

**Service Never Stops**



**AmeriCorps**  
Montana

**ServeMontana Symposium**  
March 11-13, 2026 | Helena, MT  
Carroll College

**@ServeMontana**



**serve**  
**montana**

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

# Agenda - At - A - Glance

Please be on time. All plenaries, breakouts, and meals are on the Carroll College campus. You are required to participate in sessions for the whole Symposium. If you cannot attend a session, notify your program staff. Please avoid private conversations during presentations, silence cell phones and mute laptops & tablets during sessions.

<b>Wednesday, March 11   Carroll College</b>	
10:00am-11:40am	Commission on Community Service Meeting, Maronick Board Room
11:40am-12:45pm	Attendee Arrival and Check In - Carroll College Campus Center Lunch Provided - STAC Dining Hall
1:00pm-2:00pm	<b>Event kickoff and welcome - All Saint's Hall</b> <b>Sarah R. Sadowski, Director, Governor's Office of Community Service</b>
2:00pm-3:45pm	<b>Regional Networking</b>
3:45pm-4:00pm	Transition Break
4:00pm-5:00pm	<b>Tribal Plenary: Dr. Shane Doyle</b>
5:00pm-6:00pm	Dinner Provided - STAC Dining Hall
<b>Thursday, March 12</b>	
8:00am-8:30am	Attendee Arrival, coffee and light breakfast provided
8:30am-9:00am	<b>Welcome and Introductions, Governor's Office of Community Service</b>
9:00am-9:45am	<b>Meals on Wheels: Greeting Card Service Project</b>
9:45am-10:00am	AmeriCorps Member Group Photo
10:00am-10:15am	Transition Break
10:15am-11:30am	Breakout Session A
11:45am-12:30pm	Lunch Provided - STAC Dining Hall

# serve montana symposium

12:40pm-1:40pm	<b>Civic Engagement Plenary: Shannon Stober</b>
1:40pm-1:55pm	Transition Break
2:00pm-3:15pm	Breakout Session B
3:15pm-3:30pm	Transition Break
3:30pm-4:30pm	<b>Rural Plenary: Megan Torgerson, Reframing Rural</b>
4:45pm-5:30pm	Dinner Provided - STAC Dining Hall
<b>Friday, March 13</b>	
<b>DAY OF THE A - WEAR YOUR SERVICE GEAR!</b>	
8:30am-8:45am	Attendee Arrival
8:45am-9:15am	Welcome and Opening Activity: Sarah R. Sadowski
9:15am-10:30am	<b>Last Best Alumni Panel</b>
10:30am-11:20am	Brunch Provided
11:20am-11:50am	<b>Engaging with Nonprofits in Life After Service: Julie Tate, Montana Nonprofit Association</b>
11:50am-12:30pm	<b>Closing Remarks: Sarah R. Sadowski, Director, Governor's Office of Community Service</b>



See this symbol next to a presenter?  
They're an AmeriCorps Alum!



Welcome to the 17<sup>th</sup> annual ServeMontana Symposium!

The ServeMontana Symposium convenes AmeriCorps State & National, VISTA, program staff, and AmeriCorps Seniors staff from across the state. This year we are united by the belief that putting others over self and serving people and places make a real impact. While we are here together, we will connect with fellow AmeriCorps members, and gain knowledge for serving well and strengthen our ethic of service.

The 2026 ServeMontana Symposium theme AmeriCorps Montana: *Service Never Stops* honors that the act of serving and the call to serve are continuous. Service begins with each of us and extends outward, creating change that transcends a single term – it never stops. Service brings people together to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier, and encourages growth-this year and beyond!

While at the ServeMontana Symposium, be courageous and present; approach topics with curiosity. Visit with someone new and deepen existing relationships. Engage in Regional Networking and make Handmade Greeting Cards for Meals on Wheels recipients. During plenaries, breakout sessions, and group activities, take time to reflect on your role in service and our collective impact on all of Montana.

The ServeMontana Symposium is made possible with the support of professional speakers, longstanding partners, outstanding staff, and you. Your service continues the legacy of those who served before you and sets the course for others who will serve after you. Thank you for choosing to serve Montana!

