YWCA challenges violence, racism

By Mary Stamp

After years of serving as the CFO of YWCA Spokane and other nonprofits and accounting firms, Jeanette Hauck has a new letter, "E," in her title: CEO. As chief executive officer she is readily becoming the administrator and spokesperson for the YWCA’s dual mission of empowering women and eliminating racism.

She works with a team of 23 community leaders on the board and more than 90 employees who promote programs to assure that women, children and families live in dignity, free from violence and discrimination.

YWCA Spokane programs prevent and respond to domestic violence, helping survivors through trauma to healing. Its programs also challenge racial and social injustice.

In addition to its programs providing shelter, housing, legal assistance and job skills, in partnership with other agencies, she said YWCA Spokane honors women who make a difference in the community.

Through Nov. 1, it is receiving nominations for Women of Achievement Awards to be presented at the Luncheon, which has been moved from fall to March 24 so it can be in person at the Davenport Hotel.

Jeanette started as finance director at YWCA Spokane in December 2011 and became chief financial officer in 2013. On Sept. 1, 2020, she was named interim chief executive officer, after CEO Regina Malveaux was named executive director of the Washington Women’s Commission. In February 2021, the board chose Jeanette as CEO.

During high school in Longmont, Colo., she decided to study accounting, earning a bachelor’s in accounting at the University of Denver in 1983. After college, she joined the international accounting firm KPMG in Denver, working with small business services for private and nonprofit businesses, doing both audits and taxes.

Auditing nonprofits sparked her interest in social services.

After four years, she moved with KPMG to Washington, D.C., and then to Phoenix, as her husband, Terry, was transferred in the Air Force. In San Antonio, she raised their two sons and was CFO for the Cancer Foundation.

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Holy Names Sister volunteers to welcome strangers at border

Karen Conlin, a Holy Names Sister, and cello teacher at Holy Names Music Center who has lived in Spokane most of her life, left her familiar world in June and traveled to Laredo, Texas, for the first time so she could join in efforts there to “welcome strangers.”

She went to volunteer at La Reina, a women’s shelter, and cello teacher at Holy Names.

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World Relief expects to resettle 300 Afghans

In Spokane, World Relief expects to resettle 300 of 50,000 Afghan evacuees who are coming nationally between now and the end of this calendar year, so it is looking for landlords interested in renting apartments or houses to these new families.

“We are also receiving funds to help with needs such as medical expenses that are not covered by government funds,” said Mark Finney, executive director.

“This is a defining moment for us as people of faith. Will we step up to stand with our new neighbors as they seek refuge from Taliban brutality, or will we sit on the sidelines out of fear or indifference?” he asked.

“I am confident congregations across Spokane will rise to this challenge and prove once again what makes our country so special. We welcome all who yearn to breathe free.”

To provide services for Afghan refugees, World Relief is hiring staff and seeking people who speak and can help with interpreting Dari and Pashto. Jobs are posted on the website.

Faith communities are engaging in practical ways, with several in early processes of assisting, offering housing, such as in unused parsonages,” Mark said.

Afghans who are part of the Special Immigrant Visa Program worked with the U.S. government and contractors may have one family member who speaks English.

We announced the need for volunteers and so many want to volunteer that we have filled our scheduled volunteer training through the end of December,” said Mark, encouraging individuals and congregations who want to help now to raise money.

“Most Afghans coming do not qualify for social services, such as medical care. They are refugees, not immigrants,” he said.

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Faith calls for interreligious solidarity

Speaking at the G20 Interfaith Forum “Faith calls us to interreligious solidarity” which opened Wednesday, World Council of Churches (WCC) acting general secretary Joan Sauca, commented that “Christian ecumenism is a model for Christian communities to respond in relationships of indifference, conflict or cooperation with each other.”

“Ecumenism is therefore not a choice but an imperative for the churches despite— or because of— the counter-witness of their longstanding divisions,” he said. Churches lived for centuries in isolation or in conflict, and only in the last century did many agree to address together causes of their separation, he said, adding that “we still have a long way to go on the ecumenical road.”

