By Catherine Ferguson, SNJM
Amber Waldref became the director of the Zone Project to empower Northeast Spokane children, youth and families in December 2017. In so doing, her life’s journey brought her full circle back to her roots. Amber grew up in the 99207 postal zone, a neighborhood of working class families.

From her early days, she saw herself on a journey to reach her full potential.

“The community’s vision is for all children to be safe and nurtured, residents to be engaged, and families to have what they need to thrive, she said.

It seeks to empower children, youth and families to reach their potential by building on assets, sharing resources, and collaborating across multiple organizations and with residents in a “collective impact” model.

The Project focuses efforts on Northeast neighborhoods and schools that feed to Shaw and Garry Middle Schools.

“Northeast Spokane is a diverse neighborhood with many assets, but also many challenges, where 39 percent of children and youth—5,000 of them—live in poverty, where 53 percent of incoming kindergartners are not fully prepared for school, and where 26 percent of elementary school students are at risk of dropping out by sixth grade,” Amber said.

Pastors uplift appreciation for life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

As host for the celebration service on Martin Luther King Jr.’s 90th birthday, the Rev. Ezra Kinlow of Holy Temple Church of God in Christ said the gathering celebrated what “we are able to appreciate in our lives as a result of King.”

The Rev. Walter Kendricks, pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church and president of the Spokane Ministers Fellowship, said King “was a great statesman, an eloquent leader and a civil rights leader.

“He gave his life so we could do something simple: sit on whatever seat we want on a bus, sit at lunch counters, and earn an honest wage for an honest day’s work. He did not mind giving his life for the pursuit of justice—not preferential treatment, but justice,” said Walter, frustrated that in 2019, people have not figured out how to live together in harmony.

He read from Micah 6:8, “What does the Lord require of you?” and the answer “to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.”

Walter reminded that King said, “Injustice anywhere—in Mexico, Haiti, Africa, Canada or the U.S.—is a threat to justice everywhere.”

The Rev. James Watkins of New Hope Baptist introduced the speaker, The Rev. Joe Wittwer, pastor of Life Center Foursquare Church, Spokane’s largest church.

Two years ago, he heard Joe speak about “gracism” and knew he was reaching across racial lines to be friends with black pastors.

“Forty-five years ago, he was a hippie, but in 1978, he moved to Spokane and became pastor of the small Life Center Church, which has now grown to 5,000 members and has planted churches throughout Spokane,” said James, noting that the “elephant in the room” is that Joe is the first Caucasian brother to speak for the celebration service in 35 years.

Preaching on “Keep Moving!” Joe said the Gospel message is about reconciliation.

God created everyone in God’s image, no matter their color, ethnicity, nationality, or language. Black lives matter. White lives matter. Syrian lives matter. El Salvadoran lives matter. God’s presence is the same everywhere. God loves all people, he said.

The Fig Tree celebrates 35th year at benefits.

The Fig Tree will celebrate 35 years of publishing the monthly newspaper covering “faith in action” and “stories of people who make a difference” at its 2019 Benefit Lunch and Benefit Breakfast.

“The community’s vision is to support children, youth and adults ‘ready to care,’” which cannot be carried out by any one organization or person but requires the whole community working together,” Amber said.

Her life journey demonstrates the power of a supportive family and community who affirmed her dreams as a child and empowered her to reach her full potential.

Continued on page 4

‘Every child needs dreams, opportunities’

Amber Waldref returns to serve her neighborhood.

‘Every child needs dreams, opportunities’

Amber Waldref returns to serve her neighborhood.
“Building Peace through Dialogue, Kindness and Forgiveness” is the theme for the fifth International Conference on Interreligious Studies, which will be held April 2 to 4, at Gonzaga University.

SpeakeFåVs will hold a discussion on “The Future of Interfaith” at its first 2019 Feb at 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. to the organization’s newly-built building on 5115 S. Freya. The panelists will discuss the importance of inter-religious, spiritual and secular work in Spokane. The group will discuss why it is important to have the declaration of interfaith work work in the country. The event will be open to everyone and will be held in the Spokane Valley.

Peace & Justice Action Conference is Feb. 23

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane’s Peace and Justice Action Conference is from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 23, at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fifth Dr.

The theme is “Key sector Ali disarray, lead researcher and organizer for the Western States Center, will address the audience with an introduction, a keynote address and a closing session.” The theme emphasizes the importance of community and the need for unity.

The Pre-conference is from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. to Tuesday, April 2. Opening sessions are from 6 to 8:30 p.m. The plenary and break-out sessions are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 3, and from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 4. There will be a variety of sessions for participants to attend.

For information, call 313-3665 or email hoover@gonzaga.edu.
Women’s March in Spokane draws 3,000, speakers offer insights at rally

Before more than 3,000 joined in the 2019 Women’s March from the Convention Center through Riverfront Park, speakers offered insights for those gathered.

Power 2 The Poetry poets Bethany Montgomery and Sabby Votino opened with the words: “Feminism isn’t about women being better than men, it is supported on the base that women are just as good as them.” reads Bethany. “Everyone deserves to be treated equal no matter what gender. The stereotypes are teaching girls and boys that they are less than and not equal to men.

“I will accomplish my goals and be living proof that women can follow their dreams and do anything we put our minds to.”

Naghmana Ahmed-Sherazi, an educator and scientist born in Karachi, Pakistan, came to Spokane in 2012 as a single mother and saw no one of her heritage at first. Now she finds community through involvement with the Spokane Islamic Center, Spokane Sisterhood—Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Christian women of different ethnicities.

“We connect around food,” she said, “sharing our values and stories, educating each other so we stand up for each other’s rights.”

“When I became a citizen, I promised to respect the laws and to contribute,” said Nagnhmana, commenting that the judge who swore her in among 36 people from 26 countries said: “Go and make the community better, be involved, run for office, become legislators.”

She worked in 2018 to block Proposition 1, a proposal that would have allowed any city employee to ask anyone for their documents, and helped start the No Discrimination Spokane Campaign with the Hispanic Business and Professional Association, which along with the Asian Pacific Islanders and the NAACP have adopted her, she said.

“They are issues of our lives. We stand together,” she said.

Rachel Strawther, director of leadership training and development at Gonzaga University, said that as she accompanies women leaders on their journey at Gonzaga, she finds a common theme for many: self-doubt.

