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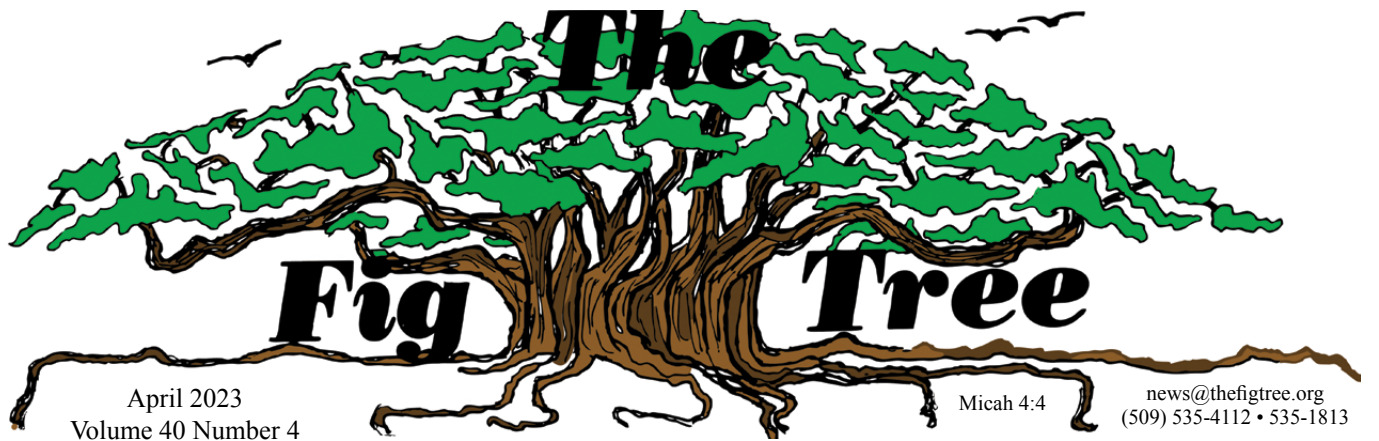
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# Synod companions practice ubuntu

By Mary Stamp

Because of the companion relationship between the Northwest Intermountain (NWIM) Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Ulanga-Kilombero Diocese (UKD) in Tanzania, the theme for the April 28 to 30 Synod Assembly in Pasco is a Swahili phrase, “Bega Kwa Bega,” which means “shoulder-to-shoulder.”

It expresses how people within area congregations and between the synod and diocese share in ministry.

They practice “ubuntu,” an understanding that “I am because you are. What happens to me affects you. What happens to you affects me,” said Heidi Cryer, who is chair of the Synod Companion Synod Committee. “It is an understanding of compassion, being together, walking together and living together.”

Sometimes, however, U.S. politics has impeded visits of Tanzanian companion diocese leaders. Recently the U.S. embassy denied visas to the bishop’s assistant and a nurse who had planned to come to the assembly and visit in the region.

Bishop Kristen Kuempel of the



Heidi Cryer finds empowerment in ties with Lutheran diocese in Tanzania.

NWIM Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Bishop Renard Mtenji of the Ulanga Kilombero Diocese wrote letters to the U.S. embassy to express the importance of face-to-face visits to nurture relationships.

The embassy then granted a visa to another UKD leader, Philorian Mpendaye, the general secretary of the UKD, said Heidi, who is also deacon at Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Kennewick.

The Ulanga and Kilombero districts are in South Central Tanzania. The Ulanga and Kilombero rivers meet at Ifakara, the diocesan headquarters.

Heidi said it’s a poor rural area where 90 to 95 percent of the people are subsistence farmers. There are few tourists, so synod visitors are among the few white people the Tanzanians see.

“Ulanga-Kilombero has been our companion synod/diocese since 1988 when the American Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church in America and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches merged to form the ELCA,” said Heidi. “The new church reassigned previous companions to connect U.S. churches

Continued on page 4

## Gonzaga has a rabbi, a Torah and campus ministry for Jewish students

By Abby Strader - Intern

Founded by Jesuits in 1887, Gonzaga University is a Catholic institution.

Its religious identity is evident in the crucifixes decorating every classroom and the church bells ringing across campus on the half hour.

However, in recent years, Gonzaga has made strides in welcoming the presence of cultures and religions other than Catholicism.

Elizabeth Goldstein is a religious studies professor, the sole rabbi on campus and an advocate

for expanding opportunities and resources and for increasing the level of comfort for Jewish students at Gonzaga.

Elizabeth was born in New Jersey and raised Jewish.

“My parents were committed to our cultural and religious heritage. We celebrated all the holidays and had pride in being Jewish,” she said.

She attended a Hebrew parochial school following the Yeshiva model, where she learned more about sacred texts and laws, and built upon the foundation her parents had established

for her. Morning instruction focused on religion, and afternoons included classes like math and science.

“I knew I wanted to become a rabbi when I was 14,” said Elizabeth.

As a teenager, she remembers having strong spiritual experiences and wanting to spend more time with God.

After graduating from Dartmouth College, she went to Israel. This year-long trip prepared her for five years of seminary, first at the Conservative-tradition Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. Then, after a year as a hospital chaplain in San Francisco, she completed her studies at the Reform-tradition Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 2001. She was ordained that year as a rabbi.

Elizabeth taught for two years in Jewish communities in San Francisco and earned a doctorate in biblical studies from the University of California, San Diego in 2010 before she came

Continued on page 6

## The Fig Tree Spring Benefit fund drive raises \$35,000

The Fig Tree has raised \$35,000—88 percent of its goal—in funds and pledges from its 2023 Spring Benefit, which included an in-person lunch with 220 people and a breakfast-time Zoom gathering with nearly 50. Donations continue to come by mail and online.

**The goal is \$40,000 for the spring drive** to ensure The Fig Tree has funds to cover the costs of printing, distribution, staff and interns to make its publications and programs possible.

“We have a 2023 budget of \$228,000, including support from newspaper and directory ads, and directory community partners,” said Mary Stamp, editor.

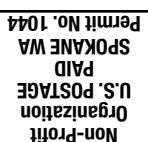
“**We recently received grants** from Advent Lutheran for \$1,300 and \$500 from the Cathedral of St. John Outreach Committee,” she added. “Donations from local and regional churches/faiths are an ongoing source of support.”

**For our 2023 benefits on “Sharing Resources:** Transforming Lives” speakers focused many of their comments on the 50th year of the Resource Directory. Excerpts from their comments are in the Sounding Board on page 14.

“**We have the feature video online.** It tells the history and impact of the Resource Directory in about six minutes. We hope that our supporters will continue to share our story by sharing that video with others and inviting them to donate,” Mary said.

“**We are using clips from the speakers’** three-minute comments to continue appeals on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter,” she added. “It’s refreshing to hear their comments, reminding us of the importance of what we do.”

For information, call 535-4112, email [mary@thefigtree.org](mailto:mary@thefigtree.org) or visit [thefigtree.org/donate.html](http://thefigtree.org/donate.html) or <https://www.youtube.com/user/thefigtree1323/videos>.



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# General secretary of Ulanga-Kilombero Diocese visits NWIM Synod

Philorian Mpendaye, general secretary of the Ulanga-Kilombero Diocese (EKD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, will be a guest of the Northwest Intermountain (NWIM) Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) from April 10 to May 23.

He will meet delegates at the Synod Assembly from April 28 to 30 in Pasco and will visit people in the synod's 12 clusters and many of the 90 congregations in Eastern Washington and Idaho.

It is his second visit. Previously, Philorian was in the synod from March 1 to May 4, 2001, on a teacher exchange, primarily in Bonners Ferry schools.

His presence then and now gives a human face to the synod's companionship with the UKD.

In 2001, he visited parishes and schools to learn strategies of education by observing classes and talking with teachers.

Then he returned to Tanzania where he integrated ideas and developed a teachers' guide that described a more interactive teaching-learning style to be used by teachers in church-managed secondary schools in Tanzania, including at Tumaini Seminary in Malinyi.

"I saw how U.S. teachers and students had more flexibility and freedom. U.S. schools have more discussions to help students think critically," Philorian said.

He not only brought ideas into his own teaching at Tumaini, but



**Philorian Mpendaye values friends in NW Intermountain Synod.**  
Photos courtesy of Philorian Mpendaye and Moses Nuaka



**Students dance inside Tumaini assembly hall.**



**Moses Nuaka shows a plentiful crop, and last year's poor crop.**

also held seminars for teachers in church-managed schools in the Eastern Zone of Tanzania and shared them with colleagues until 2008, when he became general secretary of the diocese.

Now living in Ifakara as general secretary, Philorian is in charge of the diocesan business matters as chief executive and accounting officer.

He oversees the work of the diocese, supervises heads of departments and institutions, and undertakes the administrative and employment responsibilities in all diocesan units—the head office, departments, districts, parishes and institutions. He prepares agendas of the General Assembly, Executive Council, and the executive, constitutional, finance and human resource committees in consultation with the bishop.

Philorian also implements resolutions of the assembly, council and committees. He manages employee matters, including acquisition, training, supervising and assuring welfare and retirement benefits.

Bishop Renard Mtenji is primarily the spiritual leader but he undertakes administrative tasks, too.

Since 2013, Philorian has also been secretary of companionships, which are with two German Evangelical Lutheran synods—Central Germany, Bavaria—and with the Langenhorn Tansania Arbeitskreis, the Berlin Mission Work and Lugala Arbeitskreis, the Danish Lutheran Mission, SoliadrMed and the NWIM Synod.

