‘I can help, so I do it. It needs to be done.’

By Mary Stamp

With these times calling for new ways of action and caring, we choose for our lead story, the story of Carla Peperzak, recently named Washington’s Person of the Year.

For most of her 96 years, Carla Peperzak sought to live a normal day-to-day life, remembering, but silent about, the atrocities she experienced in her teen years in the Dutch Resistance, helping save the lives of the 40 Jews she hid during World War II.

Because few Holocaust survivors talked about it, several generations of young people knew little about 6 million Jews dying. For many years, she avoided Judaism.

The resistance formed soon after German troops invaded Holland and began picking up people on the streets in July 1942. Carla’s father, Morrie Olman, a fashion designer, had an attorney remove the “J” from the ID cards of Carla and her sister, Miep. Their mother was not Jewish.

Carla became Catholic because it was safer. That meant she had to work with the underground in a group of eight resistance workers. She joined the underground when her father’s brother asked her to hide his wife, two children and

Carla Peperzak helped the Dutch Resistance and now helps educate on the Holocaust.

Helpers are evident in response to needs arising around COVID-19

One TV station news program has started a “Look for the Helpers” feature, citing Mr. Rogers’ suggestion that in times of stress, children/adults “look for the helpers.” It’s what The Fig Tree’s mission is to do in all times.

“It’s overwhelming all the helpers who are helping in these times—as always,” said Mary Stamp, The Fig Tree editor. “Instead of our usual approach of feature articles, we are sharing hope with you by sharing a sampling of what some of the ministries, government agencies, nonprofits, businesses and faith communities are doing.

“For those feeling hopeless during these times, we invite them to be aware of all the neighbors helping neighbors, using their ingenuity to adjust services around social (physical) distancing and hygiene protocols to bring their love, care and resources to people in need,” she said.

The following are just some of the agencies changing their approaches to provide services in the midst of the pandemic and in response to the “novel coronavirus disease that started in 2019” (COVID-19).

More updates are being compiled every day by Malcolm Haworth, directory editor. They are posted at thefigtree.org.

Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) is posting updates in a pdf file, “Service Impact Due to COVID-19,” at altcew.org in the bottom under “What’s New?”

They invite anyone with questions on obtaining food, transportation or supplies during the COVID-19 crisis to call their helpline at 509-860-7281. While ALTCEW has made changes, they don’t impact its ability to serve clients. Call 458-2509 or visit altcew.org.

American Red Cross of the Greater Inland Northwest reported a severe shortage of blood collection nationally because of coronavirus with more than 2,700 drives canceled across the U.S. in two weeks resulting in a loss of more than 86,000 units. There is no evidence COVID-19 can be

Directory editor informs community of resources

Responding to the daily developments of resources in the COVID-19 pandemic, The Fig Tree swung into busy mode, first gathering and sharing information on churches and faith groups closing worship and gatherings, and then keeping up with the ever-changing updates of services for people in need.

“We posted the status of gatherings for worship on the website in early-March,” said Malcolm Haworth, directory editor.

Creative responses and insights of faith leaders in this issue tell how faith communities are finding new ways to “be communities of faith” in these times.

Agencies sent information on how they are feeding, sheltering and serving people in new ways, and Malcolm called, emailed and checked websites to update an online Emergency Resource Directory Supplement on COVID-19 resources.

“It tells who is open, who is closed and who has shifted focus,” he said. “So much changes day-to-day, it is soon outdated. While many students today could care less, there are always some who care. Many of them submit essays and art to the Eva Lassman Memorial Essay Contest and Art Contest. Entries are in and being evaluated.

“I want today’s teens to know about it and spread the word,” she said.

“When I first started sharing what I experienced, it brought

Continued on page 4
Figs Tree is grateful for benefit support, continues appeal to reach funding goal

Malcolm Haworth, our Re-Source Directory editor, is studying the 1918 to 1920 period in Spokane for his doctoral dissertation with Gonzaga’s Leadership Studies program. He began sharing documents about the 1918 Spanish influenza epidemic and COVID-19 developments emerged. As a result of that and other information coming out just before the weekend, we have added 9 and 9 Benefit Lunch and Breakfast, Mary Stamp, editor, said, “We did not want to jeopardize anyone’s health or life, plus, we realized we could ask a friend to email us, phone and mail until the funds are raised,” she said.

The day before the lunch, The Fig Tree notified Gonzaga’s caterer, Flavours, which was preparing food on March 18 and 19 for the breakfast, that we would cancel. They had purchased the food for us.

By Friday, they let Mary know they had “repurposed” all the food but some fruit, to other sites in the community.

“We arranged for Second Har- vest to pick up the extra fruit,” she said.

Instead of having a bill of nearly $6,000, they billed us $727, so we cut back our budget goal from $34,000 to $28,000. We already had $4,000 in donations. Guests, who missed the cancella-tion notice and came, gave checks for nearly $1,000.

Online giving grew. Many don- ations were made by email, so people might have.

“That is much appreciated, because our advertising—heavily dependent on events—may dip temporarily,” said Mary.

As of March 20, we had re- ceived more than $18,000, leaving less than $10,000 to raise toward our initial goal.

“We really are many are in getting in by day-to-day. Giving slowed, but we know many still plan to give,” said Mary.

“We may expand our goal back to $34,000 to cover the loss in ad income. Every issue, we rely on bringing in more than $3,500 in ads,” she said.

Many ads are for events that have been canceled. Some event advertisers in this issue are running their ads anyway to support us.”

By not holding the benefits, The Fig Tree lost the opportunity to distribute profit prizes to guests, but decided to livestream the door-prize drawing on Facebook and contacted winners.

The Fig Tree thanks those who donated prizes. Barb Borgen provided gift certificates from Starbucks. Nick Beamer provided a gift certificate from Rosauers and flowers from Safeway. Highland Park United Methodist gave tea sets in gift baskets. Yvonne Lopez Morton gave a wool ball necklace, a scarf, a vase and two books.

Catherine Ferguson SNJM offered homemade cookies and certificates for more.

Sue Orokowski SP gave framed photographs of mountains, a stream and a mushroom. David Morton gave framed photos of flowers and butterflies. Zak Longoria gave two scenic photos on canvas.

Linda Hunt offered copies of her award-winning book, Soul Sanctuary. Mary Stamp offered copies of her books, Beyond Me and In Our Midst, and photo cards.

Comments of those who spoke to are in SoundBoard. Thanks also for all those who agreed to host tables and invited guests.