He called for Christianity to decolonize relations with other faiths in a global context, with the pandemic catalyzing inequalities and injustices, “our Christian faith calls us to interreligious solidarity in a time of healing—all sustained by hope nurtures a shared ethical and spiritual values to the unity of the human family, and guided by principles of humility, vulnerability, community, compassion, common good, dialogue, mutual learning, repentance, renewal, gratitude, generosity, respect and love.”

“The ecumenical calling encompasses our economic relations with each other and our relations with the environment,” Joan said. “The economic, the ecological and the moral are intertwined and cannot be considered separately. The pandemic, rising poverty and inequality, and the climate crisis teach us vividly of the global dimensions of the okos, our shared vulnerability and shared fate as one humanity.”

With people now feeling keenly the fragility of human life, he concluded that the global challenges “have revealed or reinforced not only our shared vulnerability but also our fundamental community as humans, our solidarity across divides and borders, and our capacity for empathy, understanding and sacrifice.”

Faith commitments, however different, hold shared values that draw people to closer ties and collaboration with other faiths, in a cooperative work for urgent climate action, for economic justice and for basic human rights, Joan said.

Ecumenical studies begin at Bossey

As the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey began a new academic year on Sept. 8, students from around the world embarked on an intense period of ecumenical community building, academic learning and an experience of faith that will explore what it means to live in community with people from other countries, cultures and Christian traditions,” she said. “This is an often challenging, but also deeply rewarding experience.”

“Students engage with diversity and difference, and in doing that they discover profound connections between themselves. At Bossey, ecumenical education is not just at the same time an embodied experience and an intellectual endeavor,” she said. The students’ expectations are already high for the time ahead.

Sarah Beitzig, a student from the LifeStone Church (Assembly of God) in Bologna, Italy, said the cross-catalysing ecumenical community includes grace because people want to understand and learn. Katalina Zamorano Martinez, a pastor from the Methodist Church of Mexico, values the multicultural interaction as a way to learn from other countries to help her ministry. “The

One River, Ethics Matter continues dialogue

One River, Ethics Matter, a multi-year consultation on the Columbia River Treaty facilitated by the Ethics and Trees Project, will be held on-line Wednesday and Thursday, Nov. 17 and 18, beginning at 9 a.m. each day.

With the theme, “k̓l̓ cp̓əlk̓ st̓ iḥ - restraining inytyq (salmon) to the Okanagan River and the Upper Columbia,” the eighth annual “One River, Ethics Matter” conference will focus on treaty renewal, restoring salmon and the river, youth and climate change, and will explore remedial options related to the Columbia River Basin. Grounded in respectful dialogue, its goal is to further public understanding. The conference alternates between the United States and Canada. The 2021, it is co-hosted by the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the University of British Columbia-Indigenous Studies program. It addresses the history of the Columbia River Treaty and the treaty review process within a framework that emphasizes social and environmental justice, collaboration for the common good, and the need for truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Some themes are treaty-specific. Others include the history of Indian residential schools and calls to action of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. For information, call 535-1813 or 535-4112, or email marystamp@thefigtree.org or re-source directory@thefigtree.org.

Fig Tree announces fall and 2022 events

The Fig Tree has plans for three events:

• The Fall Festival of Sharing from Oct. 21 to Nov. 30 is an opportunity for new and renewing sponsors to support the publication’s mission of sharing stories, connecting people, fostering understanding and inspiring respect and solidarity among diverse people. The goal is to raise $7,500.

• The annual “One River, Ethics Matter” conference will focus on treaty renewal, restoring salmon and the river, youth and climate change, and will explore remedial options related to the Columbia River Basin. Grounded in respectful dialogue, its goal is to further public understanding. The conference alternates between the United States and Canada. The 2021, it is co-hosted by the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the University of British Columbia-Indigenous Studies program. It addresses the history of the Columbia River Treaty and the treaty review process within a framework that emphasizes social and environmental justice, collaboration for the common good, and the need for truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

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Kristin, who earned a business degree at the University of Puget Sound and law degree at Cornell Law School, has been an advocate for sustainable development, civic engagement and human rights.

