

Stories inside

Catholic Charities housing
94% success - p. 5

Kenyan provider opens
clinic - p. 7

Gathering House starts
summer market - p. 9

The Arc offers myriad of
programs - p. 16

CALENDAR ON PAGE 15
FEATURES 90+ EVENTS



Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest
online at www.thefigtree.org • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links

Wise, witty grannies’ songs open eyes

By Mary Stamp

Combining wit, wisdom and whimsical garb stereotypically associated with grannies, Raging Grannies sing their invitation for people to think again about the issues of the day.

They peacefully protest through satirical songs that call attention to government and corporate corruption. Through the ages in many cultures, wise, older women have been asked for advice and taught values. Dressed colorfully as innocent little old ladies, they challenge today’s culture that belittles insights of older women.

Spokane’s Raging Grannies group is one of hundreds of groups across the United States and Canada. The local group shows up at rallies, protests, folk festivals, faith communities, Earth Day, the Martin Luther King Jr. Day March, the Women’s March and other events, singing new, humorous words to traditional tunes.

They have also sung at Street Music for years, raising money for the food bank.

Through songs, they call for peace, nonviolence, social justice, economic equality and environmental protection for today and



Mary Naber and Margie Heller dress in colorful granny garb to grab attention.
Photo courtesy of Spokane Raging Grannies

for future generations.

In 2006, Mary Naber of the Spokane Folklore Society and Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) returned from teaching two years in Japan with a strong sense of cultural shock. At the Seattle FolkLife Festival on Memorial Day, she saw and heard a Canadian group of Raging Grannies.

Mary told Nancy Nelson, Marianne Torres and three others who formed the Spokane Raging Grannies.

Margaret (Margie) Heller, who was also involved with PJALS and a fiddler with the Spokane Folklore Society, heard them sing at the Fall Folk Festival and joined them soon after.

Approximately six times a year, Spokane’s Raging Grannies sing at events. The group practices every two weeks, because it’s important to practice singing the words in the right places in the melody.

Some of the songs are from the national and international repertoire available online. Some have lyrics written by Spokane members.

In the Spokane group, currently

Continued on page 4

Gonzaga starts Informatics Institute to connect people and technology

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

Artificial Intelligence (AI) isn’t coming. It’s already here, quietly reshaping everything from how people work to how they think.

Preparing for this transformation in 2023, Gonzaga University secured a \$5 million dollar gift from the David and Cathleen Reisenauer family to establish the Institute for Informatics and Applied Technology and recruit its director.

Gonzaga hired Shanchieh

“Jay” Yang, a native of Taiwan, to direct the institute. He comes to Gonzaga with more than two decades of experience teaching and researching AI machine learning and cybersecurity in the U.S.

Prior to joining Gonzaga in August 2024, he served as the director of research at the Global Cybersecurity Institute and as department head of Computer Engineering at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in Henrietta, N.Y.

Jay’s new role requires both technology expertise and people skills.

“My job is twofold: first to shape the vision and mission of the institute, applying technology advances responsibly and aligned with Gonzaga’s Jesuit mission, and second to bring stakeholders together for strategic partnerships—university faculty, deans, students and administrators, as well as external partners—to inform high impact and practical decision-making to solve complex real-world problems,” he said.

Jay brings to his role as the institute’s director his technology credentials, which include simulation, machine learning and large language models for predictive cyber intelligence, plus his curiosity for exploring the intersection of technology and the human experience. Those skills help Gonzaga and partner organizations advance AI-supported pedagogy innovation, experiential learning, critical discernment and accessibility features.

Continued on page 6

Benefit surpasses its goal, Directory appeals for funds

With pledges and donations from the Spring Benefit still coming in at press time, The Fig Tree had surpassed its goal to raise \$50,000—with \$50,075 in and more donations expected.

“That’s a boost to supporting our work as some other areas of support are slightly down,” said editor Mary Stamp. “We are hoping to build more individual donations to support publishing the Resource Directory, as uncertainty about tariffs and the market lead some to hold back.

“We rejoice, however, that so many directory supporters are continuing to fund it. We held our ad rates at the same level as last year to encourage them to underwrite the costs of producing the directories,” she added. “With the changing landscape of federal funds, there are many changes in organizations providing services, so this year’s directory is a particularly crucial source to know where to find needed services.”

The Fig Tree has in place the long-term institutional knowledge to keep up the research to update the directory.

“Our directory editor, Malcolm Haworth, has the seasoned connections needed to keep current with what is happening,” Mary added. “He has also been traveling to rural, tribal and outlying communities to connect personally with people and agencies in order to keep up with changes, needs and new content.

“Going on the ground, I have learned about many emerging and struggling organizations and resources,” he said.

Other directories and resource apps may rely on short-term grants, but The Fig Tree has the infrastructure and trusted relationships necessary to report the information that is rapidly changing in these fluid times. It relies on support of general advertisers, community partners and individual donors for funds to publish.

To advertise, partner and donate, call 535-1813 or email mary@thefigtree.org.

Religion News Briefs

Around the World

World Council of Churches News, PO Box 2100
CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111
Fax: +41-22 788 7244 www.oikoumene.org

Pope Francis was ‘ecumenical prophet of mercy’

After the April 21 death of Pope Francis, 88, the bishop of Rome and leader of the world’s 1.37 billion Catholics, World Council of Churches (WCC) General Secretary Jerry Pillay described him as “an ecumenical prophet of mercy.

“Pope Francis’s passing is mourned around the world, including among his allies and admirers in the ecumenical movement and in the worldwide fellowship of the WCC. His papacy has been a great gift to the ecumenical movement. He has been a dedicated collaborator in our efforts toward Christian unity and reconciliation, and a prophetic voice for peace, the environment and justice everywhere,” Jerry said.

The Argentinian Jesuit, elected in 2013, had impact on the Catholic Church and Christians worldwide from initiatives of his pontificate: an open-armed embrace of all persons in a “church of the poor, for the poor” that is a “field hospital” for healing the sick and vulnerable, a strong and distinctive support of Christian mission as accompaniment of the marginalized, and a ministry of “mercy” or compassion to all.

Francis advocated for addressing climate change and injustices it spawns. He criticized global capitalism and economic inequality. Internationally, he called for care for migrants, refugees and trafficked people, for Muslim-Christian collaboration and for opposing all forms of war as “a crime against humanity.” In the Vatican, he reformed the Roman curia and Vatican finances, appointed and elevated bishops from marginalized countries, and appointed women to the highest tier of Vatican departments.

As a champion of ecumenical collaboration, he advocated sharing the Gospel ecumenically. He solidified partnerships of the WCC’s chief programs with dicasteries in the Vatican, ensuring collaboration on ecumenical dialogue, climate justice, interreligious dialogue and advocating for and serving migrants.

In 2016, Pope Francis visited Sweden for a Catholic-Lutheran commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation—the first time a Catholic leader met with representatives of the Lutheran World Federation to mark the Reformation.

Francis’s commitment to ecumenical mission was expressed in his pilgrimage to the WCC, the Ecumenical Centre and the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey in 2018. Celebrating the WCC’s 70th anniversary and ecumenical charism, the pope said, “We are heirs to the faith, charity and hope of all who, by the nonviolent power of the Gospel, found the courage to change the course of history, a history of mutual distrust, estrangement and fragmentation. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, who inspires and guides the journey of ecumenism, the direction changed and a path has been irrevocably paved: the path of a reconciled communion aimed at the visible manifestation that unites believers.”

Collaborative ministries and diaconal service were Francis’s form of ecumenism, uniting churches as agents of reconciliation in the world. He added, “So let us ask: What can we do together? If a particular form of service is possible, why not plan and carry it out together, and thus start to experience a more intense fraternity in the exercise of concrete charity?”

Patriarchs share Easter message of hope

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem proclaimed an Easter message of life and hope, calling Christians and others of goodwill around the world to recommit to working and praying for relief of the afflicted, release of all captives and an end to wars and assaults that have led to immeasurable human suffering, death and destruction throughout the Holy Land and in other parts of the world.

They rejoiced that this year, the eastern and western celebrations of Easter fell on the same date, April 20, and that 2025 coincides with the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, the first of the great ecumenical councils that brought together Christian leaders from around the world.

“We pray that this happy confluence of events may inspire our churches to increasingly strive for greater unity in Christ,” the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem said.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Film made by the son of a local pastor

Spokane Riverkeeper presents its 11th Annual Wild & Film Festival starting at 5:30 p.m. with films at 7 p.m., Thursday, May 16. at the Garland Theater.

This year’s theme “Wild at Heart,” celebrates the power of wild places to inspire compassion, understanding and connection to the world.

“It will be an evening of thought-provoking, visually

stunning films, highlighting the courage and enthusiasm needed to protect the environment,” said Katie Thompson of Riverkeeper.

Agencies will share resources at the event.

Mikah Meyer, filmmaker of “Canyon Chorus,” one of the films being shown, said, “Canyon Chorus has many religious themes, which is appropriate because I am a pastor’s kid.

My dad, Larry Meyer, served in campus ministry for the ELCA Lutheran Church in Spokane from 1979 to 1982 and is also featured in the film. In the film, I talk openly about that and the way it inspired the film. So, there’s a fun local tie-in for the Spokane faith community.”

For information, visit, spokaneriverkeeper.org/calendar or tickets are at the door.

Unanswered prayers focus of June retreat

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC) will hold a Silent Day of Prayer: “When Your Prayers Go Unanswered” with Deacon John Ruscheinsky from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday, June 12, at 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd.

He will lead a reflection on how sometimes prayers seem to go unanswered.

“We pray daily but haven’t received the answer we seek. It seems the pleas have been swallowed by silence. We ask: ‘Does God care?’ Yes! God is always ready to answer. God also knows what’s best for us,” said John, who retired in October 2022 after 25 years as director of IHRC for the Diocese of Spokane.

This Day of Prayer centers on the Rev. Keith McClellan’s “Care Notes” on unanswered prayers, with an invitation for people to learn to open themselves to receive and accept God’s answer.

To register in advance, call 448-1224, email ihrc@ihrc.net or visit ihrc.net

Brunch supports Jewish Family Services

The annual Julie Morris Memorial Benefit Brunch to support Spokane Area Jewish Family Services (SAJFS) for individuals and families in need will be held from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Sunday, May 18, at the Hemmingson Ballroom at Gonzaga University.

The program will present Marti Martin and Faith Hayflich

with the Julie Morris Outstanding Service Award.

Proceeds will support programs of SAJFS for senior socialization at monthly luncheons, transportation to medical appointments, rent and utility assistance and a peer-led caregivers support group, said Neal Schindler, director.

SAJFS helps people of diverse backgrounds based on Jewish values of the inherent worth of every person, the practice of treating others with kindness and the importance of connection to community, he added.

For information, call 413-8254 or email director@sajfs.org.

Unity holds ‘Pilgrims Peace Walk’ May 3

“Pilgrim’s Peace Walk: A Spiritual Journey at the Labyrinth, an Interfaith Gathering for Connection, Reflection and Unity” will be held from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Saturday, May 3, at Unity Center of Spiritual Growth, 4465 N. 15th St. in Coeur d’Alene.

More than a walk, this event offers a sacred space to honor differences, celebrate common

ground and find peace together.

“The single, spiraling path represents life’s journey—with all its twists, turns and returns—drawing us toward a shared center of wholeness and divine connection. The winding path becomes a poetic symbol, a mirror for reflection and insight, a quiet place to feel the rhythm of breath, release and renewal,”

said Kim Morgan, organizer.

Walkers move in silence, prayer or thoughtful reflection to explore life’s transitions, seek inner clarity or find a moment of peace and presence.

Participants may bring a writer’s journal and an outdoor camping chair.

For information, email kimemorganworkshops@gmail.com.

Christ Kitchen’s benefit is on May 19

One Life at a Time Luncheon, a benefit event for Christ Kitchen, will be held from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, May 19, at True Hope Church, 1316 N.

Lincoln St. in Spokane.

The featured speaker is author Megan Marshmann, who is finishing a doctorate of ministry studies, while serving as a teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill., and as the director of women’s ministries at Hume Lake Christian Camps. She also shepherds women at Arbor Road

Church in Long Beach, Calif.

Megan is committed to using her life to spread hope, share truth and celebrate others.

In her presentation, she will address the theme, “Hope That Abounds When We Truly Invest in One Another.”

For information, call, 325-4343, to register, christkitchen.org/one-life-at-a-time.

The Fig Tree is published 10 months each year, September through June.

Deadlines:

COPY - 3rd Wednesdays
ADS - 3rd Fridays

It is published by The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization.

Editorial Team

Editor/Publisher/Photos - Mary Stamp
Directory Editor - Malcolm Haworth
Website Developer - Lorna Kropp
Volunteer Coordinator - Kaye Hult
Development & Editing Assoc - Marijke Fakasieiki
Editing Team - Susan Chadduck, Catherine Ferguson SNJM, Erin Endres, Hannah Klaassen, Mary Mackay, Emma Maple, Tannaz Moghaddas, Jill Redl, Pava Young

Fig Tree Board

Gloria Aston Baynes, Nick Beamer, Emily Clark, Amy Cross, Sandy Crowley, Marijke Fakasieiki, Catherine Ferguson SNJM, David Gortner, Malcolm Haworth, Kaye Hult, Gary Jewell, Betty Krafft, Raymond Reyes, Erica Salkin, Mary Stamp

Copyright © 2025
(509) 535-4112 or 535-1813
Email: news@thefigtree.org

The Fig Tree is reader supported
BECOME A SPONSOR!