“When women are highly regarded have an internal monologue that they are not good, pretty or educated enough. Many studies say that women have lower confidence than men,” she said. “Lack of confidence can make women feel they are not qualified to run for office. Imagine if we had more confidence. Self-doubt conditions us to say, ‘I can’t do that.’ Research shows that while women may underestimate our abilities, men may overestimate their abilities,” she said.

She called men in the room forward to say to the women there: “We’ve got your back!”

For information, check Women’s March Spokane on Facebook.

February lectures at Whitworth look at racial justice, theology, science

Whitworth University’s African American Heritage Month Lecture will be given by Austin Channing Brown, author and voice on racial justice, 7 to 9 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 5, at Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth.

Austin is a new voice on racial justice and author of I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness.

She explores intersections of racial justice, faith and black womanhood. Her workshops include justice, pop culture, humor and truth-telling, celebrating blackness. For information, call 777-3583 or email jroyal@whitworth.edu.

Jill Gill, history professor at Boise State University, will speak on “Idaho’s Role in American Racism: Past and Present” 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 21, at Eric Johnston Science Center at Whitworth.

In a 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 19 Whitworth lecture, Thomas Jay Oord, theologian, scholar and multidisciplinary studies scholar, will discuss “Ten Reasons Why the Science and Theology Dialogue Matters.”

For information, call 777-1000.

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Amber Waldref credits family with giving her tools to succeed

Continued from page 1

She wanted to take advantage of opportunities and work toward education. While her family sometimes struggled economically, education helped her go beyond the reality of growing up in a poor neighborhood, where she attended elementary school. She then went to Gonzaga Prep, which provided both “a fine education” and a gateway to opportunities to live out the dreams her family and neighborhood fostered.

As valedictorian of a Jesuit high school, she received full scholarship to Georgetown University with diverse students. Skills she gained at Gonzaga Prep helped her navigate in this world.

She worked hard to spend a year abroad in Madrid, Spain, through Georgetown’s program.

“This experience was a new window to the world. I experienced life as a forestier learned to navigate the world in another language. This helped me relate to others on a science and live a piece of it,” Amber reflected. After graduation, she continued her education through her work and began to fulfill part of her dream, which was “to give back.”

Peace Scholar’s work with the Center for Health, Education and the Environment in Washington, D.C., hired her as campus youth coordinator. This required her to travel around the United States, organizing advising campus chapters, teaching members how to write press releases and recruiting students for meetings. She organized youth around issues they cared about.

“Moving to the Northwest, she moved to Seattle as field director on Hanford cleanup for the Heart of the Hanford cleanup for the Heart of

YWCA Spokane’s GoodGuys will hold “What Does It Mean to be a Strong Man? Exploring Men’s Leadership in Preventing Violence Against Women,” by Jackson Katz from 5:30 to 7:30, Monday, Feb. 11, at Gonzaga University’s Hemmingson Center, 702 E. Desmet Ave. The talk will offer new perspectives on a major health concern, said GoodGuys co-founder, Doug Kelley. It will suggest potential solutions that could help resolve a problem that requires a collective community approach.

“YWCA Spokane’s GoodGuys is a movement of local men working to prevent domestic violence. Jackson promotes scholarship and activism on issues of education, race and violence. He is a leader in the global movement of men working to promote gender equality and prevent gender violence,” said Patrick van der Veen, GoodGuys co-founder.

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**IDaho’s Role in American Racialism, Past and Present**

**Jill Gill**
Professor of History
Boise State University

Thursday, Feb. 21 | 7 p.m.
Eric Johnston Science Center, Room 207
Whitworth University

**Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump**

**John Fears**
Professor of History
Messiah College

Monday, March 18 | 7 p.m.
Weyerhaeuser Hall, Robinson Teaching Theatre
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By Mary Stamp

Inspirered by their faith and passion for saving the lives and health of vulnerable children and families, Tommy and Paula Williams combine their interests and skills—restorative justice, sports, and dental hygiene—in Operation Healthy Family (OHF).

They advocate for restorative justice, challenge obeisance through sports programs, teach oral hygiene and dentistry, and partner with dentists to provide care for low-income people.

Believing he had a plan for him, Tommy prayed and had a vision to start a free after-school flag football program. He wrote a proposal to do that at Grant and Sheridan Elementary Schools.

After he started the program in 2010, Paula suggested the children use mouth guard. When fitting them, she noticed several had severe dental issues from a lack of brushing. So she suggested doing a pilot oral hygiene program at Grant to teach children to brush.

That’s how his love for sports and her love of dental care combined into forming OHF in 2011 under the Parent Family Life Center. In 2012, it became incorporated as a nonprofit.

Tommy and Paula, who are members of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, chose the name “Operation” to be intentional about the mission to help youth and families be healthy through sports and oral hygiene.

In 2010, Operation Ballers (OHF) offers low-income third- to 12th-grade girls and boys affordable access to basketball education and addresses health and fitness disparities by promoting physical activities to prevent childhood obesity.

In this program, which practices in the Hillyard Baptist Church gym, everyone plays, Tommy said. Parents of students are costly, often youth in low-income families don’t play. They need basketball shoes, as well knowing how to dribble. If coaches just judge children by how well they play, those who lack the skill level to compete sit on the bench. In the BYSC program, coaches do not look like their players, so children who could not afford to play have scholarships to a week.

Paula works in 36 classrooms in schools to inspire them to take care of their teeth. She encourages them to speak up. The student leaders carry the toothbrushes home to family members.

As an entry task each day, one student holds a chart, showing children where to brush daily. In groups of four, students compare, discuss, and brush for two minutes daily.

A pre- and post-plaque score is recorded during the Brush for the Future program as a way to measure the program’s effectiveness. Paula said plaque scores showed improvement after just six months of daily toothbrushing during class.

If children brush every day in class, it may be the only time they brush.

Paula also connects children with dental emergencies to different private dentists through OHF’s Dental Access Partnership Program.

“Brush for the Future is about prevention, while Dental Access Partnership Program is about intervention,” she said.

That program connects people on Medicaid ready for intervention with dental care needs and willing to work on prevention, so a dentist does not fix teeth and then the patient returns to brushing lacking because of not brushing and flossing.

“Why fill a tooth for the $33 Medicaid reimbursement, which is less than the cost, for people who will not maintain their teeth,” she said.

In 2020, OHF plans to partner with faith communities and agencies to open a faith-based clinic through David’s clinic, where staff speak Farsi, Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian, as well as English.

