

Billings Gazette

Gazette Opinion: Montana teens set for March Against Meth

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Corrections officer for five years at the Montana Women's Prison, Rita Giebink saw the devastation that methamphetamine caused in the lives of addicts who were incarcerated and separated from their children.

"The vast majority of inmates used; so did their partners," Geibink says. "We gotta do something for the next generation."

So this Billings mom and former mental-health worker volunteered with the Montana Meth Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping youth from using meth even once.

"It's about getting the word out," says Meth Project volunteer Brittany Larsen, a Rocky Mountain College freshman majoring in exercise and sports science.

"When people see the reality of what meth does, it gets them talking, it helps raise awareness," says Steve Wells, president of the West High Key Club.

At a drug prevention assembly at West High, Wells recalls, the speaker asked who knew someone affected by meth. "I think the whole gym stood up," Wells says, adding that he has a friend whose brother committed suicide while using meth and another friend who grew up without her father, a meth addict who was in prison.

All volunteers for the Montana Meth Project have a story about why they want to fight methamphetamine. On Feb. 16 at the Montana Capitol, all those volunteers and stories will come together for the March Against Meth. Plans call for busing teen volunteers from all over Montana to Helena High School, where they will have lunch before marching to the Capitol.

Wells, Larsen and other student volunteers across the state are registering march participants and gathering signatures on petitions asking state officials to continue funding to support the Montana Meth Project.

If meth has hurt you or someone you know, the March Against Meth is an opportunity to fight back. The march takes place on Presidents Day, when many students will be out of school. For more information, please check the box below.

[more info](#)

Get involved

Sign up for the March Against Meth at MarchAgainstMeth.org or sign up with the march volunteer coordinator at your school. Participants will receive free hoodies and bus transportation from Billings and other Montana cities to Helena for the Feb. 16 march. Events start at 11 a.m. with a party and food at Helena High School gym, the march to the Capitol and back to Helena High, an after-party with music, food and prizes at the school before buses leave to take students home at 2 p.m. There is no cost to

participate, but parents must sign the form giving their students permission to be in the march. For more information statewide, call 888-366-6384.

The registration deadline is Feb. 2.

Teens may also register for the March Against Meth at Friday's hockey game between the Billings Bulls and Cody. Games and prizes related to the anti-meth campaign will be offered between periods.

Billings March Against Meth volunteer coordinator Rita Giebink, who can be reached by phone at 321-4216, is available to speak to youth groups about the event.