- ☐ \$20-50 Sponsor ☐ \$75-250 Friend
- ☐ \$300-\$1,200 Underwriter
- ☐ \$45 for bulk order of 10
- ☐ \$300/year pledge for five years

SEND YOUR DONATION TO

The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____



Your support builds homes, strengthens families, and transforms communities.



hope builders

Annual Benefit Luncheon

May 8 ♥ 11:30am ♥ Spokane Convention Center

Please register online!

habitat-spokane.org | 509.534.2552

A Woman’s Worth Gala set for May 2

A Woman’s Worth 3rd Annual Gala from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Friday, May 2, at the Doubletree Hotel in Downtown Spokane features a program with Spokane City Council President Betsy Wilkerson, motivational speaker Stephy Nobles-Beans, singers Ja’Nese Howard and Alethea Dumas and praise dancer Terezeta Graham.

The event includes an auction and testimonies from two recipients of recognition by A Woman’s Worth.

A Woman’s Worth provides tools, support and guidance to empower women to take control of their lives, rediscover their passions and unlock their full potential, said Gaye Hallman, founder and executive director.

“We foster self-worth and inspire women from all walks of life to embrace their talents, pursue their dreams and approach their future with vision, confidence and purpose. We seek to help women awaken passions, explore dreams and redirect goals to achieve their full potential,” she added.

Honorees this year are Sarah Hill, Maria Muro-Perez, Gloria Mathyer, Karen Lofgren, Jadah Parham, Melissa Muden, Skyler Morford, Crystal Lockhart and Veronica Marry. They completed AWW’s six-to-12-month program.

For information, call 385-7074 or email ghallman@aww.community.

Habitat’s Hope Builders Luncheon is May 8

Habitat for Humanity Spokane is planning its Annual Hope Builders Benefit Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, May 8, at the Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

This event is the largest annual fundraiser to sustain affordable homeownership opportunities in partnership with modest-income individuals and families in need of a safe, decent and affordable place to call home.

Community support builds homes, strengthens families and transforms communities. Since 1987, Habitat-Spokane has been a leader in affordable homeownership programs and construction in Spokane County, providing vulnerable families flexible financing.

For information, call 534-2552 or register at habitat-spokane.org.

Catholic Charities’ Gala is set for May 9

Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington will present an evening for celebrating the legacy, history, individuals, partners and services it offers. The Catholic Charities Gala will be held beginning with a social hour at 5:30 p.m., Friday, May 9, at the Davenport Grand Hotel, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd. The dinner and program begin at 7 p.m.

For information, call 358-4266, email annmarie.byrd@cceasternwa.org or visit cceasternwa.org/gala.

Riverkeeper plans Waste to Energy tour

Spokane Riverkeeper has organized a 90-minute tour of Spokane’s Waste to Energy (WTE) Facility from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Thursday, May 22, for people to learn now the city’s trash is turned into energy. The tour includes an orientation, a question-answer time and a walking tour of the facility at 2900 S. Geiger Blvd.

Visitors must wear closed-toe shoes. The tour guide will provide hard hats, eye and ear protection. Since 1991, the facility is part of the community’s comprehensive solid waste system, encouraging recycling, waste reduction and energy recovery. It handles 800 tons of solid waste each day and generates about 22 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 13,000 homes—earning up to \$5 million in power sales each year. It replaced leaking landfills to handle the community’s solid waste.

For information, call 464-7614, email hello@spokaneriverkeeper.org or visit spokaneriverkeeper.org/calendar/2025/5/22/waste-to-energy-plant-tour.

Gonzaga hosts the Academy of Religion

Gonzaga University will host the Pacific Northwest Regional Chapter of the American Academy of Religion (PNWAAR) from Friday to Saturday, May 23 to 24. Sessions start at noon in Jepson Center at Gonzaga.

Founded in 1971, the PNWAAR is part of the world’s largest academic society studying religion and supporting scholarship across many disciplines.

Its members are in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta and Yukon.

The disciplines include the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and the World of Early Christianity, History of Christianity

and North American Religions, Theology and Philosophy of Religion, Religion and Society, Religion and the Social Sciences, Asian and Comparative Studies, Mormon Studies, Arts and Religion, Women and Religion, and Experimental Exegesis and Teaching Religion.

There will be a reception at 5 p.m. Friday at Wolff Auditorium hosted by the Religious Studies Department and the Office of Inclusionary Excellence.

At 6:15 p.m., there will be a keynote conversation with Raymond Reyes, retired vice president and chief diversity officer from Gonzaga, and Itohan Idumwonyi, assistant professor of religious studies.

At 6 p.m., Saturday, May 24, in the Skyline Room at the Centennial Hotel, 303 W. North River Dr., there will be a banquet dinner followed by the Presidential Address at 7 p.m. on “Religious Studies within the Whirlwind” by Scott Starbuck, senior lecturer in religious studies at Gonzaga University.

He will share how institutional volatility, environmental upending and political discord challenge religious scholarship. He will also discuss how scholars, community leaders and the Pacific Northwest American Academy of Religion might work within the current whirlwind.

For information, visit pnwaar.com/annual-meeting-2025.

Nonprofit event is virtual and in person

The Nonprofit Association of Washington is holding part of its annual conference in Spokane from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, May 16.

The state gathering of nonprofits brings people together to learn and network on resource development, human resources and operations practices.

Statewide, the Virtual Conference will be online from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday, May 13 and Wednesday, May 14, with speakers, workshops and networking on two tracks, “A Force for Growth,

A Force for Good” and “Managing for Meaningful Service.”

Presentations include “Mapping Our Social Change Ecosystem Roles” and “Ready to Thrive: Future-proofing Your Nonprofit.”

There will be workshops on navigating through uncertainty, building a leadership framework, youth engagement, nonprofit endowments, network building, building a culture of giving in small communities, data analysis for teams, strategies for leadership succession and more.

Spokane’s keynote panel will address “What Are We Willing to Fight For?: Prioritizing Advocacy in Times of Uncertainty.” Panelists are Nichole June Mather, president and CEO of Inatai Foundation; Lili Navarrete, Spokane City Council member; Sam Smith, director of immigrant legal services at Manzanita House, and Zeke Smith, president of Empire Health Foundation.

For information, visit: nonprofitwa.org/washington-state-nonprofit-conference/pricing-registration.

Valley Connect offers aid

The 2025 Spokane Valley Connect will take place from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m., Thursday, May 22, at Opportunity Presbyterian Church, 202 N. Pines Rd.

The one-day event gathers nonprofits, community agencies and businesses to offer essential services in one place for families and individuals struggling with housing and homelessness.

Last year, 60 vendors served 450 guests, providing free hot meals, haircuts, medical appointments, vaccines, warrant quashing, clothing and services of Department of Social and

Health Services (DSHS). The Warrant Fest includes Spokane County District, Superior and Municipal Courts.

The planning committees of Spokane Valley and Spokane Homeless Connect merged and formed a new nonprofit, Spokane Connect, which will host the annual Homeless Connect and Spokane Valley Connect.

Vendors may register by May 10 by emailing homelessconnectvendors@gmail.com. For information, visit spokaneconnect.org.

Highland Park UMC
74th Sukiyaki
Take-Out Dinner
May 10
12-4:30 p.m
or until sold out
Bake sale
Homemade crafts
Inarizushi
Japanese Collectibles
Senbei
PRESALES OR BUY AT DOOR
INFO & TICKETS
hpadcouncil@gmail.com

2025-26 Resource Directory
Deadline May 21
To print in July

- Send in listing updates
- Renew your advertising
- Submit a new advertisement
- Join our community partners
- Order copies to distribute
- Donate to support production
- Volunteer to edit or deliver



CALL 509-216-6090 • 535-4112
EMAIL ads@thefigtree.org
UPDATE LISTINGS resourcedirectory@thefigtree.org

Come join us.
People living out their faith of inclusiveness and justice together.
Sundays at 9:30 a.m.
806 W. Knox (temporarily)

BethanySpokane.org

509-534-0066
Whether you are a Believer,
a Seeker, or a Doubter . . .
You are Welcome Here.



TAIZÉ PRAYER
via Zoom
Thursdays at 4:15 p.m.

For more information, contact: Shonna Bartlett
at bartletts@gonzaga.edu

Raging Grannies has hundreds of groups across Canada and U.S.

Continued from page 1
includes 20 grandmothers and women the age of grandmothers. Margie’s now five-year-old grandchild had not been born when she started.

At the April 5 “Hands Off” rally, about 60 women signed up. Because some age out or leave, there is always a need for more recruits.

At that event, Mary saw a man with a sign saying, “Kill Nazis.” With the magic of wearing granny garb, she went up to him and innocently chatted with him, “Violence will not get us anywhere.” He seemed to accept her point.

Interest in arousing dialogue is part of their goal.

There are “gaggles,” the name for Raging Grannies groups, in seven provinces of Canada and in 18 states in the U.S., plus one in Israel. The website at raginggrannies.org has a starter kit of ideas and songs for groups.

The organization began in 1987 in Victoria, B.C., and spread from there among mostly white, middle-class educated women, professionals and homemakers, challenging threats to health and the environment.

Margie enjoys singing with the group to share messages of social justice.

“We want to make the world a better place and raise awareness of issues in a way that causes people to think,” she said.

Margie grew up in a musical home in Lancaster, Pa., teaching

herself to play piano when her brother was learning. She studied music at Oberlin College, where she became committed to peace and justice during the Vietnam War. She returned to Lancaster and worked for the local newspaper for two years before moving to Seattle for a year.

She then moved to Colville to work with the Northeast Washington Head Start and a Stevens County newspaper. In 1980, she began driving 80 miles to play viola in the Spokane Symphony. In 1986, she, her husband and children moved to Spokane. She continued to play viola with the symphony until 2002.

Along with her musical background, Margie said the values of “love your neighbor” and “social justice” have stayed with her from her early involvement in the United Church of Christ.

Margie shared some lyrics to favorite songs.

Lyrics by Spokane Granny Claudia Craven to a song sung to “How Much is the Doggie in the Window?” are:

“How much is that yahoo in the Congress?

The one with the pork in the pail.

How much is that yahoo in the Congress?

I do think that Beep Beep’s for sale.”

To the tune of “Home on the Range,” Diana Kenworthy of Spokane Raging Grannies wrote a plea:

“Oh, give me a home
Where the wildlife roam

And the air and the water are clean.

Where poisons are banned
We take care of the land
And the forests are healthy and green.”

CHORUS
“Home, our home is in peril
Where greed is the cause of it all

Where money and power
Kill the bees and the flower
And many do not care at all!”

To “Where Has My Little Dog Gone,” Spokane Raging Grannies sang lyrics written in 2021 by Tom and Joy Morgan:

“Oh, where, oh where have my voting rights gone?

Oh, where, oh where can they be?

With the time cut short and the lines so long

Oh, where, oh where can they be?”

“We sing many of the songs other Raging Grannies groups sing. The lyrics are published online,” Margie said, adding that others in the Spokane gaggle along with her have written or edited lyrics.

She noted that the current administration and Congress have given them much material for songs.

“In 2016, I was one of three grannies who sat on the railroad tracks to protest the coal trains and our reliance on fossil fuels,” Margie said.

The three were arrested, fingerprinted and released. A week after that, three from Veterans for Peace sat on the track.

The coal trains still come through Spokane, but her hope was that by singing “No More Coal Trains” and other songs, she would draw media attention to and raise awareness of the coal trains and encourage people to think about how fossil fuels damage the earth.

Margie wrote a verse to one song she sang on the tracks to the tune of “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad.” The following is that verse:

“Don’t ship coal or oil on railroads!

It’s not smart to do.
Burning fossil fuels is foolish ‘Cuz it makes more C-O-2.

This old planet’s getting smothered

By what we put in the air.
If we kill the earth our mother,

Our own demise is sure.”

“Our aim with our songs is to draw laughter, and we usually do,” Margie said. “If people are sympathetic, they love it. Some just stop and listen.

“I feel like this is one of the best things I have done with my musical abilities. It’s a chance to maybe educate or change someone’s opinion or move someone to action,” she said.

Margie felt a sense of hope

when she was at the April 5 rally.

“I was glad to know I’m not alone. To be there to sing and sign people up made me feel I could do something positive about all the frustration we are feeling now,” she commented.

“The words are what is important, but the fact that we are singing also draws attention. The humor of the words adds lightness to serious issues,” she said. “People see how much fun we have.

“There is power in music— both singing and instrumental—to unite people when they sing together,” Margie said. “It strengthens our sense of being united.”

Spokane’s Raging Grannies have built friendships and feel a strong sense of community with each other.