Each of those companionships brings relationships and assists

with ministries, the hospital and school.

Companions helped build an assembly hall at Tumaini so students, who previously ate outside and ran into a classroom during the rainy season, had an indoor place to eat. Partners have also provided small classrooms and houses for staff and teachers, Philorian said.

The synod contributed to constructing the Martin Luther Spiritual and Conference Center.

To increase security, a wall is now being built around Tumaini, a boarding school with 106 students.

"It is important for our companionship ties to be first about proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as to extend hospitality to strengthen relationships with one another through the shared practices of prayer, presence and discussion of challenges in doing God's mission," said Philorian.

"These relationships influence our lives as we serve our common Lord Jesus Christ," he commented.

He also highlighted the impact of NWIM Synod Women in supporting the education of 20 girls a year at Tumaini.

One is now studying for a master's in mass communication in Germany. Some are nurses, hospital technicians and pastors. Many are active in their churches and communities.

One woman who graduated from Tumaini is a pastor and currently is pursuing a doctoral degree in theology at Tumaini University Makumira in Arusha, he pointed out.

## Black Maternal Health Week is April 11 to 17

Black Maternal Health Week, April 11 to 17, focuses on improving Black maternal health and preventing pregnancy-related deaths by understanding Black women's stories and empowering doulas of color.

Stephaine Courtney, a Black woman, leader, creative writer, certified doula and mother, founded Shades of Motherhood and The Learning Project Network on maternal health.

She launched "Building for Liberation: Centering Black Mamas, Families and Systems of Care," a community's Black Maternal Health Week with support of Better Health Together. It includes outreach and storytelling, plus recruiting and training Black doulas.

According to the Center for Disease Control, Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women, said Stephanie.

Behind the disparities are healthcare inequities, chronic conditions, structural racism and implicit bias, she added.

The week begins with a Grand Opening on amplifying Black women's voices, Tuesday at the Carl Maxey Center.

Awareness and Empowerment Day is Wednesday, Policy and Poetry is Thursday and a Movie Series is Friday. The films are "American Dream Aftershock" at 1 p.m.; "Black Women in Medicine" at 3 p.m., and "The Deadliest Disease in America: Birth Justice," at 6 p.m.

An art exhibit, "Black Mamas Matter," on Friday at the Carl Maxey Center, features photos by Shakayla Delcambre on her

struggle with addiction and being a mother.

There is a Saturday Maternal Health Conference, "Wrapping Ourselves in Joy: Reclaiming Our Stories," and a Doula and Birth Resource Fair at the Washington State University College of Medicine. Sunday is Sisterhood Sunday, and Monday is "Girl, Get a Doula" podcast.

For information, visit [tlpnet-work.org](http://tlpnet-work.org).

## Immigrant groups seek access

The Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network recently brought advocates for undocumented people to meet legislators in Olympia. The Spokane Immigrant Rights Coalition recruited members of the Hispanic Business Professional Assn. (HBPA), Latinos en Spokane and Mujeres in Action (MIA) to advocate for a living wage, health care access and unemployment benefits.

They told legislators that in the pandemic, many essential

workers were undocumented or immigrants. Now they seek access to fair wages and more.

Latinos en Spokane trains on filing taxes and the Working Family Tax Credit. HBPA helps with financial aid applications, starting a business and navigating the health system. MiA, has a 24/7 helpline and advice on sexual assault.

For information, visit [latinosenspokane.org](http://latinosenspokane.org), [hbpaspokane.org](http://hbpaspokane.org) or [miaspokane.org](http://miaspokane.org).

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# Interacting with students is rabbi's favorite part of her role at Gonzaga

Continued from page 1  
to Gonzaga to teach courses in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament).

"If you would have told me that this would be my job, I would have said no way," said Elizabeth.

Interacting with the students and being in a college classroom every day has become her favorite part of her role as campus rabbi at Gonzaga.

"My job is to help people figure out their Jewish identity. I feel like I help my students shape their identity and who they are, but particularly I feel like I can do a service in helping Jewish students formulate and grow their own Jewish identity. For non-Jewish students, I can help them understand Jewish people and the Jewish religion better."

At GU, Elizabeth also serves as an advisor to the Jewish club on campus called the Jewish Bulldogs.

"There were always Jews here, but there was never an organized community," Elizabeth said.

Formed in 2014, the Jewish Bulldogs serves as a home base for Jewish people across campus and now includes more than 30 students. It is student run and driven, and also encourages students of other faiths who want to learn about Judaism to attend.

Students of diverse backgrounds attend the Jewish Bulldog meetings. Some were raised in Judaism, others were not but have Jewish heritage, and some just want to learn more about the faith.

The Jewish Bulldogs hold worship services for Holy Days, do Torah study, hold monthly Shabbat meals and gather for small group spiritual exploration.

"My goal is that the group provides a space where students can talk about Jewish identity, where they can pray and go to worship services for the Sabbath, and have community," said Elizabeth.

Part of Elizabeth's role as advisor to the Bulldogs was acquiring a Torah for the students to use on campus. Since October 2021, it has been located in the Jewish sacred space, which is



Rabbi Elizabeth Goldstein shows ark holding the Torah.



Rabbi Elizabeth Goldstein holds Gonzaga's Torah.

one of the non-denominational worship spaces on the third floor of College Hall.

To bring a Torah, she submitted a proposal to Gonzaga's Office of Mission and Ministry and then asked University Advancement for assistance in fund raising.

"Shanna Dunne in the office of development helped raise funds for this acquisition," said Elizabeth.

A new Torah can cost \$40,000 to \$60,000, but refurbished ones run from \$9,000 to \$20,000. They set a goal of \$15,000 and raised funds from alumni, Gonzaga and the community.

Eventually, the Torah arrived on campus from Sofer On Site, an organization that revamps damaged or used Torahs and gives them a new life.

Gonzaga's Torah was placed in an ark crafted by a set builder from the Gonzaga University

Performing Arts Center.

Elizabeth, former Jewish Bulldogs President, Hannah Zeva Presken, and other Jewish staff members all assisted in designing the piece.

Hebrew letters "Eitz Hayyim" (Tree of Life) spread across the doors of the ark.

Having a Torah allows Jewish students to participate in worship and experience Holy Days without having to leave the Gonzaga campus.

During the COVID-19 shutdown, Elizabeth understood that accessibility to resources like a Torah was important for students.

Since providing one on campus, she said, many students have expressed interest in learning more parts of the worship service, such as how to chant from the Torah.

"I wanted to increase Jewish visibility on campus. I wanted people to have a sense of pride in being Jewish, and I realized that having a Torah would create a sense of Jewish designation."

She also organizes High Holy Day worship services for students on campus, the first of them being Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Rosh Hashanah is also known as Jewish New Year and was celebrated by Bulldogs on Sept. 25. Yom Kippur, the "Day of Atonement," services were on Oct. 5.

The Yom Kippur celebration included several different events throughout the day—a morning service, a meditative service, an evening discussion about Jewish identity, a closing service or Nalliah, and a "break the fast" event for students.

Although Gonzaga is taking steps to increase comfortability, many Jewish students still struggle psychologically with attending school on a Catholic

campus, where most people don't know about their culture or lifestyle, explained Elizabeth.

To promote greater understanding and respect among diverse people, Gonzaga's Center for the Study of Hate examines the impact of hate on individuals and offers culturally significant events for Jewish people, like a recent exhibit on Americans and the Holocaust.

"I have worked closely with the Center for the Study of Hate and support their work. In the last few years, they have supported my efforts to build a Jewish community on campus," said Elizabeth.

As more students come to Gonzaga, Elizabeth is hopeful she can continue to educate students of all backgrounds about Judaism.

"When I drive to work every day, I feel happy," she said. "Even though sometimes there is ignorance, for the most part people just want to learn and grow. I feel that's why students come to a place like Gonzaga."

For information, email goldstein@gonzaga.edu.

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# Manzanita House equips immigrants to grow roots in Spokane

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

In its first year, the staff of the recently incorporated Manzanita House in Spokane have worked hard to accomplish their mission “to embrace, equip and empower immigrants through access to culturally informed essential services and facilitate connections to grow deeper roots and thrive in Spokane.”

Inspired by the resilience of the manzanita plant that withstands and thrives in the wake of wildfires, Spokane organizers chose the name Manzanita House because they both see and seek to nurture resiliency in the immigrant community.

## What has this meant?

Building on personal experiences and experiences working with World Relief, Manzanita House included two refugees on its initial board of directors.

Three others have become staff members. Patricia Castaneda, an immigrant on the original board, is the executive director. Brielle Balazs is the development director, and Samuel Smith is the immigration attorney and the director of Manzanita Immigrant Legal Aid.

Other staff members are Estelita Orellana, an immigrant from Mexico working as a Department of Justice accredited representative, Daryoosh Kabeen, an immigrant from Afghanistan working as administrative specialist with Samuel, and Samantha Walters, the language program coordinator with Lamyaa Mohhammad from Iraq, who is the Arabic lead teacher.

They operate out of second-floor offices they rent from Knox Presbyterian Church in North Central Spokane.

The board quickly identified three gaps in services for refugees and immigrants: legal aid, culturally appropriate access to needed services, and community outreach to ensure that immigrants and refugees have the resources needed to live in Spokane.

In a little over a year of operation, they have developed four programs to respond to what the immigrant and refugee community identified as needs.

“We have legal aid, of course, and then community outreach activities, our language program and a program entitled Cultural Education and Implementation Program,” Patricia said.

