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Helena, Montana

**MONTANA PLAYWRIGHTS NETWORK RECEIVES
HUMANITIES MONTANA COVID RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDS**

The Montana Playwrights Network (MPN) has received \$10,000 through Humanities Montana's Sustaining the Humanities Through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) grant program. This rapid-response funding provides general operating support to the state's museums, historic sites, and other humanities-focused nonprofits affected by the COVID-19 health crisis.

MPN's President, Pamela Jamruszka Mencher said that "...receiving this vital support from Humanities Montana has enabled MPN to continue to offer a variety of Humanities programming in Montana's communities and in its home space, the Helena Avenue Theatre conference and performance facility located in Helena. The unique nature of our organizational mission and state-wide events bridges both the Humanities and the Arts; the critical importance of this grant funding cannot be overstated. Without this crucial support for Montana's cultural institutions like MPN from Humanities Montana and the National Endowment for the Humanities, it is doubtful that MPN would have survived the pandemic."

The funds are part of the \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus package, the American Rescue Plan, passed by Congress in March, to combat and recover from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The American Rescue Plan allotted \$135 million (.0071%) of the funds to go to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) through the Strengthening the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan Act (SHARP) initiative, approximately \$51.6 million of which was sent to fifty-six state and territorial humanities councils to redistribute to humanities nonprofit organizations in need.

The distribution of SHARP grants comes nearly a year after Humanities Montana distributed \$419,080 in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds. "The success of Humanities Montana's CARES Act grants taught us that Montana's cultural institutions are resilient and essential," Humanities Montana's executive director Randi Lynn Tanglen said.

Humanities Montana is Montana's state humanities council with a mission to serve communities through stories and conversation, offering experiences that nurture imagination and ideas by speaking to Montanans' diverse history, literature, and philosophy. Established in 1972, HM is one of fifty-six councils across the nation that the National Endowment for the Humanities created in order to better infuse the humanities directly and effectively into public life. The organization produces, funds, creates, and supports humanities-based projects and programs, eye-opening cultural experiences, and meaningful conversations.

Press Release: August 13, 2021

SHARP Grant Funding from Humanities Montana

Montana Playwrights Network

Page Two

For more information about the Montana Playwrights Network or the Helena Avenue Theatre, please go to our website at: www.Montanaplaywrights.org

The Montana Playwrights Network provides a forum focusing on Story through a variety of formats including playwriting, storytelling, poetry, history, non-fiction, essays, as well as presents workshops and conferences in Montana's communities. MPN connects with **writers, storytellers, educators, performers, theatre companies, libraries, book clubs, and businesses** interested in the philosophy and practice of Story as a way to build communities across Montana.

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