



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

# MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

*Marking 33 Years*

Volume 33 Issue 5

September-October 2022

## Annual Meeting in Library on November 6

The Montour Trail Council will celebrate its 2022 achievements at the annual meeting and dinner on Sunday, November 6, at the St. Joan of Arc Church Fellowship Hall in Library, PA.

We'll start at 5 p.m. with a social hour featuring wines by vintner Mary Williams. A buffet dinner will be served at 6 p.m., with the business meeting set for 7 p.m.

Kelsey Ripper, executive director of Friends of the Riverfront since 2019, will speak on "Pittsburgh as a Trail Hub," the progress that's been made and preparing for the opportunities ahead. The Pittsburgh-based Friends of the Riverfront works to steward and further develop the 33-mile Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Allegheny County. Ms. Ripper, a Pittsburgh native, earned her law degree from Fordham University and worked in New York City as a nonprofit manager and nonprofit and economic development attorney before returning home.



At the annual meeting, we will announce results of the election of new board members and the proposed bylaw modifications. Please see the separate article in this Trail-Letter.

This year we are using MyMTC for registration. Sign in to your MyMTC account, click the drop-down box in the upper right, and select "Upcoming Events." Alternatively, you can find the link on the MontourTrail.org home page. If you receive the printed Trail-Letter, you can use the attached form.

Reservation requests must be received by 12 noon on Saturday, October 29. Plan to join us.

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Visit the Montour Trail Web Site at:  
[www.montourtrail.org](http://www.montourtrail.org)  
To converse go to:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43518292159>

## MTC Members to Vote on Board Nominees and Bylaw Changes

Each fall the Montour Trail Council asks members to vote on nominees to the Board of Directors. In 2022 members will also be asked to vote on revisions to the bylaws. This year we are using MyMTC to enable members to vote electronically. See the link on the home page of MontourTrail.org to vote.

Results will be tabulated and announced at the annual meeting on Sunday, November 6 at the St. Joan of Arc Fellowship Hall in Library.

### Board Nominees for 2023-2025

The Montour Trail Council Board of Directors has nominated the following members for election to the Board for the 2023 – 2025 term. Each Montour Trail Council member is entitled to vote for the nominees. Results

**John Dorman** is a long-time Montour Trail user and supporter. He has volunteered with the MTC since 2016, including managing the three user surveys and last year's user count project. John is a member of the MTC Operations Committee. A frequent biker on the trail since relocating back to Pittsburgh in 1999, his first use of the Montour Trail was in 1988 with short rides on the (then new) Arrowhead trail with his infant daughter in the back seat. John is retired from Eaton Corporation and lives in Collier Township with his wife and biking companion, Rosa.

**Patricia Friedsam, MD**, recently retired from her internal medicine practice in Washington, PA. Since joining the board in 2016, she's been co-chair of the Membership and Community Outreach Committee and leads the Tour the Montour, the MTC's largest fund-raising event. Pat can be found most weekends during the summer on the trail interacting with users, encouraging them to join the MTC, and selling Tour the Montour raffle tickets. *Continues on page 5*



### MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Deb Thompson	President
Phillip Torrez	Vice-President
Shirley Ulaky	Treasurer
Fran Hensler	Secretary
Jen Mosesso	2020-2022
Jim Richter	2020-2022
Dave Tetrick	2020-2022
Don Thobaben	2020-2022
Deb Thompson	2020-2022
Fran Hensler	2021-2023
Dave Jackel	2021-2023
Mark Modispacher	2021-2023
David Oyler	2021-2023
Tom Prezel	2021-2023
Julian Wolfe	2021-2023
Dave Borrebach	2022-2024
Mark Imgrund	2022-2024
Peter Kohnke	2022-2024
Phillip Torrez	2022-2024
Shirley Ulaky	2022-2024
Ned Williams	2022-2024

#### THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

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[newsletter@montourtrail.org](mailto:newsletter@montourtrail.org)

All other business related trail correspondence should be addressed:

[MTCoiffice@montourtrail.org](mailto:MTCoiffice@montourtrail.org)

Other Trail Contact information:

<https://montourtrail.org/contact-us/>

We are going digital, if paper correspondence is necessary:

#### MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL

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304 Hickman Street  
Bridgeville, PA 15017

PHONE NUMBER 412-257-3011

#### NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM

Dennis Sims, managing editor

Mark Imgrund

Dennis Pfeiffer

## Prez sez....

### Wisdom of the Ages by Deb Thompson

Back in June, a number of trail fans met at Kurnick trailhead to dedicate a monument honoring the Trail's founders. This event brought up some nostalgic thoughts.