They continue to recruit vol-



Brielle Balazs, Samantha Walters and Patricia Castaneda stand beside art of manzanita plant.

Photo courtesy of Manzanita House

unteers to help with activities.

Three of the programs—legal aid, language education and community outreach—are now in operation.

Brielle first highlighted their legal aid program. Recently they became officially a Department of Justice-accredited organization, which means Manzanita Immigrant Legal Aid will be able to help more clients with their immigration cases. It also is now offering Citizenship Assistance, available for free to many clients through a new grant.

As of January, with one immigration attorney and one paralegal, they served 385 persons from 49 countries, more than one quarter of them being new arrivals from Afghanistan.

“The cost has been one-fourth to one-third of what these services would normally have cost,” she pointed out.

They also have partnered with others to offer multiple asylum clinics and workshops that several hundred people have attended.

Second, Patricia explained their unique language program.

Instead of teaching English, they teach children of refugees and immigrants their heritage language.

As families with young children arrive, the children begin to attend school and make new friends. The children quickly learn English and begin to assimilate into their new culture, Patricia said.

As time progresses, the children lose their ability to understand their parents’ language and become less able to communicate in that language, leading to communication difficulties within the family compounded by cultural differences.

“This past summer we had a pilot program of eight weeks for

Arabic at the Northeast Community Center, run completely by volunteers,” she said. “When the eight weeks were over, the participants asked: ‘When are we going to start again?’ So, we knew the pilot was a success and we had a good thing going.”

They held a second Arabic language program early in January 2023, enrolling 36 children in Arabic speaking families. Those attending were from six countries, including Sudan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Libya.

Growing out of that program, Women’s Teatime was born as a space for mothers, grandmothers and all women from the Arabic speaking communities to be together. It is a welcoming space to practice conversational English, hear from community partners and access resources—creating connections, building community and strengthening families.

Further, because they plan now to expand the program to other languages, such as Dari and Pashto for Afghani immigrants, and Karen for immigrants from Myanmar and Thailand, they have also hired Samantha as the language program coordinator to ensure the program’s quality.

Their third program is community outreach, which has been done in partnership with other organizations in Spokane that work with immigrants and refugees: Thrive Center, Refugee and Immigrant Connections and the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

With these organizations and others, they held a collaborative coat drive to give away more than 700 coats.

Activities they use to help new arrivals feel welcome include resource fairs, a soccer tournament for young people and community block parties.

“We support any humanitarian or family-based immigration services for immigrants and

refugees,” Brielle said.

Patricia described the fourth program Manzanita House is developing—the Cultural Education and Implementation Program (CEIP).

“We want to work with partners in Spokane to assure that those who serve immigrants and refugees are culturally informed in ways that allow their services to be truly beneficial to their clients,” she pointed out.

To this end they will be working with CHAS community health clinics to provide education and resources.

“It is not enough to simply provide language translation,” Patricia said. “We also need to be sure that what happens is culturally appropriate.”

As a startup organization working with immigrants and refugees, Manzanita House has received significant funding from grants and private donors, such as the Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund.

Group Health Foundation has awarded a three-year grant for operations allowing Manzanita House to hire permanent staff.

The Washington State Bar Association has assisted with their legal aid operations.

Avista helped them offer their pilot Arabic class last summer.

The Department of Health supported their efforts at COVID outreach and education to immigrant and refugee communities.

Patricia expressed gratitude to these organizations for helping the immigrant and refugee communities of Spokane have the services they need “to become productive and happy in their new country.”

Patricia grew up in a family with eight children in Venezuela. She came into this work because she was an immigrant who left Venezuela in 1997. She first lived for five years in England.

“I always wanted to help people,” she said. “I started in tourism, helping people with travel. Then I earned a bachelor’s degree in business, including management and marketing.”

From England, she went to Florida and North Carolina.

“In each place, I started nonprofits to help Spanish-speaking people have a better life and become good citizens,” said Patricia, who has earned a certificate of leadership from Gonzaga since coming to Spokane.

For information, email [pcastaneda@mhspokane.org](mailto:pcastaneda@mhspokane.org).

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# Get Lit! Festival makes Spokane 'a literary city,' draws poet laureate

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

Over its 25-year history, organizers designed Eastern Washington University's Get Lit! Festival to highlight writers.

Get Lit! covers many different genres from the traditional fiction, nonfiction and poetry to memoirs, playwriting, prose, journalism, true crime and personal coming-of-age stories.

Festival events take place Thursday to Sunday, April 20 to 23, primarily in venues like The Bing Crosby Theater, the Central Library, the HIVE, the Montvale Event Center and Kendall Yards sites. It features more than 40 events and more than 80 authors.

"As a community and regional tradition for 25 years, Get Lit! has helped make Spokane the vibrant literary city it is today," said Kate Peterson, Get Lit! director.

**The highlight for Get Lit! 2023** is that U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón speaks at 7 p.m., Saturday, April 22, at The Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague.

"We are especially happy to celebrate poetry in a time when some people try to say poetry is dead," she said. "We want to celebrate our 25th by highlighting the ways poetry can connect us and show us our humanity."

Kate hopes that will draw people who have not normally attended and allow Ada to "elevate, celebrate and speak to poetry's role—the power and potential of this art form."

Spokane poet Laura Read and Seattle poet Gabrielle Bates will read from their poetry and converse on the power of poetry to connect people.

**Ada will also offer** "How to Start a Poem: A Craft Class," from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., Friday, April 21, at the Spokane Central Library.

"Her poetry connects us with the wider world. She is a people's poet. Her work is accessible as she shows all sides of humanity in her work, the scary and wonderful parts," said Kate.

"The festival celebrates the power of the written word. We aim to inspire writers to be creative and show how an idea or an essay can take hold to help a community better understand a



**Kate Peterson is director of Get Lit!** Photo courtesy of Kate Peterson

topic. We want to create space for conversations where people can learn from each other," she said.

**An event, "25 Years Later: Celebrating the Festival's Founders,"** at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 22, at the Montvale Event Center, is a conversation with two of the Get Lit! Festival founders, writers and editors, Christopher Howell and Christine Holbert, moderated by Dan Butterworth.

They will share how they wanted to create a "literary vortex" in this region, how the festival came to be and how the scene has changed in 25 years. It has become a space for best-selling authors, small presses and decades-long poetry open mics. Christopher will also read from his latest poetry collection.

Get Lit! also celebrates how Spokane writers' works make this community "a vibrant space for writers, a place where they can be inspired to write their own work or even make their own zines," said Kate.

"There is a lot going on in Spokane for writers and artists. Live events are coming back to life now after years of dealing with COVID restrictions. We hope that a space like our Book Fair, which brings together more than 20 local and regional bookish organizations, can help to remind us how strong our community still is," said Kate, who moved to the Pacific Northwest from New Jersey in 2012.

In 2010, she received a bachelor's in writing arts at Rowan University in New Jersey and in 2014, a master's in fine arts in the Eastern Washington University (EWU) creative writing program in poetry.

headlining authors by word of mouth from agents and publishers. They pay for the festival through grants, community partnerships, ticket sales and fundraising efforts.

**In thinking of topics** important in today's world, organizers include conversations that should be happening.

"It's important to celebrate the power we have as writers to educate our community," she said.

For instance, Toni Jensen, a nonfiction writer, will offer "Combining the Personal and Political: A Craft Class" on how to communicate issues of Indigenous land rights and gun violence from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., Friday, April 21, at the Spokane Central Library.

Some writers, including ones from the region, will talk about climate change and explore histories of the Inland Northwest and women of the West.

This year's Get Lit! Festival includes some tabletop role-playing events that help show the creativity of people who play the games, come up with a story in their heads and present in real time.

At another event, Betsy Aoki, a fiction writer, poet and game designer, shares how she combines technology, poetry and Japanese folklore.

Laramie Dean, a Missoula writer, will participate in a panel on underrepresented writers in

fantasy, horror, post-apocalyptic fiction and science fiction.

There will also be a virtual Ukrainian poetry session, in which writers from Ukraine will share poetry on their experiences.

**Cascadia Field Guide** will offer two sessions to engage with art, poetry and stories, connecting readers to the landscape of Cascadia, and life in the region from Southeast Alaska to Northern California.

"Cascadia Field Guide: Art, Ecology and Poetry," at 1 p.m., Saturday, April 22, in the Montvale Event Center, is a conversation with the guide's contributors and editors.

"Walking Spokane's Wilds with Cascadia Field Guide," an immersive outdoor nature hike with poets in the wilds of downtown Spokane, starts at 4 p.m., Sunday, April 23, at High Bridge Park.

At 7 p.m., Sunday, April 23, a session at the Central Library celebrates local writers with authors Jess Walter—*The Cold Millions*—and Leyna Krow—*Fire Season*—in conversation with best-selling Spokane writer, Sharma Shields.

Many events are free and ticketed events are low cost. To encourage young people to attend, EWU offers free tickets for students at [getlit@ewu.edu](mailto:getlit@ewu.edu).

For information, visit [www.getlitfestival.org](http://www.getlitfestival.org).

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# Conference seeks to harness collective wisdom on the roots of hate

“The Challenges of Hate in the 21st Century” is the theme for the 7th Annual International Conference on Hate Studies on Thursday to Saturday, April 20 to 22, at Spokane Community College Lair Student Center and virtually.

Gonzaga University’s Center for the Study of Hate and the Community Colleges of Spokane are co-sponsors of this event gathering speakers from around the world to address manifestations of hate.

