

Great Falls Rising

Monthly Newsletter

January 2022

Great Falls Rising wishes you and your family a joyful New Year despite these difficult times. We really wish things were different and that we could gather with you in person! Hopefully the new year will bring your family happiness and good health, and that in time the world will be a safe place again. Take care of yourselves and we'll see you on Zoom soon!

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER - KATIE KOTYNSKI

Having served on Neighborhood Council #5, the Great Falls Park and Recreation Board and many other local commitments, Katie Kotynski saw a need for women in our community to be empowered by getting outdoors and developing skills that would increase their enjoyment of the outdoors. Thus in 2010 she gave birth to Girls in Glacier, a group she organized, communicated with and rallied to go on excursions into the wildlands of Montana.

Whether it was snowshoeing, cross country skiing, hiking or biking, Katie planned the trips, including training, if needed. Talk about creativity and foresight! These forays were for women of all ages, from young and energetic to older and less courageous.

Many of the 120 on her list have become seasoned outdoor women. They've explored many areas in Glacier National Park, including Grinnell Glacier, Piegan Pass, Triple Divide, many hikes around Two Medicine Lake, top of the southern Chinese Wall, Prairie Reef, Waterton, and a bike ride on the Trail of the Hiawatha going into Northeast Idaho. To plan all these excursions Katie gathered with a group of her hikers to draft

Summer/Fall and Winter/Spring trips. She also recommended the equipment needed and had her own personal collection where women could borrow what they might not have.

Katie, married to Tom Kotynski, is mother of three, stepmother of two and grandmother of four. The family has always played outdoors. Katie extended this level of fun to many women who were curious about the outdoors but afraid to venture out themselves. They soon felt safe and confident in the outdoors. Katie has retired from leading Girls in Glacier and knows that many women in the Great Falls area have the knowledge, confidence and friends to continue exploring the outdoors.

Thank you, Katie, for being a committed friend and volunteer.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN GREAT FALLS; A COMMUNITY

PERSPECTIVE. On Thursday, January 20th at 6 p.m., Great Falls Rising invites you to join our Great Falls Public Schools Superintendent, Tom Moore, and Kids Education Yes (KEY) Chair, Jamie Marshall, for a presentation on public education in our local community. Information on challenges and opportunities resulting from the COVID pandemic for students, teachers and the district will be shared, including data on student achievement; impact on teachers and staff; and the use of One-Time-Only (OTO) COVID relief federal funds. The evening will conclude with the sharing of innovative opportunities currently under development for students and the community to be engaged in as we collectively strive to enhance the public education available in Great Falls.

Please join us for this important conversation. Zoom information will be forthcoming.

LEARN TO CROSS COUNTRY SKI FOR FREE! Cross Country Ski Clinic at Silver Crest Trails (Little Belt Mountains near Kings Hill Pass off HWY 89, Winter Recreation Area, follow signs to Nordic Ski Area). To be held on January 8th at 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Classic and skate ski instruction by USSA certified instructors for beginners and non-beginners. Dress in layers and bring own food and water. If you need to reserve skis and boots, call Bighorn Outdoor Specialists at (406) 453-2841. Equipment is also available at Skier's Edge (406) 727-3955. Reserve as soon as possible since

equipment is limited. Three sessions are available: 9:00 am, 11:15 am, and 1:30 pm. Donations to Silver Crest Ski Trails are welcomed. Contact Bob Boland at (406) 788-6565 or at bboland79@yahoo.com for more information.

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL TO REMEMBER THE JANUARY 6th

INSURRECTION. January 6th, 2022 marks a full year since a violent mob was incited to attack our nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C., in an attempt to overturn the results of a democratic election. As ongoing House investigative committee hearings reveal more about those responsible for the insurrection, grassroots groups across the nation are planning vigils to mark the date as a Day of Remembrance. Community and faith leaders from around Great Falls will offer prayers.

The vigil will be held at the Cascade County Courthouse Lawn, 2nd Avenue North, between 4th and 5th Streets, Great Falls, Montana, on Thursday, January 6th at 5:00 pm. Participants are asked to bring battery-operated candles to hold during the vigil, and dress warmly. The event is free and open to all, and should last no more than an hour. Contact: Melissa Smith at (406) 315-3733, MLS3STER@GMAIL.COM for more information.

CASCADE COUNTY HEALTH SYMPOSIUM. Don't miss your chance to contribute to Cascade County's next Community Health Improvement Plan. Save the date and join us!

What: "Healthy Lives, Vibrant Futures"— Cascade County Community Health Symposium

When: January 27th, 2022, 3:00–5:00 PM

Where: The Holiday Village Mall

More info coming soon. In the meantime, [RSVP to the event on Facebook](#) and share it with community members who want to help make Cascade County a healthier, more vibrant place to live!

Best regards,
Healthy Lives Vibrant Futures Steering Committee

CANDIDATE FILING FOR 2022. Candidate filing will open at 8:00 am on January 13, 2022 and closes at 5:00 pm on March 14, 2022. Statewide, State District or Legislature candidates can file online, in person at the Secretary of State's office, by mail or by fax (filing fee must be paid at the time of filing). Local candidates file with the county election office.

LAST, BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST... Mary Sheehy Moe has been a faithful citizen and friend of Great Falls for years, serving in higher education and all levels of state and local government and our local GFPS Board of Trustees, as well as many other roles. She is moving to Missoula to be closer to family, and we in Great Falls will miss her fine work, great sense of humor and her baton twirling in parades and various events. Mary Moe reminisced in a recent Great Falls Tribune article: "You never really leave a community, you take a lot with you. We're going to have some bumps ahead, but Great Falls' best days are to come," she said. "Some of us have had greater blessings than others, but we care about one another and we have our own way of doing things in our own Destiny, and I think Great Falls is going to carve out that kind of community once again."

Farewell, Mary, and thanks for being with us for so long.

Please stay safe and healthy and HAPPY NEW YEAR from Great Falls Rising.