In 1989, the first Internet service providers came into existence, the Berlin Wall came down, a gallon of gasoline cost 97 cents, and a group of friends met to start an effort to develop a trail on the recently abandoned Montour Railroad.

The story of the Trail's founders illustrates the importance of two old adages: "Strike while the iron is hot", and "Choose your friends wisely." Had they waited to act, the railroad corridor may not have been available. And had the group not included people with the range of skills, knowledge, and dedication necessary, they may have not been up to the task.

30 plus years later, and thanks to the continuous efforts of our volunteers, the Montour Trail is here as a great regional asset, proving two more adages: "There is strength in numbers", and "Slow and steady wins the race." We owe our success to the contributions of innumerable volunteers providing labor, skills, time, and knowledge, incrementally adding to the trail year-in and year-out.

A little more thought shows that there are lots of other old saws that apply to the Trail. Here are a few of them.

- Kindness is never wasted... *so share a warm "hello" and a helping hand with your fellow trail users – and don't forget to obey safety rules.*
- Stop and smell the roses... *or whatever else is growing along the trail.*
- He who hesitates is lost... *in thought, perhaps.*
- Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated... *One foot up, one foot down. Repeat.*
- Give someone a fish and they eat for a day. Teach someone to fish and they eat for a lifetime... *Give them a bicycle and they can get to the grocery store.*
- Dog is man's best friend... *Just look at them out there – they love being on the trail with their humans!*
- Walk a mile in my shoes... *or anyone's shoes, really. Just get out there and start walking. Probably best to stick to your own shoes.*
- The squeaky wheel gets the grease... *so take good care of your bicycle.*
- The early bird gets the worm... *So you might want to wait till a little later in the day to walk.*
- A man is known by the company he keeps... *so choose quality walking buddies.*
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush... *No, no, this one does not apply! Leave the poor birds alone!*

## Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

### MTC Board Meeting:

Every third Monday of the month - 6:00 p.m. at 304 Hickman St., Suite 3, Bridgeville, PA. Turn right off of the Bridgeville exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go straight at next light and make left turn onto Hickman St. just after the Post Office. Call the Montour Trail Office for more information or to get on the agenda.

### Airport Area Friends: (MP 0 to MP 12.6 and the 6.3 mile

**Airport Connector)** The Airport Area Friends of the Trail meet every second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Forest Grove Fire Hall, 2044 Ewings Mill Road, Robinson Township, PA 15108. New volunteers are always welcomed. Contact Mark Modispacher at 412-266-1544 for more information. Numerous "work parties" are held during the season. Please call 412-262-3748 to lend a hand at the work parties.

### Fort Cherry Friends: (MP 12.6 to MP 20.7)

Friends of the Trail meeting: Second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the McDonald Trail Station, 160 S. McDonald Street, McDonald, PA 15057 (adjacent to the Panhandle Trail). Work and cleanup parties will be scheduled as needed. For more information contact Tim Thomassy, 724-926-4617 or Chuck Hughey, 724-926-9436.

### Cecil Friends: (MP 22.0 to MP 28.5)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. From May-August, meetings are held at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil Henderson Road; other months (with the exception of November and December) meet at the MTC Offices. Work and cleanup parties are scheduled as needed. Call 412-496-4308 for more information, or email densimwx@comcast.net

### Peters Township Friends: (MP 28.5 to 30.4, Library Jct to near MP 35 and part of the Bethel Branch)

Friends of the Trail meeting, the first non-holiday Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at various locations depending

on weather and time of year.. Work and clean-up parties on the first Friday and third Saturday of every month at 8:30 am. For more information on meetings or work parties please email us at [petersfriends@montourtrail.org](mailto:petersfriends@montourtrail.org)

### Bethel Park Friends: (The 2.75 mile Bethel Branch and a short piece of main line trail around MP 35)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Caucus Room behind the Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. Work and cleanup party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 a.m. Call Bill Capp at 412-833-5928 for location and information.

