

## Montana AmeriCorps members organize statewide Read for Peace events

*Dozens of volunteers statewide read books, lead projects in honor of King Holiday*

HELENA, MT – In observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, Montana AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps VISTA, and Senior Corps members organized Read for Peace events across the state this week, the Governor’s Office of Community Service announced today.

Ten communities in Montana participated or will participate in Read for Peace events across the state.

**“Honoring Dr. King this way gives students a chance to reflect on diversity and togetherness, and gives citizens a chance to serve others,”** Office of Community Service Director Dan Ritter said. **“Sharing the timeless messages of Dr. King with our next generation of leaders is important as we strengthen our communities through service to others.”**

In Missoula, dozens of AmeriCorps members and community volunteers read books about Dr. King to over 2,000 students through the efforts of Montana Campus Compact.

In Helena, 20 citizens, including Lt. Governor Mike Cooney, read to over 230 students at Bryant Elementary School, and led students in activities like Inequality Through Coloring and reading peace poems. Director Dan Ritter will participate with a group at Shodair Children’s Hospital on Monday, January 21, to lead students in poetry and art projects that honor Dr. King.

**“The future success of our students is dependent on positive and engaged adults who are committed to modeling peace and compassion for others,”** said Mandy Countryman, a teacher at Shodair Children’s Hospital. **“Martin Luther King Day and Read for Peace gives the students the opportunity to experience this feeling of pacifism through acts of service and volunteerism.”**

Read for Peace is just one of a host of events honoring Dr. King’s message of peace, equality, and service nationwide – for more information visit <https://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday>.

In recognition of Dr. King’s legacy of service, Congress designated the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday as a National Day of Service in 1994, and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers AmeriCorps, with leading the effort.