The Raging Grannies website says that the qualities needed to be a granny include a sense of humor, willingness to speak up and learn, a sense of history, passion, persistence, silliness and friendliness. Singing ability is not a requirement

For information, email copelandheller@icloud.com or peacenik_49@msn.com, or visit raginggrannies.org.

Nonprofit lifts people into ‘next chapter’

Next Chapter, a new nonprofit, has launched its two-program approach to lift up people who have experienced homelessness and underrepresented community members to opportunities to thrive in the next chapter of their lives.

In April, it opened a show-room for its program, Home, at the former Sunrise Church, 4718 N. Ash St. Working with partner nonprofits—Compassionate Addiction Treatment, Jewels Helping Hands, Spokane Aids Network, Health and Justice Recovery Alliance and CHAS Homeless Outreach team—Home provides home goods and furnishings to people exiting homelessness.

“Next Chapter reaches out to organizations serving under-represented communities and helping with shopping appointments,” said Lerria Schuh, Next Chapter Home and Leadership Development co-founder.

They accept donations of gently used home goods, kitchen wares, home décor, plants, linens, bathroom essentials, pet supplies, sporting equipment and furnishings by appointment and will soon have times to drop off household cleaning supplies, paper towels and toilet paper.

The second program, Leadership Development, starts in the fall to provide a free six-month board development and leadership class for BIPOC persons,

people who experienced homelessness and under-represented folks. The course teaches organizational practices, financial oversight, human resources, best practices and board strategy with hands-on experience at a nonprofit, said Lerria.

On completing the course, students will serve on nonprofit boards and have skills to enhance the next chapter of their career.

For information and appointments visit nextchapterhome.org.



Affordable Housing Solutions
Home Share Kootenai County handles administration, background checks & ongoing support to ensure safe, successful housing matches.
Need housing or assistance renting a room?
Contact: Info@homesharekc.org | (208) 215-2269



Pacific Northwest Regional Conference
of the
American Academy of Religion
at Gonzaga University Spokane
May 23-24
pnwaar.com



Rockwood South Hill:
2903 E. 25th Ave.
509-536-6650

Rockwood at Whitworth
10322 N. Middleton Dr.
509-466-0411

www.rockwoodretirement.org

independent • assisted • skilled nursing • memory care



ENRICHING LIVES
CREATING COMMUNITY

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE

The Youth Development programs offered at West Central provide children and teens numerous opportunities to participate in fun, active & educational activities in a safe and nurturing environment.

509.323.7519

WIC WOMEN, INFANTS, and CHILDREN

The WIC program is a vital service available at WCCC with other locations in Cheney, Airway Heights, and Fairchild Air Force Base. This program provides health and nutrition education, breastfeeding support for new mothers, and access to healthy foods to help support healthy families.

509.323.7497

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Two programs for adults with developmental disabilities provide socialization, education, recreation and community integration.

Private pay adult day care as well as county-funded community inclusion are among the services offered.

509.323.7517

ASANTE HEALTH

Asante Health Primary Care provides comprehensive medical services for all ages, including preventive care, chronic disease management, acute illness treatment, vaccinations, health screenings, and wellness exams.

509.808.2835

1603 N. BELT ST, SPOKANE WA, 99205



think globally.
eat locally.

Feast
WORLD KITCHEN

Learn more and order takeout:
feastworldkitchen.org

Catholic Charities supportive housing has 94 percent success rate

Permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals and families built by Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington (CCEW) has a 94 percent success rate, based on Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data.

“Success” means that people who move out of homeless shelters, off the streets, from living in cars or couch surfing into the permanent supportive housing are there more than three years.

The national average is 40 percent, also based on HUD data.

In the 15 “Haven” low-income housing tax-credit properties that CCEW has built in the region since 2011, its staff assist residents with mental health struggles, substance use treatment, case management, life skills counseling, employment support, tenancy skills and health care management. They address these and other issues from intergenerational poverty and chronic homelessness.

Rob McCann, executive director of CCEW, said four more permanent supportive housing properties will be completed in 2025 and 2026, with applications underway for two to four more per year through 2028.

In May, Dominican Sisters Haven in Colville will open its doors with 72 one-, two- and three-bedroom units of affordable, permanent supportive housing in three buildings. It includes a gathering place, playground and recreational amenities.

“The city of Colville approached us and said they had a need and wanted us to build there. City leaders connected us with a property owner. We made an offer that was accepted,” said Alex Reynolds, vice president of housing outcomes.

“When the units immediately fill with homeless people on a waiting list, family homelessness in Colville will be brought to functional zero,” said Rob.

“By that we mean the point in time count for Stevens County reported 62 individuals and 38 households experiencing homelessness in 2024,” said Jonathan Mallahan, executive director of Catholic Housing Ventures.

“Dominican Sisters Haven will add capacity to the community to help achieve functional zero in homelessness. This means an individual or family’s experience of homelessness is likely to be short and less likely to reoccur,” he clarified.

“There are many more in Colville who are struggling, marginally housed and at risk of homelessness” Jonathan explained. “In addition to opening Dominican Sisters Haven, we need to continue to work to add capacity to prevent and respond to homelessness in the community.”



Plans for the Dominican Sisters Haven in Colville show three buildings with 72 units total. Rendering courtesy of Catholic Charities

Dominican Sisters Haven is named to honor the Dominican Sisters who founded and served the community through Mount Carmel Hospital in Colville. Dominican Sisters started the hospital in 1919 and expanded its buildings and services until turning it over to the Sisters of Providence in 1993.

Once the homeless are housed, other units will be low-income housing for families whose incomes are 30, 40 or 50 percent of the area median income.

Rural Resources Community Action in Colville, a partner of CCEW serving rural communities, will coordinate the services and referrals for case management, medical services, health and wellness classes, adult education, food preparation and nutrition classes, as well as the other usual services. For children, there will be Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and out-of-school programs.

“We did a needs assessment in Colville and found many people underhoused or homeless—some living on the streets but more who were invisible, living in a trailer without hookups or couch surfing,” said Alex. “The assessment also determined what services were needed.”

CCEW is close to starting 48 units in Twisp and finishing 72 units in Clarkston.

In Spokane, it is breaking ground in August for 48 units in St. Agnes Haven on the corner of Government Way and Sunset Blvd.

It will break ground on 72 units in February 2026 for River Family Haven and the Spokane Salish School on land that was once part of the Convent of the Holy Names grounds. The school, apartments and five-acre campus will be permanently transferred to the Spokane Salish School—a \$30 million asset.

The convent was previously located on 65 acres that were traditionally winter grounds for Salish-speaking tribes of the region, said Rob. Of that, the Spokane County Conservation Futures program acquired 31 acres along the Spokane River

for preservation, ensuring it is left in its natural state and not developed.

Rob said the names of the havens are chosen to honor individuals and groups.

• River Family Haven, for example, honors the Salish as “People of the River.”

• Fr. Bach Haven, the first one built in 2011 in Spokane, was named for Fr. Frank Bach, who served diocesan parishes, visited people at House of Charity and was director of Catholic Charities of Spokane from 1964 to 1978.

• Skylstad Family Haven, which is being built in Twisp, will be named after the family of Bishop William Skylstad, who was bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Yakima from 1977 to 1990 and bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane from 1990 to 2010.

• Buder Haven in Spokane honors Sister Madonna Buder, known as the Iron Sister for participating in the Ironman Triathlon and other triathlons.

• Mother Teresa Haven in Spokane has 48 units for families and 24 for individuals.

• Pope Francis Haven in Spokane Valley has 51 units.

With the permanent supportive housing planned into 2026, CCEW will have 72 affordable-housing properties in 13 Central and Eastern Washington counties.

Three years ago, CCEW, which then had 30 properties, received Spokane Housing Ventures’ affordable housing portfolio so those 36 properties would remain affordable.

“Spokane Housing Ventures dissolved and transferred their assets to us to manage, preventing them from flipping into high-end apartments that would kick the poor out,” said Rob.

When CCEW received them, they came under its property management system and were brought up to its standards so people in them could live in dignity and safety, he added.

That meant not only improving their curbside appeal by upgrading their exterior appearance, but also putting on new roofs, replacing flooring, buying refrigerators and more—millions

of dollars of improvements.

“When I began 25 years ago, working with Donna Hanson, then executive director of Catholic Charities—whose name is on one of the havens—she set the rule for our housing. That was answering the question, ‘Would you want to put your mother in an apartment?’ If the answer was yes, we were managing it right,” Rob explained. “If the answer was ‘no,’ we would make changes so we would want to have our mother live there.”

Before adding the Spokane Housing Venture properties, CCEW properties had 1,200 units. With the Spokane Housing Ventures properties, previous properties and new construction, CCEW now has 3,100 units.

“With those, 5,128 men, women and children have a place to put their heads on Catholic Charities’ pillows at night,” said Rob. “Without them, 5,128 more people would be on the streets.”

CCEW continues to build housing. Its properties include housing for seniors, veterans, adults with disabilities and farm-worker families, as well as those for homeless individuals and families.

Catholic Charities Housing serves people with chronic mental health conditions, adults with disabilities, veterans and low-income individuals and families.

CCEW properties are in Chewelah, Colville, Davenport, Deer Park, Medical Lake, Clarkston, Othello, Pasco, Pullman, Walla Walla, Brewster, Quincy, Omak, Twisp, Winthrop, Sunnyside, Goldendale, Grandview and Yakima.

Catholic Charities has been serving Central and Eastern Washington communities for more than 75 years, providing life-affirming services for vulnerable people regardless of religious faith.

“At Catholic Charities we feed the hungry, heal the hurting and welcome strangers,” said Rob. “I’ll keep doing that until all are done, but it’s never-ending work. Our goal at Catholic Charities is to put ourselves out of a job, so there is no more intergenerational poverty. I hope my children and grandchildren will see it.”

Rob is frustrated by what he considers “an urban myth” about the havens.

That myth is based on the six percent who fail to engage in services and draw SWAT teams, fire engines and ambulances to the havens because of a relapse into drug use, flooding an apartment or returning to a shelter. Media typically cover the “unusual” outcome, not the 94 percent success rate of moving people off the streets, out of cars and out of shelters into forever housing.

HUD and the city audit the Havens every year to determine the number of people still in permanent supportive housing and out of homelessness.

“There still are homeless people on the streets,” Rob said, “so we keep building permanent supportive housing.”

For information, call 358-4250, email dave.meany@cceasternwa.org or visit cceasternwa.org/properties.

WE CAN END THE VIOLENCE

May 18
8-10 am

WARRIOR WALK
STUBBORN GIRL'S MIMOSA CHALLENGE

SRDVC
PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT
SPOKANE REGIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COALITION

WELLNESS & BEAUTY EXPO
VIVISTA STADIUM

REGISTER HERE:
WELLNESSANDBEAUTYEXPO.COM

NOW ENROLLING
Elementary Age Students for

Parkview
Early Learning Center

Technology Academy

Before & after school program for children aged 5 to 12 with transportation from Lidgerwood, Longfellow, Madison & Willard schools

Enrollment Inquiries
509-326-5629 • **ParkviewELC.com**

Looking for a personal wellness coach?

- programs for weight loss
- weight/muscle gain
- groups and individuals
- basic skills training
- non-violent communication

For information, contact brooksranner1@gmail.com
(509) 869-2070

AFRICA MOVEMENT

NORTHWEST FAIR HOUSING ALLIANCE
Working to Ensure Equal Housing Opportunity for All

35 W Main, Suite 250, Spokane, WA 99201
Tel: 509-325-2665 • Fax: 866-376-6308 • nwfairhousing.org

Federal and state laws prohibit housing discrimination based on:

Race • Color • Religion • Gender • Disability
National Origin • Familial Status • Marital Status
Sexual Orientation • Military/Veteran Status
Citizenship or Immigration Status

Our services include: fair housing counseling, advocacy and education

This ad is supported in part by funds from a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. NWFHA is solely responsible for the accuracy of statements and interpretations in this ad.

WILD & SCENIC®

FILM FESTIVAL

where activism gets inspired

FRIDAY, MAY 16
AT THE GARLAND THEATER
DOORS 5:30PM | SHOW 7PM

\$20 in advance
\$25 at the door
a fundraiser for the Spokane Riverkeeper

SPOKANE RIVERKEEPER

Jay Yang empowers colleagues to infuse AI into new ways of learning

Continued from page 1
They also help in research that develops predictive capabilities to strengthen business operations and cybersecurity.

Just as important, he also brings his people skills to the role.

“I always ask why things work as they do. I think about the audience, the learner, and I put myself in their position with empathy,” he said.

In Taiwanese culture, it’s not common for students to ask questions. They only listen to lectures, but Jay honed his questioning skills and empathy early by asking questions he thought other students might have, but might not ask.

He continued this mindset and practice in his doctoral studies in electrical and computer engineering at the University of Texas in Austin and his work as a professor at RIT, where he led the Council of Chairs to mentor and develop chairs and directors across disciplines and collaborated in research and teaching with faculty in humanities, business and education.

What he learned and practiced in his career developed into skills required to bring together diverse stakeholders with varied ways of reasoning at Gonzaga. He challenges and empowers colleagues to infuse AI into innovative and creative ways of learning and find new solutions to complex problems.

Even his Chinese name points to the skills that fit him for his position.