### South Hills Friends: (MP 35.4 to 46.6)

Meeting second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at South Park Township Community Room or the Township Library located at the Township Building at 2675 Brownsville Road, South Park, 15129. Work and cleanup parties on the second Saturday of the month. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, [davidoyler1950@gmail.com](mailto:davidoyler1950@gmail.com), or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, [mckeownp@comcast.net](mailto:mckeownp@comcast.net)

### The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

For more information send email to [mrhs@montourrr.com](mailto:mrhs@montourrr.com).

### The Westland Friends: (MP 21.0 to 21.9, and Westland

**Branch)** Standard meeting schedule is third Thursday of the month at 1:30 PM at MTC Office in Bridgeville. During Pandemic, meetings have been moved outside to Galatit trailhead pavilion. For more information contact Dave Hajnik at 412-498-3854 (text enabled) or [dave@theneonweb.com](mailto:dave@theneonweb.com)

## Remember When

**30 Years Ago, 1992:** The first section of the Trail opens between Cecil Park and Hendersonville. This piece of trail is 4.4 miles long and features the National Tunnel

**25 Years Ago, 1997:** The longest remaining Trail gap, 2 miles between Clairton and Large is closed when MTC purchases it for \$24,000 from Dick Corporation.

**20 Years ago, 2002:** The above segment is completed in December skirting the park and ride lot at the Mon-Fayette Expressway interchange.

**15 Years Ago, 2007:** A new interactive map is added to the web site.

**10 Years Ago, 2012:** Tandem Connection opens at MP 27.1 in Hendersonville.

**5 Years Ago, 2017:** Montour Trail was named Trail of the year with many government agencies offering congratulations.





Peters Friends volunteers finish installing a bench at the Brush Run trailhead honoring all past and present MTC volunteers. The bench was donated by a Peters Township couple.

(left to right: Wayne Pfrimmer, Dick McCracken, and Mark Imgrund)



The Montour Trail maintenance crew is mounting a new resurfacing campaign mid-September through October. This operation targets that stretch of trail between mm 14.5 (Quicksilver bridge) and mm 16.6 (Ft Cherry trailhead parking lot). Please use caution in this area as heavy equipment, including graders and dump trucks, will be in use. (Thanks to Fran Hensler)



Scout Troop 1313 out of McMurray assisted John Wright (far left) of the Cecil Friends mulching the campsites. We got to all 5 campsites and used all of the mulch. Mark Modispacher arranged the mulch deliveries.



Montour Trail Christmas ornaments are back. They will be ready for order on or around Oct 15. For those who have never seen them or don't remember, they are Lenox china bicycles decorated for Christmas with "MontourTrail" written in Gold Leaf. Watch for the announcement on the website and on the Montour Trail enthusiast page on Facebook



## Board Nominees and By-Law Changes Continues from page 1

**Dennis Pfeiffer** is a retired Assistant Vice President in Telecommunications from PNC and has been volunteering with the MTC since November of 1989. Dennis served as president in 2000, 2004 & 2006, 2013 - 2014 and 2018. He founded the Engineering & Construction Committee in 2000 and led our efforts to secure the MTC Bridgeville office in 2001. Since 1993 he has been active in the Airport Area Friends and has been the project manager of numerous construction projects. His current project is completing the Coraopolis Connector; he also recently managed construction of the western corridor garage located at Milepost 5.9.

**Jim Richter** retired in 2015 after a 45-year career working with local and state non-profit organizations. He served as treasurer of the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, founding Trustee of the Bethel Park Community Foundation, and board member of the Bethel Park Soccer Association. He also is active with the Bethel Park Friends of the Trail. Jim studied Public Administration at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, English Literature at Pitt, and music education at Duquesne University. Jim has been active with the Montour Trail Council for six years and is chair of the Friends Groups Engagement and Enhancement Committee. Jim is nominated for his second term as a MTC board member.

### Proposed Changes to MTC Bylaws

The MTC Board periodically recommends modifications to MTC Bylaws. The last revisions were approved in 2018. There are four changes proposed for 2022; see the ballot for proposed language.

#### ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS, Section 2, Paragraph 2.

*Paragraph 2 enables the President, with the approval of the Executive Committee, to respond to emergency situations that may occur between monthly board meetings. The proposed revision increases the level of unbudgeted funds needed to meet the emergency to \$10,000 and makes wording changes to eliminate redundancy.*

#### ARTICLE VII – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, Section 1. Responsibility.

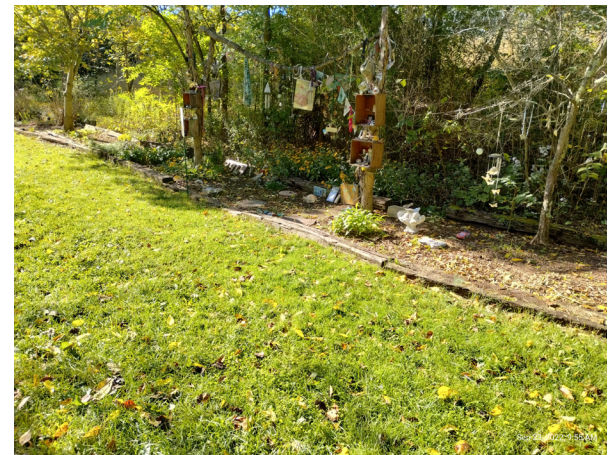
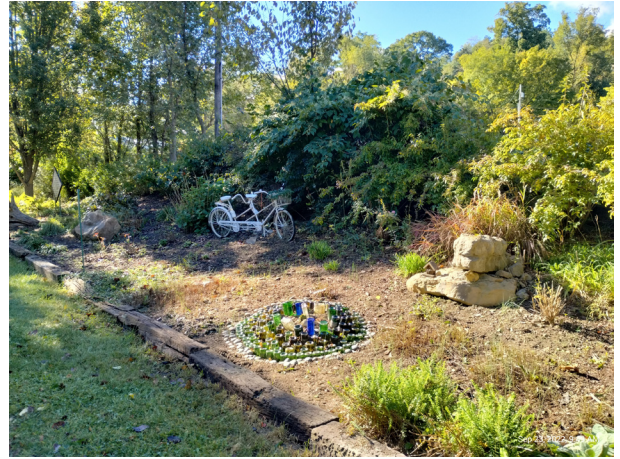
*If approved, redundant language in this paragraph would be replaced by a reference to Article VI Section 2 (see above).*

#### ARTICLE VII – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, Section 2. Composition.

*Along with the four MTC Officers, the preceding President may currently be asked to a member of the Executive Committee for the year immediately following the preceding President's term. This proposed change extends the time period beyond a single year.*

#### ARTICLE XIII – FINANCE, Section 3.

*MTC checks, drafts, notes, and other instruments of indebtedness must currently be signed by either the President or Treasurer and one other member of the Executive Committee. This requirement results in delays in processing invoices when individual Executive Committee members are unable to sign due to travel or other personal circumstances. The proposed change enables two other individuals—the Finance Committee chair and the Business Operations Manager—to co-sign these instruments.*



September weeding in Cecil. At the top , the Ghost Bike Garden was weeded by several groups of volunteers and a few members of the Cecil Friends took on the area around the Spirit Tree in the middle. Below the finished work of David Wright and Julian Wolfe who replaced the fence overtop the culvert leading to Valleybrook Country Club.



## MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

### Clinton Block Mine No. 1

**By Bryan Seip – Montour Railroad Historical Society**

The Clinton No. 1 Mine was serviced by Montour trains. It was located about two miles from Imperial on the north side of U.S. Route 30. The mine was in the area between Route 30, the Findlay Township Sports Complex, and the airport I-376 & PA 576 interchange. The Airport Connector segment of the Montour Trail runs along the east and north edges of the mine area.

The mine was owned by the Clinton Block Coal Company, which was formed and opened the mine in 1917. The Coal Company also built a tippie loading facility and the Clinton Block railroad spur to service the mine.

The Clinton Block Spur left the Montour Railroad main track a short distance west of Route 30 in Imperial (near Trail Milepost 9) and followed the North Fork of Montour Run up the west side of Route 30 to a grade crossing just south of the Burgettstown Road intersection. The old right-of-way going up to the mine is about a tenth of a mile beyond the entrance to the Findlay Township Sports Complex. Trains using the Clinton Spur (later named the Clinton Block Branch) would have to run past the switch at Clinton Block Junction and then back into the spur and shove cars up to the mine. At the time the spur was built, the Coal Company said it would run no more than six trains per day at speeds not to exceed 15 mph. Since the spur was built by the Coal Company the Montour did not own or maintain the tracks but did supply all railroad service.