The Dental Access Partnership works with diverse groups of dental providers, many of whom are driven by their faith—Mor- mon, Muslim, Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic, and Protestant. In 2015, OHF partnered with agencies like Catholic Charities, whose residents in shelters and apartments have dental treatment from private dentists, he said. “Now, we partner with the YWCA Domestic Violence Program, and ohf.org threatens by OHF’s Domestic Violence Program, World Relief and other agencies to address the dental needs of women, children, immigrants, veterans, and elders,” she said.

Originally from Chicago, Tommy played football at Eastern Washington University while studying for a master’s degree in education.

He was academic counselor for the men’s football and women’s soccer teams at Washington State University from 1996 to 1998 while studying for a master’s degree in education.

After he married Paula in 2005, he encouraged him to finish his master’s thesis. Tommy also was a probation officer and football coach with the YWCA for Five Years. He and his family serve at-risk youth for the Cœur d’Alene Tribal School in DeSmet.

Recently, he has been teaching criminal justice at District #81’s Newtech Skill Center, a trade school for juniors and seniors.

Paula earned a GED at the age of 16 and completed studies at Spokane Community College to become a dental assistant at the age of 19. As the daughter of an optometrist and microbiologists, it was a lifelong dream. Seven Miles, Paula was always interested in health care.

She has worked both in private dental practices and in a community health clinic (CHAS) as a dental hygienist. In 2010, she completed studies at Spokane Community College to be licensed as an expanded function dental auxiliary (EFDA). In that role, she does fillings after a dentist examines and drills the teeth. For a while, she was the only EFDA with four dentists at the downtown Dennis Murphy CHAS Clinic, so they could serve more Medicaid patients.

Tommy and Paula, who each have two sons from previous marriages and two sons together, said “they are committed to raising future godly husbands,” he said.

“Our mission is to honor God, follow Christ and serve the community by offering support, services and programs to help strengthen families through col- laboration and partnerships with other like-minded nonprofits and businesses,” Tommy said.

For information, call 720-4645, email paukertlawgroup.com or visit www.ofhsokane.org.

Tommy and Paula Williams combine interests in sports, health.
Moving beyond hate to love leads to King's vision of beloved community

Continued from page 1

image is in each of us,” he said. “God made people to relate to God and to each other. At the end of the Bible in Revelations is the image of coming before “a great multitude of people from every nation, tribe, people and language.”

For Joe, that’s King’s image of “the beloved community,” ev- eryone made in God’s image and in the end, everyone worshiping God together.

In between, people fall and fight.

“Jesus came to reconcile us with God and each other. There’s a spiritual and a social wing to the Gospel,” Joe said. “If we follow Jesus, Jesus leads us back to God and to each other—to love God and our neighbor.

“In the civil rights movement, we are to keep moving to the king- dom, reconciliation and justice,” he said. “In the last 50 years, we made progress, but have a long way to go. We need to keep moving to- ward justice.”

“That quote is misunderstood,” Joe said. “King was not a fascist, because the arc bending toward justice. We must not give up. Moving forward.”

Joe said people are to keep moving toward the other, because God’s great commandment is to “love God and ‘love our neighbor as ourselves.’”

“What is love?” Joe asked. “It is doing what is best for the other, no matter what it costs you, just as God gave his son because God loved us.”

When Jesus said to love en- emies, he was not talking about a feeling or emotion, but doing what’s best for the enemies, Joe said.

Then he reflected on the Good Samaritan story in answer to a man asking, “Who is my neighbor?” A Jewish man was robbed, but a priest walked by and a Lev- ite, a priest’s assistant, walked by, but a Samaritan, the enemy, bandaged him and took him to a room to be cared for. Jews and Samaritans hated each other. A Samaritan came and cared for a Jew, a stranger, an enemy.

“Jesus twisted the man’s ques- tion, saying it’s more important to move toward the other, to be the neighbor rather than to define ‘neighbor.’ Keep moving toward the person who is different.”

Twenty years ago, even though he came to Martin Luther King Jr. services, Joe said he had no friends of color. “I lived in a white bubble. I realized I was impoverished. I invited Rodney McAuley to lunch and said, ‘I’m a white boy living in a white bubble.’ I asked him to be my friend. I said I did not know what it was like to be a black man in Spokane. We are still friends, and he is a super networker. He has visited me now I have many friends of color. That has changed me.

“I had no idea what prejudice felt like. I had not woken up won-
dering how I would fit in the white dominant culture. I’m the ben- eﬁciary of white privilege,” said Joe, who has talked with pastor- s in his denomination about white privilege and made some mad. Along with making friends, he has educated himself by reading books, such as King’s sermons The Gift of Love, and King’s letter from the Birmingham jail to white minis- ters.

“Reconciliation starts here in moving toward people. It starts with relationships and friendships, but it does not end with relation- ships. The beloved community does not start until we love each other,” he said.

“There’s a spiritual battle around racial issues that keeps us in bubbles, distrustful, suspicious and hating. As we followers of Jesus need to rise up and say this should not happen.”

Joe then moved to his second point that “we need to keep mov- ing beyond anger to love.”

When Jesus was going to Je- rusalem, James and John tried to ﬁnd hospitality in a Samaritan inn, but King found a survivor to tes- tify against one witch doctor. He found a judge who would try and sentence him to life in a prison, joining more than 2,000 prisoners strapped in space mean for 200. Bob brought the survivor to the U.S. for surgery that healed him, but God called Bob to love the witch doctor—the enemy. Bob visited him in prison, shared the gospel and the man became a follower of Jesus, spreading the gospel and love of Christ in the prison.

Eve about Jesus as a baby being a refugee fleeing violence, Jesus being a dreamer, and understand- ing what people on the border felt fleeing for their lives, he had a phone call from someone angered that he connected Jesus’ birth with what was happening in the world.

“I was ready to give him a piece of my mind, but anger never made anyone smarter,” Joe said. “Jesus did not come to destroy but to save. Jesus did not retaliate when the village turned him away, but went on to the next village. Some- times we need to be big enough to move on. Being offended is a national sport. We need to keep moving beyond anger to love if we want reconciliation and jus- tice. We can’t get stuck at anger about the lack of justice.

“Anger may help us change a law, but anger does not change hearts. Only love can bring us together,” Joe said.

