

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Missoula, Montana

### *Fourteen Montana College Students Recognized with Montana Student Volunteer Award*

On Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, fourteen Montana college and university students will be honored by the Governor's Office of Community Service and Campus Compact board for their volunteer work. From organizing Service Saturdays at MSU in Bozeman, to helping keep the Learning Center open at Blackfeet Community College, Montana college students invest time, energy, and passion into their communities. This award recognizes the civic contributions they make all year long. Montana has a long, rich history of community members stepping up and giving back, and college students are a part of that tradition.

Below are synopses of our 2022 awardees:

#### **Xavier Hawley, Aaniiih Nakoda College**

Xavier, who's in the Ecology Bachelor of Science program at ANC is not only an excellent student and role model, but has also demonstrated great leadership qualities with the Student Senate and ANC Science Bowl Team. In the spring of 2019, Xavier was inducted into ANC's Phi Theta Kappa Honor of the President's Award in recognition of his hard work and good grades. In addition, he participated in an internship at ANC's Whiteclay Immersion School working as both a mentor and basic Aaniiih language teacher. He also assisted the first graders with math and phonics and taught the second grade class basic science lessons and set up experiments to help them understand basic principles. The internship allowed him to do volunteer service teaching basic language skills to the 3 and 4-year-old classrooms of the local Head Start programs in the Fort Belknap community. Xavier believes that this has been an "amazing" opportunity, he enjoys working with children and also understands the importance of knowing and learning the Aaniiih language. Because of that internship experience, Xavier is now employed at the Immersion School working as the science teacher and continues to teach Aaniiih at the Head Start program. One of his many goals is to become a fluent speaker and continue to teach the language.

#### **Tyler Brown, Blackfeet Community College**

Tyler, a sophomore in Liberal Arts and Hydrology, has volunteered in to the college and has helped the Academic Enrichment Services Learning Center stay open during the Pandemic. Tyler assisted staff so the center could still operate while people were out sick. Tyler was a steady presence during a difficult start to the academic year, allowing the doors of the Learning Center to stay open. He is always willing to go above and beyond for the college and Academic Enrichment Department by taking the initiative to help where needed.

#### **Savannah Phillipson, Flathead Valley Community College LCC:**

Savannah, a sophomore in English Literature, interviewed veterans for an oral presentation that was then presented to the community. During the interviews she identified a very real problem that impacted these individuals. Both veterans support the VFW and the American Legion and expressed the lack of support from the community for the organizations. Savannah took to

heart this call to action and with just three weeks to plan and execute, arranged a bake sale and raffle with the proceeds going directly to the organizations. Savannah organized this fundraising event all while taking four classes, maintaining a near 4.0 GPA and supporting her four children. Promoting the event included being featured in the local newspaper, going to local businesses to gather support, and organizing a large array of baked goods from individuals willing to donate. For a solid 3 days, Savannah hosted the event at the college and raised \$3000 in proceeds. At her presentation she invited both veterans and gave them each \$1500 in hopes of helping the organizations continue to serve veterans and raise community awareness for their work.

### **Robert Franks Peterson, Dawson Community College**

Robert, a freshman in Criminal Justice at Dawson Community College, is an honorable, trustworthy, and dedicated college student who invests his time and energy in supporting others and making the college a better place. When he sees a need he takes care of it while aiding those who need his help. Shortly after arriving at DCC he joined the Cheer Squad when the coach approached him about needing strong individuals for their cheerleading stunts. He is committed to the squad and hasn't missed a practice or game except once when his baby was sick. He enjoys cooking and has cooked a few meals for his Cheer Squad. Along with some teammates, he volunteered at a community-wide event called "Dawson Days" where they did face painting and applied DCC tattoos to the kids. When he sees a need, he takes the initiative to support and help others, whether that means taking students to the hospital when they were sick or helping a classmate with school work. He also assisted with sports physicals and a vaccine clinic on campus.

