

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Kathy Peters, 406-243-5135, [peters@mtcompact.org](mailto:peters@mtcompact.org)



**Campus Compact**  
Montana

### **George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarships Awarded to Ten Montana College Students**

(Missoula, Montana) [Montana Campus Compact](#) (MTCC), an eighteen-campus higher education network, recently announced the inaugural class of the George M. Dennison Civic Engagement Scholarship winners. The award recognizes 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 scholarship have been donated in memory of George M. Dennison by Jane Dennison and sons, Rick and Robert Dennison, and their families. George Dennison was a tireless champion of service and was the co-founder of Montana Campus Compact. The other half of each scholarship is matched by the winners' institutions.

This fall we had a highly competitive group of 36 students apply for the scholarship, each accomplishing exemplary service and making significant positive change in their institutions, communities and the world.

Following are the winners:

#### **Grace Anderson** **Senior at Montana State University** **Major: Architecture**

For the past 3 years Grace has worked with fundraising, programming and campus outreach around issues concerning substance misuse and abuse. She currently serves as chair of Montana State University's Center for Recovering Students (CRS) and has served 2 years on the Gallatin County DUI Task Force, a county commissioner appointed board tasked with the education and prevention of driving under the influence.

"Community efforts instill a sense of belonging and camaraderie in me -- that there is nothing we cannot do together, and there is nothing we must endure alone. I would not be graduating if it wasn't for CRS: the help they gave me and the purpose they handed me in a leadership role...I am inspired by the compassion and resiliency these students possess and see their successes as a necessary piece in solving a complex problem facing every college campus."

#### **Durand T. Bear Medicine** **Senior at Montana State University Northern** **Major: Community Leadership**

Durand provides guidance and leadership to youth. As a Pikuni Legacy Dancer and singer of different styles of Blackfeet dance, he exposes local and off-reservation youth to cultural diversity and practices. For youth experiencing issues with substance use or disorders, he connects them to resources available in the community. He is also a leader of the Grammy Nominated drum group, Young Grey Horse, a family group.

"I observed my grandfather speak in Glacier National Park. He educated and shared his knowledge about the Blackfeet Culture. His dedication and commitment to teaching others through storytelling...have inspired me to do the same, which I have done as a powwow singer, professional, community member and most importantly, as a father."

“As the only Native American on the Board of Behavioral Health and the Montana Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, I represent my community and all tribes as a voice.”

“I envision a community that empowers our youth, community members and the Blackfeet Tribe to live healthy through the practices of intervention, education, health & disease prevention, and cultural practices pertinent to direct care. A vision that will help them become healthy, drug free citizens in the community.”

**Kaeleigh Cain**  
**Freshman, Fort Peck Community College**

Kaeleigh has volunteered supporting blood drives and clothing drives in her community, as well as other various community engagement work on her reservation. She plans to use her education to serve her reservation through the field of medicine – especially in the areas of alcohol and drug abuse prevention and teen pregnancy prevention.

**Heidi Hohmann**  
**Junior, Carroll College**  
**Health Science/Public Health**

Heidi has volunteered the past three years as a health educator for the annual Special Olympics Montana Health Clinic, for five years with the Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service (SCRAPS), and she volunteers weekly at Bryant Elementary in the Sixth Ward in Helena, helping to build resiliency in children who have experienced the toxicity of stress through adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). In addition to being an Asian American immigrant, she will be the first in her family to graduate from a four-year college. Her future plans include working in health care internationally through the Peace Corps.

“Heidi is a great example of what Carroll College strives to instill in our students—that what we do isn’t just for school, but for life. In keeping with the ideals of George Dennison, she has invested and continues to invest her time in improving her community and making this world a better place.”

-- Gerald Schafer, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences, Carroll College

**Hannah Catherine Johnson**  
**Sophomore, Helena College**  
**Associate of Science, Double major in Public Health and Biochemistry**

Hannah’s many volunteer activities include working on initiatives through Montana Associated Students, serving on the diversity committee as an Associated Students of Helena College Student Representative, serving as an orientation leader, serving as vice president of the TRiO Club and Secretary of the Chemistry club, and being a volunteer teacher for the Creative Arts Center.

“I am very passionate about the importance and impact that two year schools can have on a student...As ASHC President, one of my main priorities is to serve the needs of HC students by working collectively with Carroll College, MSU, and UM to create better transfer pathways for students.”

