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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

Fair Trade improves lives of artisans

By Mary Stamp

After settling in Spokane 40 years ago, Naseem and Nissar Shah, who grew up in the village of Srinagar in Kashmir, India, found when they returned home in the 1970s that family, friends and other people in their village struggled because of poverty and war.

For the last three years, they have been among the fair-trade vendors who sell hand-made products through the Jubilee International Marketplace at First Presbyterian Church in Spokane.

At first the Shahs brought back traditional crafts—lacquered papier-maché boxes, animals, eggs, candleholders, coasters, knitted purses and woven wool rugs by local artisans—as gifts for their friends in the United States.

Tourism had been a strong market in Kashmir, allowing artisans to make a modest living. Decades of war, however, led to a decline in tourism and living conditions. India and Pakistan still fight over the state of Kashmir.

“I remember that Kashmir was a paradise on earth with the Himalayan Mountains, lakes and four seasons,” she said.

In the mid 1990s, they began buying crafts to help families in



Nasreen and Naseem Shah display some of the Kashmiri crafts they sell here.

nearby villages. They paid in advance, because the artisans needed the money.

“It’s the main livelihood for four families,” she said.

Along with their jobs, the Shahs then decided to start a small business and sell the crafts at craft shows in Spokane on weekends.

Before they learned about fair trade, the Shahs sold items at local fall and Christmas season craft shows and at the Fall Folk Festival in November. Eventually, they also began to sell leather purses and jewelry they made with beads from India.

For 14 years, Naseem has worked for Head Start, helping children and low-income families in Spokane. Nissar graduated from Gonzaga University in engineering and works in that field.

Naseem’s father, who had come to the United States in the 1950s, taught civil engineering at Gonzaga. Naseem met Nissar when he came from the same area of Kashmir to study engineering.

Naseem studied biology and chemistry, graduating from Gonzaga University in 1978. She worked as a medical technician before raising her family. Later

Continued on page 4

Catholic Charities Immigration and Refugee Services is helping young immigrants apply for temporary status

Since President Barak Obama announced June 15 that young undocumented immigrants who meet certain requirements can apply for legal, non-immigrant status so they can work and be contributing members of society, Greg Cunningham, director of Catholic Charities’ Immigration and Refugee Services in Spokane, has held several orientations and workshops to help people sign up.

“There are about 1.8 million people eligible in the United States,” he said. “Washington is one of the top 10 states, especially in Yakima and Franklin counties.”

About 12 came to an orientation in Brewster, and 40 each to orientations in Spokane, Okanogan and Walla Walla, where they learned about the two-year Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

“It’s a temporary authorization and does not allow for permanent status,” Greg explained.

Young people who have graduated from high school or earned a GED, and have no felonies, major misdemeanors or DUI records can enroll so they can go on to higher education or work.

“They are not a population tar-

geted for deportation,” Greg said.

He is hopeful because in the past some temporary programs have become permanent.

Recently, he met with three young women—one in high school, one who graduated in nursing and one who is studying civil engineering—to help them sign up.

They came to the United States in 2000 when they were ages five through 11, so all they know is their experience here. They have been educated and acculturated here, and have no ties in Mexico.

“Why would we not want to give them the opportunity to contribute to our society? I can imagine what they could do for the greater good,” he said. “Beside that, it is the right, just, kind thing to do.”

So far, Greg has been working with 15 applicants in varying stages of the process.

“It’s not the DREAM Act—the proposal in Congress for Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors, proposed in 2001 to provide conditional permanent residency to some undocumented

residents who arrived in the United States as minors, lived here continuously for at least five years and graduate from U.S. high schools.

“It’s the DREAM Act lite,” he said. “It’s the just thing to do with vulnerable people.”

Because it is not an act of Congress, the President can stop it at any time, but Greg doesn’t see that happening.

Applicants must have been under the age of 30 on June 15, 2012, have entered before age 16, be enrolled in high school, have completed high school or a GED, or have been honorably discharged from the military. Those under 15 may apply only if they are involved in removal proceedings.

For Greg, DACA fits the Catholic bishops’ position on immigration, emphasizing welcoming the stranger. It also fits his understanding of Gospel values.

He hopes it will be a foot in the door to help bishops and others lobby to extend the opportunity and make it permanent.

For information, call 455-4960.

The Fig Tree surveys readers

With the assistance of a volunteer who is studying marketing at Eastern Washington University, The Fig Tree will survey its readers to learn how to better serve their needs and to gain demographic information to better promote its media.

“We know about the enthusiasm of many readers through our face-to-face encounters, and we appreciate receiving that feedback,” said editor Mary Stamp. “We hope to have strong response to the survey so we gain a better picture.”

Stephanie Sproule, a volunteer through United Way, is designing the survey, which is being distributed at displays, by mail, by email and online. She is also preparing a survey of those who receive bulk orders.

For information, call 535-1813 or email mary@thefigtree.org.

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Youth more involved in eco-justice

Youth engagement in eco-justice is expanding in scope and sophistication, said Marcelo Leites, Latin American and Caribbean regional secretary for the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF). Marcelo, an Uruguayan now working in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and member of the World Council of Churches (WCC) climate change working group, speaks from experience.

What began as a regional WSCF call for photos by youth depicting water challenges in their countries grew into a travelling photo exhibit, then a set of accompanying workshops developed in several Latin American countries. Now it is an international program. The workshops, he said, equip youth for eco-justice advocacy by explaining how to relate ecology and economy, how to engage partners from civil society organizations, and how to frame and pursue their advocacy projects for natural-resource preservation and other forms of eco-justice.

Last summer at the United Nations sponsored Rio+20 conference on sustainable development about 24 students from the regional and international WSCF network and the Regional Ecumenical Centre for Advocacy and Service (CREAS) participated. Personal encounters resulted in follow up plans.

The Youth and Environmental Justice program, a 22-month project initiated in Latin America has brought the regions together and encouraged solidarity among local groups overcoming their isolation from one another.

Mission with humility, justice and inclusivity

In a world where understanding of Christian mission is changing rapidly, Bishop Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, moderator of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), explains visions the WCC's new mission statement will bring to the churches.

The WCC Central Committee, meeting in September in Crete, Greece, adopted the statement, "Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes." The bishop said it is about vision, concepts and directions for a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism amid changing global landscapes, and is the WCC's first mission statement since 1982.

The statement seeks to stimulate creative mission reflection and encourage discernment of action by member churches and related mission agencies of the WCC.

Some of the changes addressed include a shift in the center of world Christianity from the global North to the global South and East, the influence of neo-liberal economic ideologies, the impact of migration, new forms of oppression of people and the environment, new ways of being churches, and the rise of Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

Being creation and life centered, the statement challenges churches to assume the role of a "servant"—instead of "master"—of God's mission. It also has implications for how evangelism is practiced, advocating "authentic evangelism" that promotes values of humility, hospitality, justice, inclusivity and the dialogue of life.

The CWME will prepare study guides that member churches, affiliated bodies and mission agencies can use to train missionaries and evangelists.

The statement emphasizes "mission from the margins" rather than mission "to the margins" or "at the margins" where the poor and the marginalized are treated as objects of charity. People at the margins have a special gift to distinguish life affirming forces from life negating ones. They are in a unique position "to see what is out of position from the view of people at the center." The statement advocates justice, solidarity and inclusivity as the key expressions of mission from the margins.

The prophetic dimension of the statement also lies in its rejection of the idolatry of Mammon in a world of free market economics. "Receivers" of mission reclaim their status as agents and initiators of mission.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Interfaith Thanksgiving service is Nov. 22

"Giving Thanks for our Differences" is the theme for the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at 10 a.m., Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 22, at Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr.

Baldev Singh, who helped host community members who held hands around the Sikh Gurudwara in Spokane Valley after a shooting in Wisconsin this summer, will be

the featured speaker. A representative of Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest will report on hunger needs in the region.

People from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, New Thought, Native American and other faith traditions will reflect on "Giving Thanks for our Differences."

"With all the divisions in the world, it's important that we understand we are to love our

neighbors," said the Rev. Joe Niemiec, pastor of the Center for Spiritual Living and member of the Spokane Inter-Faith Council, which is sponsoring the event.

Participants may bring canned goods and nonperishable food items for Second Harvest or may bring a gift for the offering, which will be shared by Second Harvest and the council.

For information, call 534-1011.

Tree of Sharing fills Christmas gift requests

With close to 7,700 gift requests from 60 agencies, Spokane's 30th annual Tree of Sharing is the largest in the country, board president Jon Louis found from an online search.

"Through volunteers donating about 4,000 hours in 2012, the often forgotten members of our community will once again be touched," he said.

Agencies submitting requests for gifts deal with people who are young and old, and people in rehabilitation, escaping abuse or struggling in the economic downturn.

Opening at the RiverPark

Square, Northtown and Spokane Valley malls on Friday, Nov. 16, Tree of Sharing tables will be staffed by volunteers every day except Thanksgiving until Thursday, Dec. 13.

Agencies communicate gift requests to Tree of Sharing staff, who print bar-coded tags listing the age, gender and gift request. Tags are available at the mall locations. Shoppers pick up tags, purchase items, and return the gifts and tags to malls or designated businesses.