He then told of Bob Geoff, a law- yer, going to Uganda and learning that witch doctors kidnapped and sold children as sacrifices. Bob eventually found a survivor to tes- tify against one witch doctor. He found a judge who would try and sentence him to life in a prison, joining more than 2,000 prisoners strapped in space mean for 200. Bob brought the survivor to the U.S. for surgery that healed him, but God called Bob to love the witch doctor—the enemy. Bob visited him in prison, shared the gospel and the man became a follower of Jesus, spreading the gospel and love of Christ in the prison.

Love did something anger could not do. Only love can change a heart,” Joe said. “Bob continued to crusade among witch doctors, inviting them to learn to read and write. The books were the Bible and Bob’s own book, Love Does.”

In a sermon on loving enemies, King said there would be no permanent solution to the crisis in race relations until people of different races learn to love each other. He recognized it might be ideal, not practical, but “we have followed the practical way and it has led to confusion and chaos, but we are not to abandon righ- teous efforts.”

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Three members of Unity Spiritual Center in South Spokane, Wash., serve the 8,000 people of more than 200 traditions at the Parliament of World Religions Nov. 1 to 7 in Toronto, are now applying ideas from that gathering in their congregation and for interfaith work through One Peace Many Paths. The 2018 Parliament marked 125 years since the first Parliament in Chicago in 1893.

It was Hank Broeckling’s first Parliament, but the second one for Joan Broeckling and Jane Simons. Joan went in 2015 to Salt Lake City. Jane and her husband Gary, co-pastors at Unity, went in 2012.

They are incorporating ideas for interfaith work, an upcoming event, study program, native-non-native ties, a mat project and the Compassion Games.

Inspired by diversity

Because they are involved in peace and interfaith work in Spokane, they gained inspiration at the Parliament.

“I soaked up energy from the diversity and acceptance,” Joan said. “It was fascinating to be among so many people of so many traditions on the world level, gathering and organizing our own individual communities. Unity teaches about the oneness of creation. We live out our oneness in everyday relationships.”

Jane said it made her “heart sing” to be under one roof with so many kind, compassionate people.

Hank said it deepened his sense of oneness with everyone to connect with people of so many races and beliefs.

“I recognize we are one from the horizon to horizon opened for us, realizing those who were there are taking that energy back to their homelands to use,” he said.

Sharing ‘Speed Faithing’ event

One Peace Many Paths is planning an “Interfaith Potluck and ‘Speed Faithing’ Dialogue” from 6 to 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 9, at the SGI-USA Spokane Budhist Center, 1717 W. 6th Ave., as part of the 2019 United Nations’ World Interfaith Harmony Week.

“Speed Faithing,” a spin-off from speed dating was introduced at the Parliament, said Joan.

“In small groups, we will share how our faiths impact our questions, perspectives and life choices,” she said. “With others from our spiritually diverse community, we will explore such topics as gratitude, love, environmental responsibility, spiritual practice, relationship to the divine, giving and receiving, peace and justice, prayer and meditation, and service.”

Groups and individuals may RSVP at onepcessmanypaths@gmail.com.

Offering series to act on faith

Inspired by interacting with many of the 250 people at the Parliament from The Association of Global New Thought, Jane decided to lead a year-long Sunday series with Gary, called “Don’t Believe a Word I Say.” Congregants are invited each week to put the principles spoken about into practice rather than just hear about them.

“New Thought seeks to create a world that works for everyone,” she said. “The world is changing. Change happens through us.”

The series encourages participants to take words of faith and put them into practice to see what changes they bring, she said.

“Unity is about practicing spirituality,” Jane said.

Insight for indigenous ties

Hank connected the recognition and presence of Canada’s First Nations and other indigenous people with his involvement in the event with the Native Non-Native Talking Circle, started six years ago by One Peace Many Paths.

Last September, the 2018 Spokane Compassion Games included a Horse Massage Healing Ceremony acknowledging the US Army massacre of 800 Indian horses, “honoring the resilience of tribes and plegding for native and non-natives to work together for a positive future,” Hank said.

He and Joan also participated in a Spokane Tribe regional tour of 160-year-old battle sites and heritage spots.

At the Parliament, Hank learned that Canada’s 2006 National Reconciliation Act seeks to bridge concerns among First Nations. It includes rewriting history books, because most have been written from the white man’s perspective of coming to tame and civilize indigenous people. He also learned how Canada is valuing and promoting First Nations’ culture.

“From that and my connection with the Native Non-Native Talking Circle, I realize we all need to heal,” Hank said, aware that poverty is still an issue for indigenous people and indigenous women continue to disappear.

Doing a service project

Joan looked for ideas she could bring back to use in the Unity Sunday school and worship, as well as in One People Many Paths workshops on compassion, environment and interfaith understandings.

At Unity Spiritual Center, she has started a project with third to eighth graders, called “Mats of Compassion,” creating mats with plastic bags to give to homeless people. “We are weaving long newspaper mats of four-by-six-foot mats on a two-by-four, two-by-four boards,” Joan said. “The mats are four inches thick, providing insulation from the ground.”

Joan seeks donations of thousands of bags for this intergenerational activity—doing a little every Sunday.

That project connects concern about homeless people with the concern about plastics in the environment.

At an environmental presentation that challenged single-use plastic bags, Hank learned that only “nine percent of plastic are recycled, and the rest goes into landfills and the ocean.”

He was impressed by the openness to change among Parliament participants and by recognition that “we can’t keep doing what we are doing,” especially given reports that climate change is speeding up.

Compassionate Cities met

Joan met representatives of four other—Spokane is one—“Compassionate Cities”—Rotterdam, San Jose, Pomona and Austin. For more than 10 years, some have been connecting governments, nonprofits, artists and others to reduce poverty and make their cities more compassionate.

“Each year, One Peace Many Paths and the Compassion Games promote the United Nations’ 15 Sustainable Development Goals,” Joan said, who learned how the SDGs are being spread worldwide.

“How can we as a city and region integrate compassion into our policies, courts and education?” she asked. “I am one small voice. Compassion needs to be systemic and global, not one effort little here.

“We have more compassion in the community now, but it’s not yet systemic. We have to work with city leaders so it runs through policy,” she said. “It’s important to work to demonstrate compassion.

Interfaith is not a luxury

“Interfaith is a luxury or nice option. It’s a necessity in facing today’s challenges,” Joan said.

Opening night, she felt grateful and inspired to see people of so many ethnicities and walks of life finding many ways to be a compassionate person, motivated by their faith traditions,” said Jane.

“We all want to make a difference so children have a safe place to live and a clean earth.”

Every session, 25 to 40 workshops were offered, covering many issues from many perspectives.