### **Montana Commission on Community Service**

Morgan Turnbough, Chair, Forsyth  
Autumn Coleman, Helena  
Dawn English, Butte  
Cliff Kipp, Hungry Horse  
Becky Nelson, Great Falls  
Thomas Risberg, Great Falls  
Jim Swan, Box Elder  
Donnie Wetzels, Jr., Helena

Rob Lawler, Vice Chair, Helena  
Dylan Davids, Ex-Officio, AmeriCorps  
Zach Hawkins, Helena  
Jim Larson, Billings  
Pete Pace, Great Falls  
Jake Strissel, Lewistown  
Vicki Turner, Helena

### **Governor's Office of Community Service**

Sarah R. Sadowski, Director

Kristina Jordan, Program Officer  
Nick Bennett, Administrative Specialist

Keena Irby, Fiscal Officer  
Anastasia Matheison, Program Specialist

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## Symposium Welcome

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All Saints Hall — Wednesday, March 11th, 1pm

### **Sarah R. Sadowski, Director, Governor's Office of Community Service**



Sarah R. Sadowski is the Director for the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service (GOCS). Before her appointment by Governor Gianforte, Sarah served as the GOCS Grants Manager, overseeing AmeriCorps grants to make public funding into real results for Montana's people and places. Serving as Director is an excellent fit for Sarah as she is a two-term AmeriCorps VISTA alum, serving one year in Fairbanks, Alaska and another in Helena as a Leader with Montana Legal Services Association. Sarah is a University of Montana graduate, and a Leadership Montana Alum who has served on nonprofit boards and with local government. In her free time, Sarah might not be easily found as she enjoys exploring remote geothermic locations and climbing mountains!



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## Remarks

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### **Kristen Juras, Lieutenant Governor of Montana**

All Saints Hall — Wednesday, March 11th

Montana's Lieutenant Governor, Kristen Juras, a fourth-generation Montanan who grew up on her family's ranch near Conrad, is a wife, mother, grandmother, attorney, and public servant. Upon her election in 2020, Kristen became the second female elected Lieutenant Governor of Montana in the state's history. As an attorney in private practice in Great Falls, Juras helped farmers, ranchers, and small business owners navigate legal issues, and she provided pro bono services to clients with disabilities who confront homelessness and addiction. She graduated from the University of Montana and the University of Georgia School of Law. She taught at the University of Montana Law School for 20 years. Married since 1984, Kristen and John Juras have three sons and two grandchildren.



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## Welcome to Helena Mayor Emily Dean

All Saints Hall — Wednesday, March 11th



Emily Dean is a proud citizen of Helena where she serves the community while also advocating for kids and public education. She learned the value of public service at an early age through involvement in volunteerism and community building activities. Emily is a product of Carroll College where she was elected Student Body President and spearheaded a number of student-centered campaigns that continue to impact students' well-being. She moved to Dallas where she taught high school U.S. Government and Economics through the Teach for AmeriCorps program. Through the experiences with and of her students, Emily's deep belief in the power of education to improve opportunities and building an inclusive community was affirmed. After receiving a



Master's Degree from Southern Methodist University, Emily returned to Helena, determined to bring opportunity to our community. In addition to her role as a schoolteacher, she has served in a variety of communications and advocacy roles within government and non-profit organizations.

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## Regional Networking

All Saints Hall — Wednesday, March 11th, 2:00pm

Connect with AmeriCorps members serving in your region and share information about community, recreational opportunities, and life in Montana to give you the tools to make the most of your service term.

A crowd favorite, and a great networking opportunity whether you're just starting out or you're halfway through your service.

Led by:

Sydney Crabtree, AgCorps, Jonah Casale, Billings Metro VISTA, and a stellar team of regional facilitators!



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## **Tribal Plenary**

**Shane Doyle**

All Saints Hall — Wednesday, March 11th, 4:00pm



Dr. Shane Doyle (Apsaalooké) is a community and environmental advocate who hails from Crow Agency, Montana. Dr. Doyle currently serves as the North America Indigenous Right Relations Director for The Nature Conservancy, as well as the Executive Director of Yellowstone Peoples, an Indigenous nonprofit that supports and organizes an annual Intertribal Tipi Village event in Yellowstone Park. In his role for The Nature Conservancy, Shane works across the U.S. and Canada to support Tribal Bison Restoration on Native lands, as well as the revitalization of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Land Back to Native communities. Shane lives in

Bozeman with his wife Megkian, and their five children: Florence, Ruby, Lilian, Blake and Quannah.