**The Friday evening banquet** speaker is Charlene Teters, interim dean of the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, N.M., and member of the Spokane Nation. She is an artist, writer, educator and activist

who gained national recognition as a graduate student at the University of Illinois-Champaign, speaking out against depictions of American Indian caricatures in sport team mascots. She was focus of an award-winning documentary, “In Whose Honor?” by Jay Rosenstein.

**Other speakers include:**

• Nimmi Gowrinathan, founder of the Politics of Sexual Violence Initiative, is director of Beyond Identity: A Gendered Platform for Scholar-Activists at the City College of New York.

• Rae Jereza is a professor and researcher at the Polarization and Extremism Research Lab at American University in D.C.

• Arun Kundnani writes on

racial capitalism, Islamophobia, surveillance, political violence and Black radical movements.

• David Neiwert is an investigative journalist with Daily Kos and author of *The Age of Insurrection: The Radical Right’s Ongoing War on Democracy*.

• Nicole Nguyen is associate professor of criminology, law, justice and educational policies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and author of *A Curriculum of Fear: Homeland Security in U.S. Public Schools*.

• Zoë Samudzi, who teaches photography at Rhode Island School of Design, is a researcher at the Center for the Study of Race, Gender and Class at the University of Johannesburg.

• Arjun Sethi edits “American Hate: Survivors Speak Out,” and teaches law at Georgetown and Vanderbilt.

**The interdisciplinary forum** offers presentations on hate, social problems and ways to create socially just and inclusive communities. Ideas and plans that emerge from the event will help educators, researchers and advocates counter hatred to enhance commitments to peace, human rights and justice.

“We are stronger together’ is more than a saying when it comes to countering hatred and creating peace, human rights and justice,” said Kristine Hoover, professor of organizational leadership and past director of Gonzaga’s Center

for the Study of Hate.

While the 2021 conference was only virtual, this year’s event brings students, academics and organizations together in person and virtually.

**“Hatred is a danger** to everyone. So fighting it is a job for everyone,” said António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General in 2021. To address growing intolerance and hate-motivated violence, he urges education on root causes.

The conference seeks to harness collective wisdom. Presenters represent 51 institutions of higher education, 15 organizations, 12 countries and 17 states.

For information, visit [gonzaga.edu/icohs](http://gonzaga.edu/icohs).

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# Always asking 'why' led a young man to study and teach philosophy

By Emma Maple - Intern

Keith Wyma, professor of philosophy at Whitworth University, has built his life on asking the "why" questions. He believes it is important for everyone to learn a bit of philosophy.

"Philosophy helps us understand other people—where they're coming from and why they might act or believe the way that they do," he said.

Keith said philosophy's applicability is about more than just understanding. It's also about being able to articulate one's beliefs and why one holds a certain world view.

**For Christians, Keith said** philosophy is "doubly important" because it allows believers to recognize both where common ground is and where the real differences lie.

He said that philosophy can help people see below the surface issue and find out which core beliefs are causing a person to think in a certain way about situations.

Keith suggested that once "we reach this level, we begin to realize that issues are so complex, that we're not going to be able to completely understand them.

"If we realize that about our own beliefs and realize that about where other people are coming from, too, I think it promotes a degree of humility and compassion," Keith said.

For him, this is especially evident through philosophy of religion, which he said has taught him that it is rational to believe in God and be a Christian.

On the other hand, he said philosophy of religion has also taught him that he's not going to be able to convince everyone to be a Christian by offering demonstrative proof.

Although Keith doesn't believe one can achieve a complete proof of the Christian faith, he also doesn't think that is or should be a goal for Christians. He has seen many people who are not Christians talk about how even believing in God is irrational.

**"I think there are strong** arguments for the rationality of Christian faith," he said. "There's a difference between having a belief that's proved and having a belief that's rational. I think that's where we can come with Christian faith."

Keith said that he entered philosophy "kind of by accident."

As a child, he was always the one asking the why questions, but didn't encounter philosophy until he was a junior in high school.

Then, his older brother went to college and brought back a philosophy book. As Keith began to read the book, what he read



Keith Wyma believes philosophy helps build understanding.

Photo courtesy of Keith Wyma

made him mad.

"I thought, 'these guys are idiots,'" he said.

It also sparked excitement. He had finally found others who were asking and answering questions about existence.

When he went to college, Keith took a philosophy class during his first semester.

**"I fell in love with it,"** he said.

Even though Keith loved it, he said he still could not convince himself that he was going to "waste" his life on a philosophy degree.

Then, during the second semester of his junior year, he realized that philosophy was inevitable for him. He declared it as his major.

"I didn't choose philosophy so much as philosophy chose me. I just found something I needed to find," said Keith, who has been teaching philosophy at Whitworth University for 25 years.

He earned his undergraduate degree at Calvin University in Michigan and his graduate degree at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.

Through these institutions and Whitworth, he saw different models of Christian education. The way Whitworth does Christian education is his favorite.

At Calvin, professors must be from a Christian Reformed denomination to secure tenure. On the flip side of that, Notre Dame does not require their faculty to have any faith background.

**Keith has seen benefits** and drawbacks in those models.

"At Calvin, everybody is sort of on the same team, but because everybody must be from a particular denomination, there are questions that are not asked. There's clearly a right side on every issue because that's where

the denomination falls," he said.

At Notre Dame, Keith said that students could take a section of philosophy with a Christian professor who affirms their faith, or they could sign up for a different section and encounter an atheist professor who is disparaging Christianity.

"At Notre Dame, not everybody is on the same team, pulling on the same side," he said.

At Whitworth, Keith said, they seem to be walking the "narrow ridge." While Whitworth does require faculty and staff to sign a statement of faith, it does not require them to all be from a specific denomination.

He said this allows those who work at Whitworth to have a "unity of purpose but also a much more vigorous life of faith."

**"At Whitworth, we honor** God, follow Christ and serve humanity," he said.

However, there is also a range of opinions on what it means to accomplish those three statements.

"I think that makes for this to be an intellectually lively place," he said.

**As part of his professorship** at Whitworth, Keith is also a co-coach of the Ethics Bowl team, which he finds important for two reasons.

First, it brings together people from a variety of majors and allows them to engage with each other and different professors on interdisciplinary research.

"It brings together the best of what a liberal arts education is," he said.

Second, he considers the skills that Ethics Bowl provides the students are essential skills for their future. Some of the skills he highlights as most important are working under time pressures,

communicating effectively, responding quickly, improvising and researching.

Keith believes his role as both a professor and coach is "not simply to be a vehicle for evangelism. Rather, I think my role can be to help people of faith see the reasons they have for their faith."

For those who do not believe in Christianity, he said his role is not to change their minds, but to help them better understand and have more respect for those who do hold religious beliefs.

**Keith, who attends** Whitworth Presbyterian Church, which is in the Presbyterian Church (USA), said that he grew up in the Reformed tradition, "so that Calvinistic background is pretty steeped in me."

At Whitworth Presbyterian, he serves on the session—board of elders. He sometimes plays bass in the worship band and occasionally preaches.

During May and June this year, Keith will preach at Hamblen Park Presbyterian while the pastor is on sabbatical.

Although he finds value in the many aspects of his life, Keith says his relationship with God is most important, and his relationship with his wife and children

is a close second.

"I have a unique responsibility to them," he said. "My efforts are to make sure my children are okay in the world and have a living faith of their own. That's probably my biggest priority."

For information, email [kwyma@whitworth.edu](mailto:kwyma@whitworth.edu).

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## LINC provides sustainable produce year round

LINC Box, a local farm-to-table subscription service of Local Inland Northwest Cooperative (LINC) Foods, is now available year-round so people can access local sustainable produce beyond the growing season.

Also supplying eggs, bread, mushrooms, coffee, cheese, meat and beer, it has 14 pick-up locations and does home delivery.

It works with more than 75 farmers and artisans, vegetable farmers, ranchers and others, including local organic producers.

When organizers learned carrots, potatoes, cabbage and onions were available much of the year, they started a winter LINC Box for 25 people. Incorporating add-ons from farms in the Puget Sound Food Hub, they can offer winter

greens into the winter and spring seasons.

LINC Box has about 250 members in the winter and 350 in the summer.

“Our goal is to make sure people know how to eat locally and seasonally, and to share recipes to use some of the odd staples,” said Michelle Youngblom, crop promotions director.

“Another way to increase food security is by supporting local farmers through emergency food providers,” said Michelle. “We are contracted with the Washington State Department of Agriculture for the We Feed Washington Program, which serves emergency food partners in nine counties, distributing food for 550 to 700 households a week.”

For information, visit [lincfoods.com](http://lincfoods.com).

## NAACP, Providence expand health care careers

Spokane NAACP and Providence Health Services are partnering to provide health care career development opportunities for communities of color.

Providence recently hosted students from Rogers High School at Sacred Heart Medical Center for a hands-on educational experience, learning from nurses and surgical technicians at interactive learning stations.

The event is part of ongoing work by the Spokane NAACP Health Committee, which meets with Rogers students to make

careers in health care more accessible and create a health care system that reflects the community's diversity.

“Our committee seeks to ensure everyone who wants to work in health care has the opportunity, regardless of economic status, ethnicity or skin color,” said Elin Zander, Health Committee chair.

“We should all have the opportunity to be cared for by health care providers who not only look like us, but also understand our life experiences and culture,”

said Lisa Gardner, Spokane NAACP Branch vice president.