She pointed to the power of faith, hope and love, she looks forward to engaging faith communities in fulfilling FAN’s mission of building a just, compassionate and sustainable world.

For information, call 535-1813 or 535-4112, or email marystamp@thefigtree.org or re-source directory@thefigtree.org.

Faith Action Network names policy leader

The Faith Action Network’s new policy engagement director, Kristin Ang, begins work on October 4.

Kristin brings policy leader-ship experience as a port commissioner for Tacoma, and experience in international trade with a Japanese-American immigrant and lawyer who collaborates with interfaith circles in Pierce County.

During the fall, she will be learning about FAN from cluster members, coalition partners and staff.

Kristin grew up in Pierce County, where she has been a community advocate, Port of Tacoma commissioner and Northwest Seaport Alliance managing member.

She was the first person of color on the Tacoma Port Commission, with the endorsement of the Pu Ally Ship Tribe. She is a founding member of the Asian-American and tribal liaison committees, and on the executive board of the Central Puget Sound Economic Development District.

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Transitions ‘People Who Care’ is online

Transitions decided to move the 2021 “People Who Care” event to a 100 percent virtual event at noon, Thursday, Oct. 14. The program includes celebrating 30 years of people at Women’s Heart, hearing from Heart alumnas and a university professor who recently conducted research on the Heart’s drop-in model.

Speakers include people who have participated in programs and moved their lives forward from Transitions’ executive director, Edie Rice-Sauer, to invite participants to invest in the program.

People Who Care helps fund Transitions encourages people to end poverty and homelessness for women and children.

Transitions promotes respect for human dignity, justice, community, growth and whole-ness.

Transitions will use its You Tube channel to stream the event and guests can participate in chat.

For information, visit https://help4women.org/pwc2021/
Vigil for Healing the Earth is Oct. 3
A vigil for the Healing of the Earth will be held from 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 3, at the Old Mission Landing, down the road from Sacred Heart Mission at Cataldo, Idaho.

Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of Eastern Washington and North Idaho (FLLC) organizes Healing of the Earth and Earth Day Vigils every six months. Those attending will hear from people affected by living on the nation’s largest Superfund site, the Montana Dot.jpg, convert Soil and pastor of Veradale United Church of Christ in Spokane.

People may participate in a grieving circle on ecological dev- astation. They also will learn about groups working to overcome pollution and climate change, and be invited to join in the solution. The event is at Old Mission Landing at exit 39 on Interstate 90. After going toward Cataldo’s Old Mission State Park, attend- ers are to follow The Dredge Road to the end.

Founded in 2018, FLLC participants work to overcome racism, militarism, poverty and ecological devastation. Their goals are the principles set forth by the Poor Peoples Campaign: A National Call for a Moral Revival. All four barriers affect ecological devastation.

“The care of our planet crosses all cultures, class divisions, religions and non-religions,” said Gen. For information, call 408-593-9556 or email genheywood@gmail.com.

PJALS raises funds for Salish School on Oct. 14
The Salish School of Spokane Autumn Harvest Virtual Fundraiser, hosted by Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Looking Up for Racial Justice Committee, will be held online at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 14.

In a one-hour celebration of the school’s work to revitalize the Salish language, the language of the original inhabitants of the Pacific Northwest to raise $3,000. The school educates children and youth ages one to 18 through immersion classes in the Salish language and know their cultural heritage. They also offer free Salish language workshops for parents and community members.

For information, call 848-7870 or visit pjals.org.

Riverkeeper urges viewing GU website
The Spokane Riverkeeper Jerry White reports that the Gonzaga International Conference on Hate Studies co-hosted virtually by the Spokane County Human Rights Task Force and the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations.

The International Conference on Hate Studies brings scholars and practitioners together with students and community members to bridge theory and practice, and to expand learning with and from each other, said Kristine Hoover of Gonzaga University’s Institute for Hate Studies.