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## **Service Project**

**Samara Lynde, AmeriCorps Seniors, RSVP Director**

**Rocky Mountain Development Council**

All Saints Hall — Thursday, March 12th, 9:00am

Meals on Wheels is a senior nutrition program in most communities across the country and in Montana for over 50 years. Meals on Wheels is “More Than A Meal.” Yes, they deliver a hot nutritious lunch, but it’s also about the social connection.

Helena Meals on Wheels has about 60 volunteers that deliver 250+ meals a day. These volunteers get to know the folks on their routes and friendships form. It’s a beautiful thing. Meals on Wheels serves seniors from all walks of life in countless situations, and providing a hot meal makes a big difference to the people they serve.



**AmeriCorps  
Seniors**

For this service project, attendees will make Handmade Greeting Cards to be delivered along with meals.

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## Civic Engagement Plenary

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**Shannon Stober, Jump Start Training and Development**

All Saints Hall — Thursday, March 12th, 12:40pm



Jump Start Training & Development Founder, Shannon is a nationally recognized facilitator in leadership, community building, and volunteerism. Each year she engages hundreds of people in workshops, retreats, and coaching. After finishing her degree in Colorado, Shannon served two terms with AmeriCorps VISTA here in Montana. After service, she continued with AmeriCorps in staff roles of Montana Conservation Corps Director of Programs, Montana Campus Corps Program Manager, and Governor's Office of Community Service Training Officer. She is known for her energy, character, and humor. Shannon will lead a civic engagement plenary, *This Year and Beyond: Becoming a Lifelong Change-*



*maker*. Participants will discover the ways civic engagement takes shape and the different roles people play in communities, understanding how each of us shows up, actions we're drawn to, and ways we contribute. Participants will gain a sense of place in the ecosystem of change, and lifelong engagement with impact.

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## Rural Plenary

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**Megan Torgerson, Reframing Rural**

All Saints Halls — Thursday, March 12th, 3:30pm

Megan Torgerson is a writer, farmers' daughter and podcast producer from the windswept Great Plains of Dagmar, MT. In 2019, she founded her award-winning documentary podcast Reframing Rural while an arts leadership MFA student at Seattle University. Reframing Rural's mission is to celebrate culture, preserve history and cultivate curiosity and conversation across geographic, class and cultural divides. Megan earned her BA in English with a creative nonfiction emphasis from the University of Montana. She then moved to Portland, Oregon where she worked for the nonprofit Northwest Documentary. Since returning to her home state in 2023, Megan has lent her knowledge of rural spaces, storytelling and nonprofit management to media projects, needs assessments, lectures and educational courses for



organizations including the Red Ants Pants Foundation, Montana Farmers Union and MSU Extension. Megan will lead us in a session titled *Against All Odds: Remaining Resilient in Rural MT*.

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## AmeriCorps Alumni Panel

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All Saints Hall — Friday, March 13th, 9:15am

The act of serving and the call to serve are continuous, and they extend beyond an AmeriCorps service term. In this session, we will hear from a panel of AmeriCorps Montana alumni about their unique journeys through service and into life after.

Panelists will share their insights on national service and discuss how their experiences helped shape who they are today.

This session is presented in partnership with the Montana Last Best Alumni Council.

The Montana Last Best Alums Council (LBAC) is the official AmeriCorps alumni group of Montana. The purpose of the LBAC is to advance and strengthen the core tenets of AmeriCorps service in Montana, providing a post-service voice for alumni from all AmeriCorps streams of service (NCCC, State/National, Seniors, VISTA) and for participants from all Montana AmeriCorps programs.

Visit [lastbestalums.com](http://lastbestalums.com) for more information.

Find us on  Montana Last Best Alumni



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## Closing Plenary

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**Julie Tate, Montana Nonprofit Association**

All Saints Hall — Friday, March 13th, 11:20am

Want to stay involved in community-oriented work after your service year? There is an entire sector devoted to the public good! From career opportunities to volunteer experiences to leadership development, the nonprofit world can help you find the intersection between your skills, your passion, and the community you care about.

