

MONTANA INNOCENCE PROJECT

Fall Newsletter

Join the Montana Innocence Project for Wrongful Conviction Day

This Saturday marks the Eighth Annual International [Wrongful Conviction Day](#), a day to raise awareness about the causes and remedies of wrongful conviction and to recognize the tremendous personal, social, and emotional costs for directly impacted people and their families. This year, the Montana Innocence Project will recognize Wrongful Conviction Day with three virtual events happening on **Friday, October 1**. We hope you will join us!

The Fight Continues for Katie Garding

A conversation about fighting for exoneration with MTIP Legal Director Caiti Carpenter and MTIP client Katie Garding

When: October 1, noon – 1 p.m. Mountain Time

Where: Zoom

Meeting

link: <https://umontana.zoom.us/j/97955036079?pwd=Q0xOVVFTN3RsaForcEILUTByN2tXdz09>

Meeting ID: 979 5503 6079

Meeting password: 243533

Shining a Light on Re-Entry and Compensation

Panel about issues of re-entry and compensation, including MTIP freed client Dave Wilkes, Welcome Back Community Organizer Benny Lacayo, and Social Worker Jenea Buhler

When: October 1, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. Mountain Time

Where: Zoom

Meeting

link: <https://umontana.zoom.us/j/99394553616?pwd=Ky81QmhWc3VZTFZORDIzajd4c3RZZz09>

Meeting ID: 993 9455 3616

Meeting password: 747509

The Fight Continues for Justice and Accountability

Virtual rally in partnership with the Montana chapter of the Black Law Students Association featuring speakers about justice and accountability plus live entertainment. The lineup includes: an opening song provided by Shawn White Grass & Brittany Hunter; and musical performances by Rob Garding, singer/songwriter and MTIP client Katie Garding's dad; and Missoula-based singer/songwriter, Lee Rizzo. Speakers include: Rep. Kim Abbott; Appellate Defender, Moses Okeyo; and keynote speaker Eldena Bear Don't Walk, Regional Deputy Defender for the Office of the Public Defender Region 3.

When: October 1, 6 – 7 p.m. Mountain Time

Where: Zoom Webinar

Webinar

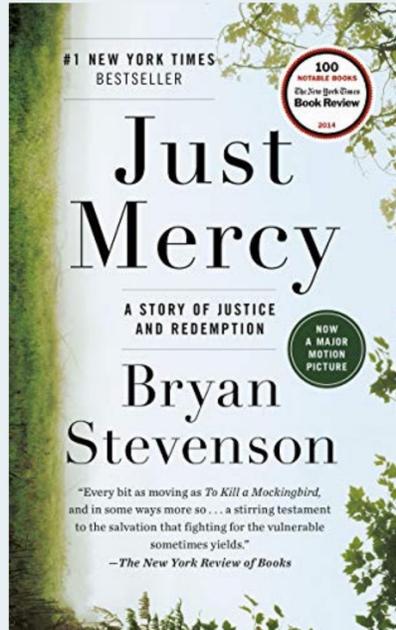
link: <https://umontana.zoom.us/j/94468467378?pwd=cWtvSINDOWdlldzhheVIGa3hQU0oyZz09>

Webinar ID: 944 6846 7378

Webinar password: 280660

Virtual Book Club: Bryan Stevenson's 'Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption'

Montana Innocence Project Virtual Book Club



Book Selection: Bryan Stevenson's "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption"

Available for purchase at Missoula independent bookstore Shakespeare and Co.

October 29

3 - 4 p.m.

Zoom Meeting ID: 983 5106

1834

Zoom Meeting Password:

190602

The Montana Innocence Project will host a virtual book club on October 29 from 3 - 4 p.m. over Zoom. The book selection is Bryan Stevenson's "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption."

