Rohingya refugee flees from violence in Myanmar and settles in Spokane

For the 2019 Holocaust Remembrance Service at 7 p.m., Sunday, April 28, at Temple Beth Shalom in Spokane, Noor Kamal, the survivor of a contemporary genocide, will light the seventh candle.

In April 2017, Noor, a Rohingya refugee from Myanmar, fleeing from violence in April 2017, he came home from work after the 9 p.m. curfew. Soldiers stopped him, beat him, took his money and lunch box. One soldier said, “He’s little. Let him go.”

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In July 2018, two years after starting to clean up and stabilize contamination at the site, Newmont asked the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce the cleanup level approved in 2006, saying the site has naturally high levels of radium and lead. Twa-le said The SHAWL Society challenges the proposal, because relaxing levels continues health and safety risks.

By Mary Stamp
The SHAWL Society continues to educate people as it holds Newmont Mining Company, owner of the Midnite Mine Superfund Cleanup Site, accountable to remediation agreements to clean up radioactive contamination and toxic wastes on the Spokane Indian Reservation by 2025.

The contamination resulted from uranium mining there from 1955 to 1963 and from 1968 to 1981.

Deb Abrahamson founded the SHAWL (Sovereignty, Health, Air, Water and Land) Society in 1994 to educate people and advocate for cleanup. Her daughter, Twa-le Abrahamson-Swan, helps lead the effort.

“It’s been a long journey for us,” said Deb at a community meeting on Feb. 26 at the Eastern Washington University Building at Riverpoint.

“We have been through changes, and borne the damage of the toxic environment ourselves,” she said.

“I am thankful the tribe is taking a strong stance and the next generation is taking over. We will continue to fight this and educate people on health costs to miners and their families, and on the destruction of the air, water and land.”

Community continues pressure for cleanup

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In April 2017, Noor, a Rohingya refugee from Myanmar, came to Spokane through the Lutheran Community Services’ Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Foster Care Program. When it was learned he was 19, not 16, World Relief sought to place him with a family so he could continue in the English Language Learners program at Mt. Spokane High School, where he is now a junior.

Larry Andrews saw the email appeal. So did his wife, Bethanne. They felt moved and called by God to welcome him into their home in October 2017.

All but one of their four adult children are out of their home, plus they had lived six years in Singapore when Larry worked with Procter & Gamble, so they had some understanding of South Asian culture. Larry is now CEO of Partners International, a global missions organization partnering with multi-cultural organizations around the world.

They moved to Spokane in 2012. Noor had only a year of education before he was nine, when his father left Myanmar for Bangladesh, fearing for his safety.

Funds he left covered food for three months, not tuition. As the oldest child with two younger sisters and a younger brother, he became a farm worker, earning about $35 U.S. a year, caring for a company’s cows and rice paddies.

They had a home and just needed money for food and clothes.

At 12, he began doing day labor in road and house construction, earning about $1,000 a year.

Violence broke out in 2012.

Boys and girls were killed. His family slept in the mountains, so soldiers wouldn’t find them.

“People with money fled to Malaysia. I didn’t have enough money to leave,” Noor said.

One day in 2014, he came home from work after the 9 p.m. curfew. Soldiers stopped him, beat him, took his money and lunch box. One soldier said, “He’s little. Let him go.”

Earth Day Vigil to call for healing of the earth

An Earth Day Vigil, “For the Healing of the Earth,” will be held from 5:15 to 7:30 p.m., Monday, April 22, at the Tribal Gathering Place next to Spokane City Hall.

The Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC) are planning a vigil then, followed by a vigil the first Sunday in October at the Cataldo Mission, Cataldo, Idaho.

“We plan to repeat these events every year,” said Gen Heywood, convener for the FLLC. “We hope by meeting every six months, different groups working on separate aspects to heal our Earth can gather, report to each other what they are doing and encourage others to join with them.

“The care of our planet crosses all cultures, class divisions, religions and non-religions. We are one people when we are united in the healing of our one planet,” said Gen, who is pastor at Veradale United Church of Christ.

The April 22 vigil will open with reading the statement American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead gave before the United Nations on March 1977. Bell ringing will be followed by opening words from Chairwoman Carol Evans of the Spokane Tribe of Indians, as well as other tribal leaders.

People affected by the Bunker Hill Mine in the Silver Valley and Midnite Mine on the Spokane Reservation will speak.

There will also be presentations by people challenging the Newport Smelter and more.

Groups working to heal the Earth such as Spokane Riverkeepers, 350-Spokane and others will share information on how to join their work.

Organizations working to heal the Earth may contact Gen at Continued on page 4

Continued on page 6
With 220 attending The Fig Tree’s Benefit Lunch on March 8 and about 170 coming, despite the snow, the benefit lunch on March 13, that was the most attending benefits in any year. At the lunch and breakfast, The Fig Tree shared about its work with the newspaper, resource directory and legislative conference.

It also raised funds to help it do the work of informing, inspiring and involving people. The events so far have raised $28,565, plus pledges of more than $2,640 — $31,890. Expenses were $6,500. “Our 2019 goal is to raise $30,000, plus another $35,000 in other ways for our 35th to add staff and build for the future,” said Mary Stamp, editor. “We are grateful to have reached the first goal. We also added 32 new sponsors and new volunteers.”

More than 60 individuals and organizations hosted tables, inviting guests to come to learn and support. For information, call 335-1813 or email mary@thefigtree.org.

Religious leaders join UN Environmental Assembly

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has published “Freedom of Religion or Belief: A Guide to Biblical Insights,” as part of online training offered through the Freedom of Religion or Belief Learning Platform. The guide offers reflections and questions on how the Bible speaks of human rights, human dignity, universalism and other subjects. It also explores the Bible and the concept of justice, as well as the importance of the freedom to have, choose, change or leave a religion. The Freedom of Religion or Belief Learning Platform is developing online training courses for trainers, community leaders and development of professionals working in contexts of gross violations of freedom of religion of belief.