### **Mark Spring, University of Montana**

Mark, a junior in Multidisciplinary Studies, has a passion for serving older members in his community, but his desire to be of service runs deeper than that. While completing an internship with the YWCA Pathways Program for his Nonprofit Administration minor, the work was intense but he saw the value the YWCA placed on their staff and volunteers. He truly committed himself to this position over three months, attending every training and counseling session offered. Notably, Mark will continue in a part-time advocacy position with the YWCA for the next two years. In addition to his work for the YWCA, Mark volunteers for the Basic Needs Committee, the University of Montana Food Pantry, the University of Montana Gerontology Society (of which he is the President and new board member), the Missoula Senior Center, and the YWCA Abuse in Later Life program.

### **Laurel Bartos, Miles Community College**

Laurel, a freshman in Education Pathways/Special Education, is very engaged within the Miles City community. She has served on the Custer County District High School board (2020-2021) and was Student Government Vice President until May 2021. She immediately got involved at Miles Community College as the President of the Student Activities Board and has helped organize multiple events to engage the students. From student club sign ups to trivia and bowling nights, domestic violence education to Reverse Trick-or-Treat, and Canned Food Drives for the Pioneer Pantry and Food bank, Laurel is always engaged. Additionally, she was elected

by her peers to serve as a Freshman Representative with the Associated Students of Miles Community College (ASMCC) Student Senate. Laurel found her academic passion by volunteering with Special Olympics Basketball in Miles City. Her experiences were so strong that she has decided to major in Special Education and is currently in the Education Pathways program at MCC. Additionally, she volunteers with the "Raising Our Community Kids Safely" (ROCKS) program which provides a safe place for children to learn, grow, and have fun. Laurel supports after school programs, crafts during the summer, Special Olympics obstacle courses, serving meals with our local soup kitchen, fishing days with Fish Wildlife and Parks, and much more.

### **Kylee Dougherty, Flathead Valley Community College**

Kylee Dougherty, a sophomore in Chemistry, was completing her sophomore year in high in the Summer of 2018 when she enrolled in FVCC's Summer Experience program. One of the requirements for the program is to complete a service project. Kylee joined FVCC staff for the Kalispell Heart Programs HEART Locker, a facility which acts as a store (open to all K-12 students) at no cost. The HEART Locker offers donated clothing, hygiene products, bedding, and school supplies. Kylee returned for a second year to help at the HEART Locker and impressed FVCC staff with her deep commitment to the community. In addition to her ongoing work with the HEART Locker, she regularly participates in FVCC's Service Saturday projects.

### **Jessica Tiry, MSU Billings**

Jessica, a sophomore in the University Honors Program/Interdisciplinary Honors Minor and Human Services, has demonstrated her dedication to volunteering in the Billings community during the past year in multiple settings. This past October, she participated with Billings Parks and Recreation annual Refresh the Rims cleanup project to help mitigate impact on the environment, and donated blood to hospitals. In November, she restored animal habitats at ZooMontana and donated lifesaving platelets. In addition, Jessica spent time with St John's United senior community to provide socialization and care.

### **Isabelle Cuthbertson, Montana State University**

Isabelle, a senior in Chemical Engineering, has led MSU's Community Engagement program for the past two academic years and has shown a tremendous dedication towards the Service Saturday program as well. She works with local organizations with an impressive professionalism and does a fantastic job of bringing student groups and campus organizations together to work on monthly service projects held on the first Saturday of each month. Isabelle is a dependable resource for community partners and students who participate in Service Saturday alike. She came into this role during an unusual year with COVID making direct service programming challenging to execute. Isabelle did so with such ease and has truly done a wonderful job creating a growing group of community partners and students that are excited to work together each month. Through her leadership this program has gained a new sense of sustainability. During her first year in this role, amid all the challenges that COVID presented, Isabelle coordinated 6 Service Saturdays with 222 unique student volunteers completing a total of 864 service hours within the community. She communicated with 13 community organizations and the volunteers she worked to recruit completed 27 projects throughout the

year. Beyond her role in community service here MSU, Isabelle is the vice president of the Rhapsody A Capella group.