To supplement the gift giving, the Tree of Sharing provides some funds for participating agencies

to purchase gifts for those whose requests were not filled.

"We are prayerfully hoping for greater participation this year than ever before," said Jon.

Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ founded the program in 1982. Other churches have assisted in the past. KREM-TV joined in 1984. Employees of Asuris Northwest Health assist, and the Washington Air National Guard 242nd Combat Comm Squadron moves gifts from the malls to the Tree of Sharing warehouse.

For information, visit treeof-sharing.org.

Temple Beth Shalom sets educational event

Temple Beth Shalom will gather the Inland Northwest Jewish community the weekend of the Global Day of Jewish Learning, Sunday, Nov. 18. Globally about 300 communities will celebrate and learn more about their faith.

Temple Beth Shalom will hold classes Friday, Saturday and Sunday to study a curriculum on Jewish understandings of blessing and

gratitude, "Let My People Know: Blessings as the Gateway to Fuller Living," said Iris Berenstein, the temple's director of education.

She said resources are for people of any religious affiliation.

Rabbi Henry Glazer, known as the "Grateful Rabbi," will lead adult education classes at 5:30 p.m., Friday, and 6 p.m., Saturday. With Spokane area rabbis, he will

lead a class at 10 a.m., Sunday, on "Translating Blessings to Everyday Life." There is a children's program at 9:45 a.m., Sunday.

At 1 p.m., Sunday, after a kosher lunch, there is a presentation of art, music and dancing as "Community Cultural Activities."

For information, visit www.spokanetbs.org.

Network plans annual dinner

The 2012 Faith Action Network's Annual Awards and Fund-Raising Dinner will be a statewide interfaith celebration on the theme "Faiths Like These."

It begins at 6 pm., Saturday, Dec. 8, at Temple De Hirsch Sinai, 1511 E. Pike St. in Seattle.

An award for outstanding advocacy work will be given to one of the advocating congregations that assist the Faith Action Network (FAN)—a merger in 2011 of the former Washington Association of Churches and the Lutheran Public Policy Office.

FAN will also present a veteran faith advocate with a Lifetime

Justice Award and will bestow its Interfaith Award to honor a religious leader who has bridged the interfaith community this year, said Jackie O'Ryan, director of administration and mission advancement.

Advocates from across Washington State will gather to celebrate FAN's work toward a just, compassionate and sustainable world through community building, education and public action.

For information, call 206-625-9790 or email fan@fanwa



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Editorial Team
Editor/Publisher/Photos - Mary Stamp
Eugenie Alexander, Diane Crow, Kaye Hult, Inga Jablonsky, Mary Mackay, Nancy Minard & Sara Weaver

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and Second Harvest present the
Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
Thursday, November 22 - 10 a.m.
featuring Baldev Singh of the Sikh Gudharawa speaking on

'Giving Thanks for our Differences'

Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane
4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr.

Bring canned goods for Second Harvest
Financial contributions shared between
Second Harvest and
the Spokane Interfaith Council

Bank's donation helps keep VOA's Crosswalk shelter for teens open

A \$6,000 gift from Sterling Bank makes it possible for Spokane's Crosswalk Teen Shelter, a program of Volunteers of America

serving 1,000 youth, to keep open on weekends through December.

non-emergency services.

the end of 2012. Another \$6,000 is needed to keep it open through June 2013. Another \$25,000 is needed to restore client services.

Fall Folk Fest features tribute to Woody Guthrie

"A Tribute to Woody Guthrie: An American Story" will be presented through his songs and prose readings during the annual Fall Folk Festival at noon Sunday, Nov. 11, in the Lair Auditorium at Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene. It is the 100th anniversary of his birth. The Spokane Community Choir will sing some songs and the audience will choruses of Guthrie's songs.

The 17th annual Fall Folk Festival, "A Celebration of Cultures," will be held from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 11, on multiple stages. There will be music and dance performances and workshops, plus stories and crafts for children from various ethnic traditions.

The Spokane Folklore Society held the first festival in 1996 at the Unitarian Universalist Church with about 12 performing groups and 350 attendees. In three years, it outgrew the church and moved to Glover Middle School for several years. Now more than 6,000 people attend, and 100 groups perform.

For information, call 624-5693, email dancer@moxxee.com or visit spokanefolkfestival.org or spokanefolklore.org.

Gonzaga hosts International Day of Tolerance

Gonzaga University students, faculty and staff will gather with members of the faith, education, business and government community to observe the International Day of Tolerance at noon, Friday, Nov. 16, on the front steps of the Crosby Student Center on campus.

Gonzaga President Thayne McCulloh and Spokane Mayor David Condon will offer reflections.

Participants will link arms and form a line of solidarity as a symbolic way to stand for justice, said Tracy Ellis-Ward, director of Gonzaga's Unity Multicultural Education Center, which is organizing the event.

In 1996, the United Nations General Assembly invited UN member states to observe the International Day for Tolerance on Nov. 16, with activities for educational institutions and the public. The goal is to promote human welfare, freedom and progress by encouraging tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among people of different cultures, faiths and nations.

The day recognizes that human rights and tolerance can ensure the survival of diverse communities around the globe.

"At Gonzaga, we are mindful of the role we play through our Catholic, Jesuit and humanistic and social justice mission to support individuals' rights and beliefs, especially the marginalized," said Tracy. "The goal is to pause and reflect on the impact and outcomes injustice generates here and abroad."

For information, call 313-5836 or visit www.gonzaga.edu/idot.

VOA of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho learned Oct. 1 that two federal grants for more than \$115,000, were not renewed.

Founded in 1985, Crosswalk offers an emergency shelter, a school and life-changing programs to break the cycle of youth homelessness.

Cuts led to eliminating three staff positions and reducing budgets for food, recreation, prescriptions, bus passes and other

VOA needs \$300 per weekend to keep the shelter open on weekends, said Marilee Roloff, chief executive officer.

"Sterling is happy to partner with Crosswalk to help ensure our vulnerable youth have a safe place to access. I hope other downtown businesses, who see the youth every day, will contribute, too," said Ezra Eckhardt, Sterling Bank's president and CEO.

While Sterling's donation keeps the shelter open weekends through

Sterling Bank has opened a donation account for Crosswalk.

Marilee said that without a place to stay on weekends, many youth who use the shelter may get into trouble, stay in unsafe places or stay with dangerous people.

"If they're here, they're doing something productive with safe people," she said.

For information, call 838-6596.

Smart Justice Spokane organizes symposium

Smart Justice Spokane plans a symposium from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 9, at Northern Quest Casino in Airway Heights to explore how the community can reduce criminal justice costs, make communities safer, and create the best outcomes for those entering, working through and exiting the criminal justice system.

Anne Martin, director of Greater Spokane Progress and a spokesperson for Smart Justice Spokane, said much of the county budget supports the criminal justice system so the symposium is timely.

Local, regional and national speakers will lead sessions on risk assessment of offenders, matching sentencing options, early case resolution, therapeutic courts and electronic home monitoring.

Presenters and participants include judges, elected officials, law enforcement specialists, community leaders, counselors, professors, students, interested

citizens, and people from non-profit, religious and service organizations interacting with the criminal justice system.

The symposium is a collaborative effort of local government

leaders and citizens, who seek to create a more effective criminal justice system.

For information, call 624-5657 or 251-1424, or visit www.smartjusticespokane.org.



Fall Folk Festival

The Fall Folk Festival is sponsored by the Spokane Folklore Society a non-profit organization serving Spokane since 1977.

For information call (509) 747-2640 or visit www.spokanefolklore.org

Celebrating our area's cultural diversity

Nov. 10 to 11

Saturday - 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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SATURDAY, Nov. 10
Kaffe Stua 9 - 11 am
Bazaar 10 am - 1 pm
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Saturday, Nov. 10 9 am - 4 pm
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Saturday, Nov. 10
Lunch Available 11:30 am to 1 pm
Raffles
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For information, contact

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Or email info@thefigtree.org to RSVP



Ties with family, friends become connection for marketing traditional crafts

Continued from page 1

she took classes at Spokane Falls Community College in early childhood education.

Nasreen, the youngest of their three daughters, was nine when she first visited relatives in Kashmir. She helps her parents with the Jubilee sale.

Now, she said, the original art form is on the decline as younger people do not carry on the traditions. So the Shahs have fewer items, and the Jubilee sale fits their inventory.

In addition, weight restrictions on what they bring back when they fly means they have to ship

more of the items.

Members of their extended family no longer do the crafts because they go to school and work.

Two families in another community now supply items. The Shahs plan to go back to Kashmir next summer and purchase more.

Naseem said that people who come to the Jubilee sale seem to value the amount of work it takes to make the boxes and other papier-maché items. She knows the process for making them, because as a child, she watched people make things and then tried to make some herself.

"It's a long process to mold the

papier maché, smooth it, paint designs on it and lacquer it," she said.

For Nasreen, who is working on a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, after earning a bachelor's in psychology from Eastern Washington University in 2011, involvement is both a way to connect with her culture and a way to help impoverished people she has met in Kashmir.

"It renews our faith to be able to help them," she said.