“It’s important for faith communities to connect with people who are affiliated with any faith or no faith through common causes, the environment and social justice issues,” Joan said. “Many young people don’t come to church Sundays, so we need to have relationships and discuss spiritual aspects to deepen connections.

In one “jam packed” session on the future of religion, Jane came to realize that many who are labeled as “nones”—not identifying with or affiliated with any religion or faith community—are not people with no faith.

“Most seek spiritual meaning and are concerned about social justice,” she said.

For information, call 838-6518, email djane@unityspokane.org or onepcessmanypaths@gmail.com, or visit parliamentofreligions.org.
Disability Action Center helps people find resources to help themselves

By Kaye Hult

When people who have disabilities or have loved ones who do come to the Disability Action Center NW (DAC) for assistance, they often hope the DAC will solve their problems for them, said Virgil Edwards, one of the independent living advocates in the Post Falls office.

But Virgil said that DAC expects to help them help themselves.

“We’re peers, not professionals,” he said. “We just provide resources.”

DAC is an independent living center, said Virgil. “We give people information so they can take care of their own issues. We’re a conduit. The idea is to give people the power.”

Virgil’s can-do attitude stands him in good stead as he works with clients. He has suffered for a long time with disabilities of his own—bi-polar disorder and physical problems. They could have been roadblocks to him, but he has taken the time to re-think how he can keep moving ahead with his life and has made adaptations necessary to do that.

He uses himself as an example with clients, helping them realize they have what it takes to advocate for themselves and achieve their goals.

As a member of the staff in one of the three DAC locations—Lewiston, Moscow and Post Falls—Virgil offers a wide range of services to those he assists.

DAC’s specialties are individual and community advocacy, information about and referral on a variety of topics, independent living skills, businesses and government, communication services, community involvement, housing advocacy and assistance, peer advocacy counseling and transportation services.

Staff keep up with resources available in their areas. They also advocate for a community more inclusive of those with disabilities.

Virgil was born in Colorado, the third child in his family. When he was young, the family moved to Spokane.

His mother was religious and his father was a truck driver.

“I never got into much trouble,” he said. “I was more afraid of my dad than my mom. I didn’t want to disappoint her.”

Growing up in a working class family, he began working in grade school peeling potatoes at the Star Grill Cafe. Soon, he did everything but cooking. Agnes, his mother, was his best friend and his mother, influencing him to move forward with his life.

She was a great cook and they had an “if I wanted stuff, I had to earn it,” said Virgil, who worked there until he graduated from Fortis High School in 1968.

He began working at odd jobs. For many years, he put in sprinkler systems. When he developed a backache, he persevered and found another job. He realized he didn’t have to do physical labor.

“All along, I had used what I learned to help others who were working for me,” Virgil said. “It was natural. I wasn’t anybody special.

“I could see what other people were doing and help them more than I could do it myself. Without realizing it, I did mental work—such as planning, sales and designing systems.”

He began working for SL Start, where he helped clients with disabilities find employment. The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation sent him clients. He led them to realize they had made many strengths and then trained them in new skills for new work,” Virgil said.

About 15 years into his job, he saw an ad saying DAC needed help.

“If I wanted to move forward in my life, I needed to re-think my abilities,” he said. “I had to figure out how to sell myself to a prospective employer.”

He had met Mark Leeper, the executive director of DAC, while working for SL Start. He also was familiar with the Coeur d’Alene DAC and its former manager.

Virgil contacted Mark, who hired him part time at first, then full time, in part because of his understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

“I was hired in 2008 to make it an independent living center,” he said.

Virgil has helped the center transition into a place that empowers people to do for themselves. He uses his physical and mental disabilities as an example from which his clients can learn.

“I saw myself overcoming different things and mental health issues,” he said. “I seemed I had much against me, but I never saw it that way. I am still able to hold jobs and succeed.

“I know where a disabled person is coming from,” he said. “I know to begin with little steps and move from there to bigger ones. He and his co-workers investi- gate things with individuals rather than for them. Sometimes people with disabilities run into roadblocks and think DAC will help with lawsuits. It does not, but refer them to a lawyer. If a client doesn’t have a computer at home, Virgil informs them of the computer access at the library.

For people who have no money, DAC can give or lend essential devices it keeps on hand.

Having moved several times in Coeur d’Alene, DAC moved to Post Falls in 2016. They purchased the building at 352 E. Mullan Ave.

Already outweighing that building, they have added staff, and are branching out to work in Spokane.

DAC’s advocacy extends beyond helping individuals. They also work for changes at the community, state and national levels to remove physical, communication and attitude barriers for people with disabilities. They strive to gain community support for independence and to include people with disabilities in community life.

In October 2018, DAC recognized Paul Kinney, public works maintenance manager for the City of Post Falls, and his staff for supporting those with disabilities by working with the Post Falls community to make travel by wheelchair easier.

Recently, they presented the City Council with the Tom McTear Memorial Award for going above and beyond with proper snow removal and putting in more sidewalks.

“Post Falls is making many changes because it is growing fast,” Virgil said.

In November 2018, DAC hosted a National Career Mentor Day at Spokane Community College for students ages 16 to 24 with a disability. Students shadowed the career of their choice, gaining a chance to test drive their dream job.

In January 2019, the Moscow office of DAC hosted a celebration to reintroduce the Disability Integration Act (DIA) in Congress. The bill ensures people with disabilities can live in freedom in their communities. It received bipartisan support in both the Senate and the House in Congress in 2018. He hopes that results of the midterms elections mean an opportunity has opened for the bill to pass this year.

“We’re peers, not professionals,” he said. “I want to set my day and not let life dictate to me.”

Virgil continually exhibits that can-do attitude to his clients, inviting them to adopt it too.

For information, call 208-664-9896 or 800-874-9500 or email vedwards@dacnw.org.

Inviting All Jewish Families

Tot Shabbat

Sundays March 17 & April 14

Are you a parent with kids ages 0 to 5 and excited to help your kids learn and love their Jewish identity?

J-Village is the place to gather with other parents and their kids in our community. You’ll get to know each other and discuss the joys and challenges of parenting.

Temple Beth Shalom

1222 E. 30th Ave

747-3304

www.spokanebets.org

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Meditation helped teacher of teens be able to manage their struggles

Because many of her 18 years of teaching were working with troubled teens, Mary Naber saw the need for helping them with anger management. She also realized she needed to be calm and patient in interacting with them. That began her path to learning and teaching passage meditation, which focuses attention by repeating words of prayer, texts and sayings from many of the world’s faith traditions.