Faith leaders meet at UN celebration of diversity

A diverse group of Christian and Muslim believers and inter-religious leaders met at a side event at the United Nations in Geneva to celebrate diversity with key speakers shunning extremism and committing to tolerance as a gateway to peace.

Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, executive director of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue opened a March 21 panel on “Celebration of Diversity: Beyond Tolerance, the Path Towards Empathy.” Speakers noted that the role religion can play peace is distorted by those who steal it.

Tolerance is not an end in itself, but in the path that leads to empathy. The latter is the gateway to peace,” he said, extolling the role religion can play peace is distorted by those who steal it.

The latter is the gateway to peace,” he said, extolling the role religion can play for peace.

Refugee Connections Spokane is hosting a benefit. “Refugee Stories: Voices of Hope,” from 5-7 p.m. to “Building Bridges,” April 27, at St. Anne’s Catholic Parish, 2121 E. 1st Ave. with a panel of refugee representatives from Malawi, South Africa, Central America, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq and Sudan.

They will highlight issues they experience living in Spokane, sharing how they contribute to the community, increasing diversity Washington.

Churches call for support amid devastation caused by Cyclone Idai

Habitat for Humanity-Spokane’s annual Hope Builders Luncheon is 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, April 25, at the Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., features keynote speaker Mandy Manning, the 2018 National Teacher of the Year. The luncheon raises funds to provide safe, healthy and affordable housing.

“It’s an opportunity to invest in our community,” said Michelle Girardot, CEO of Habitat for Humanity-Spokane. “We help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build a better life.”

Spokane’s housing market has limited inventory meaning rising rental and home costs. Many renters pay 50 percent or more of their income for rent. In 2017, the rental vacancy rate was 2.4 percent, nearly half the rate of 2005. Plus the monthly supply of homes for sale has significantly decreased every year since 2014.

Families and individuals in need of safe, affordable homes partner with Habitat to do sweat equity to build their home and others for neighbors, plus they take financial workshops.

Family Promise names Joe Ader director

Family Promise of Spokane, which runs multiple programs and shelters for families experiencing homelessness, has hired Joe Ader as their new executive director.

“Families in transition have a strong need to be welcomed in and supported for Family Promise,” said Joe Ader.

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Continued from page 1
genhywood@jjnt.net about shar-
ing information on Earth Day events.

The Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of Eastern Wash-
ington and North Idaho works to overcome racism, militarism, po-
verty and ecological devasta-
tion. These are the principles set forth by the Poor Peoples Campaign: A National Call for a Moral Revival. All four barri-
ers come together where there is eco-
cological devastation.

In June 2018, the FLLC began working on an initiative to draw at-
tention to the reality the Inland Northwest is the largest superfund site in the nation. ‘A superfund site is one so pol-
uted that it will take an enormous
amount of money to clean and con-
tain it,' said Gen. ‘The hope is that these vigils become op-
opportunities to build friendships, strengthen our resolve, and put our thoughts and prayers into actions For the Healing of the Earth.'

For information, call 408-593-
9556.

Spokane Valley - April 13

‘Save the Species’ is the theme for “Happy Earth Day 2019” from
11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday April 13, at Balfour Park Block across from the Spokane Valley City Hall, 105 N. Balfour Rd.

Sponsored by the City of Spo-
okane Valley and Spokane County
Library District, the event is a benefit for the natural environ-
ment surrounding Spokane Valley, Spokane and North Idaho.

After expenses, funds will be used to help restore ecosystems and habitats degraded, damaged or destroyed by human inter-
vention, storms or wild fires; to
protect and restore endangered species extinctions and planting
fruit trees to local community
habitats and people.

Habitat loss is the leading cause of species extinctions and planting
fruit trees to local community
habitats and people.

Allies to protect vital areas of the

2019 Spokane Community
Observance of the Holocaust

SPEAKING UP FOR ‘THE OTHER’

• Reading of 1st place middle and high school entries
in the Eva Laraman Memorial Creative Writing Contest
• Exhibit of artistic entries themed for the Observance
• Children’s Candle Processional
• Candle Lighting Ceremony
• Music by the Lewis & Clark High School Chamber Orchestra

Sunday, April 28 - 7 p.m.
Temple Beth Shalom
1322 East 30th Ave. • Spokane WA
Spokane Tribe reaches out so their voices are heard on cleanup

Continued from page 3 to reduce its costs, Twa-le said. The company lowered its cleanup costs beyond $42 million the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have paid it for cleanup work at the Midnite uranium mine. The Midnite mine was dug so deep that it hit ground water, creating a problem with contamination in open pits containing radioactive materials and heavy metals—250,000 gallons.

The EPA’s 2006 cleanup plan calls for filling those pits with waste rock and ore, and capping them with a liner and a layer of soil. Lawsuits and other delays stalled the work. It did not begin until 2016.

Water in the pits is currently treated and discharged into Blue Creek, which flows into the Spokane River. A new plant, planned to be built within a few years, will treat 5 million gallons per day. Sending treated water in pipes to Lake Roosevelt will reduce the impact on the creek, which the tribe seeks to re-establish for native redband trout, said Brian Crossley, the tribe’s natural resources water quality specialist.

Brian, who has worked 20 years on stream restoration, administering water quality standards for the tribe and EPA, showed aerial pictures of scars on the land from the Midnite Mine, Dawn Mill Site and Sherwood Mine. “Dilution is the solution, rather than having water flow down Blue Creek. The treated water must meet tribal water quality standards, which are high,” he said. “Pipe does not go into effect until we build the new plant.”