"From the time I was little, the message was honed into me that the best thing to do to follow Mohammed, Peace Be Upon Him,

is to help someone every chance I have. Charity is one of the five pillars of Islam ingrained in me as a child."

She also believes that any time people can gain understanding of different world views, beliefs and customs, they gain a better understanding of life and are enriched.

Nasreen finds that both understanding and enrichment happen at the Jubilee International Marketplace and at the Spokane Islamic Center, where people come from all over the world.

"There is a connection with overseas that builds a sense of community and appreciation,"

Nasreen said. "Each of us has our own stories of what we faced migrating here.

"People coming to the Jubilee sale can do something just by buying one item. They can make a difference in the lives of people elsewhere," she said.

"We all work for a common cause: to sell products to help people," she added.

"Most of the income helps families pay to send their children to school, because there are no free, public schools there," Naseem said.

For information, email nshah2@zagmail.gonzaga.edu.

Jubilee Marketplace raises awareness and justice

Thirty fair-trade vendors will sell hand-made crafts, baskets, jewelry, clothing, toys, instruments, books, cards and more at the annual Jubilee International Marketplace from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 9, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

Local vendors work with artisans in such countries as Guatemala, Nepal, Thailand, Ethiopia, Bolivia, Peru, Kenya, Nicaragua, Rwanda and India.

They also sell Christmas crafts, from Ten Thousand Villages, one of the world's largest fair trade organizations founded in 1946, and provide opportunities for people to give alternative gifts of training and animals through Heifer International.

Jubilee, a ministry of First Presbyterian Church, raises awareness of economic justice by paying fair wages to artisans. More than 2,000 people attend each year. Proceeds help support artisans' livelihoods, so they can provide food, housing, education and medical care for their families.

The name of the event is based on the biblical year of Jubilee and the Sabbath year described in Deut. 15 and Lev. 25.

"The Sabbath year is every seven years, and the year of Jubilee is every seven cycles of Sabbath years," said organizer and founder John Frankhauser, explaining the name of the event. "The Jubilee is a celebration of God's provision for the community and is a model for sustainable society, in which members cannot acquire

an over-abundance of resources that permanently impoverishes the lives of others.

"Those years are times for debts of community members to be forgiven, slaves to be freed, the land to lie fallow and the land to be returned to the original owners," John said.

"The two-day Jubilee International Marketplace serves as a tangible reminder that we are to be year-round stewards of our money, time, talents and other resources," he said, "because the earth is the Lord's."

Since it began 24 years ago, Jubilee has raised more than \$750,000 for people in need.

For information, call 747-1058 or visit spokaneipc.org/serve/in-our-church/jubilee-international-marketplace.

Ganesh Himal Trading launches scholarship project to support education opportunities for girls in Nepal

As part of the annual Fair Trade Festival and inspired by PBS showing "Half the Sky" about the desire for girls and women to be educated, Ganesh Himal will launch "The Power of Five" to raise funds for the Girl Child Education Fund of the Association for Craft Producers (ACP) in Nepal to provide scholarships so girls can attend school.

The ACP works with marginalized women to help them gain skills, live lives of dignity, gain control of their earnings and provide education for their daughters.

"Many girls have been able to stay in school because of these scholarships, but, in February 2012, Ric and I met with two girls who had finished their three years of scholarships and were unable to continue because their father lost his income and no scholarship

money was available," she said.

Ganesh Himal seeks to reach 900 people to raise \$4,500 to fund scholarships for more than 100 children of fair trade producers at ACP in Kathmandu, Nepal.

They have created and will be selling packets of bookmarks that tell the story. When participants share the bookmarks, they raise awareness about the importance of educating girl children, raise money for scholarships and tell about the effects of fair trade.

Each participant gives \$5 for a bookmark and will receive a packet of five bookmarks to pass on to five others, who each give \$5 and pass on five bookmarks each

to five others. Each participant will return the donations to the first person or return the money to Kizuri at 35 W. Main with 100 percent of the money going to the Association of Craft Producers scholarship fund in Nepal.

Denise said that while \$5 isn't much, that is the idea.

"If we all give a little, the effect ripples out, it empowers and connects people," Denise said.

People can pick up additional packets of bookmarks at fair trade retailers, like Kizuri, that buy from Ganesh Himal.

For information, call 448-6561 or visit www.ganeshhimaltrading.com.

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Center for Spiritual Renewal at Gonzaga University

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Two Spokane women share about their successful ventures in fair trade

Two women who have been friends for more than 25 years represent two parts of the global chain of fair trade—from the earth to producers, wholesalers, retailers to consumers and back to the earth.

Denise Attwood, co-owner of Ganesh Himal Trading, is a wholesaler who has built a business with \$1.5 million yearly in fair trade retail sales. The business connects cottage industries and development projects for Tibetan refugees and women in Nepal with 250 retailers around the United States.

Kim Harmson, owner of Kizuri, a fair trade retail outlet in the Community Building at 35 W. Main has the shop that had roots in the nonprofit Global Folk Art and now sells items from 40 cultures. Kizuri has grown from a business of \$155,000 in 2008 to \$253,778 in 2011. This growth has allowed the store to work with more artisan groups, double its inventory, hire part-time employees and make more than \$21,000 in donations to nonprofits both locally and globally.

Both experienced growth through the economic downturn. They operate outside the traditional business model.

At a recent Spokane City Forum at First Presbyterian Church, they invited people to become consumers of fair trade products. Purchases cycle back through the retail-wholesale chain to producers whose lives and communities improve as they educate their children, gain access to medical care and provide food, shelter and clothing for their families.

Beyond that, Denise and Kim said producers catch an entrepreneurial spirit and use savings to invite others, usually women, to earn a living by producing traditional and nontraditional products.

Denise and Kim see fair trade as a “win-win strategy to create micro-enterprise locally and abroad.”

Interested in cultures and people, Denise and her husband Ric Conner traveled in Nepal after earning degrees in environmental studies 28 years ago. They bought sweaters from Tibetan refugees. After a month of trekking, they told the refugees how much they liked the sweaters.

The refugees, who had no access to assistance, asked them to help develop a market so they could earn enough money to send their children to school. “We’re not business people,” they told the refugees, but they decided to spend \$400 to buy sweaters and ship them home. When they returned, Denise’s parents suggested they rent the Civic Theater and tell their story. They did, and



Kim Harmson and Denise Attwood display some products.

the sweaters sold out.

After returning to Nepal to buy more sweaters, they went to social justice events in the United States, telling about the people, the products and the need for just trade.

Eventually they started Ganesh Himal Trading, through which they now work with 14 producer groups that support more than 1,000 producers in Nepal.

On visits, they see producers’ children educated and making choices that once were impossible.

Knowing the producers, retailers and consumers, Denise and Ric seek to strengthen any weak link in the fair trade chain.

Like Kim, they educate consumers to pay attention to choices they make so they can influence what happens in the world.

Kim said, “Spokane has much to be proud of in fair trade, having had its first fair trade store in the 1990s. It started with items left after a Jubilee International Marketplace sale at First Presbyterian.

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane started Global Folk Art in a house near 5th and Washington. It moved several times before locating in the Community Building.

“When our children were grow-

ing up, they volunteered there in grade school,” said Kim, who left teaching to be an educational consultant. Her new role included working part time eight years with Ganesh Himal as customer service representative, relating with fair trade stores across the country.

When she learned Global Folk Art was closing, she wanted to keep fair trade in town, so she opened a for-profit store, Kizuri, which means “Good!” in Swahili.

Despite having no business background, she sought community collaboration and found financial backers for the store.

Committed to the local community, Kim holds benefit nights for nonprofits who arrange programs in the lobby, giving 15 percent of the evening’s purchases to them. It also gives 7.5 percent of its funds to the Community Building Foundation, which empowers local organizations to help the community experience justice, vibrancy and sustainability.

What is fair trade? According to the World Fair Trade Organization, it is “a trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable devel-

opment by offering better trading conditions and security rights for marginalized producers and workers.”

Fair trade makes justice in world trade possible, they said. It challenges conventional trade practices and proves “a successful business can put people first.”

In the October forum, Denise and Kim showed slides illustrating nine principles of the North American Fair Trade Federation:

1) **Create opportunities** for economically and socially marginalized producers to alleviate their poverty and provide sustainable development. The Association for Craft Producers helped a Nepali woman repair her loom so she could weave items for them to sell. Now she organizes 60 weavers so they can earn a living.

2) **Build community:** One Nepali weaver earned enough to send her daughter to a university where she earned a master’s in social work. She decided the best social work was to help her mother help

women build their weaving businesses and control their earnings.

3) **Develop transparent** and accountable relationships that are open, fair, consistent and respectful. Ganesh Himal helped a paper company that employed 4,000 families develop new products when they lost a contract.

4) **Build producers’ capacity** and independence so they can develop their businesses, be their own bosses and employ others. Without access to loans, a women’s weaving workshop couldn’t repair the building they leased. Ganesh Himal helped raise \$5,000 to transform the workshop.

5) **Ensure the rights of children** to security, education and play.

“Children need health and education because they will one day run the world,” said Kim, telling of 283,000 children enslaved by Ivory Coast’s cocoa industry. “Fair trade chocolate does not use child slaves.”