She said passage meditation is “designed for the western mindset: mind-body-spirit, thoughts, distractions and moving fast.”

“Passage meditation helps us change our lives, starting where we are,” said Mary. “We don’t need to change our beliefs. It’s a universal practice that people from many backgrounds, traditions and beliefs can incorporate in their spiritual path.”

From seven years of work with the IBM in the 1970s in Northern California, she learned to repair typewriters. When first she moved to Spokane in the early 1980s, she did that.

“I was asked to fix the type writer at the Spokane Buddhist Temple. It turns out the Rev. Fuji fixed me,” said Mary.

She became involved with that community reinforced meditation and introduced her to resources and leaders in the nonviolence movement, including Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi.

A primary resource has been Sri Eknath Easwaran’s book, Gandhi, the Man, The Story of his Transformation. It teaches passage meditation. She has visited his Blue Mountain Center for Meditation (BMCM) many times in Tomales, Calif.

For the 11th year, Mary, who teaches regularly, is offering an “eight-step passage meditation Workshop” from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Tuesdays, from Feb 5 to 26, at the Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry St.

The sessions include video instruction, discussion and half an hour of practice on words that embody a person’s ideals to drive them deep inside their consciousness.

“In passage meditation, we choose passages. Easwaran has compiled passages from different traditions. He often start people with the prayer of St. Francis, among many connected to churches,” she said.

There are Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi, Gandhi’s teachings, Native American texts and Kabir and other mystics’ sayings, as well as many Christian passages.

“Our lives are shaped by our minds. We may become what we think,” the Buddha said.

Mary introduces people to eight step passage meditation:
1) pick a passage, based on their reality;
2) memorize it to repeat as a mantra or mantra to steady their minds when they feel angry or agitated;
3) practice slowing down throughout the day;
4) have one-pointed attention; train the senses;
5) put others first; find spiritual companionship, and
6) spiritual reading from many traditions.

She said many who come to the workshops are in a hurry, but ready to slow down and focus their lives.

Her own practice of meditation 30 minutes twice a day helps her find peace and calm to make positive changes in stressful situations.

Mary, who is used to exercising her body as a cross country skier and runner—in November she ran a marathon in Athens, Greece, with two friends—knows she needs to exercise her brain.

In college, she had begun exploring meditation.

After graduating in 1971 from San Jose State with a bachelor’s degree, and in 1972 with teaching credentials at Sonoma State, she worked just three months teaching junior high before she began working with IBM for six years.

“I was idealistic then—and now,” she said.

Mary took three months to ride a bike across the U.S. Then, concerned about the threat of nuclear war, she decided to enjoy life working at a ski area at Tahoe a few years.

Mary fell in love and moved with the man to Spokane. She decided to complete a master’s degree in special education in 1985 at Whitworth.

While studying, she worked with troubled children at Tamarack Center. After two years, District #81 asked her to teach behaviorally disturbed teens at Inland Valley High School.

Then she taught math and science to hurting teens for about six years at Excelsior Youth Center.

Next she worked at the district’s Skills Center with disabled youth with vocational training—learning auto body repair, construction, welding, cooking, graphic arts, nursing and veteran skills.

“I felt valued and helpful,” she said.

She needed to teach anger management in these schools led her to explore meditation further.

While at Excelsior, she began meditating, realizing, “I needed to help myself to help others,” said Mary, who also took classes in peace studies and anger management.

“I progressed from looking at the world in a negative way. For years, I had gone to Al-Anon at least twice a week because of relationships with alcoholic or addicted people,” she said.

By meditating, however, something changed for her. She gained a sense of the unity of life, moving from feeling alone, in darkness and hopelessness, to feeling in love. “I didn’t trust, and all of a sudden I felt I belonged and was loved.”

“I still may get angry, but we need to take responsibility for our own ignorance and disconnection,” she said.

Meditation empowers her to show compassion one-on-one, like helping a mother with her children, or taking care of her 90-year-old mother. Along with meditating, Mary is involved in the Spokane Buddhist Temple. She explained that the Buddha’s teachings on “the four noble truths” are sometimes compared to a physician diagnosing an illness and prescribing a treatment.

• The first truth tells what the illness is: “Life is suffering.”
• The second tells what causes the illness: attachments to people, things and ideas.
• The third holds out hope for a cure: letting go of attachments.
• The fourth is the practice of Buddha’s Eight-Path Fold.

“I feel connected to people now,” she said.

“Buddha does not focus on what we do wrong, but on there being 10,000 paths to truth. Bud- dhism encourages us to ques- tion—to listen to what people have to say and see if it works for us and helps us be good people,” Mary said. “Buddhism has given me confidence.”

When she started attending, there were about 25 Japanese and three white members. Many of the Japanese had been in area internment camps, settled here and found community at the temple, she said.

“It was a rude awakening for me to learn about the internment camps,” Mary said. “I have learned from their experience of losing everything, but not complaining.”

Over time, more non-Japanese came to the temple wanting to know about Buddhism. Now there are only four Japanese people.

“It’s not a big enough congrega- tion to have a minister. We have three lay ministers and a supervis- ing minister in Seattle,” she said.

A few members know the lan- guage and keep up traditions, teaching other members.

Through meditation and social jus- tice work or intercultural aware- ness, Mary feels she has found her true self.

For information, call 570-6876 or visit bctemple.org.
Nonprofits and faith organizations step up to assist in times of need

Many people, nonprofits, agencies, programs and faith communities in the “servant” sector were stepping up to do what they do in emergencies—helping people through tough times—when the shutdown ended temporarily.

Many public servants, who are part of the infrastructure that keeps our cities running, were facing need for help through the shutdown. Federal government employees face missed paychecks and public assistance beneficiaries faced cuts.

In a late January press release, Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington announced it was ready to support those in the region affected by the shutdown, from TSA agents at the Spokane International Airport to forest services in Okanogan County, public servants who work every day to keep people and the environment safe.

“Missing paychecks, working and furiously government employees had to decide what to pay—mortgages, rent, utility bills, medicines, food and necessities. To help with this, president of Catholic Charities, said the shutdown of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which operates SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, “puts thousands of our vulnerable neighbors at risk of homelessness and hunger.”