In a report prepared for the February meeting, Spokane Riverkeeper said the EPA set the cleanup level based on the “average” contamination level in radium and undisturbed soil around the mine. “The report says that...”

**Hot Tip: Avoid speaking with one voice.”**

David Browneagle, former Spokane Tribal Council member, said that at a meeting held a few years ago at the federal building, “tribal citizens spoke, but neighboring farmers and ranchers stayed on the sides. I reminded them that the water goes downstream. Farmers use it to irrigate. Ranchers give water to their animals. Everyone eats wheat and animals. The contamination does not stay on the reservation.”

He said the EPA plans a community meeting in April. The tribe wants to present the 2019 construction report, connect the community with an expert uranium advisor, report on outreach to the Center for Disease Control’s Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Control, and provide an update on the community involvement plan.

**Discussion at the February meeting raised some concerns:**

- Cheryl Joseph Butterfly, who lives on the reservations, asked the EPA to provide bottled water for residents.
- “Radiation goes downriver and upwind. We need to come to a consensus and have the company stick to the plan.”
- Spokane Riverkeeper Jerry White offered to publish updates on spokaneriverkeeper.org/riv-
erjurnal.
- **Carol Evans, chairwoman of Spokane County Treaty Tribes.**
- Hear from people affected by the Bunker Hill Mine, Midnite Mine and Newtown Smelter.
- Learn about groups overcoming effects of pollution & climate change.
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- Learn about groups overcoming effects of pollution & climate change.
- Next Giblig ‘For the Healing of the Earth’ Sunday, Oct. 6, 3-5 p.m. - Cataldo Mission, Idaho

**The contamination does not stay on the reservation.**

**Hear from people affected by the Bunker Hill Mine, Midnite Mine and Newtown Smelter.**

**Learn about groups overcoming effects of pollution & climate change.**

**Next Giblig ‘For the Healing of the Earth’ Sunday, Oct. 6, 3-5 p.m. - Cataldo Mission, Idaho**

Just Trade fairly traded crafts from around the world inside Brushed Books 235 E. Main Pullman, WA 590-334-7989 Mon-Fri 11 am-6 pm Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5

FOR THE HEALING OF THE EARTH

An Earth Day Vigil
Monday, April 22: 5:15 to 7:30 p.m.
Spokane Tribal Gathering Place
Next to Spokane City Hall

Hear from people affected by the Bunker Hill Mine, Midnite Mine and Newtown Smelter.

Learn about groups overcoming effects of pollution & climate change.

Become part of the solution.


Next Giblig ‘For the Healing of the Earth’
Sunday, Oct. 6, 3-5 p.m. - Cataldo Mission, Idaho

For the Healing of the Earth

Serving breakfast & lunch

Full Coffee Bar

Monday-Saturday: 7:30 am - 2 pm
Cafe: 12 E. 5th, Pullman, WA

WE ALSO CATER: 496-6936
www.helps4women.org

Helping women succeed through food services.

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Community rallies to support local Muslims at several gatherings

At a Thursday midday gathering of 100 outside Hemmingson Center at Gonzaga University and at a Friday evening gathering of several hundred filling the Spokane Islamic Center, Mamdouh Al-Aarag asked “all people of conscience and faith to reject hate, Islamophobia, racism and injustice” after the shooting that killed 51 people and injured 20 March 15 at Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Mamdouh is a member of the Spokane Islamic Center’s board.

“People showed up at our mosque with flowers and cards, but most of all with their love and support,” Mamdouh said.

“We will stand together in mourning with the families over the loss of the victims of this senseless and hate-fueled attack. Islamophobia, hate, and xenophobia have no place in New Zealand or any other country in the world.”

“We stand together in the compassion that is rooted in each of our different religious and moral traditions. We declare that all humans are neighbors and deserve love and respect. Love for every human being will triumph over hate. We offer comfort to our American Muslim neighbors and join them in sorrow and outrage. We love you and hold each of you as precious to the fullness of our country and our communities. You belong with us and we with you.”

“We will persist in the higher way of compassion known in many practices and by many names. May we gain the needed strength, even while we grieve, to be transformed from fear to love, from division to unity, from desperation to hope. Let us recommit to shaping a world of respect, tolerance, safety, and love. The only way is to say No to exclusions,” the statement concluded.

Mamdouh Al-Aarag, Aisha Burka and Hawa Elias share reflections at Gonzaga gathering.

A center for renewal, for faith & for the earth.

Ardern in condemning the worst terrorist attacks ever in one of any other country in the world.”

Hope Builders Annual Benefit Banquet

In 2011, the Center for Human Values commissioned a study to identify the critical issues facing the community. The study found that the most pressing issue was the need for a sense of community and a sense of belonging. The Center for Human Values then developed a plan to create a sense of community and belonging through a variety of programs and events. The plan was successful, and the Center for Human Values continues to provide programs and events to meet the needs of the community.

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Hope Builders Annual Benefit Banquet

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Young refugee is grateful to be in the U.S.

The 2019 Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust will be held at 7 p.m., Sunday, April 28, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave. The theme this year is “Speaking Up for The Other.” The program, which will feature high school and middle school students reading their first-place submissions to the 13th Annual Eva Lassman Memorial Creative Writing Contest. Art pieces submitted by Spokane-area students for the 5th Annual Art Contest will be on display.

The Lewis and Clark High School Chamber Choir will perform music for the program. There will also be a traditional Children’s Candle Processional and a Candle Lighting Ceremony, honoring Holocaust survivors, children of survivors, military who freed the survivors, a representative of the righteous among the nations (Mary Stamp, editor, in recognition of The Fig Tree’s 35 years of speaking up), and the survivor of a contemporary genocide (Nosor Kamal – see article).