6) **Pay people promptly.**
Continued on page 8

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Neighborhood Networks programs help people help themselves

Charles Williams wants to instill in other children and youth the importance of education to help them find jobs to earn a living and support their families.

As part of his work with Neighborhood Networks, he helps interact with and tutor grade school through high school students at the South Perry Learning Center now housed at Emmanuel Family Life Center.

His family came to Spokane 20 years ago when his father was in the Air Force, and he was in junior high school. His parents met at Southern Illinois University, not completing their degrees because his father entered the military.

During high school, Charles volunteered at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Outreach Center. While studying history at Eastern Washington University, he worked with East Central after-school and summer programs, and with the Neighborhood Networks after-school program at the Richard Allen Apartments.

Neighborhood Networks was established as a program of U.S. Housing and Urban Development in 1995 to give people in low-income apartment complexes access to computer technology so they have better access to jobs, health education, Department of Social and Health Services information, tenants information, awareness of technology and economic opportunities, and games, crafts and recreational activities.

The program came to Richard Allen Apartments in 1997, starting in the office of the Rev. Lonnie Mitchell at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The office moved to the Richard Allen Apartments office for more space and then in 2008 to Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., on the same campus.

Richard Allen Apartments is one of several low-income apartment complexes managed by Kiemle and Hagood, offering Neighborhood Networks resources, said Betsy Williams, who is assistant manager of Neighborhood Networks for the Richard Allen Apartments complex.

Betsy started working with Neighborhood Networks in 2003, and since then has been working on earning a bachelor's degree in psychology from Ashford University, an online college. She completes the program this term and plans to continue on to earn a master's degree and eventually a seminary degree. Betsy, who



Charles Williams assists high school students Ashley Carter, Salicia Williams and Marcus Shadwick on the computer.

attends Bethel AME, will be ordained as an itinerate deacon in 2013, and plans to take seminary studies in Spokane.

"I'm an example that no matter what one's financial status or educational background is, people experiencing hardships can earn degrees online," she said. "I'm a work in progress. Life is an adventure. I am prepared to let God pour me out to the service God has called me to do. People caught in a rut need resources to help them pull out of poverty."

Charles works with Neighborhood Networks to help maintain computers at various Kiemle and Hagood complexes, lead the after-school and summer-teen programs, teach resumé building, computer software skills and responsible renters classes.

All the programs are for the community, not just those living in Richard Allen Apartments.

"I love to help people," Charles said, who is involved with his family in Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Charles also plays the drums, is in the choir, and is advisor to the youth group, which leads the service every third Sunday. The church's young people's division includes young people from his three-year-old son to 26 years old. He also encourages children and youth at the church to complete high school and go to college.

"Education is important, be-

cause no one can take your education away from you," he said.

"I have learned patience in working with the students," he said. "Some students learn fast and some learn slow. I need to communicate with each."

The center also has three eight-foot shelves of books donated by Links, Inc. Many of the books are about African Americans.

Two days a week the children in the after-school program spend time in Emmanuel Family Life Center's gym. Charles also coaches a seventh grade boys' basketball team.

Betsy said all of her family will be in higher education programs in January. Her husband earned an associate degree and is ready to work for a degree in construction management to advance his work in that field with Kiemle and Hagood.

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We get education to give back to the community," she said. "So many of us are blessed because we have been helped along the way."

Charles seeks to steer young people away from using drugs.

"God saved me from that," Charles said. "I do not want youth to experience that. I mentor them so they will help others."

The motto of Neighborhood Networks is "people helping people help themselves," so they are more self-sufficient, Betsy said.

People need people to help them help themselves, because people caught in difficult times and poverty find it hard to rise above their despair, she said.

The after school program of the South Perry Learning Center serves about 30 students, with 15 to 20 coming each day for help with homework, a safe haven and the computer lab.

In October, Tincan upgraded computers at Richard Allen's Neighborhood Network Center and other public housing sites. The South Perry Learning Center received 13 new computers, two projectors, a screen, a printer and software for learning and music. With the upgraded equipment, they receive training in digital literacy skills.

Tincan began in 1994 to provide information technology and interactive media for education and community development. It creates online content, offers training and collaborates with partners to provide access to technologies.

With the computers, Charles will teach typing, music, math, English and safe web browsing.

The equipment and training are part of the Broadband Tech-

nology Opportunity Program (BTOP), which Tincan coordinates in cooperation with more than 17 partners—community centers, nonprofits and libraries, said Tara Neumann, assistant director of Tincan since 2003.

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, BTOP expands broadband access to unserved and underserved communities to provide long-term economic benefits. It reaches out to disenfranchised people to draw them and others into civic activism through providing technological literacy.

BTOP training includes instruction in internet basics, video production, social media and video games for self-expression, civic participation and social interaction.

Community colleges also have access to the computer lab during the day to do assignments.

Community Colleges of Spokane, Gonzaga University, Whitworth University and Eastern Washington University will provide two service-learning students helping each quarter with tutoring and other activities.

The center also welcomes volunteers to help students with their homework and as mentors, Charles said.

The program needs volunteers all day, because he often goes to different sites to help people learn to use computers and to maintain computers. It also needs funding to replace a source that was helping pay for snacks for the after-school program.

For information, call 535-9681 or email charlesl.williams84@yahoo.com.

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Mariachi band family lead music for liturgies at St. Joseph's Catholic

Jésus Lopez and his mariachi band—five of his six children—bring a flavor of mariachi as music ministers for Spanish liturgies, as well as for bilingual and trilingual liturgies at St. Joseph Catholic Church at 1503 W. Dean St. in Spokane.

Outside church, their Mariachi Arriba Jalisco Band plays at hotels and churches in North Idaho and welcomes whatever people offer to pay. They are one of few mariachi bands in the area.

When Maria married Jesús nearly 20 years ago, she knew mariachi music was in her future. She didn't realize that the band her husband would form would be made up of their children.

She is happy that the mariachi band helps the family stay together and have happy times, both in practicing two to three times a week and in performing.

"The characters and interests of each of our children are different, but this gives us something to do together as a family," she said.

"I like carrying on the tradition from my family," Jesús said. "It sometimes gives me goose bumps and makes me happy to pass it on to my children."

While some children may sit at home bored, he said that his children go as a band to visit different places.

Jésus, an automobile mechanic from 8 to 5, built his life from his vision of earning a living as a mechanic and spending free time playing trumpet and singing in a mariachi band and a church choir.

Music filled his life growing up in Ameca, 60 miles from Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco, the birthplace of Mexico's mariachi music in the 1890s.

Jésus' father, who performed throughout Mexico and in the United States, taught Jesús and his brother to play music. He attended school from 8 to 2 and learned music from 3 to 7 p.m.

Although he loved trumpets, he first played an accordion, one of the mariachi instruments, which has roots in Germany. He loved trumpets, but couldn't afford one. When he was 13, someone gave him an old, bent-up trumpet.

A mariachi band usually includes Mexican versions of European instruments: two trumpets; three to eight violins; one or more guitars; a vihuela, a round-backed, nylon-string guitar, and a guitarrón or base guitar. Accordions are used, but are less common.

Jésus said that at first violins and guitarróns were used. Trumpets were added later.

Soon after European instruments were introduced in Mexico for use in the Mass, they were



David, Carolina, Abraham, Alejandro, Roberto and Jesús perform at Convent of the Holy Names benefit.

also used for secular music. The Mexican folk music genre is played in restaurants and for community and church celebrations. Although bands were at first men only, now there are women musicians and singers.

Mariachi bands became popular in the 1920s when Mexico's president had a band at his inauguration and bands played on radio.

After nine years of school, Jesús went for five years to a technical school in Guadalajara to learn to be an automobile mechanic.

Despite his training, he was not accepted into a mechanics union or a musical union. Jesús found it hard to find work in mechanics or music in Mexico, so in 1985, he moved with his father, brother and sister to the United States.

Making money playing at restaurants and parties, he earned enough to buy a trumpet when he was 18. He started a mariachi band and went from place to place from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. in Hollywood, Santa Ana and Long Beach.

"It was exciting but stressful," he said.

Maria, one of 14 siblings, first came to the United States in 1980 to care for a sister's children and go to night school in Los Angeles after completing sixth grade in Totatiche, Jalisco.

She returned to help her father for three years on his ranch, which was two hours by horse from town and had no running water or electricity. "In contrast, life in the United States was easy," she said.

In 1985, another sister married and asked her to help with her baby. She returned to Mexico for a year to help when her mother was sick. In 1988, she joined brothers in El Monte, Calif., working at a swap meet, making airplane parts, cashiering at a 7-11 and working at an insulation company.

Jésus met Maria in 1993 when both were studying English at Baldwin Park, Calif. Working as a mechanic in Los Angeles, he had bought a house. They married a year later in Mexico.

Both had green cards so they could go back and forth. In 1999, they became citizens.

They came to Spokane in 2002, because his house in Baldwin Park was crowded with their growing family, his parents and brother. They wanted to move their children away from schools dominated by gangs.

