

March to End the Madness Press Release

The united poor people of Bloomington are marching to end the madness.

The city of Bloomington and Indiana University — through recent [police actions](#), harmful policies including the [failure to pass Ordinance 21-06](#) and [expensive housing developments](#) — have demonstrated their disdain for the city's poor and homeless.

They have criminalized our fellow citizens' daily struggle for life through their actions and policies. It is madness for the city and IU to be profiting from the March Madness tournament while they fail to address the livelihood of a growing poor and unhoused population.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the city has demonstrated its disdain for its poor residents. They have evicted encampments — against CDC guidelines — and threatened public health. Meanwhile, IU increases the salaries of coaching staff while paying graduate student workers starvation wages. Now, Bloomington and the university host a basketball tournament which promises to increase COVID-19 cases.

This is madness.

As community leaders, it is our duty to force a reckoning with this reality. Our demonstration will expose a system that perpetuates poverty and criminalizes the poor. We hope to provide a counternarrative against the callous language and cruel action the city directs at people who are experiencing homelessness.

The crushing weight of these policies fall heavily, and even fatally, on the poor and unhoused. Our dear friend J.T. Vanderburg was evicted from Seminary Square on December 14 and 10 days later — without a tent after being forcefully removed from the park — [froze to death](#). We see this not just as a tragedy, but as a trend in Bloomington.

Painfully aware of the dire consequences of inaction, an ordinance aimed at decriminalizing sleeping in the park was put before Bloomington's city council. They responded, "Wait" and voted it down.

We refuse to continue scraping together funds for funerals while the city continues the waiting game they've played for decades. As the city and university ignore the problem, the number of unhoused citizens will grow dramatically at the end of the eviction moratorium and the closing of an "emergency" winter shelter.

This crisis does not disappear with the freezing temperatures. It only deepens. The city's actions are morally indefensible, economically untenable and politically preposterous.

However, our city and university choose to focus on a different kind of madness this month — one that invites a flood of sports fans and money to fill the stadium, the restaurants and Bloomington’s hotels.

Faced with a Moral Madness that has gone on far too long, and will persist far beyond the month of March, we invite you to join us in solidarity.

On March 18 and 19 at Dunn Meadow, join us to learn with impacted leaders as we educate, mobilize, agitate and organize. On March 20, join us at Dunn Meadow at 10:15 am, or digitally via Facebook Livestream, as we “March to End the Madness.”

Schedule of Events

March 18 (10:00 am to 8:00 pm) at Dunn Meadow: “Mobilize” - Show up, sing out, help out, listen and learn. The injustice of homelessness and its causes through testimonials and teach-ins in Dunn Meadow paired with public education efforts on Kirkwood.

March 19 (10:00 am to 8:00 pm) at Dunn Meadow: “Organize” - Education and solidarity against injustice workshops.

March 20 (begins at 10:00 am) at Dunn Meadow: “Agitate” - A march to end the madness beginning at Dunn Meadow.

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