“The first Chinese character for my name—shan 善心—means kind heart and the second character—chieh 傑出—means excellence,” he explained.

“As I think about the institute, I am always interested in how humans learn,” he said, giving an example the interaction between human reasoning and learning what AI can do.

“I asked my young son how he would use generative AI to create a cat with sunglasses. He said that he first thinks about what a cat looks like and what sunglasses look like. He then looks for the nouns. Then, he thinks about what it means to create. He looks at verbs. Then he thinks about the style. Should it look like a real cat and real sunglasses, a cartoon character, something like anime or some other style?” he asked.

Generative AI reflects how humans react to queries, focusing on specific words and reacting to them. Responsible uses and advances of AI take into account human characteristics.



Jay Yang connects AI with people skills.

Jay’s decision to move from RIT to Gonzaga came from a combination of professional possibilities and personal interests. As he researched Gonzaga and the nascent institute, he was excited about the opportunity to infuse data science and AI into liberal arts education.

Professionally, he felt the appeal of leading a new institute that gave him an opportunity to shape a responsible, values-based direction for innovation with new technologies and AI-and data-science-infused education. The role allows him to leverage his experience to build both innovative and socially responsible programs.

Gonzaga’s reputation in basketball also appealed to him. He enjoys basketball and sports, especially coaching his son’s basketball and baseball teams when his son was young.

He participates in basketball games with students, using the sport as a metaphor for his leadership style—facilitating opportunities and supporting others to achieve success.

Jay describes three pillars that sum up the institute’s aim. Each has AI as a component. He listed the pillars, which must be coupled with Jesuit values and responsibility.

1) Academic innovation is about collaboration to develop AI-infused, humanity-centered academic programs that prepare students for diverse roles across industry sectors, like using AI to creatively develop cutting edge course curriculum.

2) Interdisciplinary research connects expertise across various schools and colleges within the university, focusing on AI-enabled endeavors, like researching how AI tech firms and environmental activists can work together to negotiate environmental concerns.

3) Strategic partnerships are cultivated with local and regional industries, government agencies and other community stakeholders to inform decision-making and solve complex, real-world problems, like using AI to generate solutions for rural health care and K-12 education.

Gonzaga’s institute is unique in that it focuses both inward and outward. Most AI ethics centers in other universities are outward-focused—designed to relate to external partners in different types of agencies.

“We also focus inward, aiming to strengthen the university internally by fostering an environment where technological advancement is pursued in harmony with learning outcomes for every student, ethical responsibility and interdisciplinary collaboration,” Jay said.

Even its name, the Institute for Informatics and Applied Technology, indicates this uniqueness.

One definition says that “informatics” harnesses the power and possibility of digital tech-

nology to transform data and information into knowledge that people use every day.

Gonzaga’s April conference on “Value and Responsibility in AI Technologies” exemplifies the institute’s vision. Its organizers—Anthony Fisher of the department of philosophy, and Amy Hyde Jay of the institute—developed the interdisciplinary program.

They collaborated with partners from Gonzaga’s different schools, including some that don’t seem at first glance to be connected to engineering and AI—law, business administration, education, health sciences and leadership studies.

Presenters, mostly from the Pacific Northwest, but also from as far away as Hong Kong, contributed diverse perspectives on the theme. While some were from fields directly related to technology, others came from political science, English, teacher education, religion, philosophy and commercial law—demonstrating that AI-infused and humanity-centered academic programs can be designed and promote humane values and social responsibility.

In five years, Jay envisions that the institute will help Gonzaga be “a leader in empowering students, faculty and external partners by infusing informatics

throughout its curriculum in a creative, responsible way. Students from diverse disciplines will come to GU because of the leadership it offers, not just in engineering or computer science but in our approach to infusing modern information technology throughout every program for every student with every kind of interest,” he said.

Finally, Jay sees AI as a way to deepen understanding of human reasoning and communication by leveraging the resources of large language models, which process, interpret, generate and augment human language.

He also notes that AI sometimes “hallucinates, which reflects how humans sometimes respond to unknown questions. We miss the boat if we let it run wild. We need to guide how humans advance, interact and innovate with AI with ethical values. AI is powerful so we must cultivate our own sense of value and responsibility in our interactions with AI tools.”

In that way, AI can be seen as similar to other tools—a camera, a computer or musical instruments—which “are means of expression that give meaning to who we are as humans,” Jay said.

For information, email informatics@gonzaga.edu or visit gonzaga.edu/informatics-and-applied-technology.



SAVE THE DATE

STAGE LIGHTS FOR OUR PLACE

SPONSORED BY:
 

Thursday, May 8 - 6 pm
The Gym @ Salem Lutheran
1428 W Broadway Ave

APPETIZERS • AUCTIONS • LIVE ENTERTAINMENT • \$40
ourplacespokane.org/stagelights

Tickets:

Scan or visit website!



Silent Day of Prayer: When Your Prayers Go Unanswered

Deacon John Ruscheinsky

Thursday, June 12 • 9 am - 3
\$46 (\$56 w/ room) • Lunch Included

Sometimes it seems our prayers go unanswered; we pray daily but haven’t gotten the answer we seek. It seems the pleas have been swallowed by silence. Does God care? Yes! God is always ready to answer, but there are conditions we must meet so he can answer us. God also knows what’s best for us and it is not always what we think we want or need. At this Day of Prayer, we will reflect on Rev. Keith McClellan’s **Care Notes** on unanswered prayers, how we can learn to open ourselves to receive and accept God’s answer, where He always—sometimes mysteriously—represents the fullness of His divine love for us. **Please register in advance.**

To Register:
ihrc.net or 
(509) 448-1224

 **Immaculate Heart
Retreat Center**
A Peaceful Place to Pray and Ponder

6910 South Ben Burr Road, Spokane, Washington 99223 • ihrc@ihrc.net



Personal or legal problems? DUI? In need of alcohol and drug treatment?



SPARC
SPOKANE ADDICTION RECOVERY CENTERS

SPARC has highly trained qualified staff to assist you.
For more information and to schedule an appointment, call:

624-5228
or visit us at 1508 W. 6th Ave.
8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. - Monday through Friday
Confidential, discreet services. Public funding available

West Central Community Center gains health provider for clinic

By Mary Stamp

For a long time, Geoffrey Mwangi, a doctor of nursing practice (DNP) and a family nurse practitioner (FNP-C), has dreamed of setting up his own patient-centered primary care medical practice to serve people of all races, especially immigrants and blacks.

His practice emphasizes the intersection of three pillars of health—physical, emotional and spiritual.

West Central Community Center (WCCC) had a space for a clinic and was looking for someone to fill it.

When WCCC opened in 1981, midwives with the Deaconess Women’s Clinic practiced from portables in the parking lot. When the center was remodeled and expanded in 2006, the clinic moved into the building at 1603 W. Belt St., said Kim Ferraro, who became executive director in 2011.

Deaconess left the space in 2012. From 2014 to 2023, Unify Community Health, part of the Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic, ran a clinic there.

The space for a medical clinic was open, and Kim had Black Realty set up a sign, “Clinic Space for Rent.”

Last spring, Geoffrey and his wife, Purity Femino, were having a picnic at the A.M. Cannon Park across from the NATIVE Project, where Geoffrey had worked in the health clinic since 2014.

They were talking about his dream to open a clinic when they noticed the sign.

He met with Kim Ferraro, executive director of WCCC, and she “gave me the green light to start the clinic,” he said.

On July 15, 2024, Geoffrey opened Asante Health, a primary care clinic at West Central Community Center. It is open for appointments from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.

“Asante” in Swahili, his second language—Kikuyu is his first language and English his third—means “thank you.” With that name, he is saying, “Thank you for allowing me to continue to practice and serve this community. It’s a privilege I don’t take for granted.”

Geoffrey, who owns Asante Health, said he is currently the only provider at the clinic. Amanda Kiefer is his medical assistant. He plans to add providers as the clinic gains patients and builds credentials with health insurance companies.

Lisa Fuchs, WCCC Women Infants and Children’s (WIC) coordinator, helps draw patients from the programs at the WCCC center, in Cheney, Airway Heights and Fairchild Air Force Base.

The clinic provides annual physicals, pediatrics, geriatrics, women’s health, men’s health, telehealth, lifestyle management, preventive education, mental health treatment and nutrition/



Geoffrey Mwangi opens clinic in West Central Spokane.

weight counseling. It also provides management of chronic conditions and diseases like diabetes, hypertension and asthma, and care for acute illnesses like colds, flu and infections.

Geoffrey always wanted to be a doctor. Growing up in Kagaa, a village in the Ol Kalou Constituency of about 2,000 in the Central Province of Kenya north of Nairobi, he worked toward that goal. After high school at a boys’ boarding school in Kangui, he was accepted to study biology at the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay, graduating in 2006. He worked as a caregiver and then applied to earn a nursing degree at the University of Wisconsin Madison-Lacrosse campus, studying from 2008 to 2010.

After graduating, he moved with his first wife and mother of two of his three children to Salem, Ore., to work as a nurse at the Salem Hospital. While there, he received a master’s degree in 2013 and a doctoral degree in 2014 as a doctor of nursing practice with the Oregon Health and Science University.

In 2014, he came to Spokane to join the health clinic at The NATIVE Project, where he worked until 2024. He continues to help there as needed.

Asante Health Care was established through a private funding and grants with strong backing from the community and institutions. It received a \$115,000 grant from Health Sciences and Services Authority of Spokane (HSSA) for advancing health innovation and access. It also received a \$5,000 Spokane Inclusive Business Catalyst grant from Spokane’s AHANA-Multi-Ethnic Business Association.

Asante Health cares for anyone who comes, accepting health insurance from those with insurance, having a flat rate fee for service for those without insurance and offering a cost waiver option for those unable to pay.

“I can control what happens in my clinic, but not costs outside,” he said, noting that Inland Imaging helps provide services for those without health insurance, as does Quest Diagnostics.

His wife, Purity, who owns

and operates adult family homes, also helps him in the office.

“Many black patients had been looking for a long time for a primary care provider who would understand their needs the way I do,” he said, telling of outreach to spread the word in the community about the clinic. “Spokane’s increasingly diverse population calls for health care facilities and professionals that reflect and understand communities they serve. Culturally competent, inclusive care is no longer optional. It’s essential.”

Geoffrey has seen more than 150 patients at Asante Health since last July. Patients have come after reports on local TV, an online search for a provider through WebMD and through word of mouth.

“I see everyone from children to adults,” he said. “We have openings for new patients.”

Practicing primary care medicine is fulfilling for Geoffrey, who says he is a people person.

“I love primary care and work hard to meet people’s needs,” he said. “I feel satisfied when someone who has experienced many problems comes and, by working together over time, I can help them improve their health and wellbeing.

“When patients are respected, heard and engaged in their treatment decisions they have healthier outcomes,” he said, describing how that fits into the physical, emotional and spiritual pillars of health care.

“As a Christian, the care I offer is based on the physical health for the body, emotional health of the mind and spiritual health for the spirit,” said Geoffrey, who has attended Life Center in Spokane since 2014.

“Most providers address physical care and emotional care, but if all three pillars of health are not addressed, people continue to suffer,” he said.

Geoffrey opens the topic of spiritual health by asking, “What does spirituality mean to you?” He invites conversation about spiritual health, regardless of a patient’s spiritual background.

“It means different things to different people, but if people are not healthy spiritually, it will have an impact on their physical health,” he observed.

“There are many things we can’t explain in medicine. We can help patients physically and emotionally, but something is missing if we do not address spiritual health,” he said.

With Christians, he may talk about the Bible. He counsels people of any faith to develop their spiritual lives in their tradition. Practicing faith and being part of a faith community matter.

Geoffrey has been Christian all his life. His father took him to church and Sunday school, and he attended a youth group.

“By being spiritually healthy, I mean being in tune with God. For me as a Christian, it means believing Christ is my Savior, forgiveness of sins by grace and being of service to humanity as a way to serve God. I use the gifts God has given me to serve others,” he said.

Along with incorporating the

three pillars of health, Geoffrey believes that, for the best health outcomes, it’s important to empower patients to take an active role in their health care and prevention practices.

“It improves patient satisfaction and health outcomes,” he explained. “When patients understand their conditions and treatment options, they are more likely to make lifestyle changes to improve their health.

“By giving patients tools and knowledge to manage their health proactively, we help reduce unnecessary emergency visits, improve chronic disease management and support long-term wellness,” he said. “Ultimately an engaged patient is a healthier patient.”

“I spend time to help patients to be aware of their physical, emotional, spiritual, financial and cultural issues, because I want patients to work with me as a partner in their health care and wellness,” said Geoffrey.

He listens to patients’ concerns, answers their questions and involves them in decisions about their care.


He tells patients, “Your health is your wealth.”

Along with his work as a primary care provider in Spokane, Geoffrey’s visits to his family in Kenya for two to four weeks a year are also mission trips. He takes over-the-counter medicines, a blood pressure machine and a blood sugar monitor with him.


He goes house to house to see villagers, building a relationship with them. If he diagnoses a serious illness like diabetes or hypertension, he refers people to the local hospital.

