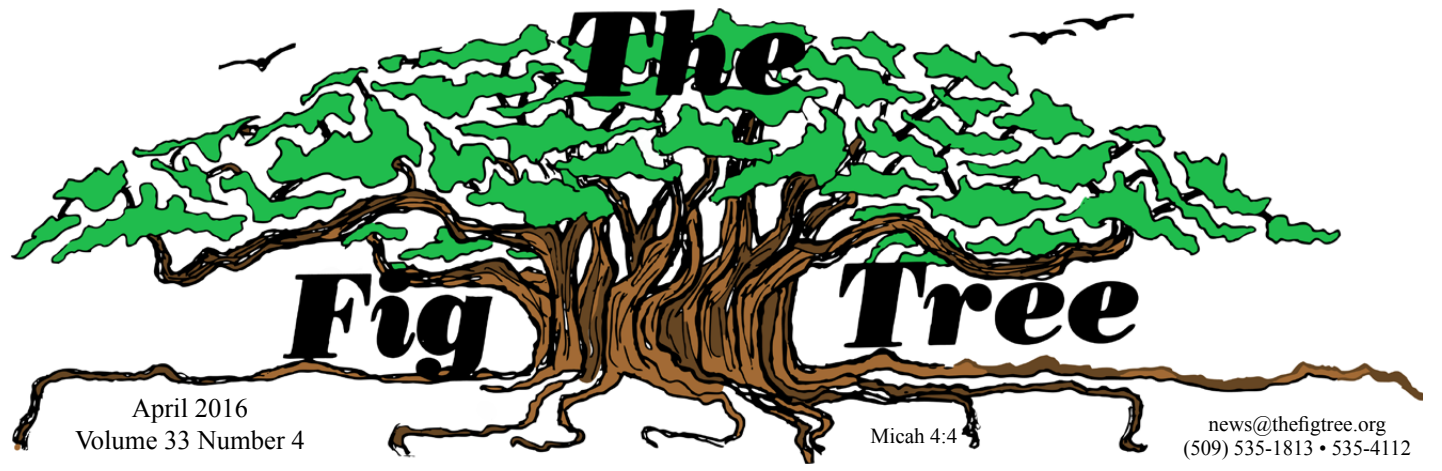


32ND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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FEATURES 48 EVENTS



Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest online at www.thefigtree.org • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links

Farmers' markets open access to food

By Mary Stamp

From March to early May, Food for All is growing 10,000 seedlings for 20 varieties of vegetables, 14 flowers and one fruit. For every seedling sold online, a plant will be given for a community garden or plant-a-row food bank garden.

The plants will be started in an 18-by-32-foot greenhouse built last fall behind the low-income Summit View Apartments at 820 N. Summit with a grant from the City of Spokane.

Pickup days for the buy-one-supply-one plant starter program are Mothers Day on May 8 and on May 14.

Food for All started on one-third of an acre donated in 2002 for the Vinegar Flats Community Garden of St. Margaret's Shelter. It became an independent nonprofit two years ago with the farm, borrowed greenhouse space and advocacy for food access.

Whitney Jacques, the Food for All farmer for eight years, and Jesuit Volunteer Elizabeth Murphy, who works with Food for All's Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, described the program in a recent interview.

"On the farm, five minutes from downtown, we can hear birds and



Elizabeth Murphy and Whitney Jacques prepare to plant seedlings in greenhouse.

coyotes," said Whitney. "The farm grows nearly 3,000 pounds of produce.

For the plant sale, she did research during the winter about regionally appropriate starts.

"We offer vegetables and flowers, because gardens need flowers to draw bees and beneficial insects," Whitney said.

Leftover plant starts will be sold at the Hillyard Farmers Market, where Food for All will market its produce this year. It has helped that market for two years. Previously, Food for All helped establish the West Central and Emerson Garfield farmers' markets. They begin farmers' markets in low-income neighborhoods. When they are successful they move on.

This summer, the West Central market will be a farm stand for Project Hope. The Emerson Garfield market is doing well, she said.

To increase access of low-income people to fresh produce and to support local growers, Elizabeth has sent \$40 checks to 1,000 low-income seniors for them to use to buy fruits, vegetables and honey.

She does activity tables to engage children at farmers' markets and gives them \$2 in Fresh Bucks

Continued on page 4

Inland Northwest communities hold educational events for Earth Week

Earth Day Festival Spokane 2016 will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 23, at Riverfront Park by the fountain on Spokane Falls Blvd.

The mission is to raise environmental awareness, celebrate the planet and its natural resources, and promote sustainable, healthy living for people, said coordinator Amanda Parrish, watershed director with The Lands Council.

There will be food, music, vendors and more, including the Procession of the Species, in which children and adults use recycled materials to make masks to wear

or dress up as their favorite animal species. The parade begins at 2:30 p.m., near the craft booth in the Gondola Meadows.

Since 2007, the Lands Council has helped plan Earth Day.

For information, call 209-2408, email aparrish@landscouncil.org or check for updates on the Facebook event listing.

Gonzaga University is planning Earth Week events with Rock the Planet from 3 to 7 p.m., Friday, April 22, at the Foley Quad.

For information, email kobrien6@zagmail.gonzaga.edu.

In addition, Downtown Spo-

kane Partnership is organizing "Clean the Core" the week before with businesses and employees cleaning downtown. They will display what they collected at their Earth Day booth.

For information email lizh@downtownspokane.net.

The Coeur d'Alene Earth Day Fair, "Trees for the Earth," from noon to 3 p.m., Sunday, April 24, at the Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front, will include flash mob yoga, a birds of prey demonstration, a fun run, plus music, arts and crafts, educational booths, poetry reading and a T-shirt design contest.

Organizers for the Kootenai Environmental Alliance say it's a day to learn how to take steps to protect and preserve the environment 365 days a year.

For information, call 208-667-9093, email kea@kealliance.org or visit <http://kealliance.org/earth-day-fair/>.

The Idaho Conservation League announces an Earth Day screening of the film, "Love Thy Nature," from 10 p.m., Friday, April 22, to

Continued on page 3

Sikh community hosts open house on April 24

The Sikh Temple of Spokane in Greenacres is planning an open house from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sunday, April 24, at 1420 N. Barker Rd.

Subarna Nagra, spokeswoman for the Sikh Temple, said they seeking an opportunity to invite and educate the community.

On April 14 they celebrates the founding in 1699 of the Khalsa Sikh order, a community who dedicated their lives to serve others and pursue justice.

Cleanup following the recent break-in and vandalism is mostly done, but the temple is waiting for replacement of holy items, such as its sacred text, to come from India, said Subarna, who has a consulting business around diversity.

"It has been painful, but we are not victims," she said. "It's unfortunate that the break-in and destruction happened, but we are picking up and educating the world."

Subarna said the Sikh community has been uplifted by the financial, moral and spiritual support of community and faith leaders, coming to be in solidarity the day after an intruder vandalized the worship space the night of Wednesday, March 2.

Several came with home carpet shampooers to clean the carpets. The Interfaith Council set up a GoFundMe site that raised \$8,200 from 200 people in about 20 days.

Governor Jay Inslee has recently reached out to express his support for and partnership with the Sikh as the community heals.

Members of Sikh communities all over the world have contacted the Spokane temple to express their admiration with how the group has responded with grace and respect.

For information, call 892-3799 or email subarnaflouranagra@gmail.com.

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Religion News Briefs

Around the World

World Council of Churches News, PO Box 2100
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Brazil's water is plentiful, but access is limited

On the world scale of countries with plentiful water, Brazil comes out in the top league. It has 12 percent of the world's fresh water supplies, but Magali do Nascimento Cunha, communications professor at the Methodist University in São Paulo does not see her country scoring so well in water and sanitation distribution. São Paulo, the city with the world's 12th biggest population, exemplifies challenges in her country. As in so many other places, the poor suffer.

"For the high number of poor Brazilians living in urban slums, or favelas, and in rural areas, there is insufficient access to piped water or sanitation," said Magali, who spoke recently in Jerusalem at a meeting of the International Reference Group of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

Seven Weeks for Water, a Lenten campaign on water justice, focused on Palestine, where a poorer population does not have access to the same quality of water as Israel.

In Brazil, with a population of 204 million people out of Latin America's 600 million, many need water, "but there is also a scarcity of water in the northeast of Brazil, showing the inequalities that exist between north and south in Brazil."

About 20 million people or one-third of the rural population of Brazil have no access to basic services such as safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, says the Global Water Partnership (GWP).

The National Health Foundation reported that in 2007 only 28 percent of the rural population was connected to a drinking water supply and the connection to a sewage system was 22 percent.

"Brazilian state water companies offer their services to urban areas and do not include rural and small communities as objects of their business," says GWP.

Magali also said, "We have a long way to go to having water justice in our country. There are problems for many poor with the prices they pay for water being exacerbated by privatization."

Surrounded by water, Tonga can't take it for granted

In Tonga there is a lot of water to see, but not necessarily a lot for people to use.

Mele'ana Puloka, a member of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, is a World Council of Churches president for the Pacific, living on the islands that have a population of about 106,000. Space is tight on the 7288-square-mile Pacific Ocean Kingdom of Tonga.

Mele'ana, who heads education for the Methodist Church in Tonga, grew up on the islands with their pristine beaches at a time that the availability of water was taken for granted.

"I grew up in towns most of the time. We were used to running water and did not think when we used it," she said.

The Polynesian islands are remote, a two-hour flight from New Zealand.

"One day I went home and the water had run out," Puloka recounted from Bethlehem, where water is also a justice issue.

She could not turn on the shower, but had to wash sparingly with cups of water.

"It made me realize, we have to use this precious resource carefully and with prudence," said Puloka.

Water distribution can depend on wealth and that is why water justice is a key issue in both Tonga and Palestine, she said, referring to the WCC's Lenten campaign on water.

The World Health Organization reports that ensuring a regular supply of safe water is particularly complicated for small Pacific island states such as Tonga.

"There is a reduced number of possible fresh water sources, over extraction of groundwater and changing weather patterns and rising sea levels," says WHO. The region also faces the potential of salt water intrusion into its fresh water.

WCC campaign Seven Weeks for Water: www.oikoumene.org/7-weeks-for-water.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

CROP Walk plans local T-shirt designs

Walkers for the 2016 CROP Hunger Walk will gather at noon Sunday, May 15, at the Spokane Community College (SCC) Lair, 1810 N. Greene St., for entertainment and recognitions.