They are All Saints Lutheran, Madelyn Bafus, Sheri Barnard, Nancy Ferguson SNJM, Kaye Hult, Deidre and Lance Jacobson, Bellinger, Ladd Bjomeby, David Brookbank, Jim and Andy Castro-Lang, Sarah Yarhen with Catholic Charities, Laurie Clark-Strait, Den- nis and Thresia Cronin, VOAS’ Crosswalk, Sally Duffy, Marnie Fakasilici, Tom Falquist, Gau- nish Himal Trading Co. and Ki- zuri, Malcolm Haworth, Erica Hun- ningsen, Highland Park United Methodist, Stu Hokonson, Kasey Kuhl, Deidre and Lance Jacobson,

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COVID-19 is call to action
Continued from page 1

transferred by blood.
Locally, it is halting its in-home smoke alarm installation and provide house fire safety education for the time being. Call 950-7691 or email ryan.rodin@redcross.org.

The Americans and the Holocaust exhibit and related events at Gonzaga University during March and April have been cancelled. Gonzaga classes will be online.
The American Library Association is developing a new schedule that extends the Americans and the Holocaust exhibit tour dates by one year. Tentative plans are to bring the exhibit to Spokane the spring of 2022.

Arc of Spokane is temporarily suspending activity in the community center and community inclusion programs. Staff who are impacted by layoff on programs dependent on clients are offered options to assist in supported living. Call 328-6326 or see arc-spokane.org.

Audubon Park United Methodist Church’s Food Bank will be open from 8:30 a.m. to noon, second and fourth Tuesdays and the Tuesday Breakfast has been cancelled through April. They need more volunteers because many regular volunteers are in the vulnerable population. Contact office@audubonparkumc.org.

Carritas is open regular hours. It will keep its facility clean and social distancing of clients. Clients with symptoms will be asked to stay outdoors, and will be given a food package outside. See caritasoutreachministries.org.

Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington (CCEW) has stood side by side with people in the region for more than 100 years through times of change and hardship. Today is no different. “During this COVID-19 crisis, sitting on the sidelines is not an option for us,” said Rob McCann, executive director. “We have a sacred obligation and duty to continue the work you have entrusted to us, as best we can, even in this current Coronavirus world. Social distancing does not mean that we forget about our clients. We are putting forth every effort to ensure our clients know we are here for them. We will always answer the call to serve.”

He said that the poor and vulnerable are being hit hardest by this global pandemic, and Catholic Charities intends to remain here for them.

“We will not shy away from this fight. We are safely equipping our staff and building our organization to stand with the poor and vulnerable in this time of great need for them and for us all,” Rob said.

CCCW is looking for Shopping Angels who will fill a bag of non-perishable food items while they pick up the items and drop it off at the drive-in at its headquarters, 12 E. 5th Ave.

Staff will deliver “the miracle food bags” to seniors who are unable to leave their homes. CCEW also seeks donations of non-perishable food items. See cceasternwa.org/covid-19.

Communities in Schools is working with partners to distribute food to students to assure their needs are met. It seeks donations of food and funds. In remote coaching and staff are doing remote communication. See communitiesinschools.org.

Community-Minded Enterprises has cancelled all tours and events have been postponed. Recovery Cafe is closed to the public. CW 14 studio is closed to the public. See updates at community-minded.org/2020/03/13/community-minded-enterprises-covid-19-updates/.

Crosswalk is cancelling all events, groups meetings, church tours and in-person fundraisers to help “flatten the curve in Spokane,” said Jon Carollo. He is grateful for meal providers bringing meals to the shelter door. It continues, as a shelter provider, to serve those who need help, aware of the impact of cancelling fundraisers. Jon requested people bring extra toilet paper, latex gloves, masks and other supplies to its shelters. See https://www.voaospokane.org/covid-19.

Family Promise of North Idaho, which continues to serve homeless families, suggests calling before coming in, to be sure that someone is in the office. They do not have regular office hours. Currently, two families are in the program, and a third is expected. With restrictions on gathering, places that hosted families overnight have shut down, but they found a shelter they can use. Churches have acted as hosts and fed their guests. They welcome donations of food and cleaning supplies. Call 208-777-4190.

Family Promise of Spokane strives to preserve the safety and health of its guests, volunteers, staff, and Spokane community. As of March 25, they had no confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 among anyone connected to the organization, but are monitoring developments of the virus closely, implementing a social distancing plan to help slow the spread of this virus in our community.

To protect homeless families at high risk of complications if they are infected—expected mothers and children with disabilities or compromised immune systems—Family Promise opened a second 24/7 shelter location housing 18 people. It is full.

In total, they are sheltering 60 people, 31 children and 29 adults in the two locations. Unable to use volunteers and interns, they need financial and prayer support, as staff is stretched thin.

Those staying home can help by donating financially, buying groceries, offering an RV or trailer, and advocating for homeless children and families. See familypromiseofspokane.org/covid19.

Food Fighters offers a website as a clearinghouse where people can request meals and others respond, partnering with restaurants to deliver 25 meals a day. See spokanefoodfighters.org.

Giving Back Packs, which gives out backpacks with necessities Continued on page 3

Restaurant prepares meals for other nonprofits

Women and Children’s Free Restaurant and Community Kitchen (WCFR) is in full gear distributing prepared meals and groceries to as many women, families and organizations as possible, said Lisa Diffley, executive director.

As of March 16, the 32-year-old nonprofit discontinued its dining-in program and shifted to have distribution of bags of groceries and prepared meals in tents in their parking lot.

Those staying home can help by donating financially, buying groceries, offering an RV or trailer, and advocating for homeless children and families. See familypromiseofspokane.org/covid19.
Carla Pezerak was scared but did not what she needed to do to help her family. However, she made the best of each day, and she talked to her parents or sister what I was doing. She usually rode her bike to avoid roadblocks, but sometimes she went by train. When she met someone in another town, each had a piece of paper cut to match the right person.

Carla had a German nurse’s ID and uniform she sometimes wore. “I spoke fluent German, so I got out of some tough spots. I was scared most of the time. I had to be so careful,” she said. “German soldiers and SS officers liked girls, so sometimes I flirted my way out of a difficult situation.”

One day, two Nazi secret police interrogated her at her home. They found nothing out of order. Flirting helped her out of that situation. The men then even helped her carry her suitcase—contain- ing forged paperwork and the thumbprint machine—downstairs to her bike.

A few times Carla went into hiding, riding her bicycle out of Amsterdam to stay with people in the underground. “In my underground group, I did not know last names, and sometimes did not know their first names,” she said. “If I was caught, I could truthfully say I did not know others’ names.”

Carla began working as a medici- cal technician near the end of the war. After the war, she had no contact with those in her under- ground network.

Before Otto Frank’s family went into hiding, they lived half a block away. Margot and Anne were in the Reform temple Carla attended in Amsterdam. When she first went to see “The Diary of Anne Frank” with her daughter, they usually rode their bicycles out of hiding, riding her bicycle.