Purity comes with him to Kenya, and they also visit her family in Voi in the Coast Province.

For information, call 808-2835, email info@asantehealth.org or visit asantehealth.org.



We’re with you every step of the way.



Our community’s only nonprofit hospice, serving patients and their families since 1977.

Dignity. Trust. Compassion.
509.456.0438 hospiceofspokane.org

St. Aloysius Gonzaga Parish is hiring a Social Justice Coordinator

This is a part-time position that works with the Jesuits West Province & local nonprofits.

For more information, please go to <https://www.dioceseofspokane.org/careers>

Partners Inland Northwest celebrates serving 75 years in Spokane Valley

In April, Partners Inland Northwest celebrated 35 years as a nonprofit, but 1990 was “just a waypoint for the journey that began 75 years ago in 1951,” said Cal Coblenz, CEO.

“After four decades of grassroots service, the organization became a nonprofit to ensure that neighborly compassion could continue to gather the support necessary to grow as Spokane grew,” he said.

The agency continues to grow in serving hungry families and providing clothing, giving nearly a ton of clothing each week to children, families and folks who live outdoors.

Its diaper bank helps parents

and babies in 19 counties across Eastern Washington and North Idaho, Cal reported.

“As we blow out the candles, we’re asking for 75 for our 75th—gifts of \$75 in honor of our 75 years of collective service to make a difference in our neighbors’ lives,” he appealed. “This spring we need to raise an additional \$75,000 to help more people. The first \$10,000 has come in, leaving \$65,000.”

Partners began when 10 Protestant churches formed the United Church Welfare of Spokane in 1951 as a collaborative church effort to care for needy people. In 1952, they moved into the Perry Building in Op-

portunity, as a commissary for storing clothing and canned goods. As the cost for the space rose, they donated the clothing to Goodwill.

United Church Welfare arranged discounts for people who are in need to buy clothing from Goodwill until 1960, when a volunteer-run clothing bank was opened at Opportunity Presbyterian Church one day a month.

In the winter of 1971, a teen from Spokane Valley United Methodist Church saw that seniors needed meals and the idea grew into Spokane Valley Meals on Wheels. The Food Bank opened in 1972 at the United Methodist Church.

In 1981, the United Church Welfare of Spokane Valley changed its name to Valley Shared Ministries. In 1987, the Rev. Jacqueline Dickson, Sister Meg Sass, Carol Allen and two student groups from Inter-Collegiate Center of Nursing Education did a door-to-door assessment of community needs.

In 1988, the Guild from All Saints Episcopal Church began managing the Clothing Bank that was open the same day each week as the Food Bank.

A task force in 1989 incorporated the services of Valley Meals on Wheels, the Clothing Bank and the Food Bank as The Spokane Valley Center. It be-

came tax-exempt in 1990.

Space was dedicated in 1991 at 11922 E. First Ave., providing Spokane Valley with one center serving the needs of low-income, needy families.

In 2001, Spokane Valley Center moved to its current location at 10814 E. Broadway Ave., and in 2007, it was renamed Spokane Valley Partners.

For information, call 927-1153 or email info@partnersinw.org.

**Collective Awakening
Retreat - May 16 to 18**
**Harmony Woods
Retreat Center**
collectivelyawake.com/retreat

CdA home opens a multifaith retreat center called Bliss You

Bliss You, a new multi-faith retreat home in Coeur d’Alene, will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturdays, for weekly retreats starting May 10.

Donna Mills, a minister of the spiritual sciences who has Unitarian Universalist and Unity lay pastoral training, is opening her home for indoor and outdoor

quiet spaces for healing, reflection, recreation and ministry, plus lunchtime learnings.

There are rooms for reading, lounging, art and movement.

Donna offers herb walks in her quarter-acre garden.

For information email howto-humanwell@outlook.com.

**Parkview**
Early Learning Center

**Now
Enrolling
Toddlers!**

AGES 1 TO 3 YEARS OLD

Join our family today & watch your child's
journey of learning & discovery unfold.

CONTACT US TODAY!

509-990-6472 • parkviewelc.com

Have a Conflict?
We can help you work it out.
Book a mediation today!

**NMC**
509-456-0103
nwmediationcenter.com
info@nwmediationcenter.com

Mediation is for everyone. We can mediate many types of disputes.

- Divorce
- Parenting
- Neighbor
- Tenant-Landlord
- Business
- and many more


Fowler UMC
A community that says
I am not alone—
where everyone is valued
where everyone has a voice
where everyone belongs!
A disability inclusive community.
3928 N Howard St
509-325-3242
fowlerumc@yahoo.com




Need advice
finding
accessible or
affordable
transportation?

**MOBILITY
MANAGEMENT**

"we'll steer you right"
509-499-4810

**Washington State
Nonprofit Conference**
ready for action


**Virtual
May 13 - 14, 2025**
**In-Person
Spokane | May 16**



nonprofitwa.org/wsnt25

"WE DO JUSTICE."

DRIVER'S RELICENSING
&
POST-CONVICTION RELIEF,
INCLUDING STATE V. BLAKE

**THE WAY**
THE WAY TO JUSTICE

321 W. BOONE AVE.
SPOKANE, WA 99201
(509)822-7514

MAILING/DONATIONS:
P.O. BOX 7503
SPOKANE, WA 99207

WWW.THEWAYTOJUSTICE.COM

Be a Sasquatch Among Cougars

START **HERE**, TRANSFER **THERE**

Sarah Fisher enrolled in the Pharmacy program at Spokane Community College (SCC). She had heard about the small class sizes and faculty support from friends and family who also attended SCC. Sarah graduated as a Certified Pharmacy Technician and immediately got a job at a local hospital. Her experience at SCC set her up to transfer to WSU and pursue a Doctor of Pharmacy degree.



**SPOKANE**
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SPOKANE.EDU/NEXT

Community Colleges of Spokane of Spokane does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy and related conditions, or age in its programs, activities or employment. Marketing and Public Relations -- April 2025 - AS

The Gathering House organizes a Global Food and Art Market

By Marijke Fakasiieiki
The Gathering House is starting a new community event in the Garland District, which grew from their prayer for a new way to use the parking lot behind the church and coffee shop at 733 W. Garland Ave.

The answer to the prayer and planning is The Global Food and Art Market, which will be open from 3 to 7 p.m., Tuesdays, May 6 through July 29, in the parking lot that the Garland Summer Market previously used.

For the past several years, the Garland Business District used the parking lot for the Garland Summer Market, but it had no leaders to do it in 2024, so no market happened. As a result, the Gathering House has been praying about how to use the parking lot.

The Gathering House, with its heritage in the Evangelical Covenant Church, turns 137 years old this October. It was the First Covenant Church for 60 years. Before that, it was the Swedish Tabernacle and before that the Swedish Tabernacle of Spokane Washington Territory, one of the first churches in the area, making it one year older than the state of Washington. The Evangelical Covenant Church headquarters are in Chicago.

The first location in 1880 was at a tiny bachelor house in downtown Spokane for blacksmiths, miners and lumberjacks. For more than 110 of those years, the church building was at 2nd and Division, where Redemption Church now is. That building was built in 1950 when the first building was torn down because of construction safety issues.

The church sold that building in 2014, changed the church name, and moved to the Garland Business District. This is the church's fifth location in its history.

When they moved, they added an open-to-the-public coffee house. In 2021, Pitotti Coffee Roasters took over operating the coffee shop and runs it as a separate business there.

"We are believers. We know that our building and property were our best assets. Other than Sundays, we wanted to use these assets differently—to be a blessing," said Rob Bryceson, lead pastor.

As a friend of Mark Finney, who is also pastor at Emmaus Church, an Evangelical Covenant Church, and of Boris Borisov at the Ukrainian Church, Rob is connected with Thrive International, World Relief, Feast World Kitchen and other groups working with immigrants and refugees.

"We felt Spokane did not



Market planning team Joanna Newcomb, Alice Chapman and Rob Bryceson meet at a table in the coffee shop.

need another farmers market. We wanted to help refugees and asylum seekers restart their lives after trauma, loss and devastation," said Rob. "We decided a global food and art market would be a place for entrepreneurial start-ups."

Church members meeting Wednesday afternoons for prayer and worship looked at needs in the community and ways to make a difference. They realized that many verses in the Old Testament say that how people treat strangers, widows and orphans defines how righteous society is.

From prayer, they made connections with friends and their groups to learn what might be needed.

"Food sounds simple, but it's a complex business," said Rob, speaking from the experience of the church hosting a restaurant to help people coming out of trafficking, jail and other vulnerable situations.

The Gathering House also hosts the monthly Spokane Homeless Coalition meetings.

As a one-pastor church, many volunteers keep the place running and they are not shy about trying new things.

Joanna Newcomb, a volunteer and church member since 2018, is coordinating with multiple immigrant and refugee agencies out of her desire to serve others and to invite people from different cultures to sell their wares in a supportive setting.

Her interest in working with entrepreneurs comes from her faith and her own experience as an entrepreneur. She started Myth Food Co., a local dessert business that orders chocolate from a woman-owned and operated chocolatier in El Salvador. She has also been a vendor at area farmers' markets and got her start renting space at Feast World Kitchen.

Joanna is excited about opportunities the market holds for the community and wants to bring immigrant and refugee vendors together with others to talk face-

to-face and overcome stereotypes.

"People should come to this market ready to eat dinner. We have several hot food vendors, tables to sit at and live music to listen to. In addition to food, there will be a henna artist and vendors selling art, jewelry, sewn items, soaps and other crafts handcrafted by local artisans who are part of Spokane's international community and from different cultures," said Joanna.

"We envision having arts and crafts tables around the perimeter and a food court in the middle with different musicians performing each week," said Rob.

The hope is for people to come to sample foods and then meet people who are settling into American society and culture.

"Refugees are trying to restart their lives. Many had earned higher education degrees, achieved careers and then lost everything," he said. "We will have a rotating information booth with a local refugee and immigrant organization each week, providing information about their organization."

Rob added that the immigrant

struggle is part of the heritage of the Covenant Church.

"We can understand the plight of refugees and immigrants as our church was still singing hymns in Swedish in the 1960s. Post-World War I laws in the 1920s made it illegal to have public meetings in any language but English. Our church couldn't find preachers who could preach in English," he explained.

"We have come full circle. Last year, a 97-year-old member died. He knew the immigrant blacksmith and founder, Gus Johnson," said Rob. "One hundred and thirty-six years later, none of us are Swedish. Someone else is the immigrant now."

"It has been interesting telling people what we are doing. We thought it might be politically divisive, but people on the left support us doing it. People on the right support our helping people who want to start businesses."

"We weren't sure if there would be hostility in the current environment, but the local climate feels different. Both ends of the political perspective connect to this," said Rob.

"When they understand the refugees' struggles and the strong vetting, people from the left and right are supportive," he said.

Rob knows some may be angry if they think a refugee who came illegally receives government tax dollars, but they may support someone who comes here legally and needs support to build a business.

"We see booths at the market as startups that will turn into successful shops," Rob explained.

"Our hope as a church and as believers is that Spokane will want to help different cultures assimilate into American culture and become friends," Rob commented.

He has learned that the average stay in a refugee camp is 17 years, so 15-year-olds come who have not used flushing toilets or a doorknob. Families of different ethnicities stick together in their own language and culture groups.

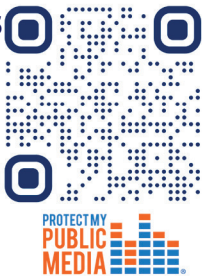
Few middle-class Americans understand unless they volunteer at World Relief or Thrive International.

Rob hopes the Global Food and Art Market will be an opportunity for people to meet and befriend people from Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine and other countries, and support their businesses.

For information, email rob@gatheringhouse.org or email market@gatheringhouse.org.

DO YOU VALUE PUBLIC MEDIA?

Just \$1.60/person/year in federal funds helps KSPS PBS educate and inspire. Scan the QR code or visit www.protectmypublicmedia.org to join Protect My Public Media and help keep public media strong.



The Way to Justice and SERA Present

K - 12th Grade

2025 COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

SATURDAY AUGUST 9TH, 2025

UNDERHILL PARK

10 AM TO 6 PM

BIKE RAFFLE, CONTESTS, & PRIZES

FREE SHOES, BACKPACKS, & SCHOOL SUPPLIES

FREE FOOD & DRINKS

YOU ARE WELCOME TO BRING YOUR OWN GRILLS

THE WAY

THE WAY TO JUSTICE

www.thewaytojustice.com (509)822-7514

Analesa Mason

THE VERANDA - Memory Care

Double occupancy rooms available!

Alzheimer's Support Group Available for caregivers!

1801 E Upriver Dr, Spokane www.riverviewretirement.org

BEST OF READERS POLL 2025 INLANDER 2ND PLACE

Call us for a tour at 509-482-9588!

Groups plan various events for Asian American Heritage Month

The opening reception for Spokane’s Asian American Heritage Month, “Echoes: Letters for New Tomorrows,” is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, May 3, at Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W. 1st Ave., with performances hosted by Melody Chang, a local opera singer, actress and activist. Activities include a picnic, resources, food, storytellers, museum objects, Campbell House archives and Boba buddies.