This year there will be new, locally designed T-shirts.

The walk is raising funds locally for Family Promise of Spokane

and Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels, and nationally for Church World Service's global development projects.

Walkers may bring canned goods for the Spokane Community College Food Pantry for Students.

The walk, which will begin at 1:30 p.m., will be on the Spokane Community College campus,

rather than the Centennial Trail along the Spokane River.

Organizers Randy Goss and Madelyn Bafus said the changes were made to avoid the costs of permits and portable restrooms, and to reduce the need for volunteers at water stations.

For information, call 468-4099 or email goss301@gmail.com.

Our Kids: Our Business events are April 13

The 10th Annual Our Kids Our Business Luncheon and Training is from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 13, at the Integra Ballroom in the Spokane Convention Center.

The luncheon speaker is author Jonathan Kozol, who has worked 50 years among poor, vulnerable children. His books include *Death at an Early Age* and *Savage*

Inequalities.

The training from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. with Kent Hoffman, co-founder of Circle of Security International, will focus on working with homeless youth, attachment theory, strategies and intervention.

Jonathan will also talk at a 5 to 7 p.m. reception sponsored by Priority Spokane.

Our Kids Our Business is a co-

alition of child advocates and the public education arm of the Spokane Prevention Of Child Abuse/Neglect (SPO-CAN) Council formed in 1987.

The Our Kids: Our Business Call to Action began in April 2007 to raise awareness during Child Abuse Prevention Month.

For information, call 475-7841 or visit ourkidsourbusiness.org.

Project Hope plans 'Growing Hope' benefit

"Growing Hope," a fundraiser for Project Hope Spokane will be from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Sunday, April 24, at the Kendall Yards Welcome Center, 1335 W. Summit Pkwy.

Project Hope provides activities

that teach youth from ages 14 to 18 the values of employment and positive contributions they can make to improve their neighborhood. The fundraiser includes silent and live auctions, and an-

nouncement of a new endeavor to train and employ more youth.

For information, call 724-0139, email james@projecthopespokane.org or visit projecthopespokane.org.

UN Association holds event on Model UN

The United Nations Association of Spokane will meet at 6 p.m., Tuesday, April 26, in Jepson Room 111 at Gonzaga University, before a 7 p.m. presentation in Jepson's Wolff Auditorium by Gonzaga Model UN students on

conferences in Portland and New York. The UNA and the Gonzaga University Center for Global Engagement are sponsoring the presentation.

Stacy Taninchev, president of the Spokane UNA chapter, invites

current and past members, and people interested in becoming members of the United Nations Association to discuss the future of the Spokane Chapter of UNA.

For information, email taninchev@gonzaga.edu.

Center for Organizational Reform sets series

The 2016 Center for Organizational Reform (COR) Summer Series will be offered June 13 to 17, and 20 to 24 at 1100 W. 6th Ave.

The workshops, five focusing on individuals and five on organi-

zations, will address "Confronting Overload and Depletion - Finding a Better Way."

The series will look at individual and organizational overload, or lack of "bandwidth," helping

people learn how to increase bandwidth, and discover ways they can increase their capability to withstand ongoing stresses.

For information, call 380-3363 or email drcfreehan@gmail.com.

YWCA hosts Courageous Conversation

The YWCA of Spokane will host a Courageous Conversation for Stand Against Racism Day from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Friday, April 29, at the YWCA, 930 N. Monroe.

A diverse panel will engage participants in dialogue on "How Communities Are Impacted When Public Officials Normalize Hate." Stand Against Racism promotes

the YWCA mission to eliminate racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary.

For information, call 789-9289 or email terim@ywcaspokane.org.

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Help us end hunger - one step at a time

Sunday, May 15

To register, come at noon to the Spokane Community College Lair. There will be entertainment and prizes for churches and individuals that raise the most

1:30 p.m.
 Walk on campus

To participate, contact Randy Goss 468-4099 - goss301@gmail.com

KYRS hosts Amy Goodman of Democracy Now!

KYRS will present "Democracy Now! 20 Years Covering the Movements Changing America" with Amy Goodman at 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 4, at Lewis and Clark High School Auditorium, 521 W. 4th Ave. The event, a benefit for KYRS, will include a pre-event reception with Amy, said Lupito Flores, station manager of KYRS, Thin Air Community Radio at 88.1 and 92.3 FM.

Amy will share insights from her new book on the TV and radio news program she founded, and on movements and heroes who have moved democracy forward, said Lupito.

In 1996 Amy began hosting "Democracy Now!" on Pacifica Radio to focus on issues and movements ignored by corporate media. Today it is the largest public media collaboration in the U.S., broadcasting on more than 1,400 public TV and radio stations worldwide, with millions accessing it online at democracynow.org. For information, call 747-3012 or visit kyrs.org.

Ashley Judd is YWCA's 2016 luncheon speaker

Ashley Judd, actress, author and social advocate, will be the speaker at the YWCA Spokane's 2016 Woman of Achievement IMPACT Luncheon on Friday, Oct. 7, at the Davenport Grand Hotel, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

Known for her movies and as the daughter and sister of country singers Naomi and Wynonna, Ashley is also a humanitarian worker and activist. She has spoken on issues including coal mining in the southeast, youth with AIDS, alleviating poverty, supporting social justice and educating girls worldwide.

In her memoir *All That Is Bitter and Sweet*, Ashley details how she was led into humanitarian work and making a difference.

Over 33 years, YWCA of Spokane has honored more than 200 women for leadership in their professional work and community service. In May, the YWCA will call for nominations. For information, call 789-9304 or visit www.ywcaspokane.org.

Professor offers sessions on 'Understanding Islam'

Shannon Dunn, assistant professor of religious studies at Gonzaga University, is leading two sessions on "Understanding Islam" 7 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesdays, April 13 and 20, at St. Joseph Church in Otis Orchards, 4521 N. Arden Rd.

Given that Islam is the world's second largest religion with a more than a billion followers, one-fifth of humanity, she believes it is important to know about Islam and Muslim beliefs, and to strive for mutual understanding.

She will give historical background on Islam, discuss continuities and similarities of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and address current fear and anger. Shannon, who has a master's degree from Claremont School of Theology and a doctoral degree from Florida State University, teaches comparative Islamic and Christian ethics, gender and religion, and violence.

For information, call 926-7133 or email info@stjoeeparish.org.

Citizenship Day offers preparation for citizenship

St. Ann's Catholic Church, Quiroga Law Office, PLLC, and Eastern Washington University English as a Second Language Endorsement Program are sponsoring a Citizenship Day from 1 to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 23, at St. Ann's Parish, 2120 E. First Ave.

Volunteers, who speak English, Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin, will help people complete the citizenship application and prepare for the citizenship exam, said Greg Cunningham, senior paralegal with Quiroga. Immigrants will learn about the English, history and civics sections of the exam, and strategies to study on their own. Organizers will address fear some immigrants feel in the midst of growing nativist and anti-immigrant sentiments among a few segments of the population, he said.

"New citizens see the upcoming elections as an opportunity to have their voices heard," he said. "We will help citizens and immigrants register to vote." For information, call 927-3840 or email greg@quirogalawoffice.com.

Compassion Games will be held April 16 to 24

The Compassion Games: Survival of the Kindest presents "Love this Place! Serve the Earth!" Week April 16-24.

Organizer Joan Broeckling encourages people to start thinking now about how they might "play" in this nine-day global challenge to inspire acts of love, service and compassion toward Mother Earth and all life. Players propose

fun, creative ways to develop regenerative practices that celebrate life's interconnectivity and cultivate responsibility to restore the Earth for seven generations, according to the sign-up page at <http://compassiongames.org>.

Joan invites people to post ideas on the One Peace Many Paths Facebook page.

One Peace Many Paths will

have a booth at Earth Day on Saturday, April 23, at Riverfront Park. The booth will have a "compassion for the earth" challenge activity for all ages.

Compassion Games include doing random acts of kindness or service projects, recording the number of volunteers, hours served, people served and money raised for local or global causes.

Council sets Meet the Baha'i Neighbors

The Interfaith Council's Meet the Neighbors in April will be with the Baha'i from 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, April 21, at the Marie Antoinette Room of the Davenport Hotel. In that room, Queen Marie of Romania shared Baha'i teachings with people in Spokane in October 1926.

Baha'i teachings were first

introduced in May 1908 in West Central Spokane by a woman traveling by train around the United States, said Skyler Oberst, president of the Interfaith Council.

The council will hold its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, April 30, at the Spark Center, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy., to review accomplishments, discuss issues,

decide future activities and elect board members.

At 2 p.m., Saturday, May 28, the council is planning Meet the Buddhist Neighbors at the Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry, and are arranging a visit to Sravasti Abbey near Newport.

For information, call 360-989-8217 or email r.s.oberst@gmail.com.

Region's communities host Earth Day/Week events

Continued from page 1
12:30 a.m. Saturday, April 23, at the Panida Theater in Sandpoint. The film about relationship with the natural world calls for a renewed connection with nature as key to people's wellbeing and solving the climate and environmental crises. For information, call 208-265-9565.

The Sandpoint Earth Day Celebration will include Earth Day related events—speakers, natural area cleanups, workshops, a vegetarian potluck and films on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays from April 16 to 26.

From noon to 4 p.m., at the Forest Bird Charter Schools, 614 S. Madison Ave., will be a festival with art projects and educational activities for children, conservation films, an eco-fashion show and booths with local and regional educational, conservation and environmental organizations. For information, visit facebook.com/sandpointannualearthday/events.

The Moscow Food Co-op and Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute are planning Earth Month on the Palouse.

Palouse Discovery Science Center at 950 NE Nelson Ct. in Pullman, is hosting educational events for children and adults. For information visit palousscience.net.

The University of Idaho (UI) Sustainability Center is facilitating "No Impact Week" April 20 to 26, with challenges each day to help students reduce their impact on the planet. The Moscow Food

Co-op is participating in a honey taste test April 21.

Moscow Parks and Recreation is sponsoring a Green Cleaning Workshop at the Hamilton Indoor Recreation Center from 7 to 9 p.m., Wednesday, April 22.