For information, call 747-3304. Country Homes Christian Church Annual Spring Tea Sunday, April 27 10:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. N. Wall Avenue Historic 40th Anniversary of the English as a Second Language School $25/person - RSVP by Apr 18 263-6084 or 466-3414 Proceeds benefit ESL School

Larry and Bethanne Andrews welcome Noor Kamal into their lives.

When he helped them, agencies gave him school tablets, books and clothing. Then they gave him an iPad, so he could call a doctor or ambulance.

After a year and a half, Noor was chosen to go to the U.S.

“I was happy. They said I could go to high school,” said Noor, who had learned to speak English, Hindi, Malayalam and Bengali.

He practiced English, but when he came to the U.S., people spoke fast. At first, he was quiet in school, but teachers and others helped him.

“Now I have friends,” he said.

Noor learned about his family, using a security guard’s phone to call his uncle’s cell phone.

Then in August 2017, he learned his mother, sisters and brother were in danger. Soldiers were shooting in his village of 2,000 people. They killed people and burned houses. People ran.

His sisters, grandmother and uncle fled and arrived seven days later in Bangladesh. His brother, grandfather and mother went to the mountains.

“I prayed you would be alive,” his family said.

Returning to the village, they found only 95 villagers. More than 900 were killed,” he said.

Last year, Mark Finney, executive director of World Relief, went to the Bangladesh refugee camp with Rohingya and four other ethnic groups. He met Noor’s sisters, grandmother and uncle, and his father who remarried and had other children.

“Bangladesh wants to send the Rohingya back. Myanmar does not want the Rohingya. We do not want to live in camps. We want justice, land, citizenship and freedom to work. Some have college degrees but can only work on farms.

Bethanne said Myanmar is predominantly Buddhist. There were also Christians, Muslims and Hindu groups living in small ethnic communities.

“By 2017, the government became intolerant and wanted the country to be one race and religion,” she said.

Because of prejudice some people have toward different religions, Noor does not talk about his religion.

“I don’t care if someone is Christian, Muslim or Buddhist. I don’t want to argue about it. I want to be friendly with everyone. I’m just happy and thankful to be in the U.S. and focus on school,” said Noor, who hopes to study to be a dental assistant.

Bethanne and Larry are grateful to have Noor in their home. When he moved in, he was “immediately part of our family,” she said.

“We knew people of different cultures while living in Singapore. While it was easy for us to travel in Southeast Asia, poverty and child labor we saw tore at our heart,” she said.

“My awareness of unaccompanied youth in the world—through Lutheran Community Services and World Relief—has increased my sensitivity to how vulnerable people are,” she said.

For information, call 808-2942 or email bethanne.andrews@gmail.com.

Annual Holocaust Observance is April 28 at Temple Beth Shalom

Larry and Bethanne Andrews welcome Noor Kamal into their lives.

When he helped them, agencies gave him school tablets, books and clothing. Then they gave him an iPad, so he could call a doctor or ambulance.

After a year and a half, Noor was chosen to go to the U.S.

“I was happy. They said I could go to high school,” said Noor, who had learned to speak English, Hindi, Malayalam and Bengali.

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April 9: "Population Health and Implicit Bias" - Expert Panel
April 9: "Population Health and Implicit Bias" - Speaker: Fr. Michael Rozier, SJ PhD, Assistant Professor Health Management and Policy, Saint Louis University

Ethics Core IA: Ethical Dilemmas in Difficult Discharges

TIME: 8 a.m. – 12 noon
DATES: April 11 (Spokane), April 15 (Colville), May 8 (Walla Walla)
Faculty: Andrea Chatterburn, DO, M.A, MAE-C

In this half day 4-hour course, participants will explore conflicts of ethics principles and core areas related to difficult discharge scenarios. Topics covered include the principles of respect for autonomy, decision-making capacity, beneficence, justice and patient safety. Continuing Education Credits are provided. Courses are open to anyone in a healthcare or caregiving related field.

Email PCHethics@providence.org or scan QR code with a smartphone to open link and RSVP. Space limited to 30 per class.
Country Homes ESL School tutors refugees, immigrants for 40 years

D oors, eyes and hearts have opened for volunteer tutors and refugee/immigrant students for 40 years at Country Homes English as a Second Language (ESL) School. Not only do they teach and learn English—and students’ languages and cultures—but also they form friendships.

A neighborhood woman in her 80s walked there Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings to “travel the world” as she interacted with students.

A Korean graduate student, who came to the school while studying interior design in Spokane, returned to Korea and started a similar program to teach Korean. A man, who had cared for years for his wife while she was dying from cancer, emerged from his grief by tutoring.

Elizabeth Housley, who came as an intern three years ago and is now director, and Doni Walker, who tutored two years before volunteering the next 35 years as a co-director, became one of the co-director and now assistant director, said their involvement is a faith-based calling.

“We are to welcome the sojourner and the stranger,” said Elizabeth, who grew up in Bremer-ton, studied bacteriology at the University of Idaho and worked in Moscow, graduated in 1966 and came to Spokane as a medical technology intern. She met her husband, Ben, at Moody.

Doni, who grew up in Bremer-ton, studied bacteriology at the University of Idaho and worked in Moscow, graduated in 1966 and came to Spokane as a medical technology intern. She met her husband, Ben, at Moody.

After years as a stay-at-home mother of four girls, she volunteered at Country Homes Christian Church is her church.

“Two women who volunteered at Burton School at First Presbyterian Church decided that with the influx of Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s and 1980s, there was need for a similar school in North Spokane, so the church offered space for them to start the Country Homes ESL School in 1979.

“The church also provides half the budget, which is now $6,500,” she said. “The other half is covered by private donations.”

To celebrate the school’s 40th year, the church’s Annual Spring Tea with a six-course international menu is at 10:45 a.m., Saturday, April 27, at the church, 8415 N. Wall St.