“If we can do that, someday our health care system will look like the community it serves, and patients will experience the comfort and care they deserve.”

“Providence is committed to diversity and inclusion by creating space for everyone to bring their perspectives, identities and life experiences to service,” said Anna Franklin, Providence chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer for Eastern Washington/Montana. “Together, we can promote health for a better world by creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce.”

For information, visit [spokane-naacp.org](http://spokane-naacp.org).

## Innovia, S-R offer book club series

Innovia Foundation and the Spokesman-Review Northwest Passages are offering a two-part Community Book Club series to encourage conversations in divisive times. Participants will read and discuss books by Pacific Northwest authors.

Mónica Guzmán's book, *I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*, will be discussed from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 2, at The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague Ave.

Erin Jones' book, *Bridges to Heal Us: Stories and Strategies for Racial Healing*, will be featured from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 31, at The Bing, 901 W. Sprague Ave.

Mónica directs Digital and Storytelling at Braver Angels, a grassroots organization for political depolarization.

Erin, a biracial, transracial adoptee of a White couple, raised in the Netherlands had to become “culturally Black” to adapt to life in the U.S. when she attended college. The educator uses her life story to help people of all races build community and disrupt

practices that divide.

“As a community foundation, we celebrate values that unite us and acknowledge the differing perspectives that sometimes divide us. Through the Community Book Clubs, we invite our region to gather as neighbors in bridge-building clubs that spark meaningful conversations, insights and connections,” said Shelly O’Quinn, CEO of Innovia.

For information, visit [innovia.org/communitybookclubs](http://innovia.org/communitybookclubs).

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- 04/29 Yours, Mine And Ours

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### DOH still provides COVID information

Washington State Department of Health is still offering information to people who have tested positive with COVID-19 on guidelines for isolation—five days—and quarantine, treatment, support—including meal and medication delivery, childcare and other services while recovering from COVID-19—and information about long COVID.

For information, visit [doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19](http://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19).

### Speaker addresses food sovereignty

Gonzaga University will host Andrea Brower, sociology lecturer, discussing “Seeds of Occupation, Seeds of Possibility,” at 5 p.m., Friday, April 28, at Gonzaga University’s Humanities Building, 1002 N. Astor.

Andrea, author of a book with that title, is an activist and scholar from the Hawaiian island of Kaua’i. Involved in environmental justice, food sovereignty and de-colonization movements, she said she will explore conditions that “led to the chemical-seed industry’s domination and testing of herbicide-resistant genetically modified technologies in the Hawaiian Islands.”

Wendy Thompson, director of the Office of Tribal Relations, and Noralis Rodriguez-Coss, Women’s and Gender Studies assistant professor, will share in the conversation on systemic injustices and intersectional resistance.

For information, call 313-6661.

### Mardi Bras provides thousands of items

For their seventh February Mardi Bras drive for women experiencing homelessness, Volunteers of America (VOA) and Transitions collected 22,547 tampons and pads, 1,309 pairs of socks, 1,688 bras, 2,090 pairs of underwear and 3,016 toiletries.

“The response was overwhelming,” said Rae-Lynn Barden, VOA’s director of communications. “We can provide months of supplies to women.”

Founded in 2017, Mardi Bras is a grassroots donation drive and fund raiser supporting both VOA’s Hope House and Transitions’ Women’s Hearth.

Donations of products and funds are accepted year-round. For information, visit [voaspokane.org](http://voaspokane.org) or [help4women.org](mailto:help4women.org).

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# Dog comforts children in abuse interviews and in the courtroom

By Kaye Hult

Lucy, the courthouse facility dog, often greets children and their families when they come to the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in Coeur d'Alene.

The dog is an important member of the forensic team helping put children at ease for interviews to elicit potential evidence, said Lucy's handler, Scott Coleman, the CAC director.

"Children and their families come to the center when there is a child abuse case," he said. "The CAC is set up as a comfortable, friendly place, where children and their families feel they are safe, physically and psychologically."

While there, a child can be physically checked, forensic interviewers speak with the family to learn their side of the story, and the child is interviewed with Lucy by their side. If Lucy is lying down comfortably, it makes it that much easier for a child to feel safe speaking about their experience, he said.

**Child advocacy centers** were created on the East Coast in the early 1990s out of the desire for interviewers to more fully and accurately learn the story behind child abuse cases.

Initially, children were interviewed, often by adults who asked leading questions, which sometimes resulted in the wrong people being tried and found guilty.

Scott directs a team of three individuals, who are both forensic interviewers and family advocates.

A forensic interview is conducted by someone trained in a court-recognized interview protocol, he said. Interviewers are required to attend a peer review on a regular basis as a means of checks and balances. The CAC does interviews with about 250 families a year.

**"When a case is sent** to the CAC, team members speak to law enforcement to understand the story from that point of view," he said.

They listen to other evidence, speak with the family and gain clarity about the allegation(s). Then, they create an hypothesis about what happened before meeting with the child.

The interviewer seeks to take



Scott Coleman is Lucy's handler. Photo courtesy of Scott Coleman

a neutral stance, going into the interview with an open mind and asking the child open-ended, non-leading questions. Lucy's relaxed presence helps create a safe place for the children to tell their stories. However, if a child goes into a crisis mode, the interview is terminated.

"The case is investigated with a multi-disciplinary approach," Scott said. "The full team includes law enforcement, health and welfare, someone from the prosecutor's office, pediatricians and some from Juvenile Diversion. They watch the interview in a separate office on video."

**If a child has to testify** in court, Lucy will accompany the child there. Having Lucy lying relaxed near the witness box helps the child feel safe enough to share with the court.

"Advocates will meet with the family, offering them tools to improve the family relationships. Abuse can be generational. The team seeks to interrupt a negative, hurtful cycle with appropriate services," Scott explained.

For each client, they offer a follow-up schedule, parenting classes, addiction treatment or housing assistance.

Always, the team members ask, "How can we help this child begin to heal from the abuse?"

The Coeur d'Alene CAC opened in 2012 as the North Idaho Children's Advocacy Center.

The Sheriff's Department, the Coeur d'Alene Police, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the county prosecutor and others brought about its establishment. Kootenai Health provides the building.

**In 2016, the CAC came** under the umbrella of Safe Passage, which deals with domestic violence. It is one of the Safe Passage programs. Safe Passage also offers resiliency programs to assist with housing, court services and shelter.

It has outreach programs to teach people to prevent domestic and sexual violence. Advocates accompany an injured person to the emergency room for support. They also provide clothes, if an individual's clothes are needed for evidence. The CAC is separate from these programs.

Trying to add more resources,

the center has applied for accreditation with the National Children's Alliance. Currently, the center is an associate developing member.

Scott came to CAC in November 2020.

**"I grew up in** Orange County, Calif., in a Christian home. My grandfather was a Reformed Church pastor. We went to church regularly. Dad would read to us in the Bible every day," he said. "I came to understand the Beatitudes."

Scott studied criminal justice and became a police officer with the Garden Grove Police in 2007. He worked up from patrol, becoming a detective in 2014.

As a detective, he became a hostage negotiator and then a chaplain coordinator.

**"I found I had a big heart** for people. I learned I am compassionate and empathetic. I like to help people through tough times, such as divorce, shooting, death, trauma or a broken heart.

"Perhaps it came from having a pastor ride in my car once a week," Scott said.

After a few years as a detective, he injured his shoulder and had permanent nerve damage. He was medically retired in 2018. As he tried to determine what would come next, he began to work with his mother, who is an educator, and with another police officer to create a curriculum for K-12 students, to teach them how to respond to violence. That curriculum turned into a business that has trained 100,000 students.

**"I missed helping people** directly," he said. "I wanted to work with children. They have an innocence about them. More and more, threats are arising toward children in our society. I believe it's important for people to stick up for children."

On a road trip, Scott traveled

through Coeur d'Alene about 10 years ago. He thought it would be nice to live there.

When he no longer had ties to Southern California, he began looking for work elsewhere and learned of the CAC opening.

"I have a unique skill set and life experiences for this work," he said. "It feels like my taking this position was meant to be."

**"My background as a cop** gives me credibility with the team. That I did forensic interviewing helped, as did time talking with broken-hearted people."

While Scott does not identify as a traditional Christian, he believes concepts of Christianity are beneficial in raising children, such as "Love your neighbor as yourself."

"I try to do this," said Scott. "Everyone has a different background. All of us care about our neighbors, especially children," he continued. "Keep them safe, watch out for them. Love families, love children. Live that out."

**Last summer, he asked** to have a dog to help with forensic interviews and courtroom support. He went to Assistance Dogs Northwest on Bainbridge Island, Wash., where he met two dogs.

"When I met Lucy, that was it," Scott said.

She had started out being trained as a guide dog for the blind but was too friendly.

He and Lucy attended training camp for a week, then a trainer came here for a week. She is the fourth courthouse facility dog in Idaho.

The way Scott was raised gives him a foundation that helps him face challenges, he said.

"If I can bolster the foundation of other children, I will. So will the other members of my team," he said.

For information, call 208-664-3446.

## Spring Compost Fair & Arbor Day Celebration

**Saturday, April 29, 2023**  
**11 am-2 pm**  
**John A. Finch Arboretum**

Learn how to compost at home  
 from Master Composters/Recyclers

Spokane County residents may take home a free compost bin.  
 Limit one per household. Bins provided by a grant from the  
 Washington State Department of Ecology.

Please arrive no later than 1:30 pm  
 and bring proof of residency.