Montana Nonprofit Association's mission is to provide leadership for Montana's nonprofit sector and partner with charitable nonprofits to promote a sustainable, networked, and influential sector. Visit [mtnonprofit.org/](http://mtnonprofit.org/)

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## Concurrent Breakout Session A

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Thursday, March 12th, 10:15am-11:30am

### **Serving Montana: Learning from Others to Accelerate Your Impact**

**Sarah Cawley, Great Falls Public Library | O'Connell 101**

Learning how to make real impact in communities when you may be new can be difficult. How do you curate lasting relationships, build authentic connections, and not start from scratch every time? Through stories, interactive discussion, and practical tools, participants will learn how to identify and engage community leaders, partner agencies, and local experts; ways to build trust and communicate clearly with community members; what “community-driven impact” looks like in practice and ways to elevate your own experiences; and strategies for sustaining partnerships that remain after your service term ends.

### **Creating a Life of Purpose Using Design Thinking and Multipotentiality**

**Jonah Casale, Billings Metro VISTA member, Native American Development Corporation | O'Connell 102**

AmeriCorps members often face the question: What comes next? This session examines career exploration through the lens of multipotentiality — the idea, coined by Emilie Wapnick, that people with diverse interests and skills can thrive by weaving them together. Drawing on design thinking concepts from *Designing Your Life* (by Dave Evans & Bill Burnett) and career coaching from *Refuse to Choose* (by Barbara Sher), participants will learn practical tools for designing fulfilling careers that honor their many passions. Through interactive exercises, reflection, and discussion, attendees will discover how service experiences can be stepping stones toward a life where “Service Never Stops.”

### **Our Journey to Becoming a Worthy Ancestor**

**Mike Jetty, Office of Public Instruction | O'Connell 106**

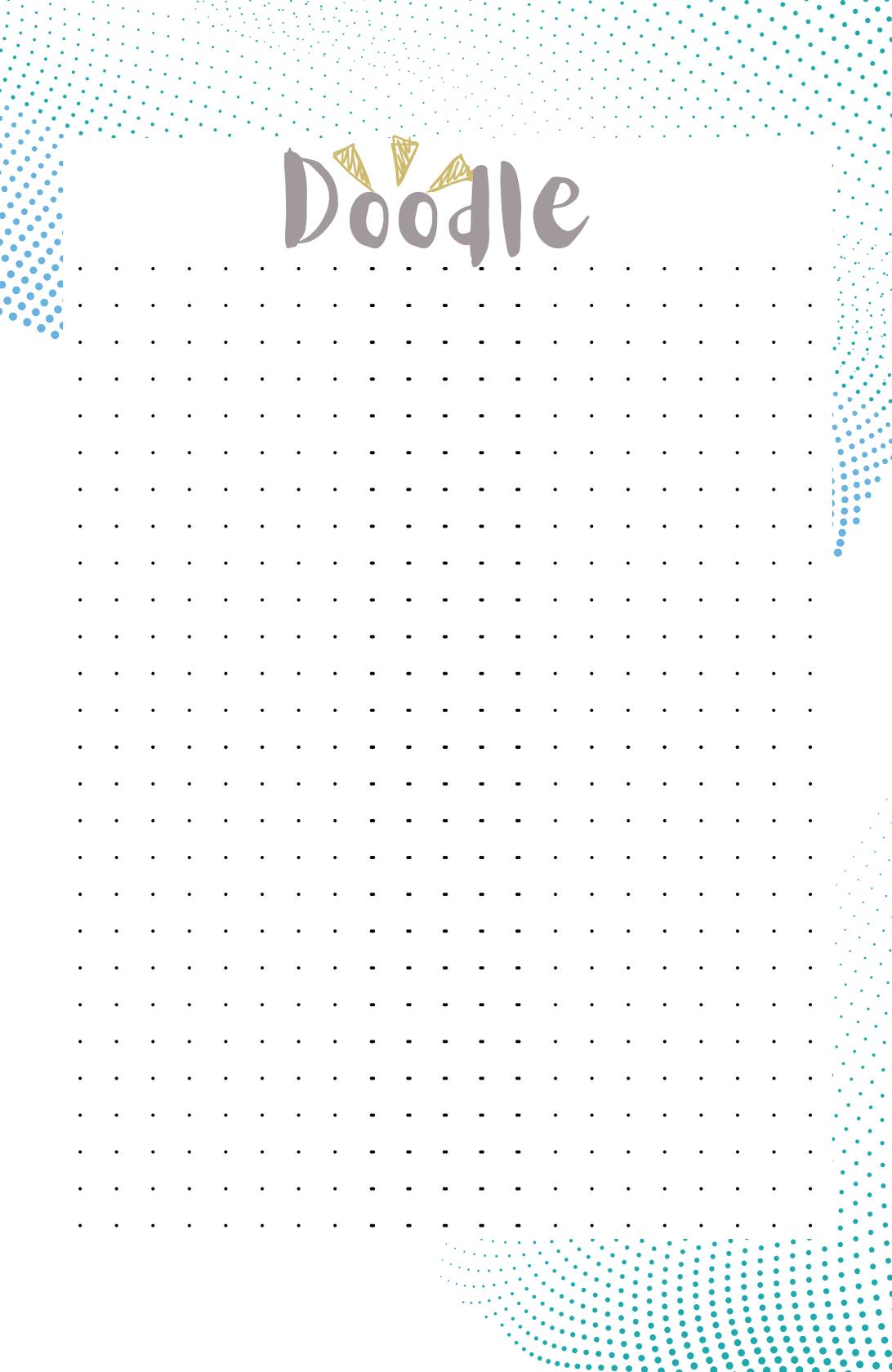
Someday, we will all be an ancestor. What kind of legacy are we going to leave for our descendants? How did we help to make the world a better place? In this session, participants will grow in their knowledge of the histories, cultures, and sovereignty of the First Nations People in Montana and how who we are today impacts the future.

