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Creating a more just and inclusive society.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EmpowerMT to launch youth empowerment campaign at 8th annual Diversity Day celebration on April 15th.

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Missoula, MT - 8-years ago a group of EmpowerMT youth helped to lead the charge for Missoula to become the first city in Montana to include LGBTQ people in their Non-Discrimination Ordinance. Every year since then EmpowerMT's youth leaders have planned the Diversity Day celebration for the second Saturday of April to celebrate this milestone for diversity in Missoula and to showcase youth leaders in our community. This year's celebration will be held April 15th at the Missoula Senior Center (705 S. Higgins Ave) starting at 6pm.

This year's Diversity Day celebrations will feature Marita Growing Thunder talking about missing and murdered Indigenous Women and a performance by local hip hop artists Deegz & Tahjbo. In addition, youth from EmpowerMT's after school clubs, Empowering People Inspiring Change (EPIC) that are run at three area middle schools and three area elementary schools, will unveil their annual community action projects.

This year is special because EmpowerMT will be launching a three week advocacy and fundraising campaign to educate the public about issues facing youth and to raise money to continue to empower youth to create change in our community.

"EmpowerMT's youth played a big part in getting Missoula's LGBTQ Non-Discrimination Ordinance passed," says Jamar Galbreath, EmpowerMT's Youth Programs Coordinator. "While we celebrate this victory we wanted to tell the stories of how youth are making an impact in our community right now."

"There are two big issues our youth are working on right now," added Alston Crudup, EmpowerMT's Youth Programs Facilitator. "Last night 350 people under the age of 18 did not have a home in Montana and 55% of students who have attempted suicide have been bullied in the past 12 months. Our youth want to educate the public about teen homelessness and teen suicide, and talk about what they are doing to address these issues."

The Empowering Youth Campaign will start at Diversity Day, April 15th and run until May 5th when Missoula Gives concludes. Each week of the campaign, EmpowerMT youth leaders will educate the public online and in the community about teen suicide, teen homelessness and what actions they are taking to address these issues. The campaign will include the following highlights:

- **Diversity Day:** April 15th starting at 6pm at the Missoula Senior Center (705 S. Higgins Ave)
- **Empowering Youth Campaign:** April 15 to May 5 online at tinyurl.com/empoweryouthmt or on social media:
 - Facebook: @empowermt
 - Twitter & Instagram: @empower_mt
- **Teen Sleep-Out on Youth Homelessness:** April 28th starting at 7pm at Holy Spirit Episcopal Church (130 S. 6th St E.)
- **Missoula Gives:** May 4 & 5 online at <https://www.missoulagives.org/organizations/empowermt>