Three of her father’s six sib- lings and their spouses died in concentration camps. Of Hol- land’s 150,000 Jews before the war, only 20,000 survived. After the war, Carla worked eight months as medical officer in a camp for Dutch Nazis. She had a bit of revenge when some complained about the food. She put a tube into their stomachs without anesthesia and pumped their stomachs “to see if they needed a special diet.”

Then she worked with the Royal Dutch Army Nurses Corp Blood Transfusion service. In the record cold spring of 1945 after liberation, 25,000 people died from hunger, disease and malnutrition, she wrote in her memoir.

Under the Marshall plan, her father returned to his work, manu- facturing and designing women’s clothing in a factory he owned. Carla met her husband, Paul Pezerak, after the war. He studied tropical agriculture at the University of Amsterdam, where she had begun studies to be a doc- tor. He had a scholarship to go to Iowa State College in Ames. They married in November 1947. He left for the U.S. soon after, and she joined him in February 1948. After he earned a master’s degree in soil management, they went to Liberia, West Africa, where their children Marc and Marian were born. Returning to Iowa in 1953, he worked on a doctoral degree. Two more children, Joan and Yvonne, were born there. In 1956, they moved to Hawaii, where they became U.S. citizens in 1958.

Because Paul was Catholic, they raised their children in that faith. His work with the United Nations took them to Thailand and Italy. They also lived in Alabama, Florida, California and Washing- ton, D.C., where Paul joined the World Bank. They then spent five years in Kenya, returning to Washington, D.C., in 1979. After Paul retired, they moved in 1988 to Colorado Springs. After he died in 2001, Carla moved to Spokane in 2004 to be with her daughter, Marian.

Carla returned slowly to Judaism after her children left home. It took 18 years for Carla to write her memoir, which is pub- lished on demand through Ama- zon. Proceeds go to scholarships for Yom HaShoah.

Carla visited her family in Hol- land almost every year. In recent years, until her sister’s death, they kept in contact through FaceTime. When asked about forgiving, she said, “We cannot forgive someone who kills people, only those people killed and God can do that.”

Recently recognized as the 2020 Washingtonian of the Year, Carla said she is grateful if it means people talk about the Ho- locaus because it is important for people to know about it.

Why was she in the under- ground? “I could help, so I did. It needed to be done,” she said. On receiving the award at the Governor’s Mansion, she said that she speaks about the Holocaust “because it is necessary. I can do it, so I do it.”

For information, email copezerak@gmail.com
Nonprofits muster new resources

Continued from page 3

Habitat for Humanity-Spokane has suspended its operations at work sites, its store and office. Panhandle Health District Healthline 208-277-7889 or at www.kroc.co.com.}

Heart of the City Church in Coeur d’Alene is experiencing overflow. The church bank is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Thursday, but drive-up only for a prepared food box. Staff is working from home to help people with rent and utilities via emails. Call 208-665-7808 and see theheartcda.com.

House of Charity, along with 24/7 shelter access, is providing regular daily services from 7:30 a.m. to noon, as well as sleeping programs. From noon to 7 p.m., when closed, it is offering Porta-Potties in its courtyard with two staff to monitor and sanitize between each use.

Jewels Helping Hands opened a warming center in Spokane to take pressure off other shelters that are overwhelmed and enable social distancing. An appeal went out to the Homeless Coalition partners for 80 sleeping mats, which can be bought at local stores’ camping departments. The Cannon Street Warming Center is open 24/7 and is full in the daytime. They serve sack breakfasts, lunch and a hot dinner outside. There are showers from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. They offer tents and sleeping bags. Call 281-7120 and see jewelshelpinghands.org.

Kizuri is closed, but is taking orders by phone for delivery or pickup. Call 466-7677.

The Kaufer Co. is closed but Ed Sinclair sells books, music and other supplies by phone or email orders, and online at https://kauferco.com/books.

The Kroec Center in Coeur d’Alene has its help line open seven days a week during business hours to field questions and fill requests of people in need, such as groceries and gas. People can call with prayer requests or to talk. Recently they sent 100 gift cards to the Rathdrum Senior Center to help clients with food. Staff are also assisting with the Panhandle Health District Help Line. Updates are by calling 208-277-7889 or at www.krocoda.org/notice.

Martin Luther King Jr. Center at East Central Community Center, 502 E. Stone, has new Food Bank hours 1 to 3 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The building is temporarily closed without an appointment. FAME and ECEAP programs are open 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. WIC is at the Broadway location. SNAP is by appointment. The SCC Early Head Start and Gym are closed. Call 868-0856 or see mikpouncespan.com.

Meat Food Bank continues regular hours 4 to 6:45 p.m., Wednesdays, bread and produce 4 to 5 p.m., Sundays. They are setting up a drive through collection. Clients walking or biking are to wait outside.

Believing in Resurrection, we trust that this truth in the tomb will burst forth with new life. Be of good courage, be kind and we look forward to resuming activities As soon as possible

The Ministry Institute 405 E. Sinto, two blocks north of St. Aloysius Church For more information, contact Shonna Bartlett at 313-5765 or bartlettsgonzaga.edu.

We invite you to join us for reflection, prayer and spiritual renewal.

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Businesses, agency gifts aid Union Gospel Mission

Barbara Comito of Union Gospel Mission shared some ways neighbors are helping them.

• No-Li Brewhouse is providing UGM with a gallon of hand sanitizer per day.
• Rick Clark of Giving Backpacs raised $1,000 online in 15 minutes to provide 100 meals for the women and children at the Crisis Shelter from Mac Daddy’s on Monday night. Rick’s idea is to support local businesses and help homeless shelters at the same time.
• Because Northern Quest Resort and Casino is closed for two weeks, they brought in a huge quantity of prepared food to UGM last week. The timing couldn’t have been better. UGM is currently short staffed, so 500+ pounds of chicken and beef, along with a healthy supply of sliced vegetables will be put to good use feeding the men, women and children in our shelters.

For information, call

Dale Fruin, UGM kitchen supervisor, left receives pans of meat from Northern Quest chef Frank Comito.

Even in the COVID-19 crisis, we continue to serve the poorest of the poor – people who know what it feels like to be vulnerable, fragile, at-risk, isolated and afraid.

Catholic Charities is here to help ALL of us now.

For more information please visit www.cceasternw.org/covid-19

Catholic Charities EASTERN WASHINGTON

In light of historic disparities, he urged that institutions and mayors and government institutions to enforce encouraging protections for all people in the state, to address boarding and price gouging. In light of historic dynamics, he urged that institutions and businesses be intentional and transparent to include the marginalized and most vulnerable, using a race equity lens and awareness of classism in distributing food, physical resources, and medical testing and treatments.

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane has compiled a list of resources, including meals

for students and families at link: www.peacejusticeaction.org.

Trip to Spokane’s food bank for refugees

Kurtis Robinson wrote the Spokane and Eastern Washington mayors and government institutions to encourage enforcing protections for all people in the state, to address boarding and price gouging.

