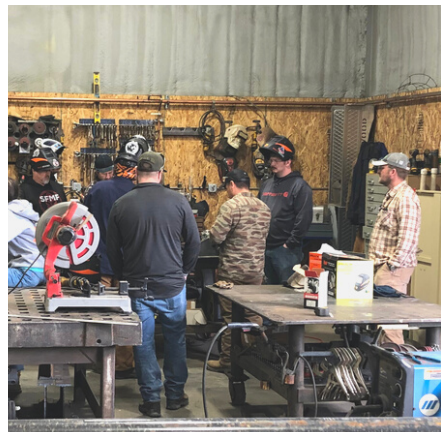
\$2,500 AWARDED FOR METAL FABRICATION WORKSHOPS FOR VETS

Connect Vets supports the successful transition of veterans by promoting health and wellness in their skills center and vocational training courses. In 2021, PCF awarded them a grant of \$2,500 to hold four metal fabrication workshops in Palmer. The workshops will provide valuable occupation training for vets and allow them to connect with others in our community.

These workshops have a number of benefits for our vets and our community. Many veterans struggle with depression and suicidal ideology. These workshops help reduce these issues by giving vets something to look forward to and work towards. They strengthen bonds as they work side-by-side learning new skills and creating useful items for our community. The projects they complete will also benefit our community as a whole. Connect Vets is working with local nonprofits and organizations to create needed items for the Palmer area, such as metal batting cages for Palmer Little League and beautification projects for downtown Palmer.

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**TRAINING EVENTS PROMOTE
HEALTH AND WELLNESS,
EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**





MAT-SU TRAILS AND PARKS FOUNDATION



OUTDOOR ACTIVITY GUIDE

\$1,500 AWARDED FOR A DIGITAL ACTIVITY GUIDE

Mat-Su Trails and Park Foundation (MSTPF) invests in projects that support access for everyone into wild and beautiful places in the Mat-Su Valley. To support their work, PCF awarded a \$1,500 grant in 2021 to create a digital Palmer Outdoor Activity Guide. MSTPF will also publish Palmer-specific activities and event spotlights on the OuterSpatial trails app. The guide will increase the knowledge of recreation in our area and provide physical and mental health opportunities in the outdoors.

The goal of the project is to reach a diverse group of people with a variety of activities for every ability level. The Mat-Su Borough has over 2000 miles of trails and nearly unlimited recreation opportunities. This app will help those who want to explore find new outdoor opportunities in the Mat-Su. Download the OuterSpatial trails app to check out the Palmer Outdoor Activity Guide.

HATCHER PASS AVALANCHE CENTER



DRONE PROJECT

\$2,000 AWARDED FOR THE PURCHASE OF A DRONE

For over a decade, Hatcher Pass Avalanche Center (HPAC) has provided professional avalanche forecasts for the Hatcher Pass region. HPAC forecasts include detailed information on snowpack conditions and often include detailed narratives, observations, pictures, and videos to help backcountry users assess risk. In addition to the professional forecasts, HPAC's website allows users to submit their own observations regarding snow conditions and avalanche activity. Each weekly forecast includes a danger rating, a brief summary of conditions, and specific details on the snowpack and avalanche problems.

PCF awarded Hatcher Pass Avalanche Center \$2,000 in 2020 for the purchase of a drone. HPAC's new drone allows them to capture avalanche and snowpack observations that would be otherwise unobtainable by any other means and publish those images with each forecast. "The use of a drone will allow us to capture cutting edge images to share with the community and disseminate lifesaving information."

PALMER HIGH SANDWICH PROJECT

\$2,500 AWARDED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS FOOD OVER THE WEEKEND

The Palmer High Sandwich Project was initiated by a PHS student during the 2018 – 2019 school year. The aim of the project is to provide food to students in need, specifically on the weekends. PCF awarded the Sandwich Projects two grants totaling \$2,500, including a grant made possible by donations to the AK Can Do campaign.