Washington State University Associated Students' Environmental Sustainability Alliance and the WSU Environmental Science Club will present the WSU Earth Day Fair from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Friday, April 22 at Terrell Mall.

For information, visit <http://www.moscowfood.coop/earth-month/>

Tri-Cities Earth Month Events will include a Children's Photo Contest, "Postcards from REACH: Shine a Light on Environmental Action," related to REACH Interpretative Centers. Submissions are due Friday,

April 15, and finalists will be announced Friday, April 22.

The month will include events and education on and by green businesses, organizations and resources. For information, visit gogreentricities.org.

At Cowiche Canyon, there will be an Earth Day Walk from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 23, starting at The Weikel Trailhead. For information, visit cowichecanyon.org.

The Chelan Earth Day Fair, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 16, at Riverwalk Park, will include gardening demonstrations, educational displays, hybrid and electric vehicles, solar power, recycling, green building, emergency preparedness, conservation and more. For information, visit chelanearthday.org.

South Asia Assn. presents Indian music

The South Asia Cultural Association of Spokane will present Indian classical music with Anapama Bhagwat on Sitar and Ravi Albright on Tabla from 2 to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 16, at the Unity Spiritual Center, 2900 S. Bernard St.

For information, call 467-5558 or email sacaspokane@gmail.com.

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- Witness the Children's Candle Processional
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Rice Bowl food and education turned around life for Ghanan boy

The smell of food drew Thomas Awiapo to a school supported by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Rice Bowl in his home village. Wiaga in Northern Ghana. He had to study to receive a snack and hot lunch. That food and education turned his life around.



Thomas and his three brothers lived with aunts and uncles after their parents died, but they had to fend for themselves and were often hungry. His younger brothers died. His older brother left the village and did not come back.

"It took an act of kindness to change my life," he said in an interview in Spokane, where he came during Lent as part of an eight-week U.S. visit to share his story so that other children might benefit.

Not only is he alive, but also he has earned a master's degree in public administration in 2004 at California State University in East Bay.

This year, he was promoting water and sanitation: building latrines for girls and boys so they have a place to wash their

hands with soap and stay healthy.

He also provides microfinancing so families can earn enough money to feed their children so they can go to school.

Thomas, 41, has been working with CRS for 15 years. He earned his first degree in philosophy and religion in Ghana, and did post graduate studies in education. He taught at Notre Dame Catholic high school in his home diocese.

For 10 years, he has visited with U.S. Catholic families, parishes and schools, asking them to sacrifice for Lent and put money in boxes for the Rice Bowl.

"They may wonder if it makes a difference. I put a face on how it makes a difference. The gifts gave me a better future," said Thomas, who is married and has four children who do not need snacks supported by Rice Bowl. "The best gift we can give a child is education. Education is liberation. It breaks the chain of poverty and injustice."

Expressing gratitude, he reminds people that sacrifice during Lent can empower people and communities.

Born into a traditional family, he encountered priests and sisters from St. Francis Xavier parish in his village of nearly 3,000 people. As a result of going to school, he became Catholic.

He sees traditional spirituality and Catholicism as having much in common, with both emphasizing communal spirituality of living together, encouraging interdependence and solidarity of bearing each other's joys and burdens.

"My extended family believes it takes a village to raise a child. Survival depends on it. Both the church and traditional spirituality teach that I need you, and you need me," he said.

Even though he lives in Tamale near the CRS office, he spends 40 percent of his time 100 miles away in his village with his family, giving to that community. His family has a subsistence farm. He helps children be educated so they can return and give to the community. Northern Ghana is an area with poor infrastructure, limited education and much poverty.

"My own children learn my village language and culture," Thomas said, "but they go to school in Tamale."

His wife is from a different tribe in the village of Sirigu, where they also visit. Her family is bigger and has taken him in.

Their local dialects are different, so English is their common language, because Ghana was a former British colony.

His wife, Felicia, who has a degree in business administration and a master's in

governance and development, works for the government in Tamale.

While in Washington, Thomas visited his oldest daughter, Loretta, 23, who is on a scholarship for pre-med studies at Seattle Pacific University. He also has two sons, Kelvin, 16, and Melvin 14, and a daughter Lindy, 7.

"Catholic Relief Services is the church in action in social ministry around the world," he said.

For 75 years, CRS has used donations of American people in other nations.

"People are receptive to me. My story helps them appreciate their own lives and what they have," he said. "I bring another perspective from a place where children walk five miles to school, may sit under a tree rather than in a classroom and have no pencils to write.

"I realize I'm blessed. Blessings come with responsibility to help those in need," he said. "My goal is for more girls, as well as boys, to go to and finish school so they find work and can support their parents, children and village."

Thomas wants people to see his story as a story of hope, mercy, love, care and blessings from God.

For information, email thomas.awiapo@crs.org.

Food for All helps seniors and low-income people gain access to food

Continued from page 1
to spend. Food for All also gives \$2 in Fresh Bucks to low-income people for every \$5 they spend in the EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer—food stamps) program on fruits, vegetables, vegetable starts, mushrooms and herbs.

Elizabeth also does nutrition education at St. Margaret's Shelter, low-income and senior housing units of Catholic Charities and Father Bach Haven. In addition, she delivers produce from Second Harvest to people in permanent supportive housing.

Weekly or monthly, she goes to homes of seniors and low-income people to teach them how to cook food bank food or to cook on a stove top—Fr. Bach Haven's studio apartments have no ovens.

She also teaches a one-week garden class there, because they have planters around the building. Interested residents sign up for the class and plant the garden boxes.

At St. Margaret's, she helps prepare after-school snacks.

Elizabeth, who is from Chicago, studied nutrition and dietetics, and minored in urban poverty at St. Louis University in Missouri. After graduating in 2014, she worked

on a small organic farm in Indiana.

Now in her second year as a Jesuit Volunteer with Food for All, she appreciates the Jesuit Volunteer values of working for social and ecological justice, simple living, community and spirituality.

Elizabeth, one of 13 Jesuit volunteers in Spokane this year, educates people on the incentives to encourage them to shop for fresh produce at farmers' markets.

"We are trying to make them easy to use and engage people at the market to eat local food, meet the farmers and see produce they won't see at the local grocery stores," Whitney said.

"Often seniors are surprised to see vegetables they have not seen for years, and immigrants see produce they knew in their home country," she said. "There are 70 varieties grown for retail grocery stores, but thousands of varieties are grown for farmer's markets. Many sold at grocery stores are grown to be shipped and for shelf life, so they do not taste as good."

Whitney, who grew up in Alaska and moved to Spokane when she was in her early 20s, earned a bachelor's degree in English, philosophy and women's stud-

ies in 2010 at Washington State University. She is also certified in organic agriculture.

"I want to provide healthful food for low-income homes. I was on WIC and EBT, and I appreciated the assistance. I want to help others. I love to show people who come to the farm how we grow food," she said.

Whitney said the Food for All farm uses organic methods but is not certified because of the cost to do that. They meet organic and sustainability standards, and do not use synthetic fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides.

"I grow bug flowers to bring pollinators—different kinds of bees, lacewings and ladybugs. In the field, we grow different heights of flowers—sunflowers for birds, medium-height flowers for bees and low flowers for the lacewings and ladybugs.

"We do not till because it disrupts bees that burrow, and nematodes and bugs that live in the soil," she said.

"There are smart ways for a small farm to grow produce without sprays. We seek to be a model small-scale urban farm," said Whitney, who is also a master

composter and recycler.

Food for All receives donations of leaves in the fall for composting, particularly from the Catholic Charities Volunteer Chore program.

On third Saturdays, there are community volunteer events

from 10 a.m. to noon. The next is on April 16. Volunteers come to help on the farm and learn best practices.

For information, call 723-3038, email greenhouse@ccspokane.org or visit catholiccharitiesfoodforall.org.

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Survivor of Bosnian genocide reminds that genocides continue to occur

Admir Rasic, a 27-year-old Bosnian Muslim, will light a candle at the 2016 Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust, Yom HaShoah, on behalf of survivors of contemporary genocides.

His invitation to light the candle is a reminder that genocide continues.

The Yom Hashoah service is at 7 p.m., Thursday, May 5, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave.

Students will read winning entries in the Eva Lassman Memorial Creative Writing Contest. There will be an exhibit of winning artistic entries, a children's candle procession, a candle-lighting ceremony and music by the Mead High School Ensemble.



Admir Rasic tells about his family's experience of a recent genocide.

"When you see firsthand the effects of genocide, such as in Srebrenica, in schools and factories, or in Dachau, it's hard to understand or make sense of genocide," he said. "I have much more to learn."

He became involved with the Interfaith Council last year because he wants to help create a community that values diversity and believes "we are stronger because of diversity."

"I want to make a better community for my daughter, Najla, 3, so it is not a community limited by religious or ethnic identity, or being second-generation American," he said.

He appreciates the eagerness of people to meet neighbors of other faiths and ethnicities through the Interfaith Council's Meet the Neighbors program.

"It makes us more wholesome," he said of visiting the Sikh and the Jewish temples, and welcoming people to the Islamic Center.

Born in Teslic in northern Bosnia, he was three in 1992 when the war broke out. For six months, his father, Adem, was in a Serbian concentration camp, imprisoned by Serbian neighbors along with other non-Serbs—ethnic Croats, Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Catholics who were fighting the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia.

Soldiers used prisoners for slave labor and as human shields, firing their guns over their shoulders.

The captors sent prisoners home for a day on occasion to see that their families were alive and would comply, Admir said.

"One of these times, we ran away to a Red Cross safe zone and made our way north by bus through Serbia, Hungary and Austria, and by train to Germany.

From 1993 to 1999, his family lived in Markt Indersdorf, a suburb of Dachau, the site of one of the largest concentration camps in the Holocaust.

His mother, Enisa, who had been a nurse, worked in a bakery, and his father, who had been a

locksmith and welder, worked in construction. Admir and his sister went to a German school and learned German quickly.

There was no mosque, but his parents taught them to treat everyone with respect, to honor freedom of speech and to respect other religions.

They lived with other refugees forced out of former Yugoslav republics. Like many others, they were forced to move back in 1999. They first lived with an uncle, his wife and son in a one-bedroom apartment. His parents found an apartment in Zenica.

In February 2000, his family moved to Twin Falls, Idaho, for a month and then to Spokane where his mother had two sisters. His family has lived here since then.