With the coal seam outcropping directly onto the hillside, no vertical shafts were needed to access the coal, and Clinton No. 1 began as a drift mine with workings on both sides of Route 30. It also operated as a strip mine beginning in 1918. Underground workings primarily worked the coal to the northwest and southwest, with the stripping operations working to the northeast. With only 40 or 50 feet of overburden needing to be removed to reach the coal seam, stripping operations using a large steam shovel were economically feasible.

Information about the stripping operation in 1920 shows a large steam shovel was used to remove the overburden soil. Its digging bucket could remove 6 cubic yards in a single bite. A smaller loading shovel was used in the coal seam to dig out the coal and send it to the cleaning tippie.

The accompanying magazine ad circa 1929 touts a rebuilt tippie and cleaning facility at the mine. Coal was cleaned and processed at the mine site, and thus could be shipped directly to customers. The ad shows several Montour hopper cars being loaded at the new tippie.

Production records from the 1930's showed both deep and strip mining with coal shipped by rail and trucks. Average mine employment was 132 men with a peak of 226 in 1932 and 1940. Coal shipments declined through the 1930's and by 1941 employment was down to 68 miners in the deep mine and 17 at the strip mine. Rail shipment records end in 1940, and after that time, coal was shipped by trucks. In 1942, the mine was bought by the Union Colliery Company. It was then taken over by the Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal Company in 1944.



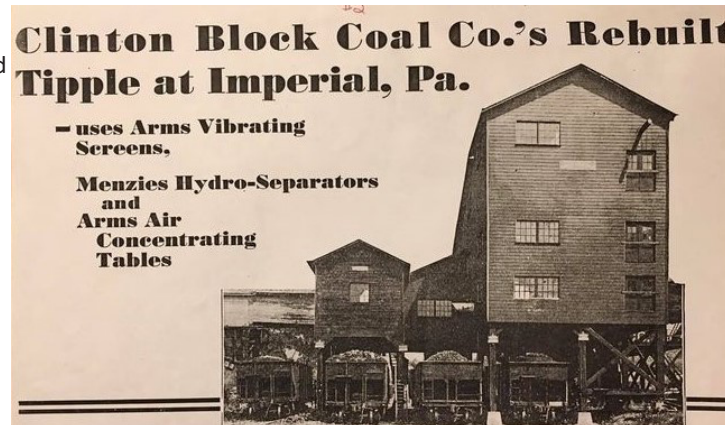
The Clinton Block Branch was also the location of a Peoples Natural Gas compressor station that used steam-driven compressors and coal-fired boilers. Coal was delivered from an adjacent mine via an inclined plane. This mine may have been privately owned as there are no records for it. There was a short railroad spur at the compressor station into the 1940's.

Thanks go to Bob Ciminell who supplied much of the original research and information about this subject.

*The original loading tippie at the Clinton #1 Mine. Left*

### Clinton Block Coal Co.'s Rebuilt Tippie at Imperial, Pa.

— uses Arms Vibrating  
Screens,  
Menzies Hydro-Separators  
and  
Arms Air  
Concentrating  
Tables



*Magazine ad circa 1929.*

*You can contact the Montour Railroad Historical Society through Facebook by searching for the Montour Railroad Historical Society. There are currently 425 members from across the country. There is a wealth of information about the Montour Railroad at this location and you can pose questions of its membership, from whom you are sure to get an answer. There is also much information at <http://www.montourrr.com>*



## I want to support the Montour Trail Council!



### Become a member now!

Go to [MontourTrail.org/help-us/join](https://MontourTrail.org/help-us/join)  
or scan the Q-R code with a smartphone



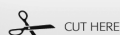
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### Annual Membership Level

- ☐ Leader's Circle.....\$500 +
- ☐ Benefactor.....\$250 - \$499
- ☐ Sustaining.....\$100 - \$249
- ☐ Supporting .....\$50 - \$99
- ☐ Family .....\$35
- ☐ Individual.....\$25
- ☐ Student/Senior.....\$15

Contribution enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**Suite #3, 2nd Floor**  
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**Bridgeville, PA 15017**