"Just Mercy" tells the story of the founding of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1989. Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer who recently graduated Harvard Law School when he opened EJI and, with a small staff, took on the criminal legal system in the state with the highest death sentencing and execution rates. "Just Mercy" highlights the organizations work in the early days through their representation of Walter McMillian who was on death row for a murder he did not commit.

The book is available for purchase at the Missoula independent bookstore [Shakespeare and Co.](#) You can also purchase "Just Mercy" through the EJI's website at justmercy.eji.org. It was adapted into a film in 2019 starring Micheal B. Jordan and Jamie Foxx, which you can access at www.justmercyfilm.com.

When: October 29, 3-4 p.m. Mountain Time

Where: Zoom
Zoom Meeting

Link: https://umontana.zoom.us/j/98351061834?pwd=Wk1BRHF5bGhwTzB4Z1INNfVQ_UjhDdz09

Zoom Meeting ID: 983 5106 1834

Zoom Meeting Password: 190602

Meet our Fall Semester Students

Rebecca Shaw



So excited to start my journey with the Montana Innocence Project! As a 3L law student at ABII School of Law at the University of Montana, I'm thankful for the opportunity to do meaningful and important work for MTIP.

I've always had a heart for people that need legal assistance and don't have access. The criminal justice system is so complex that navigating it can seem overwhelming for anyone, especially those who are wrongfully convicted. Imagine how slowly time passes for those wrongfully imprisoned. Days turn into weeks, weeks turn into months, and months turn into years, awaiting assistance and exhausting appeals. The outside world continues on, seasons change, children grow up, parents age, and hopelessness sinks

in. There's so many steps in the process to right a wrongful conviction, I'm sure at times it seems impossible.

The best part about working for Montana Innocence Project is that I know it is possible. Through hours of difficult and meticulous teamwork, progress can be made towards righting the wrongs and allowing the truth to prevail. My goal with the Montana Innocence Project is to help those wrongfully convicted and give them hope in the process, no matter how long it takes.

Bri Langley



Hello, my name is Bridgette Langley, but please call me Bri. It is my great privilege to be working with the team at the Montana Innocence Project this year as a practicum student. I am currently a senior in the social work program at the University of Montana. My focus is macro social work, specifically regarding the criminal justice system. Therefore, I was drawn to the MTIP's mission. Working to ensure social justice is not only my profession's core value but is deeply personal for me.

It would be an understatement to say that the criminal justice system is broken. The issues are complex and daunting. Therefore, I have tailored my education around these issues in several ways. By studying issues with substances and best support practices for individuals with substance use disorders in the Licensed Addiction Counselor (LAC)

pathway program, I have knowledge of one of the core issues facing many individuals in our criminal justice system. In researching the growing body of work by Matthew Epperson on the grand challenge of social work to end mass incarceration by promoting smart decarceration, I am aware of current efforts in reformation. In addition to this, I am also a pre-law student.

Currently, I am in the process of applying to the University of Tennessee-Knoxville's one-year advanced standing accelerated Master of Science in Social Work in Organizational Leadership with a certificate in veterinary social work at the Nashville campus. As Katie Garding's involvement with the Prison PAWS program proves, animals have a healing power and I want to ensure that animals remain a positive aspect in our criminal justice system. Ultimately, Vanderbilt Law's George Barrett social justice program will round out my formal education. My hope is to include the Tennessee Innocence Project in my adventures in Nashville as I don't see my professional involvement in the Innocence network ending.

Outside of my educational and professional realm, I am the mother of a smart, creative, and outgoing little girl named Alexis. She started Kindergarten this year at the local Spanish immersion elementary school. Together we enjoy hiking, playing at the park, all amusement park rides, and reading chapter books at bedtime. In any spare time, you will find me watching documentaries, listening to my favorite podcasts (shout out to Wrongful Conviction with Jason Flom!), sewing/crafting, cheering on one of my favorite sports teams, reading, or writing.

I am excited for a year of growth professionally and personally that comes from being involved in an organization such as MTIP.