"When I came, I spoke no English. I took English as a Second Language (ESL) in fifth grade and the next year was out of ESL," he said.

Because Admir graduated from Rogers High School with enough credits from Running Start for an associate degree at Spokane Community College, he completed a degree in English literature in two years in 2009 at the University of Washington in Seattle.

After college, Admir lived in Bellevue and in New Jersey for two years, working with the Federation of Balkan American

Association, encouraging Balkan youth to go to college. Many Balkan immigrants had settled in impoverished areas. Many youth dropped out of high school or turned to crime because they had few opportunities, he said.

"It was devastating for parents and youth who had survived genocide," he said. "I helped youth prepare for pre-college exams, involved them in sports and was a positive role model."

Admir's wife, Azra, was also born in Bosnia, but moved to the United States in 1994. Her family lived as refugees a year in Turkey before they came to live with an uncle in Fargo, N.D., and then settled in Atlanta. Azra earned a master's degree in criminal justice at Georgia State University.

Admir and Azra met in New Jersey, married in Spokane in 2012, and after a year living in New York, where he taught school, they decided to raise their daughter in Spokane. He now works with Ecova.

In conversations with his parents, from the time he lived in Bosnia, and from visits there with family in 2006, 2007 and 2012, Admir has learned more about the genocide. His father's uncle disappeared in the war.

"His remains were found two years ago in a mass grave nine feet from a road. He and 40 other

Muslims from our village were buried together," said Admir.

His grandparents were from different villages in the same area. Grandparents on both sides experienced "ethnic cleansing" and were forced from their homes. His maternal grandmother was in a displacement center run by ethnic Serbs until the war ended. The Serbs burned original documents, so people had to replace them. It was a long process to reclaim their land. Other people were living in their houses.

"The war ended in 1995, but my mother's mother did not have her land returned until 2000, five years after her husband died. She lived until 2008," Admir said. "My paternal grandmother and grandfather had their land back before they died. She died in 2004, after we were in the United States. He died in 2013."

"There are still struggles from the war and genocide," he said. "The divisions are not healed among neighbors or in politics. The political party in the Serbian region was the same one in power during the genocide."

On March 24, 2016, after a nine-year trial in the Hague, the United Nations' International Criminal Tribunal on Yugoslav war crimes found former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic guilty on charges of genocide and war crimes, and sentenced him to prison for 40 years.

In 2012, Admir went to

Srebrenica, the site of the largest genocide since World War II. It was a United Nations safe zone with many internally displaced people, he said. Serbs convinced the peacekeepers to open the gates to let them pass through. In July 1995, they massacred 10,000 Muslim boys and men in three days and mass raped women.

"They are still uncovering bodies digging up remains in mass graves," Admir said.

When he went in 2012, international forensic scientists were uncovering bones and matching them to form complete bodies. Each year they have a mass funeral for bones uncovered that year, usually the remains of about 700 people, he said.

"One mountain side is now a cemetery with individual gravestones of people murdered because of their religion," said Admir, who went there with U.S. and Bosnian cousins.

About 50,000 people visit the site each year.

In Spokane, Admir said there are about 150 Bosnian families, about 500 people. Many Bosnians tend to be secular because his parent's generation grew up under communism, when people of faith had limited opportunities. Those who joined the party were accepted and had benefits.

Admir's family attends the Spokane Islamic Center regularly.

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Trinity School prepares students to be responsible community members

By Sue Orlowski, SP

Sandra Nokes, principal of Trinity Catholic School, builds a safe, faith-filled, loving, joyful educational environment, because she treats parents and students as her family.

Before moving to Trinity, she taught at St. Thomas More School. She applied and was hired as the Trinity's principal in 2008.

"I believe God wanted me there. I'm to make a difference in children's lives," she said. "At Trinity, I can be an administrator, work with the child care program, be with the school children, work with curriculum and be involved with music in a mission-based educational system."

Trinity Catholic School started in the early 1900s as two schools, St. Joseph's School and St. Anthony's School. They joined together to form Trinity School in 1969. At that time, two religious congregations operated the schools, but today it has a lay staff.

Trinity was the first small Catholic school of the Spokane Diocese to be accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and the Western Catholic Education Association. In addition to the preschool, the school's elementary education includes Educare, a licensed childcare program, and the Extended Care Center before- and after-school program.

The education is based on Catholic values and traditions that help students of diverse economic and cultural backgrounds develop a strong relationship with God in a safe environment, she said.

The staff strives to enrich students' lives and encourages them to become creative, responsible members of church and society.

"With parents as the primary educators, students, parents, teachers and staff work together to create an environment where individuals are respected, have the opportunity to achieve, accept responsibility, interact peacefully, discover the wonders of the universe and grow in the practice of their faith," said Sandra.

Born in Spokane to an unwed, 19-year-old mother, Sandra spent eight weeks at St. Ann's Orphanage before she was adopted by a Spokane couple, who were struggling to have children.

Her parents always told her that she was doubly special, "because I was adopted and adopted children are special because they were chosen twice, first by God then by their parents," she said.

She sees her adoption as a gift because it enables her to let children know how special they are.

Sandra graduated from Eastern Washington University with a



Sandra Nokes treats parents and students as family.

major in reading and a minor in math. She later received a master's in reading from Whitworth University, and in 2004, her principal credentials.

She grew up attending St. Francis of Assisi parish. After she graduated from Eastern, she was hired at St. Thomas More School to teach music.

"I believe in the mission of Catholic schools because they want what is best for children, and it is a blessing to pass on the faith to others," said Sandra.

She taught music part-time in grades K to 8 at St. Thomas More, while also teaching music part-time at St. Charles School in grades six to eight. She was hired after a year to teach fifth grade half a day and music the second half. Other teaching areas included second grade, and later seventh and eighth grade pre-algebra and algebra.

In 2000, she became vice-principal.

At St. Thomas More, she first worked under principal Ann Doherty, who taught her about professionalism and service. Doug Banks, who became principal in 2000 after Ann, challenged her to push beyond her comfort zone.

"Both gave me insights into how to become a principal," she said.

While teaching from 1991 to 2004, she had six children. Her husband, Steven, stayed home for 10 years before returning to work as an accountant with the Spokane Catholic Diocese.

"It was tough during this time because we lived on only one sal-

ary and a Catholic school salary at that," said Sandra, who also gardens, bakes, cans and makes jams. "I try to live simply so I can relate to the families and be able to support them through their rough times."

Living simply is just part of her life.

Over the years, Sandra has said, "One does not need to have a lot of money to be happy, and I know that it is true."

Because she had the opportunity to operate on a tight budget, she has been able to identify with many West Central and Emerson-Garfield families whose children attend the school.

"The families come from diverse incomes, backgrounds, family structures and races. The student population is also spiritually diverse," Sandra said. "Many are financially challenged so the school has programs to help families and students reach their potential."

Sixty-eight percent of the students receive free or reduced-rate lunches. The school also participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, including a breakfast program that reimburses the school for nutritious meals. Some students also receive weekend food from the Bite-to-Go program.

"During the fall wind storm, I was worried that some students might not have enough to eat when the school was closed," she said. "Some families are in fragile circumstances."

Because of the school's diverse population, the students learn to tolerate differences.

"No students are refused admission because of an inability to pay all or part of their tuition. I meet with each family individually to determine what they can pay under their Fair Share Tuition Plan. I then draw up a contract which the parent(s) and I sign," Sandra said.

"The students not only learn the three R's but also develop a sense of community. They know God loves them, people at the school will be there for them, and they can feel safe at school," she said. "They know they will receive unconditional love from teachers and classmates. They also know they need to be accountable for their actions and responsibilities."

The school's retention rate is high, and students receive solid academic preparation for high school, she said.

The school has school-wide learning expectations. One is "to become a confident and disciplined communicator." Information on expectations and Catholic education is in the Thursday Bulletin, which families receive.

"Seeing a learning expectation

on a regular basis, keeps it in the minds of the families and the students," she said.

Students also participate in All-School Prayer on Mondays and attend Mass on Fridays. They help in Mass as choir members, altar servers, gift bearers and readers.

"This helps them respect the Catholic Church even if they are not Catholic. It also helps them respect each other," Sandra said.

For the end of All-School Prayer, led by rotating grades, students say a prayer Sandra wrote: "May God bless you with a yearning for learning and a heart to serve God joyfully. God dwells in me and God loves me."

Sandra sees herself as a role model for students and families.

"Not only can I challenge the students but also they know they can share anything with me. They know that I will be there for them and their families to help them reach their potential and make a difference," said Sandra.

For information, call 327-9369, email trinity@dioceseofspokane.org or visit trinityspokane.com.

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In Women Leading Together retreats, storytelling builds relationships

Women Leading Together retreats helped Julie Schaffer of the Center for Justice and Katy Sheehan of the Community Building Foundation promote and support the importance of relationships and help young women studying law gain greater self-awareness.

Both wish they had had access to the insights during their intense, competitive law school studies, preparing for an adversarial profession, and in the context of media images of women that seek to define who women should be.

Both grew up in Spokane, valuing being outdoors, growing food, living sustainably, having compassion and respecting diversity. Julie grew up in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane and Katy grew up Catholic.

Both felt they lost who they were in law school. Julie graduated in 2008 from the University of Washington Law School, and Katy in 2007 from the City University of New York Law School.

Katy said she was also lost in media images of women that created a “back voice,” nagging her to be skinnier, smarter and work harder. Now she accepts herself, her faults and doubts as tools to help her grow.

After Julie went to a Cultivating Women’s Leadership Retreat in 2013 in California, she invited facilitators from Bioneers to lead a September 2014 retreat for 20 Spokane women. Bioneers, a nonprofit based in New Mexico and California, developed the retreats as part of its commitment to promote solutions to global environmental and social challenges.

After the 2014 retreat, which Katy attended, she and Julie proposed doing a similar retreat for women law students and developed Women Leading Together.

Twice since then they have offered Women Leading Together retreats for women students at Gonzaga University’s Law School. To tailor retreats to students, they invite participants to share their stories.

While the majority of Gonzaga’s students are middle-class white students, who may not seem diverse, “once the students tell their stories, we find how diverse they are,” Julie said.

“Storytelling builds relationships,” Katy affirmed.

