



NEWS ADVISORY

Dec. 18, 2018

For immediate release

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## Homeless Persons' Memorial Set for Dec. 21

Missoula residents will gather on the first day of winter and longest night of the year on Friday at 5:30 p.m. on the steps of the Missoula County Courthouse to remember homeless and formerly homeless Missoulians who died in the past year.

Inspired by the efforts of the National Coalition for the Homeless, which has sponsored National Homeless Persons' Memorials 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.

People in attendance at this event will include Mayor John Engen; County Commissioner Dave Strohmaier; Susan Hay Patrick, CEO of United Way of Missoula County; Theresa Williams, Coordinator of Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness; homeless advocates; service providers; homeless and formerly homeless people; religious and spiritual leaders; and concerned citizens. Building on the National Coalition's theme of "remember, hope, and heal," the event will feature a ceremonial reading of the names of the 14 people who died in the past year in Missoula.

"The causes of homelessness are complex, and the solutions will require strong community collaboration," said Theresa Williams, coordinator of Missoula's 10-Year Plan. "This memorial is a call to strengthen our resolve to work together as a community and ensure that all Missoulians have safe and stable places to call home."

Friday's event is open to the public, and news coverage is welcome. First United Methodist Church, located at 300 E. Main St, will host a warm meal directly after the memorial. People are encouraged to bring toiletries, dental care items and canned food to support local organizations that provide direct services to people experiencing homelessness.

**Missoula's event has a Facebook page found at**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1796673647242351/>.

**About Reaching Home, Missoula 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness**

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2124/Homeless-Initiatives>

**About 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.

**For interviews contact:**

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