## Welcome New Members

*The Montour Trail Council welcomes these new members and thanks them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have recently renewed their membership and to remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants. Not all new members have been entered as of print deadline and will be listed in the next issue of the newsletter.*

### New Members

Terry Abbott  
Jim Albitz  
Brent Anderson  
Kelly Austin  
Melissa Baker  
AJ Ball  
Paul Bangor  
Patricia Barcik  
Ron Beck  
Jeffrey Becker  
Amy and Chuck Bemm  
Stacy Birmingham  
Ray Bishop  
Jennifer Boerio  
Kevin Boggs  
Corey Bonnell  
Jennai Boswell  
Jennifer Bouriat  
Sandra Bradley  
Jeff Brooks  
Brian Brust  
Rob Carr  
Christine Casillo  
Anthony Cassara  
Theresa Cavrak  
Sandeep Chakravarty  
John Churton  
Mark Collins  
Dan Conn  
Michele Conner  
Rita Costa  
Wendy Czap  
Cynthia Dagostino  
Stephen Davidson  
Theresa Debor  
Dylan Dominico  
Mary Jo Dukes  
Don Dulac  
Beth Dutton  
Walt Dyczewski  
Paula Dyson  
Chuck Eckenrode  
John Eddy  
James Ehrman  
Stacy Faulkner  
Tod Foster  
Mark Frumkin  
Willis Garman  
Patrick A. Goode  
Michael Granito

Stacey Gray  
Calt Grieio  
Kelly Haddad  
Tom Hall  
Dana Hammond  
Karen Harsh  
Meg & Mike Hartenstein  
Tracy Hawkins  
William Hill  
Kerry Hogan  
Aaron Hutchins  
Clayton Johnson  
Charles J. Fields Jr.  
Jack Keane  
Kurt Keller  
Matthew Kirby  
Larry Knopsnyder  
Curtis Koman  
Steve Korb  
Kirk Lamay  
Chris Lee  
Bruce Leverett  
Jeanette Lockovich  
Katy Lyness  
Joan Lyness  
Marcie Lynn  
Patty Mackey  
Mike Malloy  
Carl Maronde  
Damon Marraccini  
Glenn Mauney  
Scott McCall  
Kelly McCarthy  
Joseph McCullough  
Joyce McCutcheon  
Fran McDowell  
Krista McLachlan  
Ellie Meehl  
Lisa Meredith  
Harry Mertz  
Tim Miller  
Robert Miller  
David and Karen Morris  
Kathleen Mulcahy  
John Nagy  
Carrie O'Connell  
Bill O'Donnell  
Lester Olson  
Michael Parisi  
Jennifer Pasquale  
Larry Patts

David Pendel  
Jeff Petitto  
Michael Pfaltzgraff  
Venkata Piniseti  
Mike Platt  
Charles Punzell  
Ernie Rabatin  
Nancy Ritsko  
Jan Robbins  
David Robertson  
Brian Ryall  
Ray Sabolich  
Vijender Singh  
Bradley Skinner  
Eric Smiga  
Anne Smith  
Dana Spataro  
Jack Stanley  
David Steveson  
James Stratton  
Jeff Tapolci  
Riesha Tapolci  
Joseph Terrell  
Debra Turici  
Melissa Turk  
Mark Urso  
James Valloric  
Jill Vorhes  
John Vozel  
Bob Walman  
Ryan White  
Dwight Whittemore  
Kim Winkowski  
Shannon Wyda  
Sin Min Yap  
Jim Zanolio  
Omar Zevallos

### Benefactor

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Ed Cleary  
George M. Golvash  
Roger Hindenlang & Susan Uram  
Ed Koontz  
Linda Lawler  
Kristin Matheny  
Richard Novak  
Jerry Rubenstein  
Ryan Silvus

James Valloric  
John Wasco  
James Will  
Tina Zottola

### Leader's Circle

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Beinhauer Family Foundation  
Keith McMillen  
Jennifer Satler  
Eric Smiga

### In Memory of Caron Springer

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Shirley Bianco  
Leo T. Carlin  
Rosalie Clark  
Patricia Hughes  
Marilyn Kuehn  
Judith Ladyga  
Darlene Malzone  
G. A. Raffaele  
Jane Schoenefeldt

### In Memory of Edmund Taylor

Lance Letterio

### In Honor of Jackie Thobaben

Sibyl Mose



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