While classes focus on facts, issues, rules, analysis and conclusions, she said, students need to understand how people tick in order to relate with colleagues, clients, judges and juries.

“Especially in an adversarial profession, we need to see people as human beings,” she said.

Following a recent two-and-a-half-day “Women Leading with a



Katy Sheehan—with son Reed Sheehan-Schultz—and Julie Schaffer lead Women Leading Together retreats.

Purpose” retreat with 11 women law students, Julie and Katy said participant responses were heartening:

- **The retreat helped** one reflect on her strengths, weaknesses and purpose.

- It helped another face her obstacles about relating with strong women who are also struggling. It helped that woman find common ground with women and realize she is not alone.

- It helped another see what matters, who matters and what she hopes for.

- Another left seeking to find more of what makes her “tick.”

- Others appreciated reflecting on their lives and goals, and committed themselves to being more considerate and supportive of other women.

- Some appreciated thinking of law school as a community rather than individuals competing.

- Another hopes it will translate into finding mentors to help her be an effective leader.

Participants valued that Julie and Katy shared their stories and feelings of vulnerability. Both also shared their stories in The Fig Tree interview.

Julie went to law school to gain a variety of tools for broad use.

“I found little support for being outside the track,” she said. “I kept busy doing the work, but I did not build relationships with classmates. Study groups were to cram, not for support.”

Julie had not realized the importance of relationships. To her, professors were intimidating experts, so she did not connect with them. Eventually, a support group of six women and two men nurtured her interest in public law.

She worked two years with the Snohomish County prosecutor’s

office in Everett on land use and environmental law. Then she took a six-month leave to go with a friend to Alaska where she lived in a tent, gardened in exchange for room and board, backpacked and kayaked.

“I came back to myself and knew what I wanted in life,” said Julie, now the mother of a year-old son who “adds new dimensions to my life.”

Returning to Spokane, she learned the Center for Justice needed a staff attorney, a job that combined her legal skills and passion for social justice. She began in the fall of 2010. In Spokane, she knew people, so she had relationships and connections.

Julie, who is exploring Buddhist meditation to strengthen her sense of compassion, said women and men may burn out and drop out of law school or legal careers if they do not build relationships and lift each other up.

“Some want more than working long hours with more clients to win more cases or earn more money,” she said.

Women Leading Together emphasizes relationships before tasks, similar to Julie’s work at the Center for Justice to collaborate on projects and explore creative, alternative solutions.

For example, she helps the center collaborate with Smart Justice Spokane and 30 organizations on criminal justice reform to help people as they enter, experience and leave the criminal justice system.

Julie promotes restorative justice and mediation, which require relationship building because both focus on the people harmed rather than on laws broken.

“An alternative to litigation or criminal justice is to gather everyone who has been affected

by a crime in a circle to come up with a solution to the harm done, so the person who harmed someone can continue to be part of the community, Julie explained, rather than having a third party make the decisions.

“It’s about making things right, rather than convicting and excluding people,” she said, recognizing that the traditional legal system is necessary in many conflicts and crimes. Despite skepticism about whether it can work,” Julie said, “restorative justice is the ‘traditional’ way many cultures deal with conflict and crime.”

Women Leading Together retreats can help women alleviate self-doubt and self-limiting stories, Julie said. It encourages participants to look within themselves to understand their own journeys and others’ journeys, and to develop compassion for themselves and others.

Katy said that in law school, she missed having relationships and felt she had to silence her vision of sustainable living.

She went to law school after graduating in 2002 with a degree in studio art from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore., and after serving a year with Americorps and a year of working as compost manager on her father’s farm.

After law school and before taking the bar exam, she worked with the Department of Agriculture in Puget Sound mud flats looking for invasive weeds. That experience epitomized the contrast.

“I went into nature and wore mud boots after being in New York wearing high heels,” said Katy, who describes herself now as religiously eclectic—exploring Buddhism and Unitarianism, and sometimes attending Episcopal, Presbyterian and Catholic churches—valuing creation and being in nature.

Katy passed the Washington bar exam in 2008 and then worked five years at the Fair Housing Center of Washington dealing with housing discrimination. She returned to Spokane to become director of the Community Building Foundation in 2014.

“Life is about relationships, which can sometimes be tough to navigate,” said Katy, who is now exploring the world and its simplicity as the mother of a three-year-old and a baby.

Katy said adversarial law and media images of women can be the antithesis of “what we need in the real world. The stronger our relationships and networks are, the stronger we are as a people.”

Both said they felt vulnerable going on maternity leave and returning to work—feeling inadequate as mothers and at work—but their willingness to discuss that made one retreat participant feel she could talk about how important it is for her to be a mother and an attorney.

For information, call 835-5211 ext. 1498 or email julie@cfor-justice.org or katy@community-building.org.

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Pastor working in prisons finds many seeking alternatives to violence

Many people in prison for life or serving long sentences want to escape the violence they experience there. Many want to move outside the defensive bravado façade that living in a prison engenders. Many want to avoid becoming abusive themselves.

Jane Simmons, who began as co-pastor at Unity Spiritual Center in Spokane in April 2015, has spent 16 years offering Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) training programs in prisons in her native country of Canada as well as around the United States. Now she is offering classes to train others who may be interested in being AVP facilitators.

Workshops help participants increase self-awareness, empathy and personal responsibility through techniques for interpersonal peacemaking and transforming conflict through community building, communication exercises and cooperative games.

In a 20-hour weekend in February, Jane and two facilitators led 10 people in a basic workshop, the first step to becoming facilitators. Members of the congregation and her husband and co-pastor, Gary, were among the participants.

She hopes to offer the program in Spokane-area prisons, similar to the one being offered at the Monroe Correctional Facility.

Alternatives to Violence training is an experiential workshop that grew out of Green Haven Prison in New York in 1975. An inmate there reached out to the Quakers to bring their peace work to bear to address violence in his prison. The Quakers created Alternatives to Violence as a secular workshop based on communication skills and connected with activities to build cooperation.

"I was introduced to it when I became interested in prison ministry in Hamilton, Ontario, in 2000. After being trained, I drove two hours north to do prison ministry. I immediately saw the value and how it changes lives," she said.

Growing up in Hamilton, Jane said she was "always into the essence of Unity spirituality" before she learned about Unity. She had attended church when she was young and had taught Sunday school. Then she explored Eastern philosophy before she discovered Unity in 1980 and became a licensed teacher. In 1999, she became an ordained minister.

Jane, who had worked as a teacher's assistant and in clerical jobs, earned a doctorate of theology at Holos University Graduate Seminary in Kansas City.

While she was in Kansas City, she facilitated Alternatives to Violence workshops at Leavenworth, Kansas and a prison in Nebraska.



Jane Simmons promotes Alternatives to Violence program.

"Unity teaches that we are all part of the one life, connected to Spirit and all Spirit and are all expressions of Spirit. We create our life experiences by the thoughts we think and beliefs we hold routinely. If we believe we can be successful, it can be self-fulfilling," Jane said.

"Big change can come from our beliefs about ourselves and the world. Beliefs can limit us, but if we shift our beliefs and widen our focus, we can change our world and experience of life," she said.

AVP workshops are offered in 37 states and around the world in prisons, war-torn countries, middle and high schools, community groups, congregations, street gangs and veterans groups.

Some workshops train certified facilitators, because every group of 20 needs three facilitators, she said.

In the men's prisons where she has often gone, she has found the AVP workshop helpful, even in helping guards be less defensive.

"Activities help people drop defenses and build trust. When defenses come down, it's a relief for those who are incarcerated," Jane said. "There is high violence in prisons, where people live in hellish conditions. I hear from them how different they become inside the facility, how they create community, grow, change and transform. Often I'm moved to tears.

"One young man said he now has compassion. I can learn from him. A slow computer can ruin my day, but he lives in hell with other prisoners caught up in defensiveness, bravado, on guard and pretending to be someone other than who they really are. These were scared people, living a life of hurting people. Now they

give back to humanity," Jane said. "Many are impressed and find it healing that we are willing to walk through the doors of the prison."

Part of the program includes playing cooperative games that are light and lively, and move people around, such as pattern ball with beany babies, recreating a pattern of throwing beany babies to each other.

"It's wild but controlled chaos. The prisoners share laughter and begin to relax," Jane said.

Another activity uses two concentric circles of chairs facing each other. People have two minutes to answer various questions, such as sharing about a person they admire and then moving around the circle so they share with new partners.

There are also brainstorming sessions that help participants consider what violence is—including judging and name-calling.

There are role-playing scenarios to help people see they can make different choices and can choose to do things in a nonviolent way, Jane said.

They look at components and practices of nonviolence to see how they gain transformative power by respecting themselves and caring for others, and how making a different choice can mean that instead of exploding at someone, they try something different.

"We share examples from our lives," Jane said. "We share in role play what we used to do and something different.

"I've learned that we are all human. Some made horrendous mistakes and pay the consequences, but in our hearts, we are all human. We all make mistakes. We are all looking for the same things in life. How we go about

achieving our goals is the difference between that side of the bars and this side of the bars," she said. "I do internal work rather than projecting blame. If we judge someone, we project what we do not want to see in ourselves."

Jane said the first rule is not to ask people what they are in prison for doing.

"Some are willing to talk about why they are in prison, but many more share how long they will be there. For those in prison for life or long sentences, it's their life, and they are looking for it to change. Those in prison two to six months have less interest in alternatives to violence," she said.

Alternatives to Violence cuts the recidivism rate—the likelihood a person will go back after being released, she said. Those in the Alternatives to Violence Program have up to a 50 percent reduction in recidivism.

From conversations with prisoners, Jane knows that many change. Some continue and become facilitators, leaders, and people listened to and looked up to.

For prevention, she would like to have the program in schools.

Jane has developed a curriculum for youth and adults based on

her husband's book, *The I of the Storm: Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace*, which is about finding peace in the midst of conflict. She has expanded on it, writing *The I of the Storm for Teens*.

"In Unity, we are big on helping people in the midst of conflict discover who they are and how they relate with each other in triggering moments. Can we be in a place of peace when we discover what is in ourselves?" she asked.

"I feel blessed to be part of Unity and AVP because we are on a journey of self discovery. As we align with our true self and express it in the world, we help transform the world," she said.

"Our mission is to inspire people to make a difference in the world."

