



MEDIA RELEASE

Miles Community College

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Image: Collage picture of 2021-22 George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship Recipients

Two MCC Students named Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship Recipients

MISSOULA, MONTANA - Montana Campus Compact (MTCC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2021-22 George M. Dennison Scholarship Award.

The George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship honors the legacy of students at MTCC affiliate campuses who have volunteered significant time, energy, and resources – while pursuing a degree or certificate – to projects that make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. Half of the funds for each \$1000 scholarship have been donated in memory of George M. Dennison by Jane Dennison and sons, Rick and Robert Dennison, and their families.

This year, MTCC received an exceptionally strong set of applications from affiliated campuses across Montana. The civically engaged college student applicants represent

George M. Dennison's vision of building strong, equitable, and just communities through volunteerism, civic engagement, and service. Each student's application spoke to an impressive range of service activities to address unmet needs within their communities.

"It makes me incredibly hopeful for the future of our state, country, and world that today's college students not only care so deeply but that they take action and work hard to address real issues, all while keeping up their studies," said Josh Vanek, Executive Director with Montana Campus Compact.

The following students will each be awarded this prestigious scholarship to support their studies in the spring of 2022. The Dennison family has generously donated the funds to award a total of thirteen \$1000 scholarships.

Recipients are listed in alphabetical order by institution.

Riawna Marie Gallineaux – Blackfeet Community College

"I have a lot of visions for my community, I would love a homeless shelter to be set up for our people. I would love to help get their lives in order so that they can go to college, get a job or honestly, just get help with their addiction because they are people and they have families that love and care about them, but it's hard when a loved one chooses their addiction."

Jennifer Hvizdak – Flathead Valley Community College

"Almost every time I'm out picking up trash, talking with visitors, or pulling weeds, an individual will ask me what I'm doing or a question about the area. Being able to educate them on the specific task I'm doing and how this affects larger populations of wildlife/aquatic species/vegetation gives them a sense of responsibility."

Nickolas Robert Page – Fort Peck Community Collège

"Inspiring the kids and getting them passionate about something is truly indescribable. I will continue to serve as long as there are people to help because helping just one person in need is a feeling you can't ever get enough of. All these services, large or small, have taught me the importance of service and community."

Rhea Elizabeth Smoker – Fort Peck Community College

"[I want to] help make a difference even if it's just something small right now but hopefully it'll grow and inspire others to start something good and prosperous for our youth and other generations to come. My goal is to finish school so I can help the native youth make reachable goals"

Katie Ann Maphies – Great Falls College MSU

"My vision not just for my community but for the world is that we can all come together, get along and live in peace. Some will say this is impossible but to me nothing is impossible, I have dreams, goals, and aspirations and these include spreading love, light, and positivity in this world because all these things are contagious and who is to say that it can't be done."

Elizabeth Hecker – Miles Community College

"Kids can really struggle with feeling alone or persecuted. I choose to volunteer with youth to help them learn how to interact with one another through love and kindness. I also help them to reframe the negative experiences they have into finding a positive aspect and then focusing on that instead. Choosing to see the positive as we go through life is a powerful tool that will positively ripple through a whole community."

Laurel Renae Bartos – Miles Community College

"We need to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. My current community engagement supports this vision by showing others that it doesn't take much to show others that you are living the life that you advocate for. Working in Special Education classrooms, coaching Special Olympics, showing kindness and empathy, that's all it really takes."

Gabrielle A. Bugnon – Montana State University

"My vision for my community is to create a space where those who need support are fully accepted and helped to the best of anyone's abilities. While my ultimate hope is that intimate partner violence will cease to exist, I understand that that is an impossible goal. Working with the VOICE Center and the Survivor's Fund allows me to help survivors start healing and find the support they need within the community."

Jordyn Daw – Montana State University

"My hope for my community and the world as a whole is that we, as a society, can start providing greater support for children and other communities in need such as minority communities, impoverished communities, and communities with survivors of sexual assault, violence, or anything else. Essentially, any group of people that needs just a little extra support and empowerment in order to succeed and thrive in their lives."

Meaghan Reed – Montana State University Billings

"For our campus community, I'm striving to make this feel like a welcoming, secure and safe environment by using my position as Student Activities Board Chair to put on engaging activities where others can meet a safe group and/or hang out with no fear of judgment or unease."

Susan E. Brurud – Montana State University-Northern

“My vision is to see all youth educated in community organization, policy work, and civic engagement that will help to shape them into future leaders who are engaged, confident, and informed. I would like to see a school curriculum that starts in grade school and empowers youth to lead and gives them the opportunity to serve their community, regardless of age, sex, race, or socio-economic indicators.”

Samantha Massey – University of Montana

“I was so excited to be a part of my community again after the last two years of lockdown prevented me from being as involved with the community as I would have liked. I believe in being part of the community, it’s important to understand the needs of others and have that desire to give back to your community.”

Morgan Gabrielle Duncan – University of Montana Western

“By doing these activities I have learned how to do this confidently, and no longer be scared of being a leader in a community. I think this has also helped others become more confident in participating and coming closer together as a campus community. It has been so rewarding to watch people grow new friendships because of the activities we are able to put on.”

MTCC is supported by donations of these scholarships from Jane Dennison and sons, Rick and Robert Dennison, and their families.

For more information, please contact Pete Buchanan with Campus Compact at buchanan@mtcompact.org.

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