Asians for Collective Liberation (ACL) Spokane plans a literary event at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, May 8, at the Central Library with Viet Thanh Nguyen, New York Times bestselling author, Pulitzer Prize winner and profes-

sor of English, American studies and ethnicity at the University of Southern California, discussing his memoir, “To Save and to Destroy: Writing as an Other.” Stories on identity, memory and belonging offer insights into the Vietnamese diaspora and broader Asian American experience.

“In a world where immigrants, refugees, Black, Brown, Indigenous, queer and working-class people are under attack and dehumanized, Viet tells what it means to be an outsider and highlights the role of arts and culture in today’s political discourse,” said Frances Grace Mortel, cultural program manager at ACL Spokane. Details are at bit.ly/VTN-Spokane.

Boba Breaks at the 509 Spring Market from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday, May 14, at the Eastern Washington University PUB includes mental health resources, youth programs and environmental advocacy.

Seattle author Putsata Reang speaks on “Resisting Erasure through Storytelling” at 4 p.m., Friday, May 16, at the Shadle Park Library. She will also lead a writing workshop, “Stories Hold the Cure,” from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Saturday, May 17, at The Hive, 2904 E. Sprague, for Asian immigrants/refugees and Asian Americans. Details are at bit.ly/stories-cure.

“Ten Thousand Things: Artifacts of Asian American Life” is

a Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau event with Shin Yu Pai, podcast creator, poet and author, at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, May 22, at Liberty Park Library. She shares how collections and artifacts reveal personal and cultural values, stories of diaspora and tales of trauma that illuminate Asian American experiences.

She will also present “No Neutral,” a poetry night hosted by ACL Spokane’s Chai Cultural Club at 6 p.m. Friday, May 23, Auntie’s Bookstore, 402 W. Main Ave. exploring place, histories, identity in shifting spaces, poems on social unrest, conflict, friendships, being a woman, mother, artist and daughter. Details are at bityly/SYP-poetrynight.

The closing reception at the “New Wave” Film Screening, from 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, May 28, at The Garland Theater, honors the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War and the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees in the U.S.

Chinese Vietnamese filmmaker, storyteller and author Elizabeth Ai excavates the untold story of rebellious punks in the 1980s Vietnamese New Wave. Details are at bit.ly/newwavespokane.

The Asian American Heritage Month events are sponsored by ACL Spokane, Spokane Public Library and Humanities Washington. For information, visit aclspokane.org/heritagemonth and humanities.org.

Measles

is a virus that spreads easily and can be dangerous.

Prevention

Vaccination is the best protection. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine has been studied and monitored for decades for safety and provides strong protection from the measles virus.

Symptoms

Fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes followed by rash

Call Ahead

If you think you or your child has measles, stay home and call your doctor or urgent care immediately to get advice on how to get evaluated while limiting exposure to others.



When you take your child (ages 0-18 years) to a health clinic in Washington state, you might have to pay a small charge for getting the shot and for the office visit, but you will not be charged for the vaccine itself. Spokane Regional Health District assures nondiscrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. To file a complaint or to request more information, reasonable accommodations, or language translations, contact 509.324.1501 or visit srhd.org. Created: May 2025.

Chaplain engages residents to accept challenges that are part of aging

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

Yvette Schock, a member of Salem Lutheran Church and chaplain at Riverview Retirement Community since August 2019, finds meaning in ministering to people during their later years and as their bodies change.

“Adjusting to changes in our bodies and minds is not just a physical challenge. It’s a spiritual one,” said Yvette, who sees retirement as a time of “holy rest.”

Yvette also considers residents at Riverview heroes with their resilience and acceptance of the challenges that come with aging.

Riverview is an assisted living facility founded in 1959 by Lutheran congregations in Spokane to address what they saw as a gap in services.

“I love Riverview’s history as part of the Lutheran tradition, looking beyond the walls of the church to express our faith by serving our neighbors,” said Yvette.

Local Lutheran congregations continue to support the facility by serving on its board, by sharing its mission of care and by volunteering.

“For me, Christian ministry expresses love for the whole person—body, mind and spirit,” she said, noting that this perspective grounds her approach to offering spiritual care for individual residents, their families and staff.

Yvette’s presence as chaplain means she is available for people who just need company, as well as for people of faith who want to pray or hear a Psalm.

For her, spiritual care involves Bible study and prayer services, visiting people, praying with them, walking with them and developing other activities that touch and support their spirits.

After she arranged a guest presentation on meditation and mindfulness, residents requested an ongoing meditation group. Yvette now convenes the group weekly, meditating and learning alongside the residents.

A residents’ Community-Builders group, started by the previous chaplain, gathers quarterly to strengthen community ties among all residents across Riverview’s campus.

Yvette connects residents with ministry through arts, music and movement, learning about creation care and exploring holistic aspects of spirituality.

“I met some creative, talented quilters who could no longer sew, but I thought they would still find joy in doing something creative,” said Yvette. “They



Yvette Schock shows display of “Rooted in Love” art creation.

inspired me.”

She applied for a grant from the Lutheran Services for the Elderly Endowment, a fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Her proposal, “Creating Joy: Spiritual Care through Art, Movement, Creation Care,” was approved.

With the grant, Yvette involved local artists who designed and led two community art projects.

The first was a tree art piece, “Rooted in Love,” designed by local artist Oriana Sage. Working with her for several weeks, residents painted a large round canvas and many pieces of fabric. They began forming the trunk, leaves and branches around a chicken wire base.

“There is a wood heart in the center of the tree trunk, made by a resident in our woodshop. He carries wooden hearts around and gives them to just about everyone he meets, sometimes people who are struggling,” said Yvette.

“The first day of the art project, he met the artist, saying, ‘I want you to have a heart.’ She thought it was beautiful but

wasn’t sure how to use it. While putting the tree together to finish the piece, she found the perfect spot for it in the center of the tree trunk, fitting for a project called ‘Rooted in Love.’”

The second part of the “Creating Joy” project was “Movement with Music,” created with the help of Riverview’s resident engagement manager, Amy Brandle, who has a dance background.

For the first “Movement with Music” event, Amy led residents in chair-based movement to music of a live contradance band. At another event, members of Spokane’s Vytal Movement Dance Company shared dances from their upcoming recital, then taught residents a short, chair-based routine to the same music.

Connecting with nature is another part of “Creating Joy.”

“A neighbor who is a birder suggested ways to be in nature and appreciate it as a spiritual experience. The grant helped us buy bird feeders and put them up around our campus to give residents more opportunity to observe birds,” said Yvette.

“Last summer, I moved some of our morning midweek prayer services outdoors to connect residents with nature.”

Yvette grew up in Eastern Washington, where she and her family were active in their local Lutheran congregation.

Because her family hosted exchange students, she developed an interest in learning Spanish. A student from Paraguay stayed with her family for six months.

“It opened up the world to me. I loved learning languages and learning about different cultures and places,” said Yvette, who went on to study Spanish in college.

After graduating, she volunteered with Spanish-speaking communities through the Urban Servant Corps in Denver, Colo., and the Border Servant Corps in El Paso, Tex. Her experiences there led her to pursue ministry.

She attended seminary in Berkeley, Calif., and after earning a master of divinity degree, she was called to serve a small congregation on the East End of Long Island, N.Y.

“They called me because I spoke Spanish, and they wanted to serve the growing Spanish-speaking community around them,” said Yvette.

After four years there, she

moved to Washington, D.C., to work with Church World Service and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition. Then she returned to parish ministry in the D.C. area.

When she and her family moved to Spokane in 2019, she heard about the chaplain position at Riverview from the Northwest Intermountain Synod office.


“I hadn’t served as a chaplain but had ministered to some families when a parent or a spouse had dementia, so I had that experience to draw from,” she said.

“I also had known many elderly church members. I learned so much walking through life with parishioners in their later years, seeing how they grieved, but also accepted the changes that came as our bodies and minds change,” Yvette commented.

That was a helpful touchstone for her understanding of life and aging.


“I’ve continued to learn from the people I’ve met working here at Riverview,” said Yvette. “It’s not that they don’t have sorrow, struggle or anger, but so many people in their later years are grateful as they reflect on their lives. It’s a sweet gift to share that with them.”

For information, email yschock@riverviewretirement.org.



Books
Gifts
Storytimes
Events

So. Perry



WishingTreeBookstore.com
1410 E. 11th Ave. Spokane, WA



Introducing a new UU presence in Spokane

**THE INLAND NORTHWEST
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY**

We are an intergenerational, progressive,
and socially responsible congregation

Zoom services at 10:30 a.m. Sundays

You are welcome here!
inuuc.org

**YOUTH 18 & UNDER
RIDE FREE ON STA!**



spokanetransit.com/youth

Career, Education and Health Fair

Cultural Village

Activities for All Ages

Join us for the 31st Annual

UNITY
in the
COMMUNITY

Region’s Largest
Multi-Cultural Celebration

Live Entertainment

Free K-8
School Supplies

Free Kids Helmets
(while supplies last)

Senior Resource Area

Saturday, August 16th · 10am to 3pm · Riverfront Park

nwunity.org

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH 

Background with variety of people served food bank director well

By Kaye Hult

Over the seven years Darrell Rickert has been program manager, he has appreciated how the Community Action Partnership (CAP) food bank serves the city and area.

He seeks to break through to those who may judge people who use food banks.

He invites those with preconceptions about people who come to food banks, “Come, see for yourself.”

Working through his career and volunteering in the community—in a printing business, as an EMT, in city planning and in charge of school transportation—has connected him with a variety of people.

“Our food bank is a big, happy family,” he said, describing the staff, volunteers, donors, community partners and clients as a family.

In addition to working in the food bank, Darrell distributes food to 25 different food banks in North Idaho, from Bonners Ferry to St. Maries.

“We’re a hub for the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At the food banks I deliver to, I do the same things as here,” he said.

Working with different food banks, he sees varied styles of operation.

“Our food bank is easy to access,” he said. “We don’t have a big intake procedure. We ask clients to register, but do not require proof of identity or residency. We don’t turn anyone away.”

Darrel, who grew up in Spokane and graduated from Rogers High School in 1977, began his career in a check printing business. He moved to a management position by the time he was 20 and has continued in management positions since then.

When the check printing business closed, he moved to Oregon for two years to study printing at Portland Community College.

About 30 years ago, he and his



Darrel Rickard sets aside preconceptions of people.

wife, Tammy, moved to Rathdrum to start Twin Lakes Print Company.

Along with that work, Darrell began to serve in the community, volunteering as a fireman and EMT.

He then became involved with the City of Rathdrum, first as a planning and zoning commissioner for six years, and then with the Rathdrum City Council for another six years.

When he closed the printing business, he began working as transportation supervisor with the Lakeland School District, a job that kept him serving the community.

Overseeing the bus garage meant working with parents, bus drivers, kids and teachers, making sure each felt heard and respected.

He felt responsible to keep their kids safe for their parents. He felt responsible to teachers to transport healthy kids to school on time. Because the buses moved throughout the community, he made sure the bus drivers and vehicles provided safe transportation.

After about 20 years with the school district, Darrell was ready for a change and learned that CAP had a job opening.

“I have to have an open mind

because we deal with so many different people as clients and volunteers—including those doing court-ordered community service,” said Darrell.

With much government paperwork and inspections to assure the operation is clean and food is safe, Darrell seeks to run the food bank efficiently with two staff and about 50 volunteers.

“The volunteers are amazing. I thank them for the work they do, and they thank me right back for allowing them to do it,” he said.

In addition to staff and volunteers, Darrell fosters good relationships with donors and community partners.

“They need to see the pride we have in the way we present the food they provide to our clients,” he said.

In addition, many companies and schools come into the CAP food bank to do community projects. When CAP receives donations of several hundred pounds at once, he needs extra volunteers to help sort it.

“We also have a community garden out back,” said Darrell, who manages it but has a master gardener to tend it.

“Groups come in to clean up and turn over the garden plots in the spring for a project,” he said. “We’ve gathered as much

as 2,000 pounds of produce from it in some seasons.”

Given the variety of people with whom he has interacted over the years, Darrell developed his ability to avoid judging people.

“I seek not to be judgmental.

The more I find out about people, the more I appreciate how interesting they are,” he commented. “I learn from their differences and find them enlightening.”

For information, call 208-770-3018 or email d.rickard@cap4action.org.

Dances of Universal Peace



Simple movements
Singing sacred phrases,
From many traditions
All are Welcome!

Sept-Jun - 2nd & 4th Thurs
at 6:30pm
See Calendar or 509.818.6733
www.facebook.com/spokanedup

Recycling Pick-Up Service



- appliances
- office paper
- cardboard
- electronics

Call for hours

EarthworksRecycling.com
(509) 534-1638
1904 E Broadway-Spokane
2 blks N of Trent/Napa



At Emmanuel Family Life Center

“People Matter and We Care”

WE RENT SPACE

Office space
Gymnasium Usage

In South Perry neighborhood
at 631 S. Richard Allen Ct.

We house programs that help people improve their lives.

pbenjamin.eflc@gmail.com • (509) 443-4884

Railroad Museum Now Open!