### **Real Talk on How to Recruit, Retain, and Recognize Volunteers**

**Samara Lynde, Rocky Mountain Development Council | Siena**

A panel of experienced volunteers and volunteer managers will discuss strategies on creating and managing a successful volunteer program. Learn how a meaningful and engaging volunteer program can spark a passion for service that never stops. We will provide practical tips, examples, and a Q&A session.





# Doodle

A large grid of small dots for doodling.

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## Concurrent Breakout Session B

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Thursday, March 12th, 2:00pm-3:15pm

### **Public and Private Service to Promote Civic Engagement** **Hon. Brian Morris, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court, District of Montana** **O'Connell 101**

Judge Morris will discuss different pathways people can take through public service and the private sector, and how to use those pathways to promote civic engagement, shape our communities, and develop future generations.

### **Historic Helpers: Drawing Inspiration from Great Montanans** **Darby Bramble, Montana Historical Society | O'Connell 102**

See your service through the lens of history to realize you are joining the ranks of diverse changemakers who brought hope, dedication, grit, and care to shape the Montana we know today. By looking back at the unique Montana stories of Mary Fields, Chief Earl Old Person, Frances Vanderberg and Mike Mansfield, we realize we walk in the footsteps of greatness. With each example, we will explore the elements of service embodied by these great Montanans and wrap up with a call to action.



### **Lessons in Life and Leadership from a Project Manager** **Autumn Coleman, Department of Nature Resources and Conservation** **O'Connell 106**

How do we blend emotional intelligence with scope, schedule and budget to manage successful projects? In this presentation, you will hear stories from a project manager with 25 years experience that will help you understand the importance of soft skills such as communication, leadership, relationship building, negotiation and adaptability that go into succeeding as a project manager.



