

Professional Insurance Agents

# NEWS RELEASE

For release: January 12, 2007  
Contact: Gary Wolcott, Director of Communications  
PIA Western Alliance  
888-246-4466

## PIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION CHRISTMAS STAYS LATE IN HELENA, MONTANA



Anna Cossel hands the \$1200 PIA Community Foundation check to Area IV Agency on Aging director Charles Aagenes—photo *Helena Independent Record*

It actually started during the Christmas season but a donation by the PIA Western Alliance Community Foundation to a program for Helena, Montana senior citizens will keep giving all year long.

The program is called Empty Stockings and it is administered by the Area IV Agency on Aging. They serve people age 60+ faced with significant life changes and needs due to ill health and the aging process. The PIA Community Foundation gave the program \$1200.

Community Outreach Coordinator Karen Cater administers the Empty Stockings program. “Your donation goes beyond what we have ever received in previous Empty Stocking requests,” she informed PIA staff when told Empty Stockings would receive the donation. “The community had already responded to our Christmas request quite generously but we have needs that go beyond the holiday season. This donation will help with our needs throughout the year.”

The PIA Western Alliance Board of Directors, the boards representing the nine Western States comprising the Western Alliance and the member agents of the association established a charitable foundation to donate to causes where a donation from an independent insurance agent will make a difference.

The foundation board looked through nine states before finding the Empty Stockings program in an article in Helena's daily newspaper, the ***Independent Record***. It is the perfect fit for the foundation's goals of helping our PIA independent agent members make a difference in their community.

"The individuals in Empty Stockings were asking for simple Christmas needs—needs that really touched our hearts," said Anna Cossel, PIA Montana board member, PIA Community Foundation board member and an independent agent from the Dillon, Montana office of Hub International who gave the \$1,200 check to the Empty Stockings program. "A wheelchair bound lady poet asked for a journal to write personal thoughts, another a few bath towels, wash clothes and some sugar cookies. There were others seeking such simple things as some food for their companion pets, movies for a housebound lady and more."

In other words, Empty Stockings is exactly why the PIA Community Foundation was formed. It was an opportunity for an independent insurance agent—in this case, Anna Cossel—to make a difference in a community.

Empty Stockings coordinator Karen Cater said the PIA donation more than makes a difference. "We are grateful to the PIA Community Foundation for this donation to the seniors of this area. Because of the donation, all the requests on the list can be filled and that money can continue to work through the rest of the year."