Elizabeth said there are 21 students from 11 countries and 21 tutors. They find that’s about the right number to serve.

Many come two days a week, several come three, and some just one day. Some who come part-time also go to the Community Colleges of Spokane ESL program on North Monroe, where they are in a class with 30 students.

The first students were Vietnamese, Hmong and Laotian.

Current students are from Afghanistan, Brazil, China, El Salvador, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Syria and Taiwan.

Over the years, the school has had about 380 tutors helping nearly 600 students from about 60 countries.

Many students are aged 50 to 80, but there are also young mothers with children, so there is childcare Mondays and Wednesdays. Elizabeth’s baby, Walter, is in the child care.

The adult literacy program serves foreign-born adults, assessing their individual needs and planning lessons to meet those needs so they can be self-reliant members of the community. Some students had no formal education.

Some are college graduates.

With tutors volunteering, the one-to-one or small-group lessons from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from September through June are free for students.

Tutors also help with applications to drivers’ licenses, citizenship and jobs.

Doni’s first student was 21 when she escaped with her 16-year-old sister over the mountains from Vietnam to a refugee camp in Thailand. They were there two years before coming to Spokane.

Learning English, finding a safe place and developing trust over a year with Doni, she was able to tell her story of trauma from being robbed and raped while fleeing.

“It’s a small program and it takes time to build trust, but students are able to share about their lives and culture,” said Doni, who one day took a shopping list from the Vietnamese woman and brought her the food, which she cooked all day to prepare a banquet to say thank you.

After she married, she moved to Los Angeles, where there was a large population of Vietnamese.

Another early student was a Korean who went on to own a restaurant and run a gas station.

“We prioritize students who are college graduates. Some are college professors and doctors start over here with low-paying jobs that do not use their education or skills,” she said. “Once they have a driver’s license, their jobs are no longer limited by where they can go on a bus or if friends will take them, Doni said.

She is sad the government is cutting the number of refugees, but is glad to provide a setting for respecting those who come.

“Instead of fearing our neighbors, we are to love them,” said Elizabeth.

“Volunteer tutors are accepting, gracious, interested and curious,” Doni said. “Some have helped 20 years. We are wired to help people.”

While many tutors are Christians, our philosophy is that we respect students and their faiths,” said Elizabeth.

For information, call 466-3414, Doni 839-2901 or dwalker3@comcast.net or 217-313-5590, dere-jjk@gmail.com for Elizabeth.

Walter and Elizabeth Housley and Doni Walker coordinate program.

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April 27, at the church, 8415 N. Wall St.

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Kalispel Tribe of Indians receive recognition for watershed stewardship

At the 12th annual Winter Waters events, the Upper Columbia River Group of the Sierra Club and the Center for Environmental Law and Policy honored the Kalispel Tribe as the 2019 Watershed Heroes for stewardship of the waters and aquifer of the region. Before presenting their award, John Dodder of the Sierra Club Group also recognized the Protect Mill Canyon Watershed Group as “Water Guardians” for challenging a permit to use bio-solids on agricultural land and successfully petitions the City of Mill Canyon west of Spokane. The group is now working on a state moratorium to prevent such bio-solids application in other areas.

In honoring the Kalispel, Catholic Bishop Emeritus William Hawkes, thanked the tribe for their stewardship of the Pend Oreille Basin.

“An honoring event helps us remember, be in contact with a remarkable tradition and history, and be a people of relationships, good will, and leadership for our common good,” he said.

He recounted that in 1870, the tribe was almost annihilated—dropping from 1,600 in the early 1800s to 100 in the early 1900s. They were sold by the U.S. government to move from the Priest River-Pend Oreille area to a reservation in Montana. When the Upper Kaulispels moved to the Jocko Reservation, the Lower Kaulispels refused to move.

Their refusal resulted in 1914 in their 4,600-acre original reservation—one mile wide by eight miles long—along the Pend Oreille River, miniscule compared with the 200-mile-long original land.

In 1965, the average tribal income was $1,400. There was one phone on the reservation, and few had running water in homes. “In 1996, the Kalispels’ mission statement expressed a commitment to growth, preserving their tradition and culture, and education,” Bill said. “Today, the tribe models resiliency, determination and commitment to community, overcoming difficulties to flourish and be regional leaders.”

The bishop listed some accomplishments:
• Since 2000, the tribe has donated $18 million through its Charitable Fund to help the poor, keep alive the Salish language, protect the environment and sponsor civic efforts for the common good.
• They have become a voice for the voiceless in the region, addressing issues of fish, wildlife and concerns for generations to come.
• They have advocated for the environment, deeply sensitive to how all are connected.

Ray Pierre, vice-chair of the Kalispel Tribe, spoke of their efforts to preserve natural resources, especially through their fisheries and training biologists.

In an interview with John Osiecki, chair of Sierra Club’s Upper Columbia River Group, presents historic photo for the Watershed Hero Award to Kalispel vice-chair Ray Pierre. The photo is of two young Kalispel men canoeing on the Pend Oreille River.

Carolyn Leon, born of the Sierra Club, Glen Nenema, chair of the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, said the tribe’s priorities are to care for the land they have been on for centuries, to address threats to their natural resources and to care for members’ health.

Growing up in the 1950s on the reservation knowing his great-grandparents, grandparents and mother, Glen not only found the simple, slow pace of life there “trick in many ways,” but also experienced the tribe’s struggles with alcoholism, neglect and abuse that grew out of their losses.

Glen helped set up the Camas Institute for education and behavioral health to address spiritual, mental, physical and emotional needs, including the Salish language program and daycare.

Joan invited him to tell of the Kalispel Tribe’s work for decades to protect the Pend Oreille River.