Refugee Connections Spokane plans to use its van to deliver food bank food to refugee elders it usually serves who cannot leave their homes to shop. Its office is closed, but it is working with partner agencies, such as Spokane County United Way, the Spokane Public Health District and Spokane Public Schools to keep constituents updated on best practices. See refugeeconnections.spokane.org.

Salvation Army of Spokane’s coronavirus response effort includes continuing the Family Resource Center—food bank—continues to help people in need, as there has been a 30 percent increase in services because of COVID-19.

Catholic Charities Eastern Washington

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Agencies find new ways to serve

Continued from page 5

"We ask people to donate extra towels for sleeping, cleaning wipes and surgical masks for people who come to the food bank," said Major Ken Perine, commander of the Spokane Salvation Army Citadel Corps. In practicing safe distance, the Spokane Salvation Army is handing food box requests in front of the Family Resource Center. Individuals sign up for food and volunteers bring the boxes to them, instead of people “self-shielding” and volunteering at the same time.

Some people needing food are driving up, getting out of their cars to sign up for the food and then waiting in their cars for a volunteer to bring them a box of food. "We want folks who are not eligible for unemployment to be able to spend their money on rent, not food," he said.

Emergency Shelter, where people can stay up to 90 days, and Stepping Stones for families staying up to a year, are operating. Staff are checking in on guests' health every day. Families and guests practice social distancing.

The Youth Center is closed. Church services are online.

The Spokane Alliance is matching donations to purchase items. Information on donation is at https://spokane.unitedway.org/

Volunteers, age 55 and younger, are needed for four-hour shifts. To practice social distancing, volunteers will line up and be assigned with people coming for food. Sign up at is makingspokanebetter.org.

Second Harvest is assessing needs of partner agencies and making sure resources are available to ensure an uninterrupted supply of food for children, families and seniors who need it. Although daily operations continue, Second Harvest’s food supply chain is being strained and volunteering has been disrupted as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold.

The COVID-19 crisis will most likely result in an increased need for help. Second Harvest is appealing for donations to keep its food supply stable and respond to unexpected need. See 2-harvest.org.

Serve Spokane will refuse service to anyone showing symptoms. Those needing food and clothing can call for home delivery. See servespokane.org.

Spark Central closed its after-school program and in-person programs, but staff raised $5,000 to provide kits with Legos, playdough and cookies along with tea for kids to have during this time they are out of school. See sparkcentral.org.

SPEAR Ministries after school program in East Central north of I-90 needs non-perishable food for their food bank for low-income children and families. People wanting to help may take donations to St. Mark’s Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave — call 747-6677 for hours.

The Spokane Alliance is working with cereal and breakfast food providers and existing community partnerships to match community volunteers with resources. The Alliance is also partnering with the Spokane Regional Health District to train volunteers to test for COVID-19. Staff have tested positive for COVID-19 and do not need to be hospitalized.

Non-members may also contact Lead Organizer Katie Zinler to participate by calling 389-1750 or by emailing katie@spokanealliance.org.

Spear Creek Riverkeeper is committed to maintaining the health and safety of our Spokane Riverkeeper community members, volunteers, staff and partners. They are closely monitoring the development of COVID-19 precautions for Eastern Washington.

In the hopes of continuing to flatten the curve, they are taking cues from Spokane Regional Health District and continuing to wash hands, work remotely and stay home when sick. See speark- riverkeeper.org.

Sokane Valley Partners is monitoring developments related to COVID-19 and taking proactive measures to protect the health and well-being of its partners, volunteers, client, staff and the able-bodied, children, families and seniors it serves. It asks those coming to follow the best practices.

SVP’s food bank, diaper bank and emergency assistance are operating as usual, with increased sanitation and social distancing. Its clothing bank is closed until further notice due to the virus’s lifespan. Soft goods and clothing donations are accepted by the mail and drop off for clothing or household goods until further notice.

The need for help with utilities is increasing. This disaster will affect those who need SVP services most, especially for those who are unable to work the elderly and in addition, they are seeing many of the clients of low-wage, hourly workers who have been hit with layoffs and job losses. SVP is concerned about the stability of some of its revenue partners, churches and businesses, whose incomes are affected through shutdowns.

SVP has an emergency appeal. See svpart.org.

Tenants Union of Washington continues its advocacy. Terri Anderson, director in Spokane, reports that the city of Spokane expanded its emergency order to include a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures. The Spokane moratorium halts all notices to terminate and all evictions and foreclosures and stops late fees for April rent. It applies to both commercial and residential evictions. It also provides an exception for landlords to terminate tenancies if 75% of residents in the building. This order fills the gaps left in the statewide moratorium on evictions. Lead Organizer@Kate.Kincaid.org

Tum Tum Pantry personnel and volunteers will wear protective gear, gloves and masks.

With the Fig Tree

By Emily Franko

When Steve Scott received his COVID-19 vaccination notice, as he calls it, from his employer, he knew how he’d be spending his time off—helping his community get through this crisis.

Steve works for a retail store that temporarily closed its stores in mid-March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He has spent every weekday since at Second Harvest making emergency food bags to be distributed at Mobile Market distributions.

A regular Mobile Market volunteer, Steve has seen how hunger impacts the community. He decided to spend his time off from work at Second Harvest because he knows the need for assistance will grow during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am a firm believer that community is what we make of it—if we put it into—,” he said.

“Even though I’m one of the people who lives paycheck-to-paycheck, I’m grateful to have a pay check,” Scott said. “As someone who is healthy and active, volunteering at Second Harvest is something I can do to be there for those people who need food right now.”

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

Steve Scott wants to help community in crisis.

Steve Scott spends ‘time off’ volunteering

By Emily Franko

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

Steve Scott wants to help community in crisis.

The YWCA is closed but its services to women, children and families remain available, even given the needs with the stress. It continues to serve through its domestic violence safe shelter and other services by phone, email and video — legal advocacy, mental health counseling, job readiness and family support services. Its 24-Hour Helpline is at 326-2255, text 228-3725 or email help@ywcaspokane.org.

For updates on food banks, school food bag handouts and more, visit thespfigtree.org, where new developments are being continually reported.

With the Fig Tree
Faith leaders share insights to help members

Leaders of regional denominations—the Episcopal Diocese, Catholic Diocese, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Synod, the Presbytery, the United Methodist district, the Disciples of Christ region and the United Church of Christ have been sharing insights to help people through these tough times. They have been using emails, social media and websites to explore how to be a community of faith in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Mike Denton - Conference minister of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ

“Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Go to a calm and quiet space,” said Mike in many of his daily posts to the conference’s email Google Group. Early on he suggested each congregation plan to prepare for the disruption that would be caused by COVID-19. He called for efforts to limit exposure to “ourselves, our communities and those we care for and love.”