For information, call 838-6518 or email drjane@unityspokane.org.

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The Ministry Institute invites you to pray with music, readings and silence in the style of Taizé prayer. Our prayer for the Healing of Creation begins March 31, 2016.
No Taizé prayer on Thursday, May 12.
For more information, contact Shonna Bartlett at 313-5765 or bartletts@gonzaga.edu.

Parish nurse considers spiritual, emotional wellbeing, as well as physical

By Kaye Hult

Believing interaction with people is important for emotional wellbeing, physical health and spiritual life, Rosemary McDougall, a registered nurse, incorporates touch, listening and prayer in her visits as a parish nurse.

Five years ago, Fr. Tim Ritchey came to serve St. George's parish in Post Falls, St. Stanislaus in Rathdrum and St. Joseph's in Spirit Lake. He had a passion to establish a parish-nursing ministry as a way to expand outreach the churches were doing through assistance to people in need, a feeding program and a pregnancy support center.

He asked Rosemary, coordinator of elementary religious education at St. George's, to be trained and begin the ministry. Three years ago, she attended training with the Inland Northwest Faith Community Nursing in the Tri-Cities. She did the 40-hour session in two 10-hour days on two weekends.

"I knew the first day that God was calling me to do that," she said. "God continues to energize me for this ministry, giving me the strength and wisdom to keep going," she said.

After Rosemary took the parish nursing training, she spent a day at Fr. Tim's former parish, Holy Apostles, in Meridian, Idaho.

"They showed me many things they do and told me about ways to begin new programs," she said.

To introduce the parish-nursing ministry, she began by speaking to the congregations.

"I explained that parish nursing looked at mind, body and spirit,



Rosemary McDougall begins parish nursing program.

all of which, combined, make for good health," Rosemary said.

She spoke of the kinds of things she could do, and then she began to make herself visible throughout the parish. For instance, she began doing blood pressure checks.

At first, her ministry was sporadic. She was still working at Kootenai cancer clinics in Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls, from which she retired in July 2015 after 15 years.

"It was time to retire," she said. "The Lord was calling me more fully to the ministry."

"Since my retirement, I have had more time for the ministry, which has resulted in its growth," she said. "It has become a vital part of the parish's outreach."

Through the parish-nursing ministry, Rosemary reaches out to individuals affiliated with the three parishes. Most clients are

from St. George's.

She touches people's lives in diverse ways. She takes patients to doctor's appointments and visits people in their homes, hospitals and long-term care facilities.

She might prepare a week of medications for some parishioners or check a parishioner's dressings after surgery to make sure the wounds stay healthy.

No matter what the reason for her visit, she spends time visiting with her patients, prays with them at the end or for them afterwards.

"I always make sure touch is involved," she said. "If I touch them, they know I'm there and concerned. Touch reinforces that they are a person, not a disease."

"No one would touch lepers, but Jesus did," she said.

Rosemary has to document every encounter with every individual, even phone calls. Faith

Community Nursing, of which she is now a member, provides her with a confidential website where she keeps her records.

One person helps when Rosemary is on vacation. She expects to need assistance as the load grows.

Last October, she coordinated an estate-planning seminar at St. George's Church for about 80 people.

At 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 19, she will hold a second free, public estate-planning seminar, at St. Stanislaus Church in Rathdrum.

Fr. Tim will discuss end-of-life issues from the Catholic perspective. An attorney will speak about wills and living wills. A financial planner will present, which should draw younger people. Representatives from Yates and English funeral homes will speak about pre-planning funerals.

The seminar is a way to invite the Rathdrum and Spirit Lake congregations to be more involved with the parish nurse ministry.

Rosemary first talked about becoming a nurse when her third grade teacher in Alpha, N.J., near New York City, asked students what they wanted to be when they grew up.

She received her LPN certificate in 1976 after studies at Warren County Community College. For six years until she enlisted in the Army, she worked with men-

tally disabled people.

After serving in Missouri and Texas, she was stationed in Berlin, Germany, when the Berlin Wall was still in place. She also served in Massachusetts and Alaska in various nursing jobs.

When she left the army in 1988, she was a single mother. Having traveled through the Inland Northwest on her way to Alaska, she decided to settle in this area with her son.

Through a distance-learning program at New York University, Rosemary earned her degree as a registered nurse (RN) in 1995.

She worked in long-term care for a while and then in the Kootenai cancer clinics.

"I am involved with people at my church who have cancer, so I'm still doing oncology," she said.

Beyond parish nursing, Rosemary volunteers with the Area Agency on Aging Senior Medicare Patrol, making presentations on Medicare, and she is on the St. George's parish pregnancy support center team.

For information, call 208-699-6060 or rosemarymcdougall@frontier.com.

New partnership helps Habitat double home building

Habitat for Humanity Spokane will double its home building through a new loan partnership between the Washington State Housing Finance Commission and Habitat for Humanity of Washington State.

The \$2.5 million loan means Habitat for Humanity Spokane can serve 40 to 50 families a year, instead of 15 to 25.

"We will have an increase in other funders to diversify our funding portfolio because of this partnership," said Michelle Girardot, CEO of Habitat Spokane.

The loan will speed the construction of Hope Meadows in Deer Park, a 114-home Habitat development, which is finishing 30 homes this spring.

Habitat just broke ground on infrastructure for the project's second phase, and will "likely be

able to move right into phase three infrastructure," said Michelle.

In late 2015, the Housing Finance Commission loaned \$5 million to Habitat for Humanity of Washington State, which loaned \$2.5 million each to the Spokane and Tacoma affiliates.

Habitat for Humanity, an international nonprofit, builds simple, affordable homes that are sold to low-income families who also donate "sweat equity" during construction. In Washington, the average cost to build a Habitat home is \$100,000.

Michone Preston, outreach director for Habitat for Humanity Washington, said the partnership with the commission is revolutionary.

"We've been moving at a snail's pace, building homes one at a time

as we raise philanthropic dollars," she said. "This loan infuses our affiliates with cash to start and finish projects."

The loans also help Habitat affiliates raise more funds from donors and energize the volunteers who help build Habitat homes.

If the pilot project is successful, the loan program could become a self-sustaining resource that Habitat affiliates could access through an application and review process.

The partnership will also support Habitat's statewide organization, which will keep half a percent of the interest as affiliates repay loans. This will cover staffing to facilitate and administer the loans, plus legal and administrative expenses.

For information, call 370-1394 or email michone@habitatwa.org.

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Benefit proceeds on par with 2015, more donations needed to meet goals

As of March 31, The Fig Tree raised \$22,110 from the Benefit Lunch and Benefit Breakfast, which is on par with 2015 proceeds by that date. In 2015 the total raised from the benefits was \$28,143.

With pledges and appeals to those who

have given at benefits in the past, we should surpass that, reaching our basic budget goal of \$30,000 and stretching to meet our growth goal of \$50,000.

Many thanks to all who helped with organizing, hosting tables, volunteering,

attending and supporting The Fig Tree. Thanks also to the speakers, board members and musician.

In his appeal, the Rev. Happy Watkins, board member, invited people to double their giving "so we can keep The Fig Tree

and its coverage of diversity going, challenging folk all over the Northwest.

The promotional video is online at thefigtree.org for people to share our story, increase readership and expand our impact.

Mary Stamp - Editor

Reflecting Diversity

Sounding Board

Sharing our Story

Benefit speakers value the many ways The Fig Tree reflects diversity

In 31 years with Volunteers of America, I have seen the difference The Fig Tree makes, from finding meal providers for Crosswalk to keeping people updated on our shelter, programs and new facilities. We are grateful for exposure of the needs of our chronically homeless neighbors.



The Fig Tree reflects diversity. Many times when I read it, I'm transported all over the world. Last year's stories reflect The

Fig Tree's efforts to bring us closer together—from a couple in Myanmar, community gardens in Burundi, parish partners in Haiti and resettlement efforts right here. Inclusion locally is also a theme with stories on the Upper Columbia United Tribes, the Islamic Center, a young Muslim peacemaker, Holocaust survivors, Spokane's civil rights history and Sandy Williams' new newspaper, The Black Lens. In The Fig Tree pages, we see understanding, respect and dignity for all people.

The Fig Tree is always there to promote people's positive life-changing efforts.

Marilee Roloff
CEO Volunteers of America
of the Inland Northwest

It's easy to live in fear when we think we are alone. Sometimes things feel hopeless. Can hope really change things? Can people be fed and children find homes and be loved? Will this craziness ever end? Am I making a difference? Can we ever respect one another?

Then The Fig Tree comes along and reminds us we are not alone. It reminds me that people are always working to create a new world. In little and big ways, there are many people seeking to create beauty, sing a new song, act justly, love mercy and walk humbly. To continue what the Creator started, challenge the status quo and look at things differently, The Fig Tree invites us to be real together.

At Transitions, we work to end poverty and homelessness for women and children. We do that through housing, job training, and our values of community, growth, respect and justice. The Fig Tree helped us do that through the December 2015 article.

The value of justice is the toughest, but The Fig Tree reminds me that I do not need to do this alone. In his sermon series "Strength to Love," Martin Luther King Jr., tells the victims of segregation to continue to work vigorously and passionately for their God given and Constitutional rights: "Let no one pull you so low that you hate them."

The Fig Tree invites us to know our neighbor no longer seeing the other as alien but responding in love to the many needs of the world. The Fig Tree supports my mantra of persistent pressure relentlessly applied.

Edie Rice-Sauer
Executive director of Transitions

It's important to have diversity in telling stories important to us. Given what we face today, those stories are trampled out in the face of sensation and what sells newspapers and ad space. It's impor-

tant for us to uplift and support avenues that provide a platform to tell stories, diverse stories, stories that touch our hearts.

My grandmother said we have two ears and one mouth because we need to listen twice as much as we speak as young people. In Coyote stories, animals teach us how to treat each other.

We have a smart brain, but it can be so smart it tricks us into thinking we are too smart. She would tell me don't let coyote take over your actions. Remember what comes from your heart.

In The Fig Tree, I see the embers of life, the knowledge of life, as a fire that is burning in us. When we tell stories, we breathe life into the embers as we pass them down to the next generations. When we speak from our heart, we are sticking to a truth that has been passed down through us.

When I talk about our cultural ways and traditions, it's applied science from thousands of years. Animals tell us about our environment today and what we need to prepare for. Stories don't just come from humans. They also come from animals and the environment.