The Kalispel were fishermen, gathering and hunting, Glen responded: “Fish were important for food. The river was our highway to Montana,” he said, noting he fished as boy, but after the dams were built, fishing began disappearing.

“I always felt it was good medicine to walk along the river, to be there with the river and mountains,” Glen said. “Sometimes we ask the river to take away what hurts us, to take it downriver.” At the end of his talks, his head would be clear, he said, because “the water is strong medicine.”

The Albeni Falls dam, built on traditional land, and the Box Canyon dam both affect wildlife and fish. The tribe has worked to mitigate those impacts and restore native fisheries.

They worked many years with the Public Utility District (PUD) and filed a lawsuit over the Box Canyon dam, Glen said.

Beginning with the Northwest Power Planning Act, they have sought solutions for the negative impact of dams. They had no funds, technical people or biologists to explain options until they worked with Allan Scholz of Eastern Washington University’s fisheries department.

His students help the tribe understand the act, giving “us the technical ability to help protect our future,” he said.

John asked about the cleanup from mining pollution and smelt ing wastes in the Coeur d’Alene Basin, cleanup from Tech Resources in Lake Roosevelt, uranium pits on the Pend Oreille reservation and pollution flowing into the Spokane and Columbia Rivers.

Glen said people in the sparsely populated Upper Columbia Region have been vulnerable to pollution and spillage

Because the government has not advocated for them and “has often abetted polluted waters.”

Bearing the brunt of impacts from past and present, tribes were motivated by tribal interest to advocate for the public interest and common good to prevent the environment, he said.

The Kalispel Reservation, being in a Class 1 air quality area under the Clean Air Act, is supporting the challenge to a proposed PacWest silicon smelter in Newport,” he added.

About 20 years ago, there were hostile meetings and interactions with agencies. Now the Kalispel Tribe collaborates with utility partners, federal regulators and other entities in a comprehensive plan for the Pend Oreille Basin, particularly related to restoring fisheries with native trout, Glen said.

For information, contact John at 939-1290 or john@waterplanet.net, or Tom at 270-6666 or watertocoe@gmail.com. The full interview is at celp.org/programs/voices-for-water/chairman-nenema.

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It partners with 26 retail chains—and picks up food directly from retailers in large supermarkets—and picks up food that didn’t sell, is overstocked or is no longer retail worthy but still good to eat.

Partner agencies also pick up food directly from retailers in their communities throughout the Inland Northwest and give it directly to people, saving the cost of transportation and storage.

Julie said 12 million pounds of food rescued from local retail outlets last year went on the tables of hungry families and seniors.

Retailers serve the community by being stewards of product that would otherwise be wasted and save disposal costs, she said.

For information, call 534-6678 or visit 2-harvest.org

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Through the Krista Foundation, Linda and Jim Hunt welcome young adults, Krista colleagues, who have served in 60 countries and 52 U.S. cities to a “soul space” in their back yard. In 2000, they replaced a rundown barn with a guest center that has Latin American, Asian, African, and Northwest-theme rooms, and is surrounded by a garden with an Asian water fall, Latin American patio, American fruit trees, a secret garden and a prayer garden.

Intended as a place of beauty and peace, it helped them heal from the death of their daughter Krista Hunt Ausland in a 1998 bus accident in Bolivia, where she was volunteering with her husband, Aaron.

To honor her spirit of service, the Hunts, family and friends launched the Krista Foundation for Global Citizenship, an ecumenical, Christian nonprofit with the vision of supporting other young adults who do a year or more of service.

The Hunts call their back yard “soul space” the Hearth. Krista colleagues build community there while coming for conferences and debriefing retreats when they return from service.

Linda captures that “soul space” in a book with 180 color photos, quotes from “wisdom voices,” and stories of some of the 300 young people who have come. The book is Soul Space: Creating Space and Lives that Make a Difference.

At 7 p.m., Wednesday, April 10, Linda will do a book signing at Auntie’s Bookstore on 402 W. Main for Soul Space, which is sold there, at Kizuri and through the Krista Foundation.

Linda hopes the book invites people to know how important it is in this time of divisiveness to find “hearts”—places of welcome, inclusion, encouragement and beauty.

After their daughter’s death, Jim, who taught history at Whitworth University and for 25 years took students on five-month service study programs in Central America, continued doing that.

Linda continued teaching at Whitworth, as director of the writing program and faculty leader of the service learning program, until resigning to be the foundation’s initial director and to write.

They also continued to travel and learn about cultures and faiths of people around the world.

With experiences in service learning in the U.S. and abroad, they knew the importance for returnees to take time to debrief, but that few programs offered debriefing to help young adults figure out what they learned and to reduce culture shock.

“We are not a sending agency,” Linda said. “but come alongside young adults serving with existing agencies that use volunteers, such as the Peace Corps, Jesuit Volunteers, Presbyterian Year in Mission orAmericorps.”

“Unfortunately, most provide little debriefing support, so recently we received a $200,000 Murdoch grant for consulting with agencies across America to encourage them to include pivotal debriefing and intercultural awareness,” said Linda.

Before building the guest center, they gathered with friends for a “Blessing of the Hearth.” Tiki lights marked the building’s footprint. Those gathered shared prayers that young people and guests who came would find comfort, counsel, challenge, conversation, contemplation, compassion, confidence and courage.

The book’s chapters follow those “c” themes as they share the narrative of Krista’s service, of starting the Krista Foundation, of creating the Hearth and Global gardens, and of experiences of some of the young people—Krista colleagues—who have come there.

“Their stories and spirit of service give us hope in young adults and in our country,” Linda said.

Jim, Linda and other helpers design and tend the garden, keeping it a place growing beautiful flowers, fruits and vegetables.

The garden is healing for Linda, who is now being treated for cancer.

I find the extraordinary in the ordinary, in bees returning to the lilac bushes, a praying mantis on a red dahlia, and the peace around the pool and fountain,” she said.