For more information call 509-625-6580 or  
 go to [www.spokanecountysolidwaste.org](http://www.spokanecountysolidwaste.org)

Partial funding provided by WA State Dept of Ecology.

## Earn College Credit in High School!

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Tuition is waived up to 15 credits\*



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discover more details or go to:  
[spokane.edu/Running-Start](http://spokane.edu/Running-Start)

\*Running Start does not cover mandatory fees, books, and/or any other additional fees charged by the institution. However, additional funding may be available to you.



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## Editor reflects on 50 years of sharing resources, transforming lives

The Fig Tree family includes those whose photos have been on the cover of directories, those who have used the directory to help themselves or someone else, those who are on staff or volunteer with The Fig Tree and those who have their organization listed, story told or advertise.

It's hard to believe this year's Resource Directory will be Volume 50, representing 50 years of its reliability and ongoing service to the faith and nonprofit communities of the Inland Northwest.

We look forward to "Sharing Resources, Transforming Lives" in the region for many years to come.

Meanwhile, we realize that directory listings capture a moment in time. Services continually change. Updates are needed each year and sometimes multiple times a year. A number of agencies have closed in 2022.

Informing people of changes allows me to make a difference in lives of individuals

and enables me to network caring people to strengthen services.

The Fig Tree is rooted in what we describe as peace or solutions journalism that differs from corporate mass media. It's about listening with sensitivity to nuances of who people are, not isolating them as a category or issue. We see real people in their contexts.

As I do research for each edition of the directory, I strive for it to be comprehensive and inclusive because I know it transforms lives. Our directory is uniquely suited as a self-help tool. Because we offer a wide scope of services, people use the directory for varied needs at varied stages of their lives.

When people are referred to us, we listen to their stories to discern where to direct them based on their specific need and where they live, so we can direct them to an agency in their neighborhood.

Because we know the resources and

community of care, we can make relevant connections.

Over the years, we have partnered with other directories that focus on one category. We learned much as the Community Colleges of Spokane Headstart/ECEAP directory merged into ours. They and other single-focus directories appreciate that we connect people with a wide array of services to improve their lives—including faith communities, justice advocacy and ways to build community and give back.

In addition, I consult with coalitions on transportation, food security, homelessness and youth mental health, for example, to learn needs and concerns of those communities and let them know the scope of resources available.

Being attuned to the faith communities, I inform secular agencies of intersections and invite collaboration.

With that in mind, The Fig Tree is

exploring a Networking Initiative to build communication among people in congregations, so they know what other congregations are doing, and then build awareness among nonprofits of how services of congregations overlap with their work. By building connections, we seek to strengthen the network of services. We are also looking at new ways to partner with local and state governments to better serve.

The Fig Tree mission with the directory is to bear fruit by enhancing the community so everyone can live under their vine and fig tree in peace and unafraid. Our approach is healing for individuals and restores wholeness to the community.

We are grateful to the many who contribute to our work helping with research, ads, editing, deliveries and donations to bring the community this book of hope, care and life.

**Malcolm Haworth - Directory Edi-**

## Benefits are opportunities to support the newspaper, directory, programs

Each spring the Benefit Events are a chance to give a gift to support our gift of love.

The Spring Benefit Events offer opportunities to give generously for our mission, newspaper website, directory, stories, events and operations.

The benefit is also a chance to offer your labor of love, volunteering to support our labor of love. We always need more to join our team of 50 volunteers who help

with editing, writing, organizing, delivering, mailing, calling and networking.

An important role is to use the resources and videos from the benefit events to spread the word about The Fig Tree and Resource Directory, to share our story to reach more people in congregations, nonprofits and the community—to invite new readers, new sponsors, new advertisers and new community partners to share in the venture.

Donors join us in the journey to justice, pilgrimage to peace, road to reconciliation, the call to care for all creation.

We are called to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly as we seek to deepen the roots of The Fig Tree so everyone—everyone of all faiths or no faith—can live under its branches—in shalom, in beloved community.

We journey now from the 50th year of the Resource Directory to celebrate

in 2024 the 40th anniversary of The Fig Tree's founding.

Walk with us to learn about responsible media, credible communication, peace and solutions journalism.

Walk with us as we inform, inspire and involve people to build understanding and respect among diverse people in our community and the world.

**Mary Stamp  
Editor**



## Four speakers uplift interconnection of directory with their work

### Johnny Edmondson of Growing Neighbors and Shadle Park Presbyterian Church

Our primary mission with Growing Neighbors is building relationships that transform how we interact with people. We do that is by growing and sharing healthy food and resources to increase food access and develop community.

We love collaborating with The Fig Tree and using the Resource Directory to share resources and transform lives. That happens. The Fig Tree lists our church, weekly dinners, gardens and the area network of community gardens in the directory to help people find us.

We distribute directories in the 60 Little Food Pantries around town we build, install and stock. We also deliver directories to people we deliver food to, because they have other needs. We follow up to make sure they know how to use it.

After The Fig Tree wrote an article on us, it was fun to hear the readers' responses. One is now starting a community garden for a homeless community. Others are in the works. It's fun to see how an article sparks creativity and opportunity.

### Lynn Kimball - executive director of Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington

I have so much gratitude for the Fig Tree. I direct Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington, a public agency that helps older adults and people with disabilities stay at home. A big part of our work is helping people navigate resources—connecting with a home delivered meal, finding help for a family member with dementia, navigating Medicare options or setting up in-home care.

The Fig Tree's Resource Directory is a critical partner. Asking for help is hard,

and we often don't look for information until we have a significant need. The Fig Tree puts our information in front of many people, including faith communities seeking to help people in need. We are so grateful the Resource Directory is there to help people find critical community services.

We get calls at our Community Living Connections helpline daily from older adults looking for help to connect with services. They don't use computers or smartphones. That makes it so important to have printed resources like Resource Directory. It means all of our community has an opportunity to find information to make that phone call to get help.

We are also grateful to the Fig Tree for their work to share articles and important events every month. They have long been an important resource for us to connect local community members with Falls Prevention classes, Medicare classes and volunteer opportunities. Articles, advertising and the calendar help us get our message to the community.

I'm not just grateful for what the Fig Tree does, but also for who they are. The spirit of service runs through this small, but mighty staff. Our community is a better place because of service oriented people like the Fig Tree staff and volunteers. Please join me in sharing gratitude and a huge thank you to the Fig Tree staff and volunteers for all that they do.

### Oscar Harris - chief family and community engagement officer with Spokane Public Schools

Given the task at hand for The Fig Tree team, I think it took being relentless to get to this point. The Fig Tree has interviewed me and has been at the forefront of many challenges in the community during the pandemic and everything, so I

want to acknowledge that I appreciate its relentlessness.

I have a unique role in Spokane Public Schools, the largest school district East of the mountains and second largest in the state. I help broker resources and make connections among community partners, entities and families. Many challenges go along with that, but I remain optimistic because we live in a community that will stand up and will make a difference.

We have a unique opportunity to make a difference in sharing resources and transforming lives. Being with the Spokane Public Schools almost two decades, I see 200 support staff—and many of our 6,000 staff—using The Fig Tree Resource Guide or Resource Bible. Copies are marked up. Pages are missing. Why am I saying this? Because we have amazing staff who try day in and day out to support families and students. There's nothing like hearing a counselor say the resource guide helped meet the need of a family or student. At Spokane Public Schools our mission is "excellence for everyone." To accomplish that, it takes everyone in the community, so that's why I want to honor you and encourage everyone to dig a little deeper to support this organization and its mission of sharing resources and transforming lives.

### Nicole Bishop - strategic partnership coordinator with SNAP

I've been involved with Spokane social services for the better part of a decade. Organizations I was with pursued different missions, and served different populations and communities. One common thread was their reliance on the Resource Directory to more holistically serve clients.

Staff at more than one nonprofit I've worked with, including SNAP, have re-

ferred to the Fig Tree Resource Directory as "The Resource Bible." That's the role it serves. Spokane is rich with community resources, and the one place that allows us to identify those resources is The Fig Tree.

SNAP has served Spokane County for more than 55 years. We have more than 30 programs providing energy assistance, home repair, health transportation, business loans and development. As one of the largest social service nonprofits in Spokane, we are a hub where many clients come for help.

Although SNAP can do a lot to help our neighbors, we can't do everything. When a client calls SNAP for a solution we can't provide, our specialists know to consult the "Resource Bible" to send that client to the right place.

Clients don't come to SNAP on the best day of their lives. When they arrive at our doors, they're often stressed, anxious and needing help they never wanted to ask for. It's hard when we don't have a service to help them, especially when so many find us their safe haven in times of turbulence.

For our staff, The Fig Tree Resource Directory is a way to continue to provide hope. We might not have the solution or know the answer, but we know we can find hope in the pages of the Resource Directory—and that earns it the deserved, oft-repeated title: Spokane's Resource Bible.

Thank you to the Fig Tree for giving our community additional lifelines in their hardest hours. Thank you to organizations that use the Fig Tree to direct a client to SNAP. Thank you to the organizations to which SNAP sends clients we can't fully help. I'm grateful the Fig Tree has been there to guide me in my years of social service work in Spokane. I'm more grateful that this Resource Bible has provided hope and transformed lives for 50 years.



Johnny Edmondson



Lynn Kimball



Oscar Harris



Nicole Bishop



# Calendar of Events

Phone area code is (509) unless listed.

