



## NEWS ADVISORY

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For immediate release

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### Homeless Persons' Memorial to be Held in Missoula Dec. 21

Missoula residents will gather on the steps of the Missoula County Courthouse on Saturday, Dec. 21, the longest night of the year, at 4:30 p.m. to remember people who have died while experiencing homelessness in Missoula this year.

"People experiencing homelessness are too often pushed to the margins of our community," said Theresa Williams, coordinator of Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. "The purpose of the Homeless Persons' Memorial is to bring to the center of our community's consciousness the very people who have experienced homelessness and passed away this year. Each is someone's son, daughter, sibling or parent and will not be forgotten."

This annual ceremony will feature a reading of the names of the 22 people who have died in Missoula this past year. The names will be read by members of Missoula's Coordinated Outreach Team, joined by community leaders including Mayor John Engen, County Commissioner Josh Slotnick and City Council President Bryan von Lossberg.

Inspired by the efforts of the National Coalition for the Homeless, which has sponsored National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day every year since 1990, Missoula will join more than 150 cities and counties across the United States to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember those who have died while living without permanent homes. Events are held around the country on the longest night of the year, often outdoors during a bitterly cold evening.

Missoula's Homeless Persons' Memorial is planned by members of the At-Risk Housing Coalition. The Missoula At-Risk Housing Coalition (ARHC) is an ongoing formal task force comprised of representatives from health and human service agencies and governmental departments. ARHC

works on issues surrounding low-income housing and homelessness in Missoula and coordinates the local effort to plan and provide comprehensive services through a continuum of care model.

**Contacts for interviews:**

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