Participants hear from speakers from around the world, engage in workshops, name all forms of dehumanization and reignite passions to address the “dis-ease” of hatred, she said. It draws academics, journal- ists, law enforcement personnel, educators, representatives of governmental and nongovern- mental organizations, human rights experts, community or- ganizers, activists and others to discuss hatred.

Sessions of the event are from 6:30 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 4, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 5, and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 6.

Located in the Spokane River Park, this event includes short videos on PCB pollution in the Spokane River.PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), a carcinogenic toxic chemical pollution the river, according to the fish.

He said the Spokane River currently exceeds State Water Quality Standards (WQS) for PCBs, and the pollution limits that result in real clean-up, said Jerry.

Water Act comes in 2022, Spokane Riverkeeper seeks to defend

and Policy, and the EPA. As the 50th anniversary of the Clean

challenge between Sierra Club, Center for Environmental Law & Equity: Challenging Hate and Inspiring Hope
Gonzaga’s 6th International Conference on Hate Studies, Nov. 4-6, will be held virtually this year
Join us for presentations, workshops and discussions from local, national, and international experts and organizations, including regional Human Rights groups, the Western States Center. 
"Justice and Equity: Challenging Hate and Inspiring Hope" is the theme for the sixth Gonzaga International Conference on Hate Studies co-hosted virtually by the Spokane County Human Rights Task Force and the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations.

The International Conference on Hate Studies brings scholars and practitioners together with students and community members to bridge theory and practice, and to expand learning with and from each other. The topic is the Spokane Riverkeeper Jerry White reports that the Gonzaga International Conference on Hate Studies is being held at Gonzaga University in September.

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As a financial person in a nonprofit, I realized I could make a difference, advocating for patients to participate,” she said. “It was amazing to make a difference in someone’s life. I realized I enjoyed doing social service.”

After two military moves, Terry left the Air Force. They moved to Omaha for a year before coming to Spokane, where he became a partner in a former co-worker’s oral surgery practice.

Along with being at home with their sons, Jeanette worked at LeMster Daniels until it was sold to CliftonLarsonAllen, and she started at the YWCA, where the finance work involved assuring funds were available to serve clients and support staff.

“Because nonprofits often pay staff less than for-profits, it’s important to care for and value staff who serve clients experiencing trauma,” she said. “It’s hard work to bear stories of trauma every day. We encourage self-care.”

In 2000, the YWCA Spokane supported staff decisions on childcare and schooling children at home. “I have shifted from task-oriented, budget-preparing financial statements and making budgets—to relational work, such as making community connections with other CEOs about community needs, vaccine mandates, shelters and housing in a time of low vacancy rates,” she said. Jeanette also talks with staff legal advocates, visits early childhood education classes and meets monthly with program staff.

“I watched a teacher use her skills to resolve a playground conflict with simple words to help the children learn resilience and kindness,” she said.

Aware of staff interactions with clients, she realizes their impact.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the YWCA’s therapy, legal and advocacy programs went online and remote phone services continue to be easier for some, especially those in rural areas, or when shuffling child care and work schedules, but more difficult for low-income women without internet connections.

During the stay-at-home order, the shelter was “essential” and open 24/7, so she mobilized to provide PPEs and protocols for the shelters, which have 15 units, with emergency units for clients in mandatory quarantine.

Some hotels also make rooms available for overflow. A contract with one expired a year ago. The YWCA seeks to offer others too.

The average stay in shelters is 45 to 60 days, but during COVID it has been longer because of limited vacancies.

“To offer services remotely, we gave staff laptops and cell phones to use at home,” Jeanette said. “We have had a 50 percent increase in crisis line calls since January 2020. In the pandemic, victims are stuck at home with their perpetrators. The crisis line is an opportunity to converse and develop a safety plan,” she said, noting national research states an increase in domestic violence.