She particularly enjoys Memorial Day weekends when a new Krista Foundation cohort meet for the first time. Within three hours, they relax, share in conversation and start friendships that are the basis of the long-term “colleague community” after they leave.

It’s also a powerful time when they come back to the Hearth after their service and share with one another their profound learning their questions and discernment on their next steps,” she said. “It’s a privilege to share in this.

In addition to young adults, she said other community groups find the Hearth a creative place to gather on occasion, such as Whitworth and Gonzaga staff, the Interfaith Council, church groups, the NAACP Spokane, St. George’s faculty, international groups and individuals.

Those who come are guests, but many donate to the Krista Foundation.

The Hearth and gardens are a family commitment, said Linda, using no resources from foundation donations.

The Hunts two other children enjoy visiting and offering support.

Their daughter, Susan, and her husband, Peter, live in New- ton, Mass., with their children Quinnlan and Hunter. The Hunt’s adopted Korean son, Jefferson and his wife, Kris, live in Hawaii with their daughter, Erin. Their son-in-law, Aaron, married Gabriela from Bolivia. They have two children, Ava London and Thiago, whom Linda and Jim consider their heart grandchildren.

All three families come to the Hearth for family reunions.

The Krista Foundation also offers service leadership grants.

One recipient, Nathan Williams, a physics graduate who served in the Peace Corps in a poor village in Burkina Faso saw people struggling without basics like electricity. He used a $1,000 Krista Foundation grant to attend an international conference on solar energy in South Africa. Then he studied at Nelson Mandela University, to learn about using solar panels to provide electricity in villages like ones he served. He recently earned a doctoral degree from Carnegie Mellon University and is working with colleagues on energy needs in Africa.

Megan Menard, a biology major who volunteered a year in Portugal, Oreg., helping homeless men and women with acute needs after they were released from hospitals, used a $1,000 Krista grant to attend a Housing First Conference in Washington D.C. and then went back to college for a nursing degree. She now works with low-income new mothers in Spokane.

Colleagues also share their awareness of barriers to women leaving the sex trade in Ethiopia, of experiences of immigrant children in Tacoma or of developing urban U.S. community gardens.

Linda, a history major at the University of Washington, was 21 when she went to the Middle East and Europe with the future president of Fuller Seminary. That travel opened her to the world.

For information, call 939-6597 or visit kristafoundation.org.

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Editor reflects on The Fig Tree’s 35 years and years yet to come

People and their stories bring The Fig Tree to life. In these times with polarized news creating personal echo chambers, it’s hard to believe that when truth and falsehood meet, truth will win.

In these times, we need hope and resilience—so we can persevere. That’s why The Fig Tree informs people to inspire them to be involved. We do that through stories of caring people who make a difference, and through the resources that empower people to improve their lives, communities and the world.

It’s amazing having the strength, patience and wisdom to persevere in the struggle for social and environmental justice and peace. To be resilient, we need to remember the power of vision through the eyes of people of diverse races, tongues, cultures and faiths, living together in community—side by side and in unity.

Adversity—personal, social, political—happens. When many are challenged and The Fig Tree seeks to keep hope alive.

The Fig Tree, rooted in Micah 4:4, envisioned that everyone shall live under their own vines and fig trees in peace and unafraid.

We have made a difference in lives through at least 2,500 feature stories over 35 years, reaching hundreds of thousands of people in print and millions through our website and social media.

The Fig Tree’s stories share struggles, possibilities and solutions.

Over 35 years, The Fig Tree has given hope, not only through its stories, but also through our example of our having hope from nothing with minimal income and giving back—reinvesting—to make it be.

We’re also part of a wider economic system. The more we in the faith, nonprofit, human service, caring and justice-seeking communities share with each other—even when we feel pinched—the more wealth circulates among us, empowering each of us to further those ends.

When we added the Resource Directory in 2007, we saw it as a tool for pastors and service providers to be informed and guide others.

Then we realized that if “clients”—people in times of struggle and emergencies need resources—we could ensure they could make copies they could use to move from crises to transition to stability with food, jobs, education and housing.

Once stigmatized, they could find cultural, recreational and community outlets to “give back,” to seek justice, change policies and improve lives for others.

The Fig Tree is an entrepreneurial venture in community journalism and resource sharing.

A team of nearly 100 multi-taskers—editors, staff and volunteers—do interviews, reviews, research, articles, editing, photos, layouts and web design; develop relationships to build a base of support; do deliveries, mailings, displays, event planning, and serve on the board.

We invite people of younger generations—any generation—to join us in this venture, sharing in any of the multiple roles that make The Fig Tree and Resource Directory possible.

Let me be clear, I’m retirement age but editing The Fig Tree is my retirement. I don’t know if I’ll be involved, but I also want to mentor and partner with others to share in this work.

We seek a big person or people to share in the multiple tasks. While the benefits raise funds for ongoing support, we also hope for an added boost to incremental staffing.

We are just over the basic goal of $30,000 for our ongoing budget.

In 2019, we also budgeted an additional $35,000 to help us fund new staffing and build our future capacity.

To help promote The Fig Tree and share our story, we are providing in print Sounding Board below comments of speakers for the Benefit Luncheon. In May, we will include comments of speakers for the Benefit Breakfast. Our hope is that our supporters will share that information with others to draw new readers and supporters. Videos of their comments are also online through thefigtree.org or at our YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/ thefigtree1323/videos.

In addition, the video Nathan Stalbarg created for the benefits with long-time Fig Tree partners—Raymond Reyes, Lonnie Mitchell, Dinky Duff, Deidre Jacobson, David Brookbank and Amber Waldref—will also be available there, along with their full comments. These are tools to use to excite others!