**Shayla McGregor**  
**Senior, University of Montana Western**  
**Major: Elementary Education**

Shayla’s volunteer efforts include time in Peers Advocating Towards Health (PATH), a health advocacy group that aids students in making healthy and informed choices; one program implemented was titled Sex in the Dark, a program

focused on sexuality and sexual health topics. She has also been instrumental in organizing events through her roles as a Resident Assistant, a Student Senator, and a mentor in the TRIO program. Shayla has a passion for educating her peers, which gives her drive to continue to create informational programs to address the needs in her community.

“...My vision for the education system is to provide rich, authentic, and engaging experiences for individuals to come to their own thoughts and conclusions about the world.”

“As an elementary education major my career aspirations are to truly inspire my students to develop a passion for lifelong learning. I believe that the lack of education is at the core of many of the nation’s most pressing issues.”

“If I can demonstrate to my students the positive impacts continuous curiosity in the world, I can ensure that they will develop the skills needed to become lifelong learners who will work to educate themselves on issues in society well beyond their time in school. Those that ask questions and challenge the norms of society are the same that make a true impact on this world.”

### **Sophie Moon**

**Senior, University of Montana**

**Political Science & Environmental Studies**

Sophie has been a volunteer with the Montana Public Interest Research Group (MontPIRG) for all four years of college, helping to register thousands of students to vote and increasing voter turnout. She has served as the vice chair and the chair of MontPIRG’s board of directors. She has also been a volunteer with Garden City Harvest for three years and this past summer she was an intern for U.S. Senator Jon Tester.

“My experience in the public sector has inspired my vision for the nation, in which people of all communities can afford sustainable food, farm workers are seen as public servants rather than disposable labor, and the prevailing agricultural practices support a healthy environment and a competitive economy.”

“As the chair of the MontPIRG Board, I am fostering a community of student leaders who are deeply involved in the success of our organization and poised to make a difference in their communities. Further, I am learning how to build campaigns and organizations that protect our environment and foster democracy.”

“Through Garden City Harvest, I directly participated in democratizing our food system by providing low income Montana families with organic produce. As the Newman Civic Fellow for the University of Montana, I am building connections with a nation-wide network of student leaders to strategize on issues of food security and democracy.”

### **Brooklyn Olson**

**Freshman, University of Montana**

**Major: Political Science, Pre-Law, & Philosophy**

Brooklyn is a mentor through Make-A-Wish Foundation and is a past mentor with a multi-year history of volunteering with Big Brothers and Sisters as well.

“My perspective on life has already shifted becoming a part of the Make-A-Wish team. Sometimes these kids would be lucky to have my really bad days.”

“My match inspired me to become a lawyer focused on family law, which I am now pursuing. My match also changed his lifestyle. He ate better, got better grades, and put himself on a better lifestyle track. I am so happy to say I contributed to that.”

**Rebecca Stein Phipps**  
**Second Year Student, Miles Community College**  
**Major: Graphic and Web Design, with certificates in Sales & Marketing and Accounting**

BeKa is a highly-respected member of her community, known for her willingness to help out wherever she can. After several years as a volunteer with Montana Warriors on the Water, BeKa was recently elected to its Board of Directors. She is also a volunteer with Walleyes Unlimited of Montana-Jordan Chapter and previously with the Garfield County Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture.

“Volunteering my time and effort allows me to connect with others from various parts of the community (and sometimes country) that I normally wouldn't have much contact with. It's humbling to know the work within these groups sticks with the recipients for a lifetime, especially those who were struggling before.”

**Maria Azucena “Susie” Rodriguez**  
**Sophomore, Miles Community College**  
**Major: Nursing**

As a volunteer for Montana Immigrant Justice Alliance (MIJA), Susie donates her time to help bring security, hope, peace and happiness to immigrant children and families. She also teaches medical Spanish to health providers, medical technicians and nurses at her local hospital.

“I feel like I am the voice of the unspoken one”.

“I am part of a nonprofit called MIJA and I am the president to our community advisory board. We provide education, resources, legal clinics to immigrants families. We are the bridge to resources in our community.”

For more information about Campus Compact and our programs and initiatives, please visit [mtcompact.org](http://mtcompact.org)

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