- Apr 3-5** • **Women's Silent Holy Week Retreat**, "Meeting the Lord in the Celebration of the Triduum," Fr. Roger Keeler, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr, 4:30 p.m. to 1 p.m., ihrc.net
- Apr 5** • **Working Families Tax Credit** Application Assistance, Cheney Library, 610 First, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 893-8280, scld.org/locations/cheney/
- **Riverfront Spring Market**, Pavilion at Riverfront, 574 N. Howard, 12 to 6 p.m., 625-6000
- Apr 6-8** • **Men's Silent Holy Week Retreat**, Fr. Roger Keeler, IHRC, 4:30 p.m. to 1 p.m., ihrc.net
- Apr 7** • **Adam Bodhi Artist Meet & Greet**, 2111 W. Wellesley, 2:30 to 5 p.m., adamwilliambodhi@yahoo.com
- Apr 8** • **Family Law Workshop**, Spokane Fatherhood Initiative, 711 W. 3rd, 9 a.m. to noon, spofi.org
- **Walk for Autism Acceptance**, Kootenai County Fairgrounds, 4056 N. Government Way, Coeur d'Alene, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., dacnw.org
- **Eastern Egg Hunt**, Morning Star Baptist Church, 3909 W. Rowan, 12 p.m., 534-4878
- Apr 9** • **Easter Sunrise Service**, Greenwood Memorial Terrace, 211 N. Government Way, 6:30 a.m.
- Apr 11** • **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, PJALS, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. jarcher@pjals.org
- **350 Spokane General Meeting**, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 6:30 p.m., info@350spokane.org
- Apr 11-17** • **Black Maternal Health Week**, tlpnetwork.org
- Apr 12** • **Neighborhood Meet-Up**, Finch Arboretum, 3404 W. Woodland, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.,
- **Working Family Tax Credit** Application Assistance, Uniontown Library, 110 S. Montgomery, 2 to 4 p.m., 397-4366, cody@whitcolib.org
- **Justice Night Legal Clinic**, The Way to Justice, Volunteer Lawyers Program, Recovery Café, 622 E 2nd, 5 to 7 p.m., thewaytojustice.com
- **Sabes Que? Speaker Series and Monthly Meetings**, Hispanic Business Professional Assn, 6 to 7:30 p.m., asociacion.hispanaspokane@gmail.com
- Apr 13** • **Working Family Tax Credit** Application Assistance, Lacrosse Library, 549-3770, cody@whitcolib.org,
- **Addressing Extreme Heat in Spokane**, Gonzaga Climate Center Resilience Team, 7 p.m., Zoom, gonzaga.edu/center-for-climate-society-environment/events#April13
- Apr 13, 27** • **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, PJALS, 5:30 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
- Apr 14** • **"Philosophy for the End of the World and the Beginning of the Next,"** Jose-Antonio Orosco, Spokane Public Library, 906 W. Main, 6 to 9 p.m.
- Apr 14, 15** • **Salmonopolis: An Ecological Story of the Little Spokane River**, North Spokane Library, 44 E. Hawthorne, Fri 5 p.m., Sat, 9 a.m. and 12:30 to 2 p.m., 893-8350
- Apr 14-16** • **Holy Spirit Weekend Retreat**, "Journeying with the Holy Spirit," Kathy Moore & Jo Ann Root of St. Joseph Healing Ministry, IHRC, 6 p.m. to 1 p.m., ihrc.net
- Apr 15** • **Saturday with the Symphony: A Children's Program**, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 1 a.m., cdalibrary.org
- **Grow Your Nonprofit-Learn about State Funding**, Northeast Community Center, 4001 N. Cook, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., 928-9664, charitydoyl@yahoo.com
- **Geo Walk & Water Sampling**, Waterfront Park, 1386 S. Lefevre, Medical Lake, 1 to 3 p.m., 869-0252
- **April Showers Auction**, The Lands Council, Riverside Place, 5 to 8 p.m., landscouncil.org
- **Chocolate and Champagne Gala**, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Spokane Convention Center, 5 p.m., reception, 7 p.m. program, 465-3591, lcsnw.org
- Apr 15, 16** • **Spokane Symphony Masterworks 8: James, Zull and Mozart**, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, Sat. 7:30 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m., 624-1200
- Apr 16** • **HBPA Scholarship applications due**, hbpaofspokane.org
- **Pancakes on Parade**, East Spokane Kiwanis fundraiser, Martin Luther King Jr. Center, 500 E. Stone, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., ekiwanis.com/pancakes-on-parade.html
- **Mister Rogers: It's You I Like - A Retrospective of Mr. Roger's Neighborhood**, Shadle Park Library, 2111 W. Wellesley 1 to 2:30 p.m. events.spokanelibrary.org
- **Sandy Williams Free Walk-in Legal Clinic** of the Carl Maxey Center, Morningstar Missionary Baptist Church, 3909 W. Rowan, 2 to 5 p.m., 867-3043
- Apr 17** • **YWCA Racial Justice Challenge**, ywcaspokane.org
- **NAACP General Membership Meeting**, Spokane Public Library 906 W. Main, or virtual, 6:30 p.m., spokanenaacp@gmail.com
- Apr 17, 18** • **Northwest BachFest**, Barrister Winery, 1213 W. Railroad Ave., 7:30 p.m., 465-3591
- Apr 18** • **How to Read a Medicare Summary Notice**, SHIBA, Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW), Moran Prairie Library, 1 p.m., scld.evanced.info/signup/calendar
- **Medicare Workshop**, Part B and Wellness, SHIBA, 1:30 p.m., cdalibrary.org/library-events/senior-health-workshops
- **Should We Build "Better" Humans?** Bill Kabasenche, philosophy professor, South Hill Library, 3324 S. Perry, 6 p.m., in person, humanities.org
- **"The Man I Saw Them Kill: Christianity and Death Row,"** Elizabeth Bruenig, Whitworth, Weyerhaeuser Hall, 7 p.m., whitworth.edu/speaker-series,
- Apr 19** • **Executive Director Coffee Hour**, Nonprofit Association of Washington, 9 a.m., online, nonprofitwa.org
- **Spokane Youth Symphony: Triumph**, The Fox Theater, 4 p.m., 624-1200
- Apr 19, 20** • **Spokane Symphony Chamber Soiree 3**, Barrister Winery, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200
- Apr 20** • **Silent Day of Prayer**, on Forgiveness, "Receiving Forgiveness: Opening the Doors of Mercy," Fr. Stan Malnar, IHRC, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., ihrc.net
- **"Building a Sustainable Nonprofit,"** SCORE Workshop, online, 12 to 1:30 p.m., scld.org
- **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Forum**, Speakers and Exhibit, Spokane Community College (SCC), Lair Student Center, 1810 N. Greene, noon
- **"America's Truth, A Documentary"** by Center for Community Resilience, Our Kids Our Business, Northeast Community Center, 4001 N. Cook, 5:30 to 8 p.m. ourkidsspokane.org
- **"The Dangers of Indifference: U.S. and the Holocaust,"** Observance of the Holocaust, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th, 7 p.m., neveragain-spokane@comcast.net
- Apr 20-22** • **International Conference on Hate Studies**, SCC Lair Student Center, 1810 N. Greene, gonzaga.edu/iochs
- Apr 20-23** • **Get Lit Festival**, 25th Anniversary, U.S. Poet Laureate, Ada Limón, 828-1435, getlitfestival.org
- Apr 21** • **"Building Community Resilience by Increasing HOPE,"** Our Kids Our Business Annual Conference, The Hive, 2904 E. Sprague, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., ourkidsspokane.org
- **Working Families Tax Credit** Application Assistance, Moran Prairie Library, 6004 S. Regal, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 893-8340, scld.org/locations/moran-prairie
- **Blue Jean Ball 2023, Communities in Schools**, Northern Quest Resort & Casino, 100 N. Hayford, Airway Heights, 5:30 p.m., auction.ilmmedia.com/auction/2023-blue-jean-ball
- **Free Legal Clinic**, Latinos En Spokane, 1502 N. Monroe, third Weds 6 to 8 p.m., 558-9359
- **The Taste of Hope**, Isaac Foundation auction, Shriners Event Center, 7217 W. Westbow, 6 to 10 p.m., 325-1515, hello@theisaacfoundation.org
- Apr 21, 22** • **"Critical Mass,"** Spring Concert, Coeur d'Alene Chorale, Trinity Lutheran, 812 N 5th, 7 p.m., Fri, 2 p.m., Sat choralecda.com
- Apr 22** • **Hope for Creation Conference**, "Care for Water," St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- **Earth Fest**, The Lands Council, Turnbull Wildlife Refuge, tree planting, nursery potting, pollinator gardening, nature hiking, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., landscouncil.org/event/earth-fest
- **Earth Day Celebration**, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **Medication Take Back**, Northeast Community Center, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., necommunitycenter.com
- **Active Living Expo**, health, wellness, travel, leisure, retirement, Mirabeau Park Hotel, 1100 N. Sullivan, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., events@spokesman.com
- **African American Graduation** for K-12 and College and University Graduates, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga, 2 to 4 p.m., spokaneag@gmail.com, aagspokane.org
- **Anna's Homes Gala: Building Hope - fund Phase II construction** at Sacred Heart Children's Hospital, The Anna Schindler Foundation, 5:30 to 11:59 p.m., 979-3146, kathryn@annaschindlerfoundation.org
- **Northwest BachFest: Matt Herskowitz and Lara St. John**, Barrister Winery, 7:30 p.m., 465-3591
- Apr 23** • **"More Than a Vision: Benedictines in the 21st Century,"** Sr. Teresa Jackson, OSB, Monastery of St. Gertrude, 1:30 p.m., zoom, stgertrudes.org
- **Northwest BachFest: Zull Bailey and Matt Herskowitz**, Barrister Winery, 3 p.m., 465-3591
- Apr 25** • **Working Families Tax Credit** application help, Liberty Park Library, Study A, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., events.spokanelibrary.org
- Apr 26** • **How to Read a Medicare Summary Notice**, SHIBA and ALTCEW, 12 p.m. Zoom, scld.org/connect
- **Opening Reception for Dale Soden Archives & Special Collections**, Whitworth University, Harriet Cheney Cowles Library, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- Apr 27** • **Working Families Tax Credit** application help, Hillyard Library, 1 to 4 p.m., events.spokanelibrary.org
- **CDAIDE Care Affair**, Benefit for local hospitality workers in Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls and Hayden, Coeur d'Alene Resort, 115 S. Second, 5 to 9 p.m., 208-765-4000
- **All the Rage: How American Politics Boiled Over**, with Steven Stehr, North Central High School, 1600 N. Howard, 7 p.m., in person, humanities.org
- **Nic Stone, author of Chaos Theory**, Northwest Passages Book Club, Spokesman-Review and Wishing Tree Books, Bing Crosby Theater, 7 p.m., spokane7tickets.com/enwp-nic-stone
- Apr 27-29** • **Friends of the Library Book Sale**, Shadle Park Library, 2111 W. Wellesley, 4 to 6:30 p.m.
- Apr 28** • **"Seeds of Occupation, Seeds of Possibility"**, Andrea Brower, Wendy Thompson and Noralis Rodriguez-Cox, Gonzaga Humanities Building, 1002 N. Astor, 5 p.m.
- Apr 29** • **Spring Dash**, 5 K, 10 K 1/2 marathon or Tot Trot benefit for United Way of North Idaho, McEuen Park, 420 E. Front, Coeur d'Alene, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., 208-597-3016
- **El Mercado**, Latinos En Spokane, West Central Community Center, 1603 N. Belt, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. 558-9359, info@LatinosEnSpokane.org
- **Spokane Valley Sunrise Rotary Club Dinner** and Auction to support Spokane Valley youth, Mirabeau Park Hotel, 1100 N. Sullivan, 5:30 p.m., mliberty@gmail.com
- **Whitworth's Polynesian Club Lu'au**, Whitworth University, dinner at Hixson Union Building, 5 to 6:30 p.m., performances at Fieldhouse, 7 to 10 p.m.
- **Spectrum Singers Spring Concert**, Shadle High School, 4327 N. Ash, 7 p.m., alena.schoonmaker@gmail.com
- **Spokane Symphony Pops 5: Jurassic Park**, The Fox Theater, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200
- Apr 30** • **Festa Italiana 2**, Celebrating Italian Culture and Sister City of Cagliari, American-Italian Club, Downtown Spokane, 211 N. Wall, 12 to 5 p.m.
- May 2** • **Innovia Book Club**, Community Conversations, The Fox Theater, simulcast Colville, Lewiston and Sandpoint, 7 to 8:30, innovia.org
- May 3** • **The Fig Tree Distribution and Mailing**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 535-4112, kaye@thefigtree.org
- May 4** • **The Fig Tree Benefit and Board Meeting**, 12 to 3 p.m., 535-4112, mary@thefigtree.org
- Thurs** • **Taize Prayer**, 4:15 p.m., via Zoom, Shonna Bartlett, bartletts@gonzaga.edu
- Suns** • **Burritos for the People**, SCAR, Compassionate Addiction Treatment, 168 S. Division, 9 to 10 a.m., scarspokane.org/burritos-for-the-people