Now open Friday, Saturday, Sunday
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



- New Cars To Tour
- 2-Foot Gauge Train Ride
- Model Trains
- Historical Exhibits
- Memorabilia & More

Order Tickets at

inlandnorthwest
railmuseum.com

Inland Northwest Rail Museum

27300 Sprinkle Rd N • Reardan (25 mi W of Spokane) 509-796-3377



FAIRWOOD MEANS TOGETHER.

Independent Living Apartments, Condos, and Meadow Homes

Assisted Living • Memory Support Care

Watch our guided video tour at
www.fairwoodretirement.com

call 509.467.2365 for tours and pricing



Groups suggest resources for nonprofits

Nonprofits across the Inland Northwest are feeling the impact of possible new policies and executive orders. Agencies need to know where they can go to get current information.

The following are some resources.

The National Council of Nonprofits, Public Citizen, State Democracy Defenders Fund, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Americans Against Government Censorship are circulating a sign-on letter at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSffoPRt1UEhkvJrnGXWiNeXbiPIGGt8xjaOcWkLJ9ZtNfDzLA/viewform>.

Many sources suggest keeping in contact with representatives in the House of Representatives at <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative> and senators at <https://www.senate.gov/states/WA/intro.htm> or <https://www.senate.gov/states/ID/intro.htm> to voice your concerns and ask for their commitment to protect the nonprofit sector.

The National Council of

Nonprofits is working to protect nonprofits in the courts: councilofnonprofits.org/impacts-recent-executive-orders-nonprofits.

Other sources of information for nonprofits and sharing information include the Nonprofit Association of Washington Community Slack channel <https://nonprofitwa.org/collaborate/>

community-slack, as well as attending the Washington State Nonprofit Conference <https://nonprofitwa.org/washington-state-nonprofit-conference>.

The Idaho Nonprofit Center also has helpful resources available at <https://www.idahononprofits.org/legislative-watch.html>.



Working for Independence, Fairness, and Justice

Build your network of friends and allies!

Join us in advocating for choice, and raising the voices of the disability community who are most marginalized.

Our team provides five core services for, including:

- ✓ Information and Referral
- ✓ Peer Counseling & Support
- ✓ Independent Skills Training
- ✓ Personal & Community Advocacy
- ✓ Transition Services

Located in Garden Court
222 W. Mission Ave # 230 Spokane

Call us
509.606.4639



Walk with Us

CATHOLIC CHARITIES EASTERN WASHINGTON

At Catholic Charities, we work to feed the hungry, heal the hurting, and welcome the stranger. This Easter season we invite you to join in that work, and to walk with us as we create positive change in our community.

Please donate today by scanning the QR code with your phone or visiting
www.cceasternwa.org.



Crosswalk opens new shelter designed by youth for youth in summer

For nearly four decades, Crosswalk has stood as a refuge for Spokane’s youth experiencing homelessness. Now a long-awaited move is closer to reality as construction on its new building nears completion for its opening in August.

“Since 1985, it has been more than just a shelter. It has been a lifeline,” said Sherrece Scott, annual giving manager for Volunteers of America (VOA) Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.

“**Within its walls**, young people find not only a safe place to sleep but also the support of case managers, educators and behavioral health counselors who help them navigate the complexities of trauma, disrupted education and the ever-present threat of exploitation,” she said.

Because Crosswalk is the only licensed emergency youth shelter in the region, “the need for its services has never been greater,” Sherrece added.

As Spokane has grown and changed, so too have the challenges faced by the young people who walk through Crosswalk’s doors. The downtown location, once a safe haven, has become increasingly dangerous, and the building at 525 W. 2nd Ave. can no longer support the full range of services youth need to thrive.

Crosswalk has outgrown its current space.

In response, Volunteers of America took on the mission to create a shelter designed for youth by youth. Bridget Cannon, a staff member who started working with Crosswalk youth and moved into administrative leadership, helped guide the effort over her 32 years there.

In 2018, conceptual planning for a new facility began, with one critical voice leading the way—the young people themselves.

When asked to imagine their ideal Crosswalk, they spoke of a home in a neighborhood away from the stress of downtown, surrounded by green spaces and close to schools. They wanted a place that felt like a fresh start, where they could be seen as kids first, not just as homeless youth.

That vision is becoming a reality. This fall, Crosswalk will open its doors in a new location adjacent to Spokane Community College, Chief Garry Park, CHAS Health and the VOA Young Adult Shelter (YAS).

“It’s an ideal setting that blends stability, accessibility and opportunity,” Sherrece said.

The new Crosswalk is more than a building.

“It’s a statement of dignity and belonging. Bright, modern and filled with natural light, the



Sherrece Scott honors legacy of Bridget Cannon at Crosswalk.

shelter is designed to foster healing and growth, and to empower those who come,” she said.

The first floor will house a welcoming shelter space, featuring shared areas that encourage community and connection.

On the second floor, private dorm-style rooms will provide comfort and dignity for youth working toward independence, whether they attend school or are starting their first jobs.

“**Crosswalk’s mission** has always been about more than providing a place to stay. It’s about breaking the cycle of homelessness,” Sherrece explained.

The new facility offers the same life-changing resources that have helped so many young people succeed, but now in a space designed to enhance the services.

Youth will have access to educational support, behavioral health counseling, substance use recovery resources, job readiness programs and a sense of stability they can rely on.

“We’re providing a community response to a growing need,” Sherrece said. “The urgency behind Crosswalk’s relocation is clear.”

Last year, 604 young people came to Crosswalk seeking safety. VOA provided more than 11,000 meals, helped 15 students earn their GED, reunited 380 youth with family and secured housing for 187 individuals.

“The numbers only tell part of the story,” Sherrece said. “Each statistic represents a young person who needed a chance and someone to believe in them.”

“Crosswalk’s new home is a testament to what is possible when a community listens, collaborates and acts. It is a promise kept, a sanctuary built not just for youth but with them, ensuring that every detail speaks to their needs and potential,” she added.

As the doors open this fall, a new chapter begins not just for VOA or Crosswalk but also for every young person who steps inside and finally hears the words they have been waiting for: “You are safe. You are home.”

In addition to reporting on the new building, Sherrece shared the sad news that long-time staff member Bridget, who has embodied Crosswalk’s mission and was excited about the new building, will not be there. She passed away unexpectedly on March 3.

Sherrece shared some of her own reflections and comments of other staff.

“Her name has been synonymous with Crosswalk as she poured her heart and soul into ensuring Spokane’s most vulnerable youth had what they needed to survive and thrive,” she said. “From early years, Bridget was a fierce advocate, mentor, leader and above all, friend to countless youth and staff.”

“**Her passion** and dedication set the foundation for the shelter’s future. Her spirit will continue to inspire all who work and volunteer there to carry her vision forward,” Sherrece said. “Her passion, dedication, resilience and compassion impacted countless lives. Those who worked with her remember her leadership, humanity and heart.”

Security program manager TJ Regalado, who has been at VOA 12 years, said: “She empowered me to fight for something the right way. Her encouragement meant the world to me. She taught me the reason we do what we do. Her passion was infectious. I will never forget what our mission is.”

Bridget’s influence stretched beyond day-to-day operations, as Brandon Martin, COO, shared: “I thrive on structure, while she embraced thinking outside the box. Without trying, she broadened my thinking and sharpened my ability to engage in new ways. Her ideas were insightful and contagious, sparking curiosity and reflection I had not expected. While she was eager to learn from me, I learned much from her.”

Wendy Alderson, director of shelters, appreciated Bridget as an “inspiring boss and mentor. Over the years, she taught me so much, professionally and personally. Her passion for the young people she served was undeniable, and her ability to

build rapport with them and meet them where they were was inspiring,” Wendy commented. “She was a great listener, always asking the hard questions that encouraged me to think for myself. She supported me through many challenges, let me fail and reminded me that if I wasn’t failing, I wasn’t truly learning.”

Sherrece added that Bridget’s own words echo her dedication: “When I eventually retire, I’ll likely continue to volunteer with Crosswalk.”

While she did not live to retire, that statement captures her commitment.

“**Her influence will continue** to guide Crosswalk’s mission to everyone who steps through its doors,” Sherrece said. “As we move forward with Crosswalk 2.0, we do so knowing that Bridget’s spirit lives in every corner, every story and every success that comes from the place she helped shape.”

For information, call 862-4877 or email sscott@voaspo-kane.org.



Peer Counseling • Housing
Employment
www.mhaspeakoutspeakup.org
**3012 N. Nevada St. #1
Spokane, WA 99207
(509) 385-5286**



**is proud
to support
the local
journalism of
The Fig Tree**



**You don't
have to do it alone.**

One number connects you to all the services
you need to age at home... **help starts here.**

(509) 960-7281 | WWW.ALTCEW.ORG

BEHOLD JESUS

IN

The Gospel of John

FREE EVENT

No Tickets Necessary - Open Seating

Saturday May 31 @ 2 pm
at

First Interstate Center for the Arts
334 W Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane

27th
Year

spokanedreamcenter.org



**GLOBAL FOOD
and ART MARKET**

Small businesses from
Spokane’s immigrant, refugee,
& international community

**Tuesdays
3-7 pm
May 6-
July 29**



733 W. Garland Ave. outside
at The Gathering House

“IT’S THE LAW!”



**Click or Call Two Business Days
Before You Plan To Dig in Washington**



Click
www.CallBeforeYouDig.org

Call
800-424-5555 or dial 811

**Safety is in Your Hands.
Every Dig. Every Time.**

Inland Empire Utility Coordinating Council www.ieucc811.org



World loses the kind of prophetic leader it most needs in these times

In the death of Pope Francis, our world has lost the kind of prophetic leader it needs most.

From the moment of his election, when he humbly asked for prayers to his public appearances on Easter the day before he died, he faithfully served his God as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

He embodied concern for those living in poverty and on the margins both by example and by his teachings. His first visit outside the Vatican was to the Italian island of Lampedusa in July 2013. The visit drew global attention to the migration crisis in Europe and highlighted the need for compassion and understanding

towards those seeking refuge. It reflected his commitment to social justice, human dignity and the Church’s role in serving the most vulnerable members of society.

One of his last actions was to visit with the U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance, with whom he had sharply disagreed on the Trump administration’s approach to immigration.

In his personal life, Pope Francis rejected much of the pomp of the papacy, choosing to live in simple rooms of the guest house Casa Santa Marta, where he took his meals in the same buffet line as everyone else. He drove in a regular car instead of the Pope-mobile and favored a

simple white robe and ordinary shoes over traditional ornate vestments.

He was one of the first leaders of a major religion to speak out about the damage humans were doing to Earth, our common home.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si*, he challenged Catholics, Christians and all people of the world to change our actions. The encyclical spurred the foundation of a worldwide movement of the same name.

He had declared 2025—what was to be the last year of his life—to be a Jubilee Year of Hope, encouraging Catholics to be “tangible signs of hope for those experiencing hardships of any kind,” urging

believers to be “pilgrims of light” amid the darkness of the world and to work towards a more fraternal and peaceful world.

Pope Francis was a remarkable leader filled with the joy of the Gospel. He championed the dignity of all people, particularly those of us relegated to the peripheries. He affirmed the sacredness of all creation and called for an inclusive church that welcomes all. He was a compassionate leader who cared about people and the planet.

May his spirit be our guide.

Catherine Ferguson SNJM
The Fig Tree Editorial Team

Self-government only works if people organize to take larger action

The practice of self-government was and remains an experiment.

Abraham Lincoln outlined the stakes of the democratic project well when he wrote that our task has “always been to prove that such an experiment can endure.”

At this pivotal point in history, our task, once again, is to prove that popular government is not an absurdity, for “if we fail, it will go far to prove the incapability of the people to govern themselves.”

None can say if it is in our inherent human nature to collaborate or dominate, but one can certainly claim that the complexity of our modern world is far beyond what our ancestors were naturally given the tools to navigate.

Navigating the complex financial, social, political and emotional dynamics of governance in a global world, with cities of millions and geographic expanses that take a lifetime to cross on foot, is beyond the capacity we are born with.

The conclusion to draw is not that we should give up, but that popular governance in an increasingly complex world requires increasingly intentional educa-

tion. In short, having freedom takes work, and it takes education.

The standard answer to solving the crises we find ourselves in is that we need better leaders.

The real answer is that we need better citizens.

If we truly want the liberty that our ancestors around the world fought for and if we want to realize the vision of a government of, by and for the people, then we must be willing to teach ourselves and future generations how to shoulder this responsibility.

What, then, must we do? How do we get there?

Good citizens deliberate, listen, negotiate, build consensus and take responsibility to create things of public value together. Those are not easy skills, but they are arguably the most important in a society that wishes to develop a democratic culture.

At a time when we need a return of the citizen movement, it is critical to teach these skills and give people the chance to practice them.

So, we are left with the question: How do we teach people the skills needed to be democratic?

We must invest in civic education.

Good citizens deliberate, listen, negotiate, build consensus and take responsibility to create things of public value together.

Those skills take time, energy and intentional effort to develop in ways that promote awareness of power and how it operates.