What inspires me about The Fig Tree is that it asks us to look at stories not covered in other media, but as we go forward we always need to have our hearts and minds open to what our environment is saying.

I thank The Fig Tree for highlighting issues of fish passage. As we go forward and face climate change, we can rely on diverse stories to make a better path for us all to walk on together in balance. When we become elders, we stand on the shoulders of elders to share knowledge, information and the gift of love with the next generation.

We thank The Fig Tree for providing an avenue for different stories to be told to share so we are in a better place, moving forward together to build a stronger community.

John Sirois - Wenatchee & Okanogan Tribes - Upper Columbia United Tribes

In our community and world media are powerful tools. The Fig Tree has an important role in media in the Northwest.

If people of color appear on the cover of the Fig Tree or the front page of any publication, it's a big deal. If it's for something good, it's a real big deal. When we see ourselves in the pages of media, it's an affirmation of worth.



It says black lives matter. It says brown lives matter, red lives matter, yellow lives matter, and white lives matter.

Media are a tool for storytelling. Whoever tells the story shapes the message.

The Fig Tree highlights good things going on in the community and ways the diverse community comes together for justice and living our faith in action.

Without The Fig Tree and those working for justice, we would not hear the back story of the disproportionate number of blacks, Native Americans and other people of color in jails or expelled from schools.

The Fig Tree tells us the stories of hardworking people overcoming their circumstances with the help of others. If

such stories aren't highlighted, they stay obscure and we can stay ignorant.

I thank The Fig Tree for highlighting stories of good people coming together for justice and peace to make a difference.

We are diverse people, but we are more alike than we are different.

Naima Quarles Burnley
President of NAACP Spokane

After a 20-year law career I became dietitian and diabetes educator at the NATIVE Project, where we deal with patients with sacred hospitality in health care.

There are 14,000 native people from more than 300 bands living in Spokane. NATIVE Project serves a diverse community. When Mary came to do the story, we sought to make sure she understood what we do there. Having her represent us on the pages of The Fig Tree was an honor for our organization.

The Fig Tree brings diversity. It reports what's going on in this community. We can see what people are actually doing, the positive things that they are doing.

Candy Jackson
NATIVE Project
from the Bad River Band
of Chippewa Indians in Wisconsin

Many volunteer and faith-based organizations work together as Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), using donated resources and volunteer labor to rebuild houses in the wake of wildfires that ravaged Washington and Idaho this last summer and the summer before.

You can read those stories in The Fig Tree.

Two years ago a micro-burst north of Spokane destroyed 40 mobile homes, as many as were destroyed by the Oso mudslide. It did not receive national attention. The people survived, so we needed 40 places for families to live. Sixteen churches came together in the Inland Northwest VOAD and raised \$50,000. In one year, we worked face-to-face with families to be sure each was back in safe, secure and sanitary housing. It was possible in part because of communication that went out in The Fig Tree, so churches could work together.

Last November as volunteer liaison at the emergency office during the windstorm, I used my cell phone to help people find ways to get out from under toppled trees. I called teams from the Seventh-Day Adventists and Southern Baptists.

I used a list of VOAD partners and The Fig Tree's Resource Directory. It's gold. Disaster relief is not just sending money to the Red Cross. It's part of everyday life. There are vulnerable populations all over the world and in our own area. Disaster response is how we work together to heal communities and make them whole again. That requires communication, collaboration and work of everyone in the community. It's only possible when we have something like The Fig Tree to pull us together.

Mike Bullard
Inland Northwest Volunteer
Organizations Active in Disasters

Spokane County Headstart/ECEAP is part of Community Colleges of Spokane. Our story and mission are about education. We serve about 1,500 low-income children and families to prepare children for kindergarten and beyond, because we know education doesn't stop when they are five.

A big part of helping children learn is to help their families improve their circumstances, so we connect families with resources in the community.

In recent years, we have worked with The Fig Tree on producing the Resource Directory. It's a wonderful tool for our families. We share printed copies with families. They appreciate having those copies and accessing the resources online. Most of our young families live on their phones, so online access is a huge benefit for them.

We appreciate the comprehensive nature of the directory. As a publicly funded entity, we are not religious, but the directory is not just for religious organizations. It covers all the resources in our region. We appreciate Malcolm's work to keep it up-to-date.

One of my favorite proverbs is if you want to go fast go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. For the low-income community we serve, it's more important that we go far. So we appreciate the opportunity to partner with The Fig Tree to help the community go far.

Terri Schibel
Spokane County Headstart/ECEAP

The Fig Tree was not at the top of my reading list when I sold insurance. The first week after I began at the church 15 years ago, a man brought a big stack of Fig Trees and set them on the counter. I picked up one and that introduced me to a world of diversity, stories of other faiths and things going on in our area. It encouraged me to go into the Browne's Addition neighborhood to listen to stories of the diverse people living there—from a wealthy neighbor to an alcoholic living on the street.

That led our church to find ways to use our 18,000-square-foot building. Neighbors have joined church people in doing ministry.

Over the years the stack of Fig Trees goes fast at our church. It introduces us to many local ministries. Now All Saints houses the Southwest Community Center in our basement, with preschoolers and a summer program for older children.

I used to think diversity meant we had both Germans and Swedes, but there's more than that. A Russian Pentecostal church meets in our basement Sundays.

The partnerships and love that go into the neighborhood, and the stress of having neighbors who don't appreciate aspects of our ministry are part of being in a diverse community.

I thank The Fig Tree for being a source of encouragement, writing articles about our ministry as it progresses.

Alan Eschenbacher
Pastor of All Saints
Lutheran Church



Calendar of Events

- April** • **Sexual Assault Awareness Month**, lcsnw.org
- Apr 6** • **Smithsonian National Museum** traveling exhibition, "Changing America: The Emancipation Proclamation, 1863, and the March on Washington, 1963," Cheney Cowles Memorial Library, Whitworth, 777-4488
- Apr 7** • **Laura Thaut Vinson lecture**, "When Religion Becomes a Source of Violence: Insights from Muslim-Christian Communal Violence in Northern Nigeria," Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7:30 p.m., 777-3834.
- **"Living in History: For Indian Country** the 2016 Election Will Be One for the Books," Mark Trahan, journalism professor at the University of North Dakota," Hemmingson Center, Gonzaga University, 12:15 p.m.
- **"Islamophobia and Anti-Terrorism,"** panel discussion, Jundt Art Center at Gonzaga, 6 p.m., boyerb@gonzaga.edu
- **Bernard Tyrrell SJ Lecture in Philosophy of God and Theology**, "Elements of Historical Praxis: Theological Perspectives on Economics, Politics and the Human Good, Fredrick Lawrence of Boston College, Jepson Center, Gonzaga, 7 p.m.
- **"This Changes Everything" film**, Hemmingson Center Auditorium, Gonzaga, 7 p.m., 313-5885
- **Disability Rights Washington Open House**, 10 N. Post St. Suite 315 and 316, 2:30 to 7 p.m., 800-565-2702, info@dr-wa.org
- Apr 8** • **Mother-Daughter Retreat**, "God's Lovely Daughter," Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Church, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr, 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Apr 10** • **Japanese Spring Food Festival**, Haru Matsuri, Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 534-7954
- Apr 11-17** • **"Get Lit!** Celebration of reading and writing, venues and schedule at getlitfestival.org
- Apr 12** • **"Changing America,"** panel on Smithsonian exhibition, Harriet Cheney Cowles Memorial Library, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4488
- **Unity in the Community Committee**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 5:30 p.m., nwunity.org
- **PFLAG Spokane**, 7 p.m., 593-0191 for location, spokanepflag.org
- Apr 13** • **10th Annual Our Kids: Our Business** luncheon with author Jonathan Kozol and training with Kent Hoffman of Circle of Security International, Spokane Convention Center, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., ourkidsourbusiness.org
- **"Global Carbon Reduction and the Fuel Sector,"** Antonio Anselmo, energy expert, Piggott Entrepreneurship Lecture, Wolff Auditorium, Jepson Hall at Gonzaga, 6:30 p.m., 313-7036, hawkka2@gonzaga.edu
- **Silent Day of Prayer**, "Understanding *Lectio Divina*: An Intimate Encounter with the Living God," Fr. Brian Sattler, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Apr 13, 20** • **"Understanding Islam,"** Shannon Dunn of Gonzaga University's Religious Studies, St. Joseph Church, Otis Orchards, 4521 N. Arden Rd., 7 p.m., 926-7113, info@stjoeparish.org
- Apr 14** • **Inland NW Fair Housing Conference**, "Strengthen Communities by Opening Doors," Jude McNeil of Odyssey, Spokane Convention Center, 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., 325-2665
- **Seniors Resource Fair**, CenterPlace, 2426 N. Discovery Pl., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 926-1937
- **"Being Intentionally Catholic,"** Breakfast with Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 8 a.m., 448-1224
- Apr 15-17** • **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** Eastern Washington Idaho Synod Assembly, Boise, 838-9871, www.ewaidsynod.org
- Apr 16** • **Vietnamese Heritage Day** Celebration, Service Station, 9315 N. Nevada, 1 to 4 p.m., 466-1696
- **South Asia Cultural Association**, Indian classical music with Anapama Bhagwat on Sitar and Ravi Albright on Tabla, Unity Spiritual Center, 2900 S. Bernard St., 2 to 4 p.m., 467-5558, sacaspokane@gmail.com
- **Lands Council's "April Showers Auction and Dinner,"** Davenport Grand Hotel, 5 p.m., 838-4912
- Apr 16-24** • **Compassion Games**, "Love This Place! Serve the Earth" Week, One Peace Many Paths, 536-2811, onepeacemanypaths@gmail.com
- Apr 16-26** • **Earth Day/Week** events Inland Northwest, see pages 1 and 3
- Apr 17** • **Susan G. Komen – Race for the Cure**, Downtown Spokane, 9 a.m., 570-3267, komeneasternwashington.org
- **Spokane FAVs' Faith Feast**, Cathedral of St. John, 4 p.m., IHRC and Unity Center, emilygeddes@spokanefav.com
- Apr 18** • **NAACP Spokane Meeting**, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m., spokanenaacp@gmail.com
- Apr 19** • **Whitworth University Theatre**, "Mr. Darwin's Tree," Weyerhaeuser Hall, 7 p.m., 777-4424
- Apr 21** • **"Justice for Self-Defense: A Conversation** with Yvonne Wanrow Swan," on criminal justice reform, 6 p.m., 838-7870
- **Baha'i Meet the Neighbors**, Davenport Hotel Marie Antoinette Room, 10 S. Post, 6 to 8 p.m.
- **"Carl Maxey: A Fighting Life" film** and panel with KSPS director & producer, Spark Center, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy., 7 p.m., 279-0299
- Apr 22** • **Kootenai County Task Force** on Human Relations Human Rights Banquet, "Institutional Racism and Human Rights," John Stocks of the National Education Assn., Coeur d'Alene Inn, 414 W. Appleway, 6 p.m., 208-765-3932, idahohumanrights.org
- Apr 23** • **Earth Day Celebration**, Riverfront Park, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 209-2408, apparish@landscouncil.org
- Apr 24** • **"Growing Hope,"** Fundraiser for Project Hope Spokane, Kendall Yards, 1335 W. Summit Pkwy, 6 p.m., 724-0139, james@projecthopespokane.org
- **Sikh Temple of Spokane Open House**, 1420 N. Barker, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 892-3799, subarnaftouranagra@gmail.com
- Apr 26** • **Trish Morita-Mullaney** of Purdue, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month lecture, "Asian Americans Navigating the In-Between Spaces: Busting the Binaries," Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4215
- **United Nations Association Spokane**, Jepson Hall 111, Gonzaga, 6 p.m., chapter meeting; Wolff Auditorium, 7 p.m., Gonzaga Model UN students, "Model UN Conferences in Portland and New York," taninchev@gonzaga.edu
- Apr 27** • **Mission Community Outreach Center**, 20th Anniversary "Fox on the Fairway" Benefit, Spokane Civic Theatre, 1020 N. Howard, 536-1084, 4mission.org
- Apr 28** • **Wil Gafney** of Brite Divinity School, Women's History Month Lecture, "Womanist Midrash: A Womanist Approach to Reading, Translating and Interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures," Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4371
- Apr 29** • **Stand Against Racism:** Courageous Conversation on "How Communities are Impacted When Public Officials Normalize Hate," YWCA Spokane, 930 N. Monroe, 11:30 a.m., 326-1190, ericas@ywcaspokane.org
- Apr 29- May 1** • **Pacific Northwest Conference** United Church of Christ Annual Meeting, Wenatchee, 206-725-8383, pncucc.org
- Apr 30** • **Sukiyaki Dinner**, Highland Park United Methodist Church, 611 S. Garfield, noon to 6 p.m., 535-2687, hp-spokane.org
- May 4** • **Fig Tree distribution and mailing**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m., 535-1813
- **Amy Goodman, Democracy Now!** KYRS Benefit, Lewis and Clark High School Auditorium 521 W. 4th Ave., 7 p.m., 747-3012, kyrs.org
- May 5** • **The Fig Tree Meetings**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon - Benefit, 1 to 3 p.m., Board, 535-1813
- **Yom HaShoah**, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th, 7 p.m., 747-3304
- May 6** • **NAACP Spokane Spaghetti Feed and Silent Auction**, East Central Community Center, 5 to 8 p.m., 209-2425, spokanenaacp@gmail.com