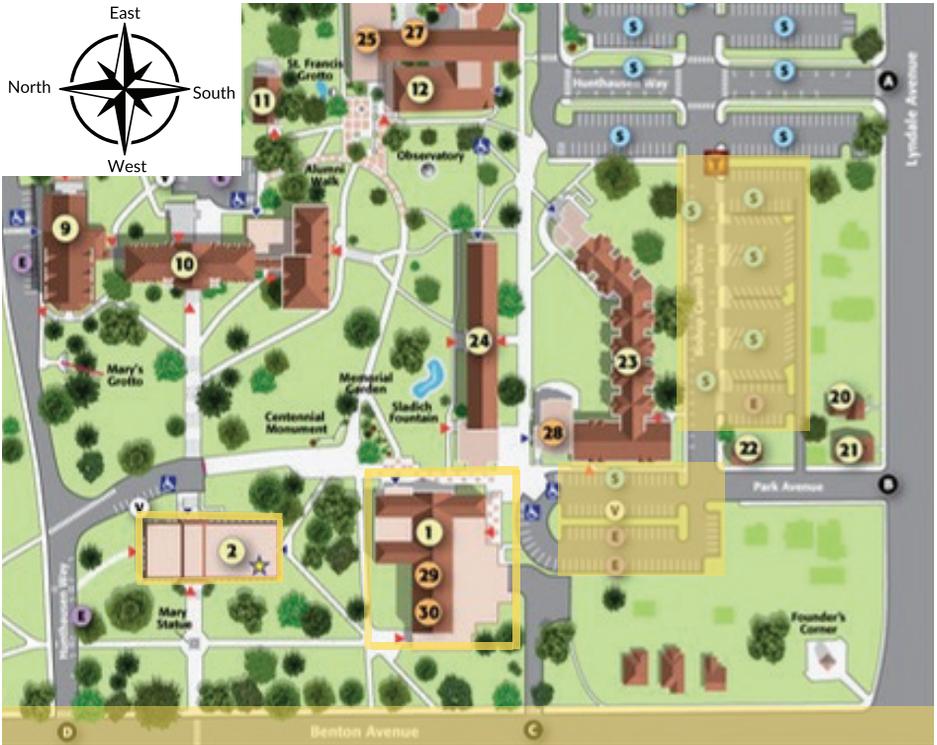
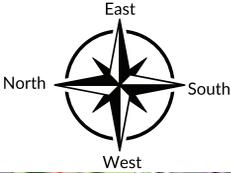
### **Stopping While in Service** **Lizzi Juda, Turning the Wheel Missoula | Siena**

In this movement-based session, we will explore in ways to incorporate tools for self-care, self-awareness and self-expression into your life of service through a playful and embodied manner.





# Carroll College



- Please park in lots South of buildings 1 and 23, or along Benton Ave (highlighted areas).
- Plenaries are at All Saints Hall in the Campus Center (1)
- Breakout sessions will take place at O’Connell Hall (2) and All Saints Hall in the Campus Center (1) (yellow outlined areas).
- Lunches and dinner provided in the STAC Dining Hall at the Campus Center (29).



**Carroll College is a tobacco free campus.**



# AmeriCorps Montana

## AmeriCorps State

### Montana AgCorps

The Montana Department of Agriculture AmeriCorps members assist the department and partner organizations in growing program services that benefit the agricultural community into the future. A sustainable AgCorps provides hands-on experience in natural resources and agriculture alongside field experts, exposes members to career opportunities, and fosters relationships with organizations and stakeholder groups. [agr.mt.gov/AgCorps](http://agr.mt.gov/AgCorps)



### Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC)

BSWC AmeriCorps members serve statewide to improve at-risk ecosystems at the headwaters of our nation's greatest rivers and mobilize community volunteers to restore America's Great Outdoors. BSWC is a partnership with the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Montana Conservation Corps, and the Montana Watershed Coordination Council. [mtcorps.org/joinmcc/individual-placement-programs/big-sky-watershed-corps.html](http://mtcorps.org/joinmcc/individual-placement-programs/big-sky-watershed-corps.html)

### Community Health Corps Montana (CHCM)

The Montana Office of Rural Health and Area Health Education Center (MORH/AHEC) at Montana State University works to improve community health by enhancing healthcare access. CHCM members foster collaboration between communities and academic institutions, address health disparities, and promote sustainable health behaviors. [healthinfo.montana.edu/chcm/](http://healthinfo.montana.edu/chcm/)



### Fish, Wildlife and Parks AmeriCorps (FWP)

FWP AmeriCorps promotes healthy, active, and environmentally aware communities by enhancing park land, providing interpretive programs, building volunteer capacity, and strengthening community outreach. [fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/employment/ameriCorps](http://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/employment/ameriCorps)

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### **Justice for Montanans Project (JFM)**

Montana Legal Services Association's Justice for Montanans AmeriCorps Project empowers low to moderate income Montanans to advocate for their legal rights

and increase access to justice. Members expand intake, help attorneys with case management, develop outreach materials and presentations, help survivors of domestic violence access services, and more. [mtlsa.org/ameri-corps-state-justice/](http://mtlsa.org/ameri-corps-state-justice/)

## **AmeriCorps Planning Grantees**

### **MONTANA CAMPUS NETWORK FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

intervention can result in improved educational outcomes for students.