Thanks to Cindy Hval for the article and to Dan Pelle for the Spokesman-Review and to Kevin Meekein for many of his friends began talking to me with problems. Newby-ginnings is a veterans’ support program with a thrift store. We give away veterans or families need, housewares, clothes, furniture, appliances, medical equipment, books, toys and even cars.

We also provide information on resources. That is where The Fig Tree’s Resource Directories comes in. I have copies on my desk. They look like my Bible, because there are sticky notes everywhere, and highlights and pencil markings in the margins. We get a case of them, so we can provide it to some of more than 2,800 families who come to us for guidance. Others have tried to pull together resource directories, but this is the most comprehensive one. It is the most comprehensive I’ve seen.

Thank you for making my job easier.

Kimmie Meineke, Fig Tree board member and pastor at St. David’s Episcopal Church, appealed for donations. This was the first time she’d seen most of them experience their relationship with The Fig Tree, and why it is important in the work they do in their communities.

The Fig Tree has a long history of connecting people and building networks, weaving the tapestry together. It’s important to see the health and wellbeing of the Spokane-Coeur d’Alene region and the rural communities.

If you would like to support The Fig Tree financially or with your time, I challenge you to support the stories that are told, the building that happens and the resource directory that is so vital for our area.

Sounding Board

Lunch speakers value information, inclusion, inspiration, involvement

Sandy Williams - The Black Lens

There are few people for whom I will shift my schedule if they ask me to do something. Mary is one. I have immense respect for the work of communication The Fig Tree and the Black Lens do.

While there is much competition in media, we share photos, stories, events. Mary supports what we do. It speaks of her character and the Fig Tree’s character. I’m a word geek. I love words and their meanings. I love using words in a thoughtful way why I publish a newspaper.

The Black Lens articles the African American focused newspaper that has been around for four years. I’m a baby in comparison with 35 years. I looked up the words of the theme, “Informing, Inspiring and Invoking.”

“Informing” is to impart information and knowledge. The Fig Tree has been imparting information and knowledge for 35 years. It can speak to how difficult it is to publish a newspaper. I wrote down all the stuff I do to get my paper out, which Mary does too.

It’s important to the community and to its readers. They are going away, and it’s vital to us to understand what is happening that doesn’t make it into the mainstream media, because what’s building our community and takes us to a place we wouldn’t be otherwise.

We celebrate you and the work you have done, and I hope to be like Mary when I grow up.

Jason Clark – Second Harvest

At Second Harvest, our work is about getting healthier food to people every day. The only way that happens is through the fabric of our community. We have 8,000 volunteers. Dozens of local organizations, neighborhood churches, food banks and emergency meal programs feed thousands of people every week. We do that by making sure we’re not just feeding someone today, but helping them feed themselves tomorrow, so they are healthier, happier and more prosperous. That involves community resources.

The Community Resource Guide is fundamental to that. It’s an amazing source of information people can use. We are grateful for the work that goes into it, and we’re proud to support and help distribute it. Our network of food banks gets copies. If we forget to send it, they call and want to know where their copy is and when it’s coming. It’s helping us do our mission and it helps many people in our neighborhoods.

Sima Thorpe - The Arc of Spokane

I’ve been reading The Fig Tree and been a sponsor for 25 years. The theme of the issue—“Informing, Inspiring and Invoking”—connects to inclusion. As executive director of The Arc of Spokane, including and inclusion are on my mind. March is intellectual and physical disabilities month. Many Arc constituents are not involved or included in our community. They often experience another “I”—invisibility. The Fig Tree makes the invisible visible. Those on the margins of society, not included and the behind-the-scenes warriors for social justice are welcome in The Fig Tree’s fold.

Disability is dehumanizing. The Arc sees its constituents as people with potential and part of the community.

Soon after I started at The Arc, Mary Stomp asked how we could partner. With jobs and job development needed for people with developmental disabilities, we became a key part of the climate force that delivers the Resource Directory—4,000 copies of them.

Our goal is a deeper level of involvement and inclusion. It lifts into light those in need to see. So, support The Fig Tree.

Theresa Hart - Newby-ginnings

I’m new to the Fig Tree family. Kaye Hult recently wrote an article about Newby-ginnings, telling how we began because my son, Rick Newby, was killed while serving in Iraq in 2011. I left my job as a nurse. While I was wondering what I would do with my life, I was killed while serving among the homeless, unbelieveable and perseverance by informing, inspiring and involving people.

Mary Stomp

Editor
The 112-year-old Fowler Unit- ed Methodist Church (UMC) has stepped into a new era of growing multi-ethnic understanding with 25 percent of its congregation being African refugees.

Their culture and music are now part of the Sunday morning worship service. The church also offers a Sunday evening worship in Swahili, led by Maria Mwange, who studied ministry and became a Methodist lay pastor while in a refugee camp in Uganda.

Her gratitude to God in all life helps infuse the ministry of others. “It’s not easy to connect with neighbors. Many work, are older, and are transient,” Sue said.

Glenn, who lives at Deer Park, grew up on his family’s ranch in Fruitland Valley near Lake Roosevelt. He left at 18, attending three colleges and graduating in psychology in 1968 from Seattle Pacific College. After four years of church youth work he went to seminary, completing his degree at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 1975. He plans to retire in June. He sees the African and Anglo members growing together in a shared ministry.

“We are moving beyond a we-and-them mindset, especially the children and youth,” he said.

“The African members’ lives are full. Parents work multiple, low-paying jobs but make time for their children. They have little time to socialize, but are faithful and active,” Glenn said. He has learned from Marie and her family about praise and gratitude.

“Marie is grateful to God for all of life. Being associated with her and her family has deepened my sense of gratitude for God’s everyday gifts of life,” he said.

For information, call 325-3242 or 434-6285, or email fowlerumc@yahoo.com.