Mike suggested not having in-person worship six weeks through Holy Week and Easter, and postponing or post-posting face-to-face meet-ings and gatherings (including funerals and weddings), suspend-ing face-to-face pastoral visits and switching to video conferencing, phone calls, emails and letters for communication. For the church administration and fiduciary, he said, it was important to not have meetings if possible and consider using video conferencing for those discussions.

The PNC Board has cancelled the in-person business portion of its annual meeting that was scheduled April 24 in Spokane. Other ways will be found online to have workshops and worship. He called churches to consider offering their buildings for emergency usage if needed, such as if hospitals exceed capacity or shelters need space for homeless people with social distancing. As of March 21, the conference camps were experiencing cancel-lations, so space was available. Pilgrim Firs at Port Orchard signed on to use its rooms to house people experiencing homelessness who need shelters with social distancing. N-Sid-Sen on Lake Coeur d’Alene has offered its facilities as an Idaho election site to give people social distancing. “These days are challenging, tough and they will not be with-out pain,” he said. “However, I know we would all rather choose some pain now to participate in protecting others from suf-fering and slowly, God, I believe, is giving us the voluntary behavior and willingness to participate in social distancing, hand washing and disinfecting that could lower this number significantly.”

“There will be another side of this. We will celebrate and worship together when we can,” he said. “In the meantime, may God help us answer the call before us at this time.”

The conference has compiled a list posted online that indicates where of its 71 congregations have services online through Facebook, YouTube and Zoom. The PNC also has technology offerings available online using Ring Central and Zoom meetings for “worshiping together when we can’t be together, a conference-wide check-in, a staff community office hour, pastoral care during the recovery plan.”

For information, call 206-838-7575 or visit centeringunit.org or presbyinw.org.

Presbytery head suggests seeing God already at work

Presbytery of the Inland Northwest, the Rev. Sheryl Kinder-Pyle

With things rapidly changing, Sheryl Kinder-Pyle, executive minister of the Presbytery, said, “It’s been a difficult challenge to continue to be able to connect with folks for worship as well as reaching out to our neighbors. The situation is changing daily.”

“Many of our churches went to a Facebook live stream format for worship on March 22. Now with Gov. Jay Inslee’s ‘Stay Home Stay Healthy’ order, we can’t even gather a team of worship leaders for livestream worship,” she said. Sheryl expects that adaptations and creative ministries will con-tinue to emerge. “The pandemic has revealed some deeper questions about the meaning of worship and what does it mean to be the Church,” she said. Without a building we are forced into a deeper understanding of Church. Congregations are a community that is part of a larger community. “We need to grow in our ca-pacity to see God at work in the community and join in with what God is already doing,” Sheryl said, quoting scripture: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, its foundations tremble with its tumult.”

“I pray for you as you address the fear and isolation that many are feeling,” she said. “Know that I am available via my cell phone for encouragement/counsel.”

“In our theology worship is not restricted to the sanctuary and we are all called to care for the most vulnerable,” Sheryl said. “I’m so encouraged by the creative ways you have found to offer worship opportunities for your people and beyond.” I’m also grateful for the many food distribution ministries which are “essential” and must be continued to feed the community. “We are in the midst of a huge shift in our understanding of our culture and the Church. As you continue to manage the present, my hope is that you will also wrestle with the questions, ‘How do you see your church as part of your community?’ and ‘What does it mean to be the Church without a building?’” she added.

Steve Lymus, lead pastor at Shadle Presbyterian Church, said a church elder proposed doing a drive-in service with people sit-ting in their cars in the parking lot. They set up a small FM transmitter inside the church building. People in cars tuned to 87.7 FM while a small team of musicians and Steve led the service. They also livestreamed the service over Facebook with a cell phone on a tripod. Forty cars were in the parking lot. Communion was served in prepackaged small cups. Pastors and staff at Hamblen Park Presbyterian plan to live stream from multiple locations. Head pastor Steve Watts said a video at https://youtu.be/7YnWfWxLSU tells how to do that.

Presbytery continues to update its website with resources for these times for worship, spiritual resources and how to love neighbors.

Missional expeditor Katie Starr is hosting weekly Zoom meetings at 2 p.m. Wednesdays with pastors and program staff on doing minis-try amid the changes happening.

For information, call 924-4148 or visit presbyinw.org.
**Bishop acts to reduce spread of infection**

**The Most Rev. Thomas Daly**

- Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane

> “In his March 25 update on the diocesan response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Bishop Thomas Daly said, “The speed at which this infection is spreading only seems to increase. I am concerned about our health care workers and the potential of overwhelming our hospitals in Eastern Washington.”

> “I want our parishes and institutions to play a role in preventing the spread of this virus. Therefore, I am announcing the following requirements which will remain in place until Monday, April 13,” he said.

- All public Masses remain suspended. Priests are to offer private Masses at their homes and to the extent possible, live stream the Mass on the web.

> “We are not suspended from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. The Chrism Mass schedule for March 31 is postponed. Our Diocese of Spokane, the State of Washington, public funeral Masses, memorials and graveside services are prohibited.

> “The Sacrament of Penance should be celebrated exclusively for those near death. Penitents, not in danger of death should be encouraged to make a perfect act of contrition.

> “The Sacrament of the Sick should be limited to those in danger of death. Priests should use proper precautions including the use of a cotton swab to administer the sacrament.

> “Parishes should suspend all office hours, meetings, adoration, stations and every parish activity.

> “The public celebrations of Holy Week liturgies are suspended. Bishop Daly will celebrate these liturgies at the Cathedral and they will be live-streamed.

> “The Sacraments of Initiation are postponed except in the danger of death.

> “Plains should be blessed and reserved for later distribution.

> “Parishioners are encouraged to reconnect with their parish websites as well as the diocesan site. At-home prayers and devotions are encouraged.

> “The faithful continue to be encouraged to join me in fasting of Fridays until this pandemic is over.

> “Parishioners are encouraged to maintain their financial support of their parish to the extent possible.

> “I understand some of these requirements are drastic and disquieting. As a pastor, I feel the need to offer what support I can to help those who are hurt by the loss of their weekly gathering practices.

> “Our lives have changed, and I am deeply concerned that those ministries continue that host recovery groups in their buildings and are conflicted about closing buildings adding to stresses of individuals breaking their sobriety.

> “I encourage an over-abundance of caution over disregard of safety in every situation. This response is about the safety and well-being of our neighbors,” she said.

> “On March 20, Kristen posted information for congregations that host recovery groups in their buildings and are conflicted about closing buildings adding to stresses of individuals breaking their sobriety.

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Pastor and organizer team up to elicit needs of West Central neighborhood

Housing was among three is- sues—with health care and jobs—that came out of a listening campaign of the Spokane Alliance last summer, said lead organizer Katie Zinder.

In those sessions, she said they way the “grittiness, heart, power, potential and anger that make for good organizing.”