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# Ray Sun educates people about genocides to prevent future genocides

By Mary Stamp

Raymond (Ray) Sun's education and teaching focus on modern German history and the study of genocides.

As associate professor of history at Washington State University in Pullman, he is well aware that any society, religion, culture, race or ethnicity has the potential to commit genocide.

From his commitment to educate people on the Holocaust, he has served two years on Spokane's Yom HaShoah Committee and will be the featured speaker for the 2023 Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust.

He will speak on "Policies, Papers and Polls: America's Indifference to Jewish Refugees, 1933 to 1941" at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 20, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave.

Ray is the first generation in his family born in the U.S.

His father had moved from North China in the late 1930s to study engineering. Because they were academics, his mother's family fled Beijing to Southwest China after the Japanese invaded in 1937. Her parents had studied in the U.S. in the 1910s, so they wanted her to move in September 1941 to study in the U.S., just before World War II.

Ray's parents met in graduate school, and both taught at Pennsylvania State University in Central Pennsylvania, where he grew up.

In 1982, he earned a bachelor's degree in history from Swarthmore College, a Quaker school in Philadelphia. Then he earned a master's at the University College in Cork, Ireland, and master's and doctoral degrees in modern German history at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, completing his doctoral degree in 1992.

In 1991, Ray, who is married and has a daughter, began his career at Washington State University in Pullman, teaching a class on the history of Nazi Germany, which has been a regular part of his teaching load throughout the years.



Ray Sun teaches history.

Photo courtesy of Ray Sun

Other classes he has taught include comparative genocides on a global scale, the history of the Holocaust, representations of the Holocaust in music, film and culture, along with the history of the world wars and how societies remember and forget major traumatic events.

That background led to his association with Spokane Holocaust survivor Carla Peperzak, who invited him to serve on the Commemoration Committee.

In Pullman, Ray had been involved for five years in the early 2000s in planning Holocaust Remembrance Week programs, speakers, films, concerts and events for WSU.

After he first heard about Carla when providing background for stories in the Spokesman-Review in 2015, he began inviting her to speak to his classes.

Then the Seattle Holocaust Center asked Ray to interview her so they could record her story on a video.

"Yes, the Holocaust happened," he affirms for those who deny the history.

"Holocaust denial is an ugly, terrible example of how people in an ideological bubble convince themselves it didn't happen," Ray said.

His study of the theory and practice of genocide reveals its universal potential.

"It's easy in the U.S., where the Holocaust is the best-known genocide to take a stand of moral superiority in viewing the Nazis, Germans and collaborators and perpetrators of the horrors, but there have been many genocides in this nation through history, even though the mainstream history taught in public schools does not acknowledge them," Ray said.

College history courses do include discussions of the U.S. genocides.

"While we focus on the Holocaust as one of the most studied genocides, other genocides deserve the same study, research and memorialization," he said. "There are universal lessons we can learn from the histories of each unique group.

"What we know about this genocide can transfer across history to today, from generalities to particularities, making awareness accessible across time and space," Ray explained.

He cautions, however, against using the Holocaust study as a "cut-and-paste" illustration of fundamental principles, because there is a need to understand genocide as a wider phenomenon.

"While we honor the experience from 1941 to 1945 in which Jews were victims and Germans were perpetrators, we need to address genocide beyond the Jewish experience," he pointed out.

He observed how quickly people may forget groups experiencing genocide.

Since 2014, the Uyghur genocide in China has had some but limited news coverage, Ray said.

The persecution and killings of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar was often in the news in 2016. They were driven out and now live in a huge refugee camp, which was only recently in the news when a major fire damaged much of that camp.

"It's an example of how quickly a genocide can be forgotten," he said, noting how it is lost in the news cycle.

Ray wants to believe people can learn the signs to identify a

genocide and stop it.

Scholars can apply research and theory to analyze what constitutes a genocide, but then the question is how to apply that so people can do something about genocide, he suggested.

"It's hard politically and economically to name a genocide," he said. "Only now is there some recognition in Turkey of the Armenian genocide from 1915 to 1917.

"If no one remembers a genocide, did it happen?" Ray asked, likening that to the philosophical question of whether there is sound if a tree falls in the woods, and no one is there to hear it.

"My interest is to remember survivor communities and to say the names of victims," he said.

A new memorial, the Dutch National Holocaust Memorial seeks to name every one of the 100,000 Dutch Jews who were murdered.

"There is an existential connection between naming someone who existed and giving them validity," he said, quoting Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel who said that "to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."

For Ray, that is why denialism is so dangerous: It's an attempt to murder people a second time by saying the genocide did not happen.

He believes it matters to remember, but it's hard to do because of some political interests.

"It's about the politics of memory," he said. "Commemoration and memorializing focuses on the living as much as it honors the dead. It is for teaching

children the lessons for the future generations to maintain a lived memory."

While Ray did not grow up religious, in college he encountered and was in community with some evangelical Christian students. Then he was influenced by some enthusiastic Catholics and converted in college.

In grad school, he was involved with a Mennonite community and then became part of a Pentecostal church and then a Quaker community in Pullman.

Part of his study of the Holocaust was influenced by his earlier study of German Catholics.

"My approach to genocide is informed by my faith, believing in God as a Christian open to other truths, as those of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and other traditions," he said.

"I believe in the concept of good and evil. I believe there is absolute evil. It is more than just being wrong, but involves destruction of all, causing human suffering and destroying the human community," he explained. "I believe there is good beyond ordinary civility, manners and good people. There is absolute good. I believe those poles exist."

While the Holocaust could be a dark, depressing subject of learning how evil operates and how society succumbs to enabling destructive policies, acts and beliefs, Ray believes that the important lesson is from people who are aware of the consequences and have the courage to say "no" to those policies, acts and beliefs.

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