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 Auction & Dinner

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 Saturday, April 23rd 10-4

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New human rights task force advocates for, brings justice to vulnerable people

As president of the new non-partisan, non-government, non-profit Spokane County Human Rights Task Force, Dean Lynch helped launch on March 8 the organization to confront discrimination, bigotry, hate speech and other attacks on human beings and institutions.

“Hatred, spewed by individuals, groups or organizations, usually comes from an individual or a small number of people,” he said. “The Southern Poverty Law Center reports eight hate groups in Washington and eight in Idaho.”

Dean listed recent acts of hate: the January 2011 backpack bomb planted on the Martin Luther King Day march route, the October 2014 painting of a swastika on an interior courtyard at Temple Beth Shalom, the July 2015 painting of “death to Islam” on the Bosnia-Herzegovina Heritage Association of Spokane building where 40 people were at a Ramadan event, and the March 2016 desecration of the Sikh Temple of Spokane.

“In each instance, those whose religious institutions were defaced felt violated, victimized, hurt, scared and angry,” Dean said. “Each incident violated the dignity and civil rights of people. When one is attacked, it makes all of us feel less safe.”

He said one can respond with anger or as the Sikh community did by offering tea to the intruder.

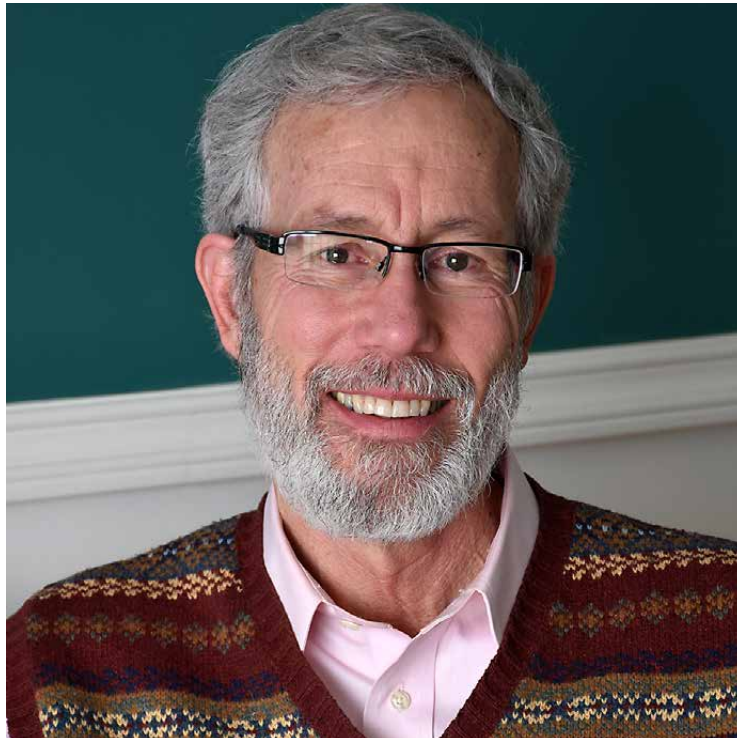
“We can also respond by standing up for those victimized by prejudice, discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes,” he said.

Dean said plans for the task force arose several years ago in a conversation of Lisa Rosier, then chair of the City of Spokane Human Rights Commission, and Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich. Believing a county human rights organization was needed, they consulted with Tony Stewart and others in the 35-year-old Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations; Raymond Reyes, vice president of diversity at Gonzaga; local elected officials and human rights advocates.

From those discussions, they formed a group that met for 18 months to develop the following goals and tasks for the Spokane County Human Rights Task Force (SCHRTF):

- It will monitor, document and oppose hate activity, hate crimes and incidents of malicious harassment. It will assist individuals and communities victimized by prejudice and bigotry.

- It will monitor and assist individuals or communities that experience discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, creed,



Dean Lynch discusses the new human rights task force.

gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or social and/or economic status.

- It will promote human rights education that advocates positive, accurate information and celebrates the acceptance of diversity and pluralism by people in the county. This includes reaching out to the public, as well as the educational community from kindergarten through higher education.

- It will partner with other human rights groups in the region to serve as allies in ongoing work and support people who face discrimination or hate activity.

The 23 board members are from a cross section of the community, human rights groups, the faith community, education, business, government; racial, ethnic and cultural diversity; gender and gender identity; disability, and sexual orientation.

The SCHRTF is an umbrella organization, networking with other human rights and civic groups.

In addition to monthly meetings, there will be committees—legislative, legal, finance, community involvement, victim support and education—that involve more people.

He anticipates partnering with entities such as local universities, the Interfaith Council, the Human Rights Education Institute in

Idaho and public schools.

The directors understand that each community includes diversity and no one can speak to all aspects, differences and unique qualities and issues of the community to which they belong.

“We are more than our labels. We each are complex individuals, speaking only of our personal experiences, but we can speak to feelings of being hurt, to being victims, to injustice, to the outrage of individuals targeted. We can speak out with love, compassion and empathy, with our presence and our resources,” said Dean.

Dean then shared some of the diverse components of his life, growing up on a farm in Quincy, graduating in 1974 in sociology at Washington State University, doing an internship with Lutheran Community Services, working at Expo 1974 and then hitchhiking nearly eight months in 17 nations from the Pacific to Europe, where he visited his paternal grandmother’s homeland, Denmark.

In Spokane, he has worked as a group home director, a licensed foster parent, in child protective services, in foster parent training, and as agency licenser. His volunteering included Boy Scouts and teaching Sunday school at Plymouth Congregational Church.

Dean became involved in the

Browne’s Addition Neighborhood Council shortly after moving there in 1982, and now he is on the Rockwood Neighborhood Council where he lives.

After retiring in 1999, Dean became more involved in the larger community and politics. He was appointed to fill a City Council term and helped the Human Rights Commission develop a nondiscrimination ordinance that included the LGB (lesbian, gay and bisexual) community.

He has also been involved with the Spokane AIDS Network, the Eastern Washington AIDS Resource Council and as a HIV/AIDS instructor with the Department of Social and Health Services. He is also a member of the Spokane Transit Authority Citizens Advisory Committee.

Dean, who is from the LGBT community, shared about his life to exemplify how each board member brings perspectives beyond one constituency.

Others on the board include Yvonne Lopez-Morton of the Hispanic community; Hershel

Zellman, the Jewish community; Raymond Reyes, the higher education community; Ben Cabildo, the Asian-American community; Sima Thorpe, the disability community; Happy Watkins, the faith community; Anna Cutler, the immigrant community; Admir Rasic the Muslim community; Jamie Sijohn, the Native American community, and Mark Richard, the business community. The four members at large are Marilee Roloff of VOA, Regina Malveaux of the YWCA, Rob McCann of Catholic Charities and Lisa Rosier. They are still recruiting people for open seats.

“I don’t know if I am culturally competent, but I hope I’m culturally always sensitive and ready to learn,” said Dean, who has traveled globally as well as interacting with various ethnic groups in Spokane.

“My life’s purpose is to advocate for those less able to advocate for themselves and to bring justice for all,” he said.

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