Through the Spokane Alli- ance, members can work on all three issues as an organization, creating strategies and actions. The alliance drew 217 to a fall candidate forum on housing and homelessness.

West Central Spokane chose to focus on housing efforts and formed the Housing Equity Action Research Team (HEART).

Health care concerns—ex- posed in the listening system and the lack of mental health care— were addressed by others. The alliance has created a workshop on prescription drugs costs and is offering it to congregations.

Creating jobs in building trades has also been a part of the asso- ciation. Seven years ago, the City of Spokane voted to require contrac- tors to hire local labor apprentices as 15 percent of their employees, to train more people to work in careers with health care and retirement benefits.

“To build infrastructure, we need a well-trained work force,” Katie said. “The city monitors contractors to be sure they meet the standard.”

In the fall of 2018, Katie started to work with the Dinner Table program of the West Central Episcop- al Mission to see how organizing could do for those coming to the meal. Those interested stayed for a listening session.

Gathering with participants at the Dinner Table, Katie and United Methodist pastor Katy Shedlock set up a listening session, inviting guests to stay after the meal.

“We asked what one thing would they change to make a differ- ence in their lives. They said they needed more, digni- fied, affordable housing in West Central Spokane,” Katie said.

To research what actions are appropriate, the Housing Equity Action Research Team (HEART) meets once or twice a month. Katie described the principles of organizing.

“The Spokane Alliance allows me to work on the big issues of organizing and driven by people experiencing them,” she said. “Faith communities want to do that, and the Spokane Alliance gives them a way to do it.”

Katie said about half of those involved in HEART have housing and half have inadequate housing or live outside.

“Some live in housing with no hot water or a broken toilet. They are afraid to call the landlord, be- cause they have too many people living with them,” she said.

HEART did a survey of the neighborhood and found many vacant properties in an area of people without homes. They found 34 within a few blocks of the West Central Episcopal Mis- sion at Elm and Dean.

The Spokane Alliance has helped them do research for in- formation they need to develop an action plan.

They looked at funding sources and found that because of the Kendall Yards development in the neighborhood, the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district they creat- ed includes West Central Spokane.

“TIF funds are tax revenue cre- ated by developers. Excess tax can go into improvements in a neighborhood, like paving streets and public infrastructure, but can’t be used for affordable housing,” said Katie.

The team began working to change that on the state level.

“The Spokane Alliance has a culture of living and learning together,” Katie said, comment- ing that participants learned from the process of developing and advocating for the bill, “Katie said she likes organizing because of her Jewish heritage.

“My great grandparents were refugees fleeing Russia because of the pogroms against Jews. My grandmother was the child of im- migrants in New York City. My husband’s family has been here for a cart there during the Depres- sion,” she said.

While she did not experience those struggles, her parents taught her that she had an obligation to make sure people have opportuni- ties to live healthy, happy, successful lives.

“In Maryland, I worked with refugees fleeing violence in El Salvador,” she said. “I saw my family history in their strength. I knew that after a few generations, I was able to be free, because we have democracy.”

Katie spent her first 18 years in New Jersey before she studied sociology, anthropology and his- tory at Swarthmore University in Pennsylvania. After earning a bachelor’s degree in 2011, she went to Washington D.C. and worked for three years with Jews United for Justice, a Jewish com- munity organizing group.

From 2014 to 2017, she worked with Action in Montgomery in Montgomery County, Maryland, which is affiliated with the Indus- trial Areas Foundation, as is the Spokane Alliance.

She and her husband, who met in Jews United for Justice, took a road trip around the U.S. in 2017 to find a “purple place that was politically mixed” to make their new home. They found Spokane.

He is using his organizing experi- ence with the Washington State Federation of Employees Union.

Katie, who serves on the Board of Temple Beth Shalom, said con- certing religious and community groups want to ensure that people have opportunities.

“The best way to do that is to keep our democratic culture. As a person of a religious minority liv- ing in an area of white supremacy, I have concern about the need to keep extremism in check. ‘she said.

For information, call 532-1888 or email katie@spokananellion.org.

Advocating for housing stretches neighbor out of her comfort zone

Alisa Shaffer, who grew up in West Central and raised her children in the Hillyard and West Central neighborhoods, shared her skills and experiences to help leg-islators address create HB 2497 housing issues in West Central Spokane.

She also learned about the legis- lative process as she stretched outside her comfort zone, interact- ing with city building projects and apprentices as 15 percent of their employees, to train more people to work in careers with health care and retirement benefits.

“In those sessions, she said she “had never been involved in anything that was so fast that action.

Alisa previously helped The Spokane Alliance of the Spokane Alli- ance through the Dinner Table, Katie said.

“He is using his organizing experi- ence with the Washington State Federation of Employees Union.

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First of two articles on West Central Episcopal Mission.

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**Editorial Reflections**

**May our concern for community in this crises seed a new ‘normal’**

“Community” is the word for today. We hear about “community spread,” a call for community responsibility and acting for community health. We hear that “herd immunity” is near, if not here.

“Community” is at the core of teachings of the faiths and the missions of nonprofits. We hear of need for personal and social responsibility to achieve isolation from the community and social distancing to protect ourselves and, for the sake of others, to prevent spread, especially to vulnerable people—elderly, immune-compromised, homeless, hungry, imprisoned.

Failure to act on communications that community response of caring and justice are critical today more than ever.

We are to love one another in new ways—finding new means to connect while being apart. Out of concern for the community, congregations and faith communities will need to rethink worship, meet, study and share resources.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, World Health Organization director-general, said, “This virus will not be stopped without the cooperation of governments, businesses, societies and people. It is everyone’s responsi- bility. We are as strong as our weakest link. The world is intertwined, globalized. We need to act in unison to build global pre- pareness and resilience.”

In a press conference, he and other health care professionals said that to lessen fear, we need the ‘time out’ and healing of Sabbath, love in all times.

What if we took Sabbath—encapulat- ing many faiths’ traditions—from Friday sundown to Sunday at midnight each week—imagine what impact that might have on reducing global warming, let alone our health.

Do we need to be so busy, busy working, shopping and being out at all week- end? We have been told to pause, to take a day. We need some of rest giving time for nature to heal a bit.

What other insights our frenzied life we gain from this time of dis- ruption?

Do we need to be contagious with love, healing, help? as U.S. Episcopal Presid- ing Bishop Michael Curry said. “Love is not self-centered, selfishly seeking the good and welfare of others. The love is so great that we would give up our life for friends. We will fight our contagion by the discipline of labor of love, working through medical folks and each of us who can help and heal, voluntarily worshiping God on- line if that will help us thrive, be strong and resilient,” he said.

What will happen as our season tickets on subways, to concerts or soccer games become useless? Are there ways to cancel?