Due to increased need, the PHS Sandwich Project has grown to include elementary and middle school students. “As a high school, we are tasked with providing every student an opportunity to learn and achieve to the best of their ability. Meeting nutritional needs is at the base of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. When these needs are met, students are able to focus on learning, getting a valuable education, setting goals for the future, and ultimately becoming valued productive citizens of our community.”

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**PROVIDING EVERY STUDENT
AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN
AND ACHIEVE TO THE
BEST OF THEIR ABILITY**



BIG CABBAGE RADIO



WEBSITE UPGRADES

\$1,000 AWARDED TO ENHANCE WEB PRESENCE

Big Cabbage Radio is an all-volunteer community radio station that broadcasts diverse music, local news, and public affairs to listeners in Palmer and beyond. Their podcasts of shows provide valuable information to the community on local government activities, the arts, and more.

PCF awarded Big Cabbage Radio \$1,000 in 2020 to upgrade its website. The upgrades included more than just a facelift to their homepage. The website is easier to navigate with your smartphone and the search function is greatly improved, making it easier to access their vast archive of shows. Big Cabbage Radio's new website is up and running, so be sure to check out their archive of shows or tune into their live stream of programming.



MAT-SU FAMILY PROMISE

**\$5,000 AWARDED TO MEET CRITICAL
NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY**

Family Promise Mat-Su provides crucial services to families in need. In 2020, \$5,000 was awarded to assist them in providing transitional housing, rental assistance, and utility assistance to Mat-Su families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020 was a challenging year full of uncertainty. Alaska Community Foundation stepped up to provide \$55,000 in basic needs grants in collaboration with its 11 Affiliate programs.



**BASIC NEEDS
GRANT**

ALASKA FAMILY SERVICES



PALMER COMMUNITY GARDEN

\$2,000 AWARDED TO BUILD A COMMUNITY GARDEN

C'enyaexde Ugheli is the Ahtha phrase for "something good grows." It is also the name of the Palmer community garden thanks to grants from the Mat-Su Health Foundation and PCF in 2020.

Alaska Family Services and Grow Palmer collaborated to create this community asset and offered free plots during the inaugural growing season. "The fact that we've constructed these beds, that they're going to be free during 2020, that we've got all of these donations and starts is a really incredible demonstration of how the community of Palmer can come out and support each other," said Alaska Family Services President Desiré Shepler.

The garden is meant to foster a sense of community identity and stewardship amongst gardeners. It provides a place for people to interact and share traditions.

MAT-SU SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

\$2,000 AWARDED TO INCREASE TELEHEALTH SERVICES

The mission of Mat-Su Services for Children and Adults (MSSCA) is to partner with individuals and families delivering excellent support services and building community by promoting dignity, respect, independence, and diversity. MSSCA faced a number of challenges associated with the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020. COVID brought the unexpected challenge of providing support services to the community and inside their homes, where the staff puts themselves at risk of exposure just by doing their job and caring for people with disabilities.

PCF granted \$2,000 to MSSCA to grow its telehealth services so they can safely provide support and minimize exposure when possible. This service will continue to benefit those they serve even after the COVID crisis has ended. MSSCA was able to secure additional funding from the Mat-Su Health Foundation to fully fund this project and are actively moving forward with making this vision a reality. "MSSCA is working hard to support people through these unprecedented times while remaining a stable organization."



MAT-SU SENIOR SERVICES



MEALS ON WHEELS

\$7,000 AWARDED FOR MEAL DELIVERY TO SENIORS

During the pandemic, many seniors became even more homebound. Meals on Wheels provides sustenance and allows isolated seniors to see a friendly face. Mat-Su Senior Services was able to provide much-needed socialization to isolated seniors and check up on folks to make sure they are OK. To support the impressive work that Mat-Su Senior Services has been doing during the pandemic, PCF awarded them \$7,000 in 2020 thanks to funding for COVID relief from The Alaska Community Foundation and Rasmuson Foundation.

Visit Palmer

ALASKA

PALMER MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND ART

\$1,000 AWARDED TO CREATE "VISIT PALMER" BRAND

The Visit Palmer program promotes Palmer as one of the best places in Alaska to visit, play, and stay. In 2019, PCF granted \$1,000 to the Palmer Museum of History and Art to create the Visit Palmer website and branding.