Visiting an uncle in Mt. Vernon, they saw Spokane on the map and began driving East. They spent a month in Moses Lake before coming to Spokane, where he found work at Camp Chevrolet.

In Spokane, Maria supported Jesús' dream of having his own band—their children.

"Because my brother, father and I had practiced at home while she was pregnant, the children grew up with the music before birth and while playing with toys," Jesús said.

His father bought David, now 18, a toy guitar when he was a year old. He played it and people applauded.

"I had not formally taught him, but he knew and played the song, 'Guadalajara' when we visited there once," Jesús said.

When Carolina, 16, was three, she went with her father to choir practice at the Catholic church they attended in Los Angeles. So she knew the songs.

When Abraham, 15, was born, his grandfather grabbed his big hands and predicted he would play the guitarrón.

to hold music."

For three summers, David, Carolina, Abraham and Alejandro studied music at the Plaza de la Raza Music and Art School in Los Angeles, staying with relatives.

The church they attended in Los Angeles had about 10,000 at the six Masses each week.

"I was in the choir, but was lost," Jesús said. "I wanted to be in a smaller church."

After two months in Spokane, they found their way to St. Joseph Catholic Church, which has a Spanish liturgy, along with bilingual English-Spanish liturgies and tri-lingual English-Spanish-Vietnamese liturgies.

"In church, we play 'Holy, Holy' as it's written, but can improvise some mariachi tempos and harmonies."

On Dec. 12 for two years, the Lopez family has played and led the annual Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe procession of about 200 people from St. Joseph's to Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral.

Because the children read music, they have learned to play bilingual songs in the Catholic music book, so they also have played for the English Masses at St. Thomas More.

"It gives me joy to share the gift we have, playing and singing at church," he said. "We put our feelings into the music."

"Mariachi music is about everyday life—animals, romance, bravery, history, revolution, values and life. We also use the mariachi tunes and change the words to sing to God," he said.

For information, call 484-0385 or email spokaneJesus@aol.com.

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North Idaho News Briefs by Kaye Hult

Two warming shelters plan to be open for homeless people this winter

Two warming shelters in North Idaho will open their doors for homeless people this winter. The Fresh Start drop-in center at 1524 E. Sherman Ave. in Coeur d'Alene, will welcome guests from 7 p.m. to noon the next day any night the temperature drops to 25 degrees or below.

St. Vincent de Paul's warming center at 202 W. Seventh St. in Post Falls will provide shelter from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., Nov. 1 through Feb. 28 when the temperature drops below 25 degrees.

Both shelters need clothing, jackets, hats, gloves, blankets, sleeping bags, tents and tarps.

Overnight shelter this winter may be in short supply. Ignite

Hope, a program that offered a warming shelter in a warehouse last year, has not yet found a location. A grant that St. Vincent de Paul used for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing ran out.

For information on Fresh Start, call 208-667-9798. For information on St. Vincent de Paul, call 208-664-3095.

Hospice of North Idaho hosts local panelists discussing 'Living with Grief'

Hospice of North Idaho will host an interactive viewing of a national educational DVD on end-of-life ethics from 8 a.m. to noon, Wednesday, Nov. 14, at St. Pius X Catholic Church, 625 E. Haycraft Ave. in Coeur d'Alene.

Because the medical profession is able to prolong life, ethical

questions have arisen about when life ends, how to care for a person whose life is ending, who makes decisions and what the basis is for those decisions. Answers to these questions evolve as improvements in technology are discovered.

The video is the Hospice Foundation of America's 19th annual

presentation in its "Living With Grief"® Program. After the DVD panel presentation, a local panel of professionals in medicine, law and spiritual care, plus family and caregivers, will respond to issues raised in the video.

For information, call 208-772-7994 or macleang@honi.org.

Christian Community Coalition offers workshop on suicide prevention

The Christian Community Coalition (CCC) will offer "Save a Life: A Suicide Prevention Workshop" from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 17, at Lake City Community Church, 6000 N. Ramsey Rd. in Coeur d'Alene.

The program offers tools to identify at-risk behaviors and engage people to prevent suicides.

It is the first event planned by the new CCC Learning Center, a place for people to learn about

suicide and to address issues "that keep people from pursuing joy-filled, godly lives," said Joe Bohart, coalition president.

When assessing needs of North Idaho, CCC leadership saw suicide as a pressing issue. In 2010, 290 Idahoans committed suicide, 53—18 percent—in the five northern counties and 66—23 percent—in Boise.

Catherine Perusse, chair of the North Idaho Suicide Prevention

Action Network, will discuss the "QPR"—Question, Persuade and Refer—intervention tool.

Therapist Raquel Kelicutt will explain suicidal thinking and behavior based on 30 years of doing suicide survivor support groups.

State Senator John Goedde, a member of the Idaho State Suicide Council, will report on suicide statistics in the Coeur d'Alene area.

For information, call 208-966-4078 or email kootenaiccc.com.

Coeur d'Alene restaurant collaborates with agencies to serve Thanksgiving meal

For the second year, Fedora Pub and Grille will serve a free Thanksgiving meal for people from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 22, at 1726 W. Kathleen in Coeur d'Alene.

The Christian Community Coalition, The Kitchen Connection and KYMS Radio are collecting donations of food and funds.

Last year, nearly 1,000 people participated, with 700 at the res-

taurant, 100 volunteers and 150 meals-on-wheels deliveries.

For information, call 208-659-5658, Coeur d'Alene; 773-4600, Post Falls or 597-7151, Sandpoint or email karla@kymradio.com.

How consumers spend money is a decision about how the world will

Continued from page 5

"We send producers \$50,000 to \$80,000 every two months before products are sent. It's business based on trust. The goods always arrive," Denise said.

7) **Support safe**, empowering working conditions. A Tibetan refugee family created a profit-sharing workshop for tailors. When the owners' daughter graduated from college, she set up a shelter teaching girls and women to knit so they could leave prostitution and escape domestic abuse.

8) **Respect people's cultural** identity and celebrate cultural diversity, while seeking positive and equitable change.

9) **Cultivate environmental** stewardship and promote sustainable practices. One producer saw

old inner tubes burning across the street and decided to make purses with them. Ganesh Himal's sale of them has recycled 1,500 tubes.

"Everyone can help," Kim said. "Think of the power of consumers. How we spend our money is a decision about how the world and people's lives here and elsewhere will be. We suggest that people shop fair trade first and ask their retailers to stock fair trade items."

"If people direct five percent of purchases to fair trade, it will have a major impact," Denise said.

The U.S. Fair Trade Federation's 250 wholesale and retail members do \$100 million in non-food retail sales. Worldwide, \$6 billion is spent on fair trade, up 12 percent in 2011 over 2010 and 27 percent over 2009 sales.

For information, call 448-6561, visit ganeshhimaltrading.com, call 464-7677 or visit kizurispokane.com.

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Participation in an Idaho historical exhibit gives sisters opportunity to reflect

As the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho, contributes artifacts to the "Essential Idaho: 150 Things That Make the Gem State Unique" exhibit in March 2013, the Benedictine sisters are reflecting on their past, present and future role in the church, state and world.

The exhibit opens March 4, 2013, and runs through the year at the State Historical Museum, 610 N. Julia Davis Dr. in Boise. On March 4, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the act creating the Idaho Territory.

Last winter, the Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS) asked Idahoans to nominate people, places, events and memorabilia that depict Idaho's heritage and culture. From 600 nominations, 150 were chosen, including the monastery.

The exhibit will include memorabilia from interesting characters, such as Senator Frank Church to Olympic champions, and events such as the 1910 Fire to moving the capitol to Boise.

A section on "Keepers of Idaho History" celebrates five influential historians, one of whom is Sister Alfreda Elsensohn, writer, educator and founder of the monastery's Historical Museum.

State historian Keith Petersen said people respect the monastery for their education, health care and spirituality; for the sisters' stewardship of the monastery land and for their preservation of the historic monastery and its museum.

The sisters decided to share their Office Books, because they symbolize who they are as a community that prays.

Now in her second term as prioress at the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho, Benedictine Sister Clarissa Goeckner said that the three current "corporate ministries" of the monastery are: 1) the Spirituality Ministry that draws more than 2,500 people to be refreshed and refocused; 2) the Stewardship of the Land Ministry that models care of creation, and 3) the Historical Museum's Ministry that preserves stories and artifacts of the community and region.

They also offer a bed and breakfast as a hospitality ministry.

From St. Benedict's invitation to seek God, the sisters were originally teachers, nurses and/or housekeepers.

Sr. Clarissa herself has served in education as a teacher, principal and religious educator and is now serving as spiritual and administrative leader of the monastery, caring for and coordinating the ministries of 35 sisters and one postulant who live there, and 14 sisters who serve in health care, education, pastoral care and parish



Sister Clarissa Goeckner

Photo courtesy of Monastery of St. Gertrude

ministries in Idaho, Washington, Minnesota and California. One has worked 20 years with at-risk youth in a gang area in Los Angeles. A retired sister volunteers numerous hours in prison ministry.

Working with and supporting the sisters are 60 Oblates—men and women who associate with a Benedictine religious community to enrich their Christian way of life—and many volunteers.