#### **Hannah Johnson, Great Falls College Montana State University**

Hannah, a sophomore in Dental Hygiene, is a dedicated student and an outstanding member of the Great Falls community. As an active member of the GFC Healthy Colleges Montana Student Group, Hannah has focused on chronic disease prevention, serving as a Peer Educator to fellow college students on oral health implications and mental health benefits through an Instagram photo campaign. As an honor student in Phi Theta Kappa, Hannah finds time to deliver meals on wheels with her Dental Hygiene School Cohort, builds kids lunch packs with Great Falls Community Food Bank and continually helps to plan programming around MLK day, Global Youth Day of Service and the Great Falls College Service Saturdays Program through campus cleanups and other planned service projects.

#### **Emily Engen, University of Montana Western**

Emily, a senior in English, has been active member of Montana Western's campus community for the past four years, as well in her home community in Fort Benton. She helped write, direct, and produce two youth play productions for children aged pre-K through high school. As the director of summer reading at Chouteau County Library, she hosts crafting workshops, story time, and games for an average of fifty children every week. She also plays the clarinet in Fort Benton's Community Band each summer. On campus, Emily has supported fellow students in many ways. She worked as a writing tutor in our Learning Center for five semesters (Fall 2019-Fall 2021) and served as a mentor for incoming Freshman in Fall 2020 as part of Montana Western's First Year Experience program. Emily is also an active member of Montana Western's Honors Program and has served as Vice President of the Honors Student Association for the past three years. In addition, she has presented her work at two regional Honors conferences and has helped organize events and fundraisers.

#### **Dusti Marottek, Fort Peck Community College**

Dusti, a freshman in Education, is caring, dedicated, and compassionate. She has shown great leadership skills when engaged in activities with care and concern for the youth in need of mentorship, and the families affected by COVID 19. Dusti understands the importance of giving back to her community. She knows how significant leading and volunteering by example is, and her dedication to service inspires youth to make their community a better place.

#### **Baylie Phillips, Montana Technological University**

Baylie, a junior in Metallurgical Engineering, reached out to Montana Tech staff this fall to share a vision she had for creating a food drive after starting something similar as a student at Butte High. Within 24 hours of brainstorming conversation, she had fully developed a plan and started implementation – the project “FOOD WARS” was officially born. Baylie's goal was to collect 500 items, but in the end, she inspired 24 teams across campus to collect over 6200 items (or 4,000+ pounds) of food for five different Butte organizations. In addition to her studies, Baylie participates in Leadershape training -an intense semester-long program that

includes topics like the value of community power to make changes, while still being deeply engaged in the broader community.

She is a volunteer at Copper Ridge Health and Rehab and The Springs Assisted Living facility. Since high school she has organized groups to make tie blankets for the women and children at Safe Space, and to put together care packages for the homeless shelter. Baylie has also volunteered at every elementary school in Butte, including spending time as a reading monitor where weekly she tested students on their reading skill, as well as organizing food drives. It is with firm belief that FOOD WARS will become a tradition at Montana Tech that lasts well beyond her time on campus.

**Courtney Mitchell, Salish Kootenai College**

Courtney, a sophomore in Wildlife and Fisheries, has immersed herself in learning and experiencing new things. Over this last summer, she started playing disc golf at the SKC course on Sundays. Through this experience, staff was able to get to know more about Courtney's higher education goals, and at leagues she showed an interest in the work that the SKC Center For Prevention and Wellness was doing with food distribution and physical activities. Once the academic year began, Courtney began showing up at activities hosted by Community Health and started assisting with set up and break down of the activities every Tuesday evening during the Fall Quarter; not missing one night. She also recruited other students to participate. That experience led her to volunteering at Food Box Fridays and in turn giving time throughout the fall. She has a great attitude, greets our participants with a smile, and is a supportive team member. She lends a hand wherever she can. Courtney volunteered for the first day of the SKC Food Pantry this fall on November 19<sup>th</sup> and was vital in helping participants make their shopping list selections, packing their food, and delivering their selections to their vehicles.

*Questions?* Please cContact: Josh Vanek, Montana Campus Compact , [vanek@mtcompact.org](mailto:vanek@mtcompact.org), 406-243-5175

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