We are asked to think not for selves but for community. The virus is bringing a new awareness that we all share the same physi- cal space. We live here together—different identities and races. God’s love is in our live love for each other. Love can heal, lift up, liberate,” Bishop Curry said.

What if, like the Sabbath, we take this time to reflect, pray, pause, think, pray, think about how the world might every day and every time be different—more just, love- ly, connected, understanding, respectful, prayerful, joyful, peaceful, caring, healthy, equal, livable for all.

We can all partner in prayer—receive and share prayer concerns.

Mary Stamp - editor

**Four of eight speakers for 2020 Fig Tree benefits shared their comments**

We need the ‘time out’ and healing of Sabbath, love in all times.

An observation from satellite views is the dramatic reduction in carbon emissions as the transportation, production, shipments, work places, schools and entertainment/sports have shut down. It’s giving everyone a chance to slow down, and giving Mother Nature a chance to breathe.

Perhaps there always has been a reason to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest each week. Now, at least for some, we need a chance to breathe, relax, heal and build relations- ships, but it also is a chance to step out of the frenzy of production, competition, shopping, sports contests, entertainment, travel, slavery and overworking.

In the same issue, I met Suzi Hokon- son, founding executive director of the Legacy Center and a past member of the board of the Fig Tree. She had brought her sewing machine to the store and had brought along a beautiful day in our Spokane neighborhood.

Articles and stories, especially those parts of our story.

Perhaps there always has been a reason to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest each week. Now, at least for some, we need a chance to breathe, relax, heal and build relationships, but it also is a chance to step out of the frenzy of production, competition, shopping, sports contests, entertainment, travel, slavery and overworking.

**Margie Hill – Eastern Washington University and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women**

I appreciate hearing that the Fig Tree newspaper tells human stories. An important part of our work with Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women is that they are real people, mothers, aun- ts, grandmothers and families who are miss- ing, but no one tells their stories or reports that they are missing.

The Fig Tree took time to explain the compli- cated jurisdictions and multiracial and Indigenous laws because of the patchwork quilt of Indian lands. Because people do not understand, law enforcement and attorneys are uncertain, so they do not act quickly to investigate or prosecute crimes.

It is important the public understands that indigenous women are not missing because they are bad—prostitutes or addicts—but because they are stuck struggling with poverty and medical care.

We didn’t ask for our lands to be broken, jurisdiction to be confusing or our people to be considered only in terms of crime.

The Fig Tree told those parts of our story.

Mary did excellent journalism in the article I felt like I knew him a bit. I felt connected.

She had brought her sewing machine to the store and had brought along a beautiful day in our Spokane neighborhood.

I also met 95-year-old neighbor who supports this valuable ministry. I am grateful for ways you inspire me to act, meet people—elderly, immune-compromised, friends. We will fight our contagion by the discipline of labor of love, working through medical folks and each of us who can help and heal, voluntarily worshiping God on- line if that will help us thrive, be strong and resilient,” he said.

What will happen as our season tickets on subways, to concerts or soccer games become useless? Are there ways to cancel?

We are asked to think not for selves but for community. The virus is bringing a new awareness that we all share the same physical space. We live here together—different identities and races. God’s love is in our live love for each other. Love can heal, lift up, liberate,” Bishop Curry said.

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Mary Stamp - editor

**It is so outdate a month ago Malcom**

**Donna Simanton and learned of her life-long advocation for peace, and Naghmama Sherazi, a Muslim Pakistani scientist who was arrested for their public stand in organi- zations when she was new to Spokane. I would love to meet each of them in person.

The ads are equally informative, a local street bulletin board in the Fig Tree. I learn of upcoming conferences, creative businesses, calendars of events, places for meetings.

Our lives are richer knowing stories of individuals and organizations who have put their faith in action. Truly our own monthly hope-filled beautiful day in our Spokane neighborhood.

Dainen Penta – Center for Justice

The Fig Tree connects people, shares positive, uplifting stories of the great work in our community, inspires and inspires action. In this time of uncertainty, it reminds us there are many amazing individuals and groups in our community.

During college, while a small, trusted staff, the Fig Tree helped me discern that collective love really looks like, there were unfortunately also many judgmental voices that reflected xenophobia and homophobia, and those voices often felt deafening. The Fig Tree has helped restore balance for me and demonstrates the restorative and restorative power of so many in Spokane to embrace me and others who have felt shunned or shunted. The Fig Tree has helped me re- deeming for my soul and for my heart, and affirms why I returned to Spokane after so many years.

What we can do is disheartening, positive stories in the Fig Tree feel like a breath of fresh air. That’s why it’s critical to ensure that our readership continue to ensure that the great work of The Fig Tree continues.

Donations may be sent by mail to The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202, or online at facebook.com/donate/11050986413388;
Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC) had scheduled the Second Annual Healing of the Earth Vigil for Earth Day, April 22, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. They had planned to hold it at the Tribal Gathering Place in Spokane.

"The Human Rights Education Institute (HREI) in Coeur d’Alene provided “take home” activity kits Spring Break Camps.

Volunteers prepared five days of “Stay at Home” activities for the Around the World Multicultural Camp for six to 11 year olds to explore culture, music, games, arts and crafts, language and food from different regions.

The U.S. Census, counting everyone in the United States, has been occurring every 10 years since 1790. This is a subtle count, but a profound one.

“This timed count of adults, children, citizens and non-citizens, homeowners, renters, those with residences and those without will have impact on almost every aspect of our lives for the next 30 years,” she said. “Data determines our voting districts, determines our representation in Congress, the Senate, state and local government. There will be no music, there will be the ringing of the bell during a period of extended silence as those participating hold hopeful thoughts and prayers for the healing of the earth. For more information, contact Gen Heywood at 408-593-9556.

FLLC still plans to hold the vigil. They have changed it to an online event, to be accessed through the FLLC Facebook Page. Jacob Jons, Barbara Miller, and others actively working to heal the Earth will share about their personal experiences. While there will be no music, there will be the ringing of the bell during a period of extended silence as those participating hold hopeful thoughts and prayers for the healing of the earth. For more information, contact Gen Heywood at 408-593-9556.

It’s now time to fill out the Census count is underway now

In the midst of the shock of the Coronavirus count, a different kind of counting is taking place, reminded Beth Pelliccioti, president of the Spokane Area League of Women Voters.

The U.S. Census, counting everyone in the United States, has been occurring every 10 years since 1790. This is a subtle count, but a profound one.

“This timed count of adults, children, citizens and non-citizens, homeowners, renters, those with residences and those without will have impact on almost every aspect of our lives for the next 30 years,” she said. “Data determines our voting districts, the number of representatives we have for our region and state, and the funding we receive for vital services such as medical clinics, fire stations and schools.”

Beth noted that those who do not complete the Census are often those who may need the government services the most.