Catholic Charities, the Salvation Army, Goodwill, community centers, outreach ministry centers, food banks and faith communities are in place, as always, to make sure everyone has basics they need—housing, food and companionship. How long could they have helped without affecting their ongoing outreach?

Catholic Charities’ Emergency Assistance, a program that helps with utilities, rent, fuel oil or fuel oil, could assist with tenants’ rights to help negotiate with landlords, as well as help families of federal employees and families on SNAP with food. Though more than 300,000 people lost federal aid sites and partners, Second Harvest helps feed people in need and was ready to assist those struggling in the shutdown.

With added demand for services in this time of increased need, nonprofit agencies need additional financial donations and volunteer assistance.

As we heard voices of the indigenous people’s women’s, and Martin Luther King Jr. marches, it’s up to us to speak the truth for justice, love people and serve those in need in our families and communities. We advocate because government infrastructure has a crucial role in our lives, and the people in charge of running it day-to-day are public servants.

A question is Do we want shutdowns or states of emergency to be the way the federal government makes policies?

Mary Stamp - editor

‘We exist. We resist. We rise. Indigenous peoples share values

“‘We exist. We resist. We rise,’” said a mural painted by artist Mary Stamp in the January 18 Indigenous People’s March in Spokane as they walked from The Gathering Place by City Hall to the bridge beside the fountain in Riverfront Park.

Excerpts of comments by some of the speakers are included here.

David Brown Eagle, an enrolled citizen of the Colville Tribe, said it’s easy to wait for someone else to act, but “we need to be willing to act.” For us to make change, we need to see ourselves as individuals and collectively.

“I want to care about the whole planet,” he said, wondering what the world will be like for his two great grandchildren and telling them to prepare for their future.

David also shared an insight from his grandmother. He said he was used to whites, Mexicans, halfbloods, fullbloods, mixed and everything because I hated myself for doing what my parents and grandparents taught me not to do. “I want to hate me, I understand hate, but today I can love you.”

His grandmother told him, “There is no hell, but if there is, you’re living it. What you do creates stories and stories can elevate us to heaven. If there is heaven, it’s here. If you want to walk in hell, hate. If you love and forgive, your life is heaven.”

James Pakootas of the Colville Confederated Tribes said he had been overcoming influences of having a father in prison, abuse and being separated from his mother, who his mother married a man who helped him connect to “who I am,” by teaching him his traditions. “I have been who helped him connect to ‘who I am,’ by teaching him his traditions. “I have been empowered by finding my language, ways of thinking, values and culture,” he said.

“Women, youth and water need protection,” he said. “They are the future for all humankind. We are the answer to our ancestors’ prayers.”

She also urged native peoples to be conduits of a spiritual and social movement. “I see the world as a spaceship. It’s our spaceship, it’s not someone else’s. It’s easy to wait for someone else to act, but we need to be willing to act.”

For us to make change, we need to see ourselves as individuals and collectively. “We need to care about the whole planet,” he said, wondering what the world will be like for his two great grandchildren and telling them to prepare for their future.

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February 23 - 24

Spokane Public Radio

**RECORD SALE**

Thousands of
Records, CDs, Equipment, and More!

**The Island Northwest's largest music and video sale!**

**February 23 - 24**

Spokane Public Radio

**Spokane Valley Events Center**

10514 E. Sprague Ave.

**Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Details at SpokanePublicRadio.org

Event Donors: The Cleaning Authority, Red Rock Catering, The Spokane Review, and Strong Solutions

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### Calendar of Events

- **Feb 1-8** | Spokane International Film Festival: The Magic Lantern, 21 W. Main, and The Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Spokane, spokanefilmfestival.org
- **Feb 2** | The Future of Infertility | Panel and Coffee Talk, Spokane Falls, Ogen Church, Spokane, 5115 S. Freya St., 10 a.m., 26-4160
- **Feb 4** | The Presumption of Innocence: Further Conversations about Ball and Incarceration in Spokane, Kurtis Robinson and Christina Kangas, Shadle Library, 2111 W. Wellesley, 3:30 p.m., spokanenewlibrary.org/calendar
- **Feb 5** | Society and Culture | Mohammed, Bouchard, South Hill Library, 3324 S. Perry St., 3:30 p.m., spokanenewlibrary.org/calendar
- **Feb 6** | BlackFlying: Cultural Appropriation and Blues | Black Student Union, Monroe 205, EWU, Cheney, noon, 3:30-2:03
- **Feb 7** | African American Heritage Month Lecture | Austin Channing Brown, author and voice on racial justice, Wachusett Hall, Whitworth U, 7 p.m., 777-2883, joelv@ewuh.edu
- **Feb 7** | Feb 7 & 14, 21 | A Diverse Voices Writing Workshop | Spokane Spokane Temple, 927 S. Perry, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays, 570-8670, spokanejewishtemple.org
- **Feb 9** | Feb 9 | 7:30 p.m., 326-1190, goodguys@ywcaspokane.org
- **Feb 9** | Spokane Chinese Lunar New Year | Fiesta, 1227 S. Grand, 6 to 8 p.m., hbpaspokane.net
- **Feb 10** | "Handel's Journey," Spokane Symphony, 7 p.m., 313-6782, spokaneriverkeeper.org
- **Feb 10** | Monthly Silent Day of Prayer on Confession | St. John's Lutheran Church, 115 N. Raymond, 7 p.m., 924-7262
- **Feb 10** | "Handel's Journey," Spokane Symphony, 7 p.m., 313-6782, spokaneriverkeeper.org
- **Feb 10** | "The Presumption of Innocence: Further Conversations about Ball and Incarceration in Spokane, Kurtis Robinson and Christina Kangas, Shadle Library, 2111 W. Wellesley, 3:30 p.m., spokanenewlibrary.org/calendar
- **Feb 12** | "A Source of Home and a Healthy Community," Ben Goldfield, The Lands Council and Spokane Riverkeeper, Community Building, 35 W. Main, Thursday, 7:30 p.m., spokaneriverkeeper.org
- **Feb 12** | "The Critical Tenants" | Fr. Tim Hayes, Immaculate Heart Monastery, 5:30 to 9 p.m., spokaneriverkeeper.org
- **Feb 12 & 23** | 10th Annual Peace & Justice Action Conference, "Building Beyond the Moment," Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, 4340 W. George Wright Dr., 6 to 9 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, 838-7870, pacificnorthwestpeace.org
- **Feb 13** | "South Africa – An African Plant Sale," Spokane Dances of Universal Peace, Unity Spiritual Center Spokane, 6:30-8:30 p.m., 509-534-4460, bkfergin@msn.com
- **Feb 13 & 20** | "Idaho’s Role in American Racism," Thomas Jay Oord, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-1000 to 9 p.m., spokanelibrary.org/calendar
- **Feb 13** | "Invisible Stories of a Black Man in America," George Lanter, 25 W. Main, and The Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Spokane, spokanelibrary.org/calendar
- **Feb 18** | NAACP General Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., 326-1190, goodguys@ywcaspokane.org
- **Feb 18** | "Solidarity with Comrades in Iran," Flannery Lecture, Maureen O’Connell, Sr. Pat Milam OSF, Nezar Hashim, moderator Tracy Simmons, Tempe Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 50th, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., 747-6803
- **Feb 19** | "South Africa – An African Plant Sale," Spokane Dances of Universal Peace, Unity Spiritual Center Spokane, 6:30-8:30 p.m., 509-534-4460, bkfergin@msn.com
- **Feb 19** | "The Presumption of Innocence: Further Conversations about Ball and Incarceration in Spokane, Kurtis Robinson and Christina Kangas, Shadle Library, 2111 W. Wellesley, 3:30 p.m., spokaneriverkeeper.org
- **Feb 20** | "Go Red for Women Luncheon" | Center Spokane, 2900 S. Bernard, Spokane, 6:30-8:30 p.m., mark.kinney@yvesmartin.com
- **Feb 20** | "Idaho’s Role in American Racism," Thomas Jay Oord, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-1000 to 9 p.m., spokanebuddhisttemple.org
- **Feb 21** | "A Source of Home and a Healthy Community," Ben Goldfield, The Lands Council and Spokane Riverkeeper, Community Building, 35 W. Main, Thursday, 7:30 p.m., spokaneriverkeeper.org
- **Feb 21** | "Invisible Stories of a Black Man in America," George Lanter, 25 W. Main, and The Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Spokane, spokanelibrary.org/calendar
- **Feb 22 & 23** | 13th Annual Viba Vino & Brew Scholarship, Ten Years Teaching and Traveling, Shalom Ministries Benefit, St. John’s Lutheran Church, 115 N. Raymond, 7 p.m., 924-7262
- **Feb 23** | "Building Beyond the Moment," Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, 4340 W. George Wright Dr., 6 to 9 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, 838-7870, pacificnorthwestpeace.org
- **Feb 24** | "Waslata and the Saint," Padre Pablo Tamar Malbo, Sr. Pat Milam OSF, Nezar Hashim, moderator Tracy Simmons, Tempe Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 50th, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., 747-6803
- **Feb 24** | "Idaho’s Role in American Racism," Thomas Jay Oord, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-1000 to 9 p.m., spokanebuddhisttemple.org
- **Feb 24** | "Invisible Stories of a Black Man in America," George Lanter, 25 W. Main, and The Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Spokane, spokanelibrary.org/calendar
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**February 23 - 24**