"We are also a regional leader in social justice issues," Sr. Clarissa said. "We offer print and online media to educate people on Benedictine spirituality.

"For more than 1,500 years, Benedictines have lived lives of prayer and service," she said. "Our history in the United States began when three sisters from Switzerland came in 1882 and settled in Colton and Uniontown, Wash., before they moved to Cottonwood more than 100 years ago.

Sr. Clarissa grew up in a Catholic family in the farming, ranching and lumber community of Cottonwood and attended the monastery-run schools. Attracted by the joy she saw in the Benedictine sisters who taught her, she decided to enter the order in her senior year of high school. Her parents' example in their commitment to seeing people's needs and helping neighbors was also an influence.

She took her first vows in 1958. "In those days, teachers studied in the summer and taught during the year. She earned a bachelor's degree in English and education at St. Martin's University in Lacey. During those years, she taught fifth grade at St. Anthony's at Pocatello, and seventh grade at Sacred Heart in Boise, St. Peter and Paul's in Grangeville and St. Mary's in Boise.

At St. Mary's she also be-

came a principal, serving there for 12 years before entering the University of San Francisco in 1979, achieving master's degrees in religious education, school administration and counseling. She worked part time teaching religion at Presentation High School, while serving as associate director of campus ministry at USF. In summers she came home to St. Gertrude's to teach English in the Lewis and Clark State College Extension program at the monastery.

In 1990, she became assistant prioress for four and a half years and then worked 12 years as coordinator of children's and family catechesis, visiting parishes throughout the Diocese of Boise.

Sr. Clarissa said her role was to "facilitate the creativity of lay people who were educating themselves to be more competent in sharing the faith."

In 2005, she was elected prioress and moved home just as the Spirit Center was completed and opened. She helped complete the capital campaign to pay for it in 2009. When her six-year term ended in 2011, she was elected for four more years.

"It was exciting to see the risk people took to help us build Spirit Center and a joy to see it grow. People come seeking quiet and time away from their regular lives, so they return home with a deeper peace," she said, noting that many who come are not Catholic.

The sisters' 2008 vision called the community to be open to the future, awakened by prayer to do what justice and compassion compel them to do.

"How will God awaken me to ministry? How are we to work for justice in our time? How are we to act with compassion so God's kingdom will come?" she asked.

"What I admired when I entered the community has grown and deepened," Sr. Clarissa said. "It is our call to gather to pray for the needs of the world, beginning with morning praise, Mass, keeping in tune during the day doing lectio divina—reading and reflecting on Scriptures—and closing with evening prayer," Sr. Clarissa said. "I love the work of prayer."

Out of prayer for the needs of the world comes serving, using talents and resources to meet people's needs, she said. "We are always asking, 'What is the gift we can give now?' Joining our prayer and efforts, we can do more together than we could do alone."

Sr. Clarissa used the words of Sojourner magazine editor Jim Wallace to describe the experience of the Benedictine sisters at the Monastery of St. Gertrude:

"Always a few committed people are the ones who make the difference." and "Just because you're small, don't give up."

So the sisters continue to find new ways to care for the earth, recycle, work for justice and serve "the needs of our time."

Their witness was noticed in 2008, when they received the Kessler Keener Extraordinary Witness Award for their impact on human rights, peace, justice and living out their faith to change the way they and others see the world.

In 2002 and 2005, they joined U.S. Benedictines in peace statements opposing the U.S. pre-emptive attack on Iraq and standing

for "no more war."

Since 2001, the community has focused on poverty, human trafficking and violence against women and children.

Since 2005, their Passion of the Earth Project has integrated respect for the land and social justice work to heal the land.

In 2005, they were recognized as Tree Farmers of the Year.

The museum covers the culture of both immigrants and natives.

Inclusion in the 2013 exhibit affirms for Sister Clarissa that "we are essential to what Idaho has become."

For information, call 208-962-3224 or visit www.stgertrudes.org.

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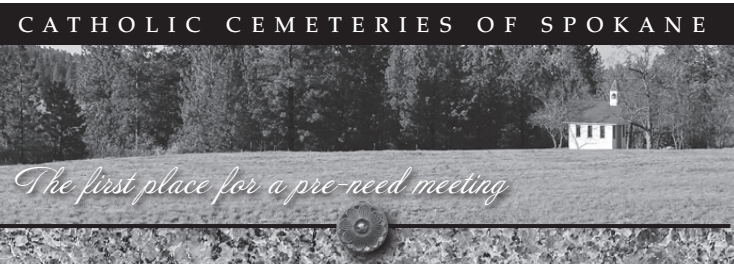
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In faith communities, divisions are grounds for ongoing conversations

The either-or mindset, win-lose dynamic and yes-or-no decisions that mark an election season will soon wind down, but the conversations that make for a democracy and solutions to the pressing issues of our time will continue.

Perhaps because we are not a battleground state, perhaps because of media I choose or perhaps because technology lets media tailor messages to my tastes, I have not been overwhelmed by negative ads and hate that I know are there. Even in the final presidential debate each candidate voiced what they imagined to be the center.

Despite the intense divisions in the faith community and beyond on Referendum 74 about marriage equality for same sex couples, both sides were calling for people to love their neighbors as themselves and to love those with whom they disagree.

Discussions surrounding related issues on churches' and faiths' stances on homosexuality—membership, ordination, bless-

ing ceremonies and marriage—have long divided the faith community. The divisions are within the faith communities, as well as between and among them.

After intensive study and discussion, national and world denominations and faiths have developed a myriad of documents and resolutions. National stances are online, compiled by at least two websites.

Decisions by regional bodies and local congregations vary, depending on the governance style of their church or faith.

Unlike most other media, The Fig Tree does not endorse stands on issues or candidates. We also do not publish political ads. We circulate across many divisions in the faith community. We do seek to educate by reporting on ministries and programs related to common ground among the faiths.

Father John Hightower, SJ, director of Gonzaga University campus ministries, opened the recent Take Action Against Hate Banquet of the Institute for Hate Studies

at Gonzaga saying, "We need to see the dignity of the divine in the person sitting across from us." He added that even though there are two stories of creation, *both* say that all people are created in God's image.

"If we are to act against hate, we must take to heart that we are to see the dignity of each person, and we are to love them, because we are loved. We must not be silent to allow hate to raise voices," Father John said.

Naomi Tutu, a human rights activist from South Africa, speaking at the YWCA's Women of Achievement Luncheon in October, said in her work to eliminate racism she challenges the idea of being "color blind," pretending not to see differences. She said, "differences are opportunities to expand what we know of the world." She called for moving to a place where people celebrate differences.

"We are called to be courageous and step into places of discomfort and be willing to

chat about what we know about 'the other' and ourselves," Naomi said. "We need to walk with courage and sensitivity into looking at our privilege and others' oppression."

Listening beyond the divisiveness over Referendum 74, The Fig Tree heard thoughtful comments coming from across the spectrum in the faith community.

So we are sharing online some of the voices, expressing the call to love and to carry on the conversation in the spirit of love. Online we are able to go beyond sound-bite summaries by pointing people to full statements, sermons and videos. We can add to them.

So the yes-no decisions made on ballots will not end the issues or the discussion of them. By giving access to resources to understand the faith concepts behind the varying viewpoints, we hope to help the faith community carry on the conversation in a spirit of love.

Mary Stamp - editor

Those who trust in God's abundance avoid the epidemic of obesity

Obesity has gone beyond a problem and is now referred to as an epidemic, sometimes capitalized, as in The Obesity Epidemic.

If we look around, we can find obesity affecting far more than our physical bodies.

Obese weddings can cost as much as a year at an elite college. With their lavish settings, entertainment, multi-course dinners and Bridezillas, they have become routine enough that an invitee to a church wedding followed by a dessert reception at a modest location recently felt it necessary to write to an advice columnist.

She wanted to know if she should down-scale her gift to the couple, because they weren't having what she regarded as a "traditional wedding."

We can laugh or cry over that one, but there are some examples of cultural obesity that definitely aren't funny.

Our already pudgy political campaigns became obese when the Citizens United court decision declared that corporations

are entitled to freedom of speech and that limiting how much they can spend to influence elections limits their speech.

When our economy tanked, in large part because of unethical behavior in too large a segment of the financial world, there seemed to be a widespread feeling that those responsible should face consequences. Obese CEO salaries and perks and extravagant bonuses throughout the system did not reduce.

We have gradually learned that as immoral and unethical as the financial manipulations were, they were not illegal because regulations have been loosened so much.

Financial analysts report that many corporations are keeping unusually large cash balances on hand instead of investing in new plants, developing new products or hiring new workers.

Profits in the oil industry have been record-breaking, but the industry shows no intention of giving up its government subsidies.

Why? Shouldn't they feel some patriotic duty or at least need to help their country out of this mess? Not necessarily.

They are behaving according to theologian Walter Bruggemann's "myth of scarcity," described in his book, *The Liturgy of Abundance, The Myth of Scarcity* and are completely in line with the results of studies of greed. Yes, there are such things.

Fear of scarcity leads us to hold onto what we have with increasing determination. In that setting, Bruggeman said that "money is like a narcotic for us."

Studies of greed indicate that the less well off are more likely to share and are less self-centered than the wealthy.