[mtengage.org/ameri-corps/ameri-corpsinfo/](http://mtengage.org/ameri-corps/ameri-corpsinfo/)

### **Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement (MCNCE)**

During the planning period, MCNCE will explore whether and how an AmeriCorps'

### **Montana State Library**

During the planning period, the Montana State Library will explore whether and how an AmeriCorps' intervention can result in increasing the Library's capacity to support

research-based literacy activities that improve reading scores for Montana children.

[msl.mt.gov/libraries/lifelonglearning/](http://msl.mt.gov/libraries/lifelonglearning/)



## **AmeriCorps Seniors**



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AmeriCorps Seniors engages adults 55+ into service across three programs, Foster Grandparents, RSVP, and Senior Companions. In Montana, 2,330 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers served in schools and community organizations to support students, seniors living independently, and a variety of direct service activities.

<https://ameri-corps.gov/serve/ameri-corps-seniors>

## AmeriCorps National Directs

### **Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest (JVCNW)**

JVCNW engages AmeriCorps members to serve in solidarity with high need communities. Most serve in rural towns to boost educational achievement among Native children—others serve in domestic violence shelters, mental health clinics, and other localities. JVCNW serves, examines, and acts upon the causes of social and environmental injustice, to promote peace, and to build a spirit of togetherness. [jvcnorthwest.org/](http://jvcnorthwest.org/)



### **Montana Conservation Corps (MCC)**

MCC brings people together to serve on outdoor conservation projects as a route to develop as leaders and citizens. Over the past 30+ years MCC has established a program that uses the power of service and the crew dynamic to mobilize a new generation. MCC annually engages hundreds of AmeriCorps members to live, learn, and serve outdoors while improving trails and habitat. [mtcorps.org/joinmcc/open-positions/](http://mtcorps.org/joinmcc/open-positions/)



## AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA)

### **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP)**

BMVP is The City of Billings' AmeriCorps VISTA Project. VISTA members serve with passion and commitment to mobilize resources and give people in poverty the tools they need to help themselves. [billingsmt.gov/1442/Billings-Metro-VISTA-Project](http://billingsmt.gov/1442/Billings-Metro-VISTA-Project)



### **MONTANA CAMPUS NETWORK FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement (MCNCE) VISTA**  
MCNCE VISTA serves from Montana college campuses and in partnership with community and faith-based organizations, nonprofits and schools. MCNCE VISTA serves closely with community groups to address poverty problems involving housing, school performance, and hunger and to connect campus resources with community needs. [mtengage.org/ameriCorps/ameriCorpsinfo/](http://mtengage.org/ameriCorps/ameriCorpsinfo/)

To learn more about these programs, visit:  
[serve.mt.gov/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-programs](http://serve.mt.gov/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-programs)



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## Looking at serving another term?

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Montana offers a variety of opportunities for you to continue your service, ranging from legal service to education and conservation efforts. If you're looking for a new experience, consider trying a different program. The service you've already done has significantly impacted many lives across our great state. While the effects may not be immediately visible, your efforts will undoubtedly resonate in the long term. ServeMontana appreciates alumni who wish to return for another term. By coming back, you'll not only contribute further to your community, but also enhance your personal and professional growth while earning another Education Award. Who knows, you might even discover your true passion during your second term.



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# Thank you!

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The 17th Annual ServeMontana Symposium was possible with the support of our partners, program staff, Lieutenant Governor Kristin Juras, Mayor Emily Dean, Carroll College, Shane Doyle, Samara Lynde, Shannon Stober, Megan Torgerson, Julie Tate, the AmeriCorps Regional Office, and many more.

A special thanks goes to the ServeMontana Symposium Planning Committee — Elizabeth Carroll, FWP; Jonah Casale, BMVP; Norah Catlin, JFM; Aidan Cessor, JFM; Sydney Crabtree, AgCorps; Emma Koster, JFM; Jade Merriman, CHCM; Adair Peach, JFM; Shayla Utzinger, BSWC; Averie Wheatly, AgCorps; and Bryan Wilson, BSWC.

Finally, thanks to all of you, the AmeriCorps and VISTA members who serve Montana and Get Things Done!





Connect with us!



@ServeMontana

Use the hashtags:

#AmeriCorpsWeek

#MadeinAmeriCorps

#GetThingsDone

#ServeMT



Symposium Feedback Survey!

Feedback from previous years has shaped the Symposium into what it is today.

Use the QR code and provide thoughtful and constructive feedback on how we can make next year even better!

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