Spokane Public Radio

**Spokane Valley Events Center**

10514 E. Sprague Ave.

**Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Details at SpokanePublicRadio.org

Event Donors: The Cleaning Authority, Red Rock Catering, The Spokane Review, and Strong Solutions
Rally speakers, marchers’ signs carry King’s message and mission

More than 3,000 marched for freedom, justice and equality on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In the rally that preceded it in the Spokane Convention Center, thousands listened to speakers remind them why they were walking.

Spokane Mayor David Condon said that the day honors the life and legacy of King, who inspired peaceful change as he called for freedom, equality and integrity.

In marching to promote justice and move beyond racism, he said, “We cannot walk alone. Across the city, state and nation, it’s a day of service to give thanks for how far we have come since segregation.

“We need to commit to justice, with equality and integrity for all as we march,” David said, recognizing the city is not immune to racism and bigotry, but that change “comes through continued struggle.”

“We need to be allies because people continue to face prejudice,” he said, announcing that the city has a new supportive employment ordinance for people with disabilities. “We need to embrace all citizens.”

“Every day is a ‘day on’ to support those who are marginalized and victimized,” David said. “We need to continue to live King’s principles of all working together for humankind.”

City Council President Ben Stuckart spoke by video, celebrating local civil rights heroes — Freda Gandy, Happy Watkins, Sandy Williams and Kurtis Robinson, leaders of I Did Time and the NAACP working to reduce inequities in the criminal justice system.

Feruz Tikue, a sixth grader at Grant Elementary School, read Grant’s Dream, written by the school’s Associated Student Body Cabinet. The dream includes:

- All people learn each day.
- All being kind and compassionate.
- Not giving up in face of opposition.
- All having the opportunity to learn.
- Everyone appreciating others.
- All being respectful and kind.
- Helping everyone in need.
- Standing up for rights.

Kurtis Robinson, president of Spokane’s NAACP, said 2019 is the 100th birthday for the local chapter.

“We will look at what it took to get here. We did not get here alone,” he said.

“The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People includes all of us. We are equal and are to be treated with dignity and respect.

- His dream includes celebrating all cultures. It’s not a black thing or a white thing. It’s a Jesus thing that all are to live together as brothers and sisters or ‘perish as fools.’
- His dream is about investing in the future of young people to have an equal playing field so they can be successful. ‘Justice plus equality equals success. We can’t let them down,’ she said.
- The time is always right to do what is right. The time is now to come together in unity, harmony and love.
- There is power in numbers. We may have differences and disagree, but we can come together to have impact by doing what is right,” said Stephy.

“So I say—she began singing: ‘We have overcome. We have overcome. We have overcome, today.’”

The Rev. Happy Watkins, pastor emeritus of New Hope Baptist Church, thanked everyone in the community for their love and for working to “make a difference until making a difference doesn’t make no difference anymore.”

He recited the words of King’s “I Have a Dream” speech as he has for many years in many community groups, adding a change in saying “Let freedom ring,” from the mountains of New York, the Alleghenies of Pennsylvania, from Trump Towers in Manhattan and Moscow. “From every mountainside, let freedom ring.”

He reminded that “the dream is rooted in the American dream,” and expressed hope that “one day the nation will rise up and live the truth that all are created equal.”

Happy concluded with the promise that one day all will be free and all of God’s children will sing with new meaning, “My Country! ’Tis of Thee, Sweet Land of Liberty,” and all God’s children, black and white, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, Democrats and Republicans will live together in unity.

For information, call 868-8056 or visit mlkspokane.org.