Analyses of tax returns and spending patterns show that the poor give a larger percentage of their income to charity than the wealthy do.

Large donations make the headlines, but the more modest ones make up the bulk of the income of nonprofit organizations that provide services to help people through

hard times, to help people with disabilities and to help people gain economic justice.

The Myth of Scarcity and the Liturgy of Abundance fit beautifully here. Bruggeman says the "Bible starts out with a liturgy of abundance." He point out that the future is not in the hands of "those who believe in scarcity and monopolize the world's resources. It is in the hands of those who trust God's abundance."

If you have a full picnic hamper, but fear that people will take advantage of you, you will find it safer to eat alone and hold onto your leftovers.

If you have just a small loaf, tucked into your pack as you leave home in the morning and you share it with someone who has only a fish, you have performed an act of hospitality, gained a varied meal, and found fellowship. That's a bountiful return for one small loaf.

When people all around you are doing the same thing, you help create community.

Nancy Minard - contributing editor

Reflections

Sounding Board

Reflections

Bishop suggests the bumpy road is often the way to follow in faith

Bishop James Waggoner, Jr., shared reflections at the 2012 Diocese of Spokane Episcopal Convention in October at the Cathedral of St. John.

When his sons visited him wanting to see Mount Rainier close up, Bishop Jim Waggoner, Jr., and his wife, Gloria, drove with them into the Cascades. They saw a road that said "To Mount Rainier" but it looked rough and bumpy, so they drove on following the safe, smooth main route until they missed the mountains.

"We traveled on the road that was comfortable, clear and easy to follow. We did not want to turn on the bumpy, uncertain uncomfortable road," he said. "To be people of the way and people on the way, we need to be people committed, not missing the road to the mountain—the road to the marvelous, miraculous abundant life God has to give us."

While the road followers of Jesus are to take might "rattle us and put us off balance, it's where we should be," said Jim, also making a point that the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane has restructured in the last few years, going down "a road we have not traveled before."

It has formed four regions, replacing six deaneries in its previous structure, with regional congregational developers who help congregations develop new models of ministry and help them connect, collaborate

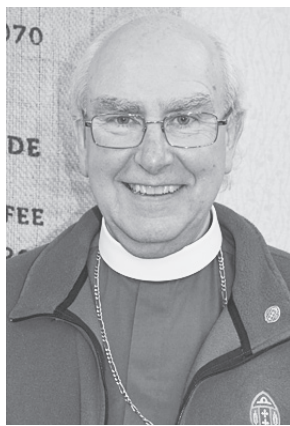
and cooperate.

People now gather for regional days, sharing stories.

"No longer is the diocese 40 separate congregations, but we are people from those congregations coming together to share gifts. We see a vision of the church through engagement and interaction that emerges as we look at the roads we might take and challenge each other to be willing to go to places we have not gone," Jim said.

Story sharing brings to light parts of congregations' lives so they better know the story of Jesus and are able to tell it, live it and see it.

Jim told of meeting a young man at Manito Park near the rose garden. He was trying to find the Japanese garden using GPS on his cell phone. Jim told him where it was, saying he had just been there, just experienced it. So the man put away his phone and went there.



Bishop Jim Waggoner, Jr.

"It makes a difference in the faith community to say, 'I've seen God do things. I've seen faith and joy. I've experienced it,'" Jim said. "What we are called to do is not to be shy."

"Several years ago when I preached my first sermon in this diocese, I said we are called to be bold and called to live the story."

Then the diocese said, "We are called to a wider mission and need a capital campaign. We have done it. We now have endowments that are paying off in new ways. We were able to organize for mission."

Jim told of some of the mission happening in parishes.

Holy Trinity in Grangeville had about 10 people several years ago. They decided to continue to exist because they have a food bank that feeds people in the community. Now they have 18 members.

That church has started a new church in Weippe, Idaho, sponsoring a congregation of 12 people who want to talk and pray. They provided prayer books and a place for prayer.

When owners decided to close the Carlyle Hotel in Spokane putting people with disabilities and mental illness out on the street, Jim said that the cathedral prevented it.

St. Luke's in Wenatchee knew members felt bad about not helping people who ask

for money. Now each person has life packs, nutritious meals sealed in plastic bags.

Holy Trinity in Spokane decided it couldn't be a regular congregation, but could be a center for God's service, for being friends with, talking with and feeding people in the neighborhood, being a chapel on the side.

Christ Church in Zillah works ecumenically with other churches and works on the reservation.

"These are things that have happened around congregations considering what it means to be people of the way, people on the way," Jim said.

"These churches are going a bumpy road, going where people are and where they are asking questions," he said. "People are talking with people, and that's holy."

"It's difficult to stay alive when we're asking the questions about surviving to be loyal to ourselves as an institution but not loyal to our mission. Custodians may fight to maintain a vision," he said. "We need to be ready to take another road."

Citing theologian Walter Bruggeman, he said the only vision is God's vision as revealed most clearly in Jesus and what he did.

"The road we are on may be fine, but won't get us where we want to go. We do not want to miss the mountain—the fullness of life that God is offering us," Jim said.

Economic justice is theme for Feb. 2 event

The 2013 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference speakers will address concerns about Economic Justice: Giving Voice to Ethics in Making Budget Policies that Shape our Lives from 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 2, at the Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave. For information, call 535-4112 or 206-625-9790.

"Pursuit of Justice" conference planned

The Gonzaga Institute for Hate Studies and Gonzaga University School of Law are calling for academic papers and session proposals related to "The Pursuit of Justice: Understanding Hatred, Confronting Intolerance, Eliminating Inequality" conference April 18 to 20, 2013, at Gonzaga Law School.

The Institute for Hate Studies is collaborating with the Law School and the Washington State Task Force on Race and the Criminal Justice System to present this joint event, which includes both the third International Conference on Hate Studies and the second Conference on Race and the Criminal Justice System, said John Shuford, director of the Institute for Hate Studies.

Paper and session proposals are due Dec. 1, and decisions will be issued Dec. 31. The final draft papers for publication consideration are due March 1, 2013.

Information on submitting proposals is <http://bit.ly/PXVWVb> and at <http://bit.ly/QPHGCM>.

For information, call 313-3665 or e-mail hatestudies@gonzaga.edu.

Filmmaker leads six writers' workshops

All Saints Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce, is hosting a pot-luck, film and workshop on "It's a Wonderful Life" from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 17.

Petrushka Pavlovich, filmmaker, screenwriter and media consultant at Fact & Fable Productions, LLC, who will lead the sessions, said the film is about a "community leaning into the faith they have in God and re-inspiring each other to depend upon it."

"It redefines giving as 'taking what you need and leaving the rest in the pot for someone else,'" she said.

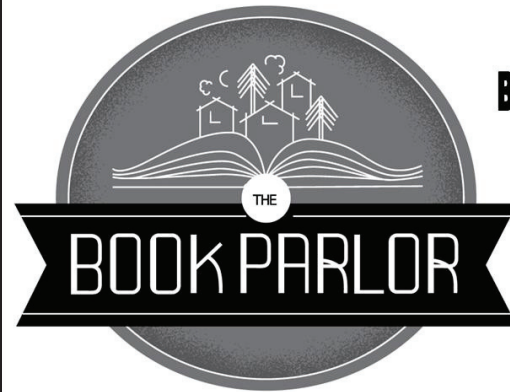
For information, call 280-7188.