It is about rebuilding a culture of “asociacionismo” or associations, like I experienced with the cooperatives in Barcelona, Spain. One woman in the co-operative expressed her motivation, “We fight for our rights because who else would?”

We need to build democratic institutions by creating places that foster civic relationships.

Americans typically entered associations not because they had strong, preexisting civic commitments, but because of their economic needs, religious beliefs, social ties and personal identities. The unions, fraternal associations, churches,

and synagogues they joined then turned them into active citizens.

Examples of associations that empower people are The Ateneus of Catalonia, Abahlali base Mjondolo’s political education in South Africa, unions in the United States, Freedom Schools in the Jim Crow South, the Homeowners Associations in the Philippines, churches in the Civil Rights Movement, Community Service Organizations in California and Comunidades de Base, or base communities in the Catholic Church.

Those institutions, schools, neighborhood associations, Ateneus, civic associations and churches that still mediate between individuals and the social, economic and cultural pressures we face need to learn how to federate.

To be effective, we need to be part of federations, built of strong and independent local organizations that are then capable of linking together when needed to take larger action.

Cameron Conner
The Fig Tree Columnist



Stories and storytelling can be tools for many facets of ministry

Octopuses have had an excellent few years in pop culture. In 2020 there was the inspiring documentary, “My Octopus Teacher.” Two years later, Shelby Van Pelt’s novel *Remarkably Bright Creatures* became a best seller (I have not read it yet). My favorite story starring an octopus is a children’s picture book I adored as a kid, *Herman the Helper* by Robert Kraus. I thought of this book during our Synod Council meeting when our guest Karen Kretschmann, ELCA Coordinator for Storytelling Engagement, invited us to think of a story from our lives or a children’s story.

The illustrations and characters came flooding back so clearly with her prompting. As the title implies, a youth green octopus named Herman spends his entire day helping sea creatures. I have been trying hard to figure out why I absolutely loved that book—so much so that eventually I was given my own copy, instead of going back to the library. Like many children’s books about young people or animals, the author simply invited young readers to relate to Herman. The surprising creatures Herman ended up helping also opened my own imagination.

Stories and storytelling can be tools for so many facets of ministry. Stories can help people heal from wounds, even trauma. Stories can help with financial stewardship. Stories can help us teach lessons or learn. Stories can be incorporated into the proclamation of the gospel. Stories can help us build new relationships and strengthen old relationships. Stories

can give us hope and help us in imparting hope. Stories invite us to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

Storytelling can be professional, polished, poetic, and witty. On the one hand, telling stories is like other skills, meaning that we can practice and get better. I can absolutely identify several of the more gifted storytellers in my life. On the other hand, every single person has a story to tell and, often with simple questions, that story can be released to the listener. After all, stories go nowhere without a listener.

One of my favorite questions that I ask around fellowship hall tables or in a narthex before worship begins is, “how did you end up worshipping with this community?” Sometimes the person I ask moved to a town or neighborhood and found the ELCA congregation. Then I ask a follow up about why they stayed or why they would invite a friend to this congregation.

Much more often I get a story about their family’s needs, or a friend who invited them, or a unique ministry they noticed, or separation from another community of faith and landing here. These are holy stories, and I thank you if you have shared yours with me. Do you know how everyone in your congregation ended up there? How could knowing more of those stories deepen relationships with one another and with the God we worship?

We have just encountered again a story central to our faith and discipleship—the story of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection.

I always find it humbling to ponder how much of this story to explain, how much to let it speak for itself, how much to correct misinterpretations, and what exactly to proclaim. During Holy Week, I was and am grateful that stories are not just in our heads. We embody the stories during

Holy Week: processing, washing, feasting, baptizing, singing, reading aloud, praying together and more. Blessings as you together encounter this amazing story anew this spring.

Bishop Meggan Manlove
NW Intermountain Synod - ELCA

Behind signs carried in rallies are many stories

People today are affected in multiple ways by decisions being made that have an impact on their everyday lives and relationships, their beliefs and values.

Recent rallies in Spokane and around the region and nation have offered people opportunities to share their passions and call for action to protect democracy.



Calendar of Events

Submit events to development@thefiatree.org third Fridays

To Sept 28 • Fire: Rebirth and Resilience. exhibit on 1889

10 to 11 a.m., 321-7137, artsalvagespokane.com

thefigtree.org

E. 620 North Foothills Dr. Spokane, WA 99207
SCOTT M. CUSHMAN 487-9683 OR 484-5221

Spokane, WA 99207
487-9683 OR 484-5221



**Please contact us if you would like to set up
an alternative time to drop off donations!**



Mission Community Outreach Center
Reaching Out With Care

1906 E. Mission Ave.
509-536-1084 - 4mission



Community
BUILDING

- affordable pricing
- all the tools needed to grow your organization
- private offices
- conference rooms
- high-speed internet
- 24/7 access.

Call Angela Chapman at 509-798-1655
or email at angela@community-building.org

12 noon to 3 pm

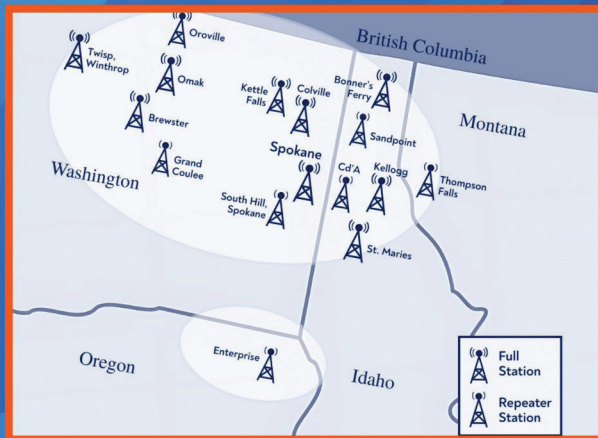
"Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the drops of one ocean." Baha'u'llah



and now second generation Beverly Amstadter

**30 years of serving Spokane
helping area non-profits
grow & prosper**

STAND WITH THE FACTS, STAND WITH SPR!



ADVOCATE! DONATE!

Learn more at SpokanePublicRadio.org



Spokane
PUBLIC RADIO
SpokanePublicRadio.org



The Arc of Spokane offers myriad of programs, plus thrift stores

The Arc of Spokane, the largest chapter of The Arc in Washington state, has for 75 years been providing direct services to nearly 3,000 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and advocating for more than 9,000 people with IDD.

“Our organization takes people as they are, finds out what they want and sets the stage for them to succeed and flourish,” said Pam Norr, who brings 35 years of nonprofit experience to her role as chief executive officer.

With the support of thousands of donors and many volunteers, its 285 staff provide programs to help people to live independent and fulfilled lives, Pam said.

Proceeds from its two thrift stores and fundraisers support The Arc’s mission of community inclusion and people’s rights to have the life they want to live, said Rose Williamson, director of thrift store operations.

The two thrift stores—at 11008 N. Newport Hwy and at 1441 N. Argonne Rd. in the Spokane Valley—have 40 employees who provide ongoing support for the services.

Pam gave an overview of the Arc’s programs and why she is committed to leading the organization.

- The community center is a place where people with and without disabilities learn and grow through games, classes, outings and social experiences.
- Community inclusion gives one-to-one support for people with IDD to join in activities, events and volunteer opportunities like Meals on Wheels, Northwest Harvest Food Bank, Southside Church Bible Study, Spokane Valley Senior Center and the Humane Society.
- Individual advocacy strengthens the voice of people with IDD to advocate for themselves and others as self-advocates. One example is Taylor Crisp, who has developed her ability to tell her story in Olympia. She now works part time in advocacy and part time at the community center.
- Since 1990, The Arc has worked with Avista’s Investment Recovery Center, where individuals drive forklifts and groups are employed to take a light pole apart to save recyclable parts, such as the wiring and the glass, saving millions of pounds of parts from going into the landfill. Avista sells and recycles the materials.
- The Spokane County Parent Coalition includes parents, caregivers and guardians who advocate for people with IDD



Rose Williamson and Pam Norr share about their roles in serving people with IDD through The Arc of Spokane.

to promote inclusive community through educational events and legislative advocacy.

- Parent to Parent empowers and supports parents, engages families, trains family volunteers to help with programs and transportation.
 - For 40 years, The Arc has provided protective payee services for individuals receiving Social Security benefits to help them have more financial stability and independence.
 - The individual supportive employment program helps clients assess their skills and resumes and matches them to jobs that fit their needs and abilities—in offices, stores and restaurants. Clients work in businesses with an employment coach.
 - The Arc facilitates supported community living for 50 adult men and women in 17 age- and affinity-based homes clients rent or own together. Staff keep them safe and comfortable and attend to their health and personal care needs and volunteers help transport them to grocery stores and medical appointments.
 - The transition and young adult program supports people between 18 and 22, helping them with college classes, entrepreneurial skills, community engagement, peer mentoring and life skills.
- “I love what we do, because I’m personally connected to the mission. I have a son with autism, ADHD and OCD,” Pam

said, grateful to be part of providing support and services for something so critically important to her.

Pam aims to work at The Arc long term as many other employees have done. Some have been there 30 to 35 years.

Tagging along with her father when he volunteered with the Knights of Columbus instilled in her the commitment to give back and serve the community.

Pam, who earned a bachelor’s degree in English and business in 1987 at the University of Oregon, started in nonprofit healthcare administration. When she became tired of that, she decided to work with grassroots nonprofits and liked that.

Pam wants to leave this planet feeling like she had a small part in helping make someone’s life better.

She appreciates how The Arc makes a difference for so many people, especially those with IDD.

Pam’s son with special needs volunteers sorting books.

“We change lives,” said Pam.

Rose, who has been working with The Arc Thrift Stores for eight years, described her involvement with the thrift store mission.

Early on, she helped her mother, who started several second-hand children’s and women’s clothing stores. She worked the cash register at the age of 12.

In 2001, Rose spent the sum-

mer after graduating from high school on a dude ranch in the middle of nowhere with no television, teaching yuppies to camp and ride horses. When she returned, she was staying with friends on Sept. 11, when two planes crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York.

“That jumpstarted me into advocating for social justice,” she said.

Her passion for social justice grew during studies for a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and political science at the University of Oregon. After college, Rose came to Spokane for an AmeriCorps job at Gonzaga’s multicultural center, developing mentoring programs.

When she became pregnant, Rose opened a thrift store, the Bougie Baby Boutique, like her mother had done. It did well and she sold that for a profit before coming to direct the Thrift Stores at The Arc.

“The thrift stores serve as a place of employment for people of all abilities,” she said.

“There are many models for thrift stores, from ma and pa shops to more mainstream,” Rose explained. “The Arc is unique. We don’t follow for-profit models. We’re here to do good. That resonates in our customer service, in funds from sales staying in Spokane County and in keeping more than 100,000 pounds out of the landfill, including recycling items we can’t sell.”

The Arc seeks to show its mission in the thrift stores. Many people know the thrift stores more than the nonprofit.

Rose added that most people know someone affected by IDD—a family member or friend.

“Our mission hits every level of society, regardless of background or belief system. Our mission supports people and their families,” she said.

“Two cashiers with IDD have been here since the thrift store opened. One started extremely shy. Another had anxiety and often retreated into her shell. Both have opened up and now help plan the Rock the Runway fundraiser, model for campaigns and engage with customers,” said Rose. “It’s been transformative for them.”


Rock the Runway, The Arc’s main fundraiser, also helps draw people out. This year it gathered 300 people on April 12 at the Convention Center for a gala and auction.

The models, who are affiliated with The Arc, come to the thrift store and have guided fittings to choose outfits—shoes, accessories, fancy dresses and suits. After a photo shoot, they strut their stuff walking down the runway, said Rose.


Those in employment programs do Rock the Runway as a group, coming out in suits and then turning around to put on their yellow vests, hard hats and safety goggles, said Pam.

The thrift stores accept groups who want to volunteer. Volunteers apply and have background checks. The thrift stores also always take donations of clothing and household items.

For information, call 328-6326, email info@arc-spokane.org or visit arc-spokane.org.



Institute for Climate,
Water, and the Environment



Is your family
prepared for heat
and smoke this
summer?

Learn more from
the Climate
Resilience Project!

[www.gonzaga.edu/
ClimateResilience](http://www.gonzaga.edu/ClimateResilience)

SPOKANE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Palabras que sanan: Un taller de escritura en español

Words That Heal: A Writing Workshop in Spanish

Para adultos

Este taller de dos días brinda un espacio de apoyo para escribir, donde puedes explorar y honrar tu camino a través de ejercicios de escritura reflexiva.

TERRA Connections ofrece este taller gratuito de escritura para la comunidad inmigrante de habla hispana. El programa es presentado completamente en español.

Es necesario inscribirse.

SPOKANE VALLEY LIBRARY

22 N Herald Rd

Sábado, 10 de mayo

9am–4pm

Obtenga más información en

sclcd.org/programas-en-espanol





FAIR TRADE • HANDMADE • LOCAL

kizuri

Curbside pickup, delivery and shipping available

35 W. Main, Spokane • 509-464-7677

www.kizurispokane.com



98% of spokane would find ways to support children they know impacted by domestic violence.

our commitment. Their future.



SAFE STATES