During COVID, the YWCA received funds to hire a teacher to work with children and parents in shelters so the children could do virtual learning. Because protection orders are too complicated to explain on the phone or online, it set protocols so some staff could meet in person at the shelter or downtown offices at its main building at 930 N. Monroe. Clients appreciate having a legal advisor in court with them. More than 30 staff work remotely on domestic violence cases.

The ECEAP early childhood program closed its five classrooms, but teachers kept in contact by email, phone, and delivering food, craft supplies and worksheets.

When Jeanette started as interim CEO, half of staff was back in the office or working remotely one or two days. ICEAP was back to in-person learning.

“We have been fortunate to have limited positive cases in the management staff,” she said.

“We worked closely with the Spokane Regional Health District to develop protocols,” she said, noting that they changed from cloth furniture and carpets as part of measures to improve sanitizing the facilities.

Staff wear masks and socially distance. Despite relaxing in June, with the delta variant and low vaccination rate spiking the governor’s current mask mandate, staff wear masks for meetings and in common areas.

Through its Women’s Opportunity Center, the YWCA backs up its weekly advocacy and therapy sessions with activities for trauma recovery with art therapy, parent training, training in workplace skills and communication, group mentoring, share stories, resumed building and selecting appropriate clothing for jobs in Our Sisters Closet.

Along with helping women find opportunities, the YWCA advocates for racial and social justice, such as through “Stand Against Racism,” which offered a panel on “Racism Is a Public Health Crisis” in April and “14-Day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge” in June. For the 2021 Challenge, 455 signed up to receive emails, do extra reading and learn what other communities are doing. The resources are still online.

“Racial and social justice are intertwined in the YWCA’s mission. We cannot empower women if we do not eliminate racism. Women of color face more barriers when experiencing domestic violence,” Jeanette said. “We want all to be safe and secure, regardless of gender, race or religious affiliation.”

“We partner with other organizations working for racial and social justice,” she said.

“Core values are to emphasize respect and to welcome all to our agenda and focus on activities that promote equity,” Jeanette said, values emphasized during her youth and amplified after joining the YWCA Spokane. Jeanette said that in 2015 the national YWCA changed its name from Young Women’s Christian Association of the United States, Inc., to YWCA USA, encouraging local organizations to include their location, such as YWCA Spokane.

“Making ‘Christian’ less visible in the name was done to say that there is no requirement to be Christian to be involved or served. It does not take away the services to others, she said. It ensures all individuals feel welcome regardless of religious affiliation.

“When faith is important to clients, we help them find healing through that faith,” she said. “We collaborate with many faith organizations.

“Seeking to empower clients, we do not want barriers to access,” she said.

In 2020, 5,012 used the helpline; 4,998 received counseling, legal assistance, education and services; 3,675 children had trauma-informed services; 1,100 women were helped with child care, pregnancy care or elementary school services; 1,033 gained skills, and 628 used hotel and housing services.

Whether from a financial or executive lens, Jeanette appreciates the “influence” of mission partners, corporate sponsors and donors who make YWCA Spokane’s work possible.

For information, call 326-1190 or visit ywcaspokane.org.

World Relief seeks housing and funds now

Continued from page 1 as Medicaid, to help support getting COVID, hepatitis, polio and measles vaccinations,” he said. “So fundraising is important.

“We are also experiencing a housing crisis locally, so we seek help from faith communities to find housing,” Mark added. “That includes unused apartments, guest homes, student housing, church properties and anything that could serve as a new “home” for someone for six to 12 months or more.

Housing is needed in the next four to six weeks, but housing available any time in the next several months would be helpful.

“We are willing to work with whatever we find. We need places to rent, safe, sanitary and affordable for a family on a minimum wage income,” he said.

Awakening a Christian conscience on behalf of the vulnerable is a core call of World Relief and an integral way we empower local churches to serve and stand with the vulnerable,” he said. “We consider it an essential task to engage American churches and remind leaders and congregations that a Christian faith should compel us to seek justice and mercy for the vulnerable and suffering.

In increasingly divisive times, we are proud of our leading role as a thoughtful voice in the U.S. evangelical community, “he said.