Calendar of Events

- Nov • **American Indian Heritage Month**
- Oct 30, Nov 6 • **Thomas Merton's Bridges** to Contemplative Living, The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior St., 483-6495, www.SJFOnline.org
- Nov 1 • **"Slavery, Transport Costs and Race** in the Making of Brazil," Eastern Washington University Monroe 207, Cheney, noon, ewu.edu
- Nov 2 • **Planning for Eastern Washington Legislative Conference**, Salem Lutheran, 1428 E. Broadway, 9:30 a.m.
- Nov 2-4 • **Exploring the Mystery of Dreams**, Spirit Center, Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, 208-962-2000
- Nov 3 • **Leaf Raking Blitz** for elderly and disabled neighbors, Catholic Charities, St. Aloysius Catholic Church O'Malley Hall, 8:30 a.m., 459-6172, clapke@ccspokane.org
- Nov 3 • **Partners in Hope**, Benefit, St. Joseph Family Center, Red Lion Hotel at the Park, 303 W. North River Dr., 6 p.m., nwhite@sjfconline.org
- Nov 4 • **Daylight Savings** time ends
- Nov 7 • **Fourth Annual Heritage Day Celebration**, Spokane Tribe, Spokane County Fair and Expo Center, 404 N. Havana St., Suite 1, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 477-2770, johnm@spokanetribe.com
- Nov 7 • **"Virtues of the Mind: What Are They and Why Do They matter?"** Jason Baehr, Loyola Marymount University, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University, 7 p.m., 777-4939, kfector@whitworth.edu
- Nov 7 • **Spiritual Conversations with Baha'is**, "Education under Fire," Chairs Coffee, 113 W. Indiana, 5 p.m., spokanebahais.org
- Nov 7 • **"Food for the Spirit: Holiday Nourishment for Body and Soul,"** Gerry Klumb and Sr. Marybeth, SMMC, 448-1224
- Nov 9 • **Smart Justice Spokane Symposium**, Northern Quest, Airway Heights, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., 624-5657
- Nov 9-10 • **Jubilee International Marketplace**, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, 448-5130
- Nov 9-11 • **"Inner and Generational Healing,"** Men's Retreat with Fr. Dan Wetzler, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224
- Nov 10 • **"Always Held in God's Hand,"** Kent Hoffman, Ministry Institute Saturday Workshop Series, 405 E. Sinto, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., 313-5765, gonzaga.edu/ministryinstitute
- Nov 10 • **"Aging Is Not for Sissies,"** Barbara Burkart, The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, 483-6495, www.sjfconline.org
- Nov 10-11 • **Annual Fall Folk Festival**, Spokane Community College Lair, 1810 N. Greene St., 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, 624-5693, www.spokanefolklore.org
- Nov 11 • **Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane Annual Membership Meeting**, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 1 to 4 p.m., 838-7870
- Nov 13 • **Catholic Charities Volunteer Information Session**, Family Services Center, 12 E. 5th Ave., 10 a.m., 358-4270
- Nov 13-15 • **"Losses of Our Lives,"** Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, 208-962-2000, retreats@stgertrudes.org
- Nov 16 • **International Day of Tolerance**, Crosby Center at Gonzaga 502 E. Boone, noon, 313-5836, www.gonzaga.edu
- Nov 16 • **Inter-Cultural Competence Introductory and Advanced Course**, Simpson United Methodist, Pullman
- Nov 16 • **International Festival**, Whitworth University HUB, 5:45 p.m., dinner, 6:45 p.m., entertainment, 777-3796
- Nov 16-18 • **Living through Grief**, Fr. Stan Malmar and Jim Shaw, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224
- Nov 16-18 • **Global Day of Jewish Learning**, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th, 5:30 p.m. Friday through 3 p.m., Sunday, 747-3304
- Nov 16-18 • **Beginning Experience Weekend**, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 534-1797
- Nov 16-Dec 13 • **Tree of Sharing**, Northtown, RiverPark and Spokane Valley Malls
- Nov 17 • **Christian Community Coalition**, "Save a Life," Lake Community Church, 6000 N Assembly, Coeur d'Alene, 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., 208-966-4078
- Nov 17 • **Baskets for Babies**, Super 1 Foods Diaper Drive, 830 E. 29th Ave, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 214-2634
- Nov 19 • **Candlelight Vigil for Poverty Awareness**, House of Charity, 32 W. Pacific Ave., 5:30 p.m., 358-4254, jlee@ccspokane.org
- Nov 19 • **NAACP**, East Central Community Center, 500 S. Stone, 7 p.m.
- Nov 19 • **"Wartorn 1861-2010,"** KYRS, Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main, 7 p.m.
- Nov 22 • **"Giving Thanks for our Differences,"** Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fr. Wright Dr., 10 a.m., 534-1011
- Nov 22 • **Community Thanksgiving Dinner**, Fedora Pub & Grille, 1726 W. Kathleen, Coeur d'Alene, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., 208-659-5658
- Nov 22 • **Catholic Charities Christmas Collection**, public awareness and fund raising for 2013, 358-4266
- Nov 23-25 • **Festival of Fair Trade**, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 448-6561, ganeshhimaltrading.com/festivaloffairtrade.com
- Nov 28 • **Crafting Unity: Native American Beading**, Gonzaga University, Crosby Main Floor, 502 E. Boone, noon to 2 p.m., 313-5836
- Dec 5 • **Fig Tree Distribution**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 314 E. 24th, 9 a.m.
- Dec 6 • **Fig Tree Board**, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., Benefit, noon; Board 1 p.m.
- 1st/3rd Weds • **Death Penalty Abolition Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m.
- 2nd Thurs • **Palestine-Israel Human Rights Committee**, 35 W. Main, 6 p.m.
- 2nd Wed • **Veterans for Peace**, 35 W. Main, 6:45 p.m.
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Shalom Ministries dining program reorganizes, seeks more volunteers

By Deidre Jacobson

For six weeks at the end of August and all of September, homeless and low-income diners at Shalom Ministries' Dining with Dignity program at Central United Methodist Church in downtown Spokane had to find other options.

The program, which serves four breakfasts and two dinners a week, closed to reorganize.

The church had considered closing, but found a new pastor, Ian Robertson who is serving as three-fourth-time minister and as site supervisor for Dining with Dignity. Five years ago, he retired as pastor at Spokane Valley Nazarene Church, and since then founded the HUB Sports Center in Liberty Lake.

"I have spent my ministry focused on building relationships and improving the community," he said. "This is a small, strong congregation with a large ministry serving the disadvantaged."

Shalom's board hired a kitchen coordinator, Karen McLaughlin, freeing program director Pyper Duncan to focus on fund raising, volunteer recruitment and program management.

During the closing, many diners filled the gap at Blessings under the Bridge, which serves sandwiches, Union Gospel Mission, the Cathedral of Lady of Lourdes, and other feeding programs. The hardship was compounded because the House of Charity was closed on Sundays and Mondays, said Pyper.

Some guests did not have money for transportation to other programs that were not within walking distance.

In 1993, Central United Methodist opened its doors for the ministry in response to a call by the national United Methodist Church's General Ministries for churches to provide urban Shalom Zones, violence-free spaces for diverse people living downtown.

The program has grown to include a clothing and hygiene closet. Student nurses from Washington State University come regularly and offer health screenings for the guests. The United Methodist Church women collect socks for distribution. Occasionally, other groups collect and donate items.

A typical breakfast includes hard-boiled eggs, yogurt, fresh fruit, coffee and juice. Cereal and oatmeal are always available. Cooks arrive at 6 a.m. and guests begin to line up around 7 a.m.

Guests are of all ages and races. Children are there infrequently. When families with children come, they are served in a separate area. About half of the diners are homeless and half live downtown in low-income apartments.

Many guests are veterans. Some are mentally ill. They range from teens to elderly. Many of the homeless come from the House



Pyper Duncan and Ian Robertson coordinate meal program.

of Charity or Hope House, or live under bridges.

There are no restrictions. Everyone is welcome, including people under the influence of alcohol or drugs, as long as they are not disruptive and are respectful of the other diners.

Pyper incorporates life-skill training and provides referrals to other agencies to help them gain the resources they need.

Volunteers are from Manito, Central, and Moran United Methodist churches, Starr Road Baptist, St. Mark's Lutheran and Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ.

Monday evening dinners are served to an average of 150 people, with numbers rising at the end of the month closer to 200.

Volunteers from Gonzaga University's Campus Kitchen serve Thursday dinners.

Believing there is a weekend gap for hungry people, Pyper would like to add a Friday evening meal and Saturday lunch, so she is recruiting more churches.

She expects a large turnout for its annual Christmas dinner from 1 to 3 p.m., Monday, Dec. 24.

"We receive around 15,000 pounds of food annually through donations from Northwest Harvest and Second Harvest," said

Pyper, who shops for additional food items at URM.

She prepares a menu for each meal, and the cooks prepare most of the meals a day in advance.

Pyper, who served as director for the past year, came to Spokane from Texas in 2010 to be close to her parents. Her mother, the Rev. Jeanne Harvey Duncan, recently retired as pastor of Central United Methodist Church.

Beginning as a volunteer, she first ran the kitchen for Dining with Dignity, which serves about 4,800 meals each month.

"I have a passion for Shalom and relate with the diners' difficulties, having experienced struggles myself," she said. "I have a rapport with the guests. They need someone they can trust and talk to."

Pyper began her faith journey at age seven when she was diagnosed with diabetes. She has also been treated for breast cancer and leukemia, had difficulty with the births of her two children and, after divorce, became bulimic.

"God has brought me through my hardships and I have a purpose," she said. "Working at Shalom Ministries provides meaning for my life as I share in its efforts to nourish people's minds, bodies and spirits. I am blessed when I

witness a guest's success."

Pyper believes many guests want respect but don't know how to act or ask for it.

In a Central United Methodist newsletter in January, Pyper urged people to open their hearts "to see what God gives us and that God carries us through every day."

"God wants so much for us. God often knows more than what we can see, but through God's love, guidance and pure faith, we together as a congregation and community can pull through," she wrote.

Two benefit events help support Shalom.

The Cardboard Box City, which shares proceeds with Shalom, Family Promise and Mission Outreach, was held on Oct. 12 and 13. Teams made cardboard box shelters and spent the night

outside at Highland Park United Methodist Church. When they rose on Saturday morning, they ate a Shalom Ministries breakfast.

The annual St. Lucy's Candlelight Breakfast, which is served by Moran United Methodist Church youth and prepared by Dining with Dignity cooks, will be held at 7 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 15, at St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th Ave.

Pyper said many resources are needed to keep the program running.

Financial donations, volunteers—especially cooks—and assistance with fund raising are ongoing needs.

Pyper is available to speak to church groups. She will also recruit donors and seek grants.

For information, call 455-9019 or visit gbgm-umc.org/spokane-centralumc/aboutshalom.html.

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