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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 15, 2023
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Paris Gibson Committee



**Kathy Van Tighem Winner of the
14th Annual Paris Gibson Award**

Great Falls, MT – Kathy Van Tighem has dedicated her life and career to volunteering and serving her local community in Great Falls. She has won the 2023 Paris Gibson Award, which is exemplified by the vision and excellence of Great Falls' founder Paris Gibson. Former winners of the Award chose her from a list of exceptional nominees.

Kathy's exemplary career started in the mid-90s earning her BS in English Education, with a Minor in Art K-12 from Northern Montana College. She then went on to achieve her Masters of Education in Counseling and Development from Northern Montana College. This is when she found her true calling and passion in life.

Since 2000 Kathy has been a Counselor with the Great Falls Public Schools. During this time she has been involved in a wide variety of committees and leadership roles that have included but not limited to: Department Chair since 2006, Assistant Coordinator for the GFPS Crisis Team, PIR Facilitator, Collaborative Solution Committee Member, Member of the District Differentiated Diploma Committee, Leadership High School Facilitator, School Improvement Committee Member, Student Council Advisor, Crisis Prevention Intervention District Trainer, and Heisey Award School Coordinator, just to name a few.

Kathy is involved in several community service groups such as, Peace Hospice of Montana, GFPS CARE Program, Great Falls Pre-Release Center,



Darcy Lynn Dengel Foundation, Compulsive Eaters Support Group, and more. One of the most impactful and significant events that Kathy leads is Camp Francis. An annual camp for six to twelve year olds that are grieving the loss of a family member. This camp is located in the Little Belt Mountains and that features a five-day camp with volunteers spending time with the children doing a variety of activities. The camp helps the children to focus on their feelings, self-care and coping strategies. Kathy also aids the parents or guardians with what their children are going through with their grief.

“Kathy embodies the true spirit of what is the most valuable asset we can give away; our time. In today’s society where there is a metric to measure every second of our daily lives, Kathy’s impact, selfless actions, and leadership simply cannot be measured.” ~ Jeremy Smith

To be eligible for the award, selected by previous Paris Gibson Award winners, a nominee must meet the following criteria: currently a resident of Great Falls; provided significant impact to the City of Great Falls; provided leadership for the community through volunteerism; and performed selfless action for the betterment of the community. The award winner will receive a \$500 check provided by Jimmy and Debbie Filipowicz of Steel Etc, which may be given to a local charity of the winner’s choice; a tree, donated by Steve Tilleraas of Tilleraas Landscape Nursery, planted in West Bank Park in their honor, with a granite marker donated by Montana Granite; a plaque donated by Greg and Leanne Hall; a dinner for two at P. Gibson’s, donated by P. Gibson’s Sports Grill; and a ride in a 1918 Model T Ford at the Fourth of July Parade provided by Kurt Baltrusch of the Skunk Wagon Club.

Formal announcement of Kathy Van Tighem as the winner of the 2023 Paris Gibson Award will be made at the first concert of the season by the Great Falls Municipal Band at 7 p.m. at the Mansfield Convention Center on Wednesday, June 28, 2023. Susie McIntyre, Chairman of the Paris Gibson Month Celebration Committee will make the announcement. The concert is free and open to the public.

Former winners are: Doug Wicks, 2010; Norma Ashby, 2011; Greg Hall, 2012; Ian and Nancy Davidson, 2013; Gene Thayer, 2014; Bill and Joan-Nell Macfadden, 2015; Arlyne Reichert, 2016; Sheila Rice, 2017; Brad Talcott and Linda Caricaburu, 2018; Chuck and Gerry Jennings, 2019; Judy Ericksen, 2020; David and Tanya Cameron, 2021; and Bud Nicholls, 2022.

For further information about the award, contact Susie McIntyre, 406-453-0349 or Jay Russell, 406-799-8183.