The joint initiative between Palmer Museum and Visitor Center, Palmer Chamber of Commerce, and Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau had a goal of increasing tourism in the Greater Palmer Area. The website features travel articles, trail maps, directories of local businesses, and an event calendar.

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Our goal is to promote
Palmer as one of the
best places in Alaska
to visit, play, and
stay.
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MAT-SU TRAILS AND PARKS FOUNDATION

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE GUIDE

\$500 AWARDED TO PUBLISH ADVENTURE BOOK

The mission of Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation (MSTPF) is "to be the resource, inspiration, and catalyst for trail and park development in the Mat-Su Borough." PCF supported this mission by granting MSTPF \$500 to publish their 2019 Adventure Book.

The booklet featured their "6 Peak Challenge Series," as well as monthly "daycation" adventures guided by MSTPF staff and local experts. The booklet also contained a large list of outdoor activities to enjoy throughout our community.

MTSPF partnered with AKtive Soles to sell and promote the guide book, as well as host their end-of-the-season party. Nearly 200 children and adults participated in MSTPF's 2019 activities. The majority of those folks were first time users of the trails they visited.



MAT-SU COMMUNITY CHORUS

\$2,500 AWARDED FOR PORTABLE RISERS

The Mat-Su Community Chorus has been around since the 1970s. The group is made up of 30 dedicated and talented singers of all ages and abilities from across the Valley. This inclusive group is open to the public without an audition and performs concerts throughout our community in a variety of settings.

In 2019, the Mat-Su Community Chorus elevated its group of talented performers with new, portable risers with safety rails. PCF contributed \$2,500 to purchase the easy-to-move equipment. The new risers greatly improved the safety of the choral members, and, because of their portability, are able to be loaned out to other community performance groups.

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**MUSIC IS THERAPEUTIC.
THE BENEFITS ARE REAPED BY
THOSE WHO ENGAGE EITHER BY
SINGING OR LISTENING .**



UNITED WAY OF MAT-SU



LIGHT UP A-MOOSE-MENT PARK

\$2,500 AWARDED TO ENHANCE SAFETY IN OUR COMMUNITY

Always looking for ways to improve the community, the United Way of Mat-Su sponsored an initiative in 2019 to light up Palmer's A-Moose-Ment Park. \$2,500 from the Palmer Community Foundation provided the equipment necessary to extend the hours and enhance the safety of this family entertainment center.

United Way of Mat-Su collaborated with the City of Palmer and Palmer Rotary. Over forty people volunteered on the project to thin out the surrounding woods, repair and paint playground equipment, and install light poles, lights, and security cameras. The A-Moose-Ment Park updates are still being talked about in our community today. This project is a great example of what can be accomplished when several groups come together around a common goal.



PALMER SOCCER CLUB

\$2,400 AWARDED FOR UPGRADES TO EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING FACILITIES

The purpose of the Palmer Soccer Club (PSC) is to encourage, promote, guide, and conduct a recreational and developmental soccer program for Palmer's youth. In 2018, they were struggling with worn-out equipment and a lack of communication between their 350 participants.

PCF helped PSC purchase much-needed equipment and install communication kiosks at their outdoor training facility with a grant of \$2,400.

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*We are building a
sense of community in
our local families
through soccer.*

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FOOD BANK OF PALMER



FOOD STORAGE SOLUTION

\$2,600 AWARDED TO INSTALL STORAGE SHELVES

The mission of the Food Bank of Palmer is to help eliminate hunger in Palmer and the surrounding area by providing food and help with utilities. To provide this essential service, they needed a safe and organized way to store their goods. In 2018, PCF granted the Food Bank of Palmer \$2,600 to build and install shelving units in their facility.

The new shelving units increased the area available to store food since they could make use of vertical space in their building. It also reduced the possibility of injury to their staff and volunteers through a more effective movement of their inventory. Because of the increased storage space, the Food Bank of Palmer was able to provide food to even more individuals in need.