“In Eastern Washington alone, we stand to lose $3,000/person per year for 10 years for every adult and every child who is not counted. There is a slogan—ten minutes to complete 10 questions impacts us for the next 10 years,” she said.

It’s now time to fill out the Census. Official letters should have arrived or will arrive soon. The survey may be completed online or by phoning 844-338-2020 from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. (EST).
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CMTV14 gives access to video tools during COVID-19 and all times

By Johnny Fuller

At the Community-Minded Enterprise public access television channel, CMTV14, staff are gearing up to help local organizations continue operating by using video.

With the growing concern about COVID-19, DaShawn Bedford, station production manager, and Darrien Mack, production associate, are shifting focus to support organizations with their filming and editing services.

The virus has forced many local companies, colleges and universities online, making videography services an important element of the pandemic response.

With colleges and universities closing campuses, professors are putting their courses online. That creates a challenge for instructors who have not taught online.

Local companies are in the same boat. While meetings are moving to the remote conferencing service Zoom, many other business activities must be filmed.

“Before we knew our normal rates for filming and editing services,” DaShawn said, “from $1,000 to $750 for four hours. We also have filming packages for larger projects.”

“If we just begin to find ways CMTV can help our community respond to COVID-19,” said Leslee Himmer, provided director of Community-Minded Enterprises (CME), “We are communicating daily about how we can help.”

The desire to help Spokane companies through these challenging times reflects the mission of CME to “empower community members through long term well-being through outreach, access and creativity.”

The City of Spokane awarded CME, a Spokane nonprofit, the community’s public access television station in 2007. Digital media programs air on Comcast channel 14, reaching about 100,000 homes in the Spokane area.

CMTV’s response to the new environment is a new way the station “offers the community the ability to have their voice heard,” said Nancy Rust, CME finance and operations director.

Many people have documentaries, shows, public service announcements and other program ideas. For people with something to say to the public, CMTV14 is like a soapbox to share their vision, she said.

Beyond video and editing services, DaShawn and Darrien offer a community space for creativity.

For a monthly membership fee of $25, people can come to the studio at 104 W. 3rd Ave., Suite B, and use the editing equipment, cameras, lights and microphones to create a music video, short film or documentary. The studio usage fee of $150 gives access to the green screen, dollies and lights.

“Many people have stories that want to be told,” DaShawn said, “but don’t have the money to buy high-end cameras. That shouldn’t be the reason they can’t tell their story.”

For example, Maurice Smith of Spokane Homeless Connect and Rising Media didn’t know anything about filming or editing when he walked into the CMTV14 studio to create a documentary series about homeless issues in Spokane.

With the support of Darrien and DaShawn, he learned how to work cameras, edit films and create a documentary.

In January 2019, he filmed “The Spokane Homeless Connect,” the first episode of the series.

“The documentary demonstrates how CMTV is here to do,” DaShawn said. “It’s to start conversations and for people to tell stories they want to share.”

Maurice went to CMTV14 daily to work on the second episode, “The Hidden Homeless.”

“CMTV takes someone like me who knows nothing,” Maurice said, “and lets me handle the equipment. People here taught me how to use the equipment and when I made a mistake, they showed me how to fix it.”

People like Maurice, who use CMTV14’s equipment and advice are called community producers.

“Anyone can become a member and come in here between Monday and Friday,” DaShawn said. “Even high school teens have learned how to use the equipment.”

Lewis and Clark High School students used the equipment to film a 24-minute documentary on Martin Luther King, Jr.

“I just went over there and helped out,” DaShawn said. “They did the editing and put the story together.”

In addition to the community producer program, they have the CMTV14 channel itself.

“As long as it’s not hypersexual or hyperviolent,” Darrien said, “people can create productions to express themselves.”

CMTV14 also offers acting classes on Mondays and Saturdays. Some classes are for adults or young adults. One just invites people into a freestyle experience to let their acting come out.

They were planning to start a new class involving both acting and videography, which would give film students an opportunity to shoot something real and give acting students the chance to experience what it’s like to act in front of a camera.

With the mounting concern over COVID-19, however, all classes are postponed.

Because the classes were an important source of revenue, they will make this up with more film- ing and editing contracts.

Local companies and nonprofits hire them to film promotional videos, public service announcements and community meetings.

Darrien and DaShawn are confident they will continue to draw more business, because they are bringing in new clients and a track record of producing quality films. CMTV14 stands out because of the energy and collaborative culture that Darrien and DaShawn bring to their work, said Nancy.

“It’s weird having my career be something I like doing for a hobby,” DaShawn said. “There have been times where I’m so late, and then I’m working on my own video. Same seat, same software and doing the same thing, but I’ll be here until 11 at night.”

After he earned a bachelor’s in graphic design from Whitworth University in 2013, Darrien traveled and started a small videography company. Then he worked as master controller at KQJ before being hired at CMTV in 2017.

“I figured out early on that I wanted to spend my life creating,” he said. “I also have an ethical direction to help people with what they want to achieve. I want to create what I like and help others create what they want.”

Both Darrien and DaShawn, grew up in Spokane. Their personal histories shape their approach to their work.

“I’m ten years older than Darrien, so his black culture is a bit different from mine,” DaShawn said. “They dress differently and bring a different sense of design, rhythm and mood to their work but they bring energy and a collaborative spirit to creative projects.”

DaShawn grew up in West Central Spokane, an area known in the 1990s for criminal activity. While some friends were into gang activity, he found solace in basketball, playing in middle school, high school and at Spokane Community College.

From basketball, he learned that a team is sometimes up or sometimes behind by 30 points but it can come back.

“It’s about attitude,” he said. “It’s never over until it’s over.”

Self-taught as a videographer, DaShawn’s determination to challenge himself led him to teach himself to use a camera on a project for the Spokane Airport in 2006. The more he filmed, the more he knew that was what he wanted to do with his life.

Soon he was honing his skills by volunteering at CME, which saw his talent and hired him.

DaShawn did a public service announcement for the Boys and Girls Club, and that year they raised more than $300,000. The national Boys and Girls Club saw it and asked if they could show it at their national fundraiser.

His next project was a documentary on Rachel Dolezal, the former president of the Spokane NAACP who gained national attention for identifying as a black woman despite having no black ancestry.

DaShawn said his time filming that enlightened his perspective about her.

“She did more positive than negative. I know some see it differently, and that’s okay,” he said. “Beyond their day-to-day work at CMTV14, both Darrien and DaShawn work on their own projects.”

Some gained the attention of Spokane Arts, a nonprofit. It recently awarded DaShawn $5,000 to create a documentary on Bobby Jack Sumler, a local basketball legend, who set records when he played at Shadle Park Community College (SCC). He later coached the team and was a role model for them.

“I love playing basketball and doing camera work,” DaShawn said. “In this production, I combine both.”

For information, call 960-7452 or email dashawn@community-minded.org or darrienn@community-minded.org.