For information, call 484-9829, email mfinney@wr.or or visit worldrelief.org/spokane/get-involved/donate-items.
Fair trade has assured stability to families of producers in Nepal

Despite the pandemic and shutdowns in Nepal with COVID-19, Ganesh Himal Trading Co. reported that the second and third quarters of 2021 were its strongest ever and Conscious Connections Foundation (CCF) in Spokane organized its largest menstrual hygiene training, distributing 3,000 kits in 18 villages in April, said Denise Atwood, co-owner of Ganesh Himal.

“Fair trade and our outreach are doing well despite COVID,” she said, elaborating on that report and then introducing Kesang Yudron, a second generation fair trader in Nepal and the first Nepali member of the CCF board, to share her story.

In the last 18 months, Denise has seen the fair trade community thriving at all levels. “Producers have been able to stay at home knitting or weaving as long as they can get materials,” she said. “I have been so proud to be in fair trade, watching fair trade fair trader groups in India pull through the COVID crisis, so people reach out to help others,” she said.

In America, communities have stood behind fair trade stores as they moved their sales and community building online. “While the last 18 months have been stressful, people have cared for each other and built community, thinking of each other before the almighty dollar,” Denise said. “The fair trade community around the world has stepped up.

“CCF was not set up to do disaster relief, but we step up when we can. Our focus is on girls education, menstrual hygiene and breaking barriers for women so they gain access to resources,” she said.

When the Delta variant hit, CCF helped food relief reach people in the lockdown. Now 15 percent Nepalis—up from 2 percent—are vaccinated.

“We are keeping business going even though it is hard to send shipments out of Nepal. People there rallied to put together a shipment and keep people working. We received a shipment in August, and all the items are sold now,” she said.

“It was heartwarming in the midst of everything,” Denise added.

Kesang, whose parents were among the early producers Denise and her husband Ric Conner met in 1986 at their bag shop in Kathmandu, now also a fair trade producer. She is in Spokane from July to December to discern options for her future, which includes graduate studies to learn about people and systems to gain insights for fair trade.

Kesang’s parents were refugees from Tibet. Her father, Namgyal, came with his family in 1960 at the age of one from Eastern Tibet and her mother, Pema Dolkhan, came with her family in 1970 at the age of 12 from Lhasa. They had an arranged marriage.

Her father’s father, Dawa Tsuring, was a yak trader, who carried loads on yaks from Lhasa to Calcutta. He carried salt in sturdy bags he made and brought back oranges and goods from Calcutta. He had been a monk, but after losing 11 brothers fighting the Chinese, he became a trader.

Namgyal and Pema Dolkhan wove and sold sturdy bags, like those Dawa made. On a Swiss scholarship, Namgyal had studied in India, so he sent their three daughters to study at a boarding school in India.

When Denise and Ric needed someone to ship fair trade goods, Namgyal started a shipping company. Before he died in 2006, Nepal’s prime minister honored him for running the biggest cargo company in the country.

Pema Dolkhan now runs a knitwear clothing business, giving women opportunities to make a living.

After Kesang returned from college she started the knitting cooperative, Padhma (Lotus) Creations, for nearly 60 single women trafficked from Nepal to India, so they could work at home and be independent.

“Lotus is a metaphor for the women having gone through difficult times but being uplifted by their work,” said Kesang, who lives in Kathmandu and travels to the border towns where a manager oversees the work. “Income from Ganesh Himal purchases helps pay for scholarships for the knitters’ children. Fair trade gives the women a chance to make a living.”

In addition to selling to Ganesh Himal, they sell to other wholesalers in Scotland, Japan and the U.S.

Kesang also promotes the Conscious Connections Foundation menstrual hygiene education project, helping women learn to make menstrual pads from kits and doing training in villages on how to use them, as well as helping women understand menstruation, their bodies, reproductive health, hormones, hygiene and overall health. Training also addresses traditions that make menstruation a taboo time, sending women to live seven days in a hut away from family when they have their periods.

