



September 23, 2019

Sovereign Bodies Institute Stands with Justice for Kaysera

As a collective dedicated to ending gender and sexual violence against Indigenous peoples, Sovereign Bodies Institute is extending our full support to efforts to fight for justice for Kaysera Stops Pretty Places. Kaysera was a Northern Cheyenne, Crow, and Mandan, Hidatsa, & Arikara high school student, who was well loved and had a bright future ahead of her. She was found deceased in Hardin, Montana on August 29, five days after going missing.

Kaysera is one of seven Indigenous women and girls that has gone missing or been murdered in Hardin, and one of 134 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls of Montana logged in SBI's MMIW Database. Like Kaysera, over one third of those women and girls went missing or were killed off of tribal lands.

Kaysera's case highlights the need for law enforcement across jurisdictions, including county sheriffs and city police, to develop cultural competency, strong working relationships with tribal communities and relevant agencies, and protocols and systems of support for Indigenous families who lose a woman or girl to violence. This is especially true of Bighorn County and the Hardin area, where Kaysera was found. Bighorn County has 27 documented cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and nearly half of the cases that occurred in Hardin remain unsolved.

While there is no community in Montana that is not affected by this violence, Bighorn County is an epicenter of MMIWG cases. We are asking our relatives, communities, and partners to stand alongside us and Kaysera's family in demanding justice for Kaysera, and in demanding that meaningful action is taken to address the crisis of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Bighorn County. This includes closing cases like Kaysera's and bringing perpetrators to justice, and creating and implementing a plan of action that reduces gender violence targeting Indigenous women and girls, and enhances their safety. We believe this cannot happen without inter-agency coordination, including coordination with victims' tribal nations. The safety and sovereignty of Indigenous women and girls will continue to be undermined as long as their nations' sovereignty goes un-respected.

We at SBI stand in prayer and in solidarity with Kaysera's loved ones and tribal nations as they fight for justice for her. We call on Bighorn County Sheriff to work with Kaysera's family and nations in a good way, and stand ready to support all involved with Kaysera's case.

Annita Lucchesi
Executive Director
Sovereign Bodies Institute