



MEDIA RELEASE

Miles Community College • 2715 Dickinson Street • Miles City, MT 59301

1-800-541-9281 • milescc.edu • mccnews@milescc.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, December 6, 2024



IMAGE: Montana Athletes in Service Recipient Walker Bennett (right) with MT Governor Greg Gianforte (left)

MCC Student Recognized with Service Award

BOZEMAN, MONTANA: Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement, a seventeen-campus higher education network that includes Miles Community College, honored student-athletes from across the state of Montana for their outstanding community service work at the 2024 Brawl of the Wild Football Game in Bozeman.

Each year MTCC recognizes one student-athlete from each affiliate campus with the Montana Athlete in Service (MAIS) Award. Representing Miles Community College on the list of recipients is MCC Pioneer Baseball team member Walker Bennett.

Bennett is from Helena and is currently a second-year student. He serves as President of the Associated Students of Miles Community College (ASMCC) and as a Resident Assistant in the residence halls on campus.

Recipients of this award have dedicated their efforts to serving the community while also pursuing their college degrees/certificates and participating in college athletics. These students demonstrate leadership extending beyond the field/court/arena by balancing the demands of their sport, academic pursuits, and personal commitments.

"This award has meant so much to me," stated Bennett. "It's so nice to get recognition for work I've done in the community."

As an engaged student and athlete, Bennett has helped with a variety of events on campus including Fall Carnival Night, which is held over Halloween each year and sees over 500 area school-aged children on campus for carnival-style games and treats.

Bennett also helps develop resources for the food pantry on campus and organizes opportunities for fellow students to support the local Special Olympics organization through fundraising and games.

Through his long list of volunteer work, Bennett has found the most joy in giving back to the local community through after-school programs held for elementary-aged children.

"It's been so much fun volunteering for the Miles City ROCKS (Raising Our Community Kids Safely) after-school program," stated Bennett. "It's so fun to see the kids get involved with role models who can influence them to make good decisions as they grow up."

Growing up as a child who experienced a similar program with an older student role model, Bennett remembers how special it was to have someone there for him.

"It meant a lot to have someone to look up to and who encouraged me daily," he said fondly of his time with his 'Big Buddy'. "It's so cool to see where I've come from and how they want to do the same things I did back then. I love being able to give that same feeling back to these kids."

Bennett has also contributed throughout his college career through other projects like children's reading programs focused on imagination and physical activities such as youth baseball camps that inspire the younger generations to stay active and creative. He actively participates in other service projects with the help of his baseball team, including offering moving services and yardwork free to the public.

Bennett is also an active member of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society at MCC, upholding strong standards in both academic areas and community service.

For Bennett, giving back is just a way of life. "It's how I was raised," he commented. "I just want to help make a difference."

2024 Montana Athletes in Service Awardees:

- Jay Beagle (University of Montana, Track and Field)
- Walker Bennett (Miles Community College, Baseball)
- Zack Blaszak (Montana State University Billings, Baseball)
- Gracey Carter (Montana State University, Track and Field)
- Abraham Chentnik (Flathead Valley Community College, Logger Sports)
- Abby Clark (Montana Technological University, Volleyball and Track and Field)
- Jaiden Dulin (Dawson Community College, Volleyball)
- Emily Feller (Montana State University-Northern, Volleyball)
- Kaylee Fritz (University of Montana Western, Volleyball)
- Tamika Guardipee (Salish Kootenai College, Basketball)
- Geordy Medicine Cloud (Fort Peck Community College, Basketball and Cross Country)
- Hunter Peck (Carroll College, Football)

To learn more about the MAIS Award, the details of a student's service, and the Campus Network for Civic Engagement, visit mtengage.org.

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