In three years, the project has grown so they reach more villages. Women train other women to take the kits and do training in villages.

Kesang and others created illustrations of women in Nepal dresses, wrote text in English and Nepali, and designed training guides.

“We use simple words so village women understand,” she said.

Denise said the guide has a “creative commons license,” so others can credit the images and use the materials.

“We want the guides to be accessible for people in Nepal and other countries,” she said.

Last spring, CCF recruited three people—a community leader, health leader and municipal leader—from each of 18 villages in the Arun Valley in Northeast Nepal. They distributed 3,000 kits among the villages when the leaders returned to share the training.

They finished before the second round of COVID hit, Denise said.

“In addition, as a trusted resource, CCF provided on-the-ground direct relief, sending me funds to distribute through organizations I know are effective at feeding people to keep them alive,” Kesang said.

“The goal during the pandemic was to make sure people were not hungry, because the government does not have social service programs and there are no soup kitchens,” she said. “Many people lost their jobs in COVID. Some survived by drinking sugar water.”

Kesang contacted local leaders to have them buy and distribute food with CCF funds. A trans woman bought food and gave it to LGBTQ people who had no family support. Single mothers who were part of fair trade, which builds communities.

“Buddhism overlaps with all I do to build a community based on loving, kindness and helping others. I see it in the work of Ganesh Himal and CCF,” she added.

“I want to give Nepalis opportunities and bridge understanding of the two world views that fair trade embraces,” said Kesang, who wants women to have more equitable and fair lives.

While she has worked on a micro level, she wants to change systems to benefit more people. “It’s fun sharing in depth with Kesang about her visions. She is young with ideas. That gives me hope,” said Denise.

For information, call 488-6561 or visit ganeshimaltrading.com or consciousconnectionsfoundation.org.

Kesang Yudron is discerning future plans.

“ Many people died of starvation than of COVID,” Kesang said. “Many moved to the streets and were exposed to COVID. We wanted to keep people fed and at home. People have little access to vaccines or oxygen.”

Denise said Kesang’s story is like many who work with Ganesh Himal. As the daughter of fair traders, she has been educated and returned. Her caring increases the impact of their work in Nepal’s Tibetan and Nepali communities.

Kesang was inspired recently taking online classes from Kathmandu University on psychol

gy, the history of Buddhism and colonial Tibet.

“As a Buddhist, we focus on the idea of right efforts, right knowledge and right actions,” she said. “Right knowledge is about our trade, which builds communities.

“Buddhism overlaps with all I do to build a community based on loving, kindness and helping others. I see it in the work of Ganesh Himal and CCF,” she added.

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Volunteers are human faces letting immigrants know people care

Continued from page 1

retired from that now.

Karen recently shared her ob-

servations of what is happening at the border there.

“As I met the people and heard some of the stories from the center director, Rebecca Solloa, I realized that these were truly desperate people who had only left their homes because of violence and oppression that made it impossible for them and their children to survive there.”

Karen said.

She heard the story of a Guatemalan family whose older daughter was kidnapped and held for ransom when she went to the market to buy supplies for their bakery. The family couldn’t raise all the money the kidnappers were asking but they tried to raise as much as they could. They told the kidnappers they were getting what they could and asked that they not harm the girl.

They managed to raise some of the money, and the girl was re- turned. Karen heard she had been raped and beaten. They were then told that if they reported the kidnapping to anyone, someone would come after their 11-year-old daughter.

“How” Karen asked, “could they stay in this place with such violence, especially to their children?”

The respite center where Karen volunteered is typical of many along the U.S. southern border. This one welcomes those seeking asylum who have already been processed by U.S. Customs and Immigration, have been tested for COVID and have sponsors. Once asylum seekers come out of the immigration building, they are transported to the Respite Center for assistance in contacting their sponsors and buying bus or plane tickets for transportation to wherever the sponsor lives.

When immigrants arrive at the Respite Center and the arrangements are made for transport, they are given hygiene supplies and clothing if needed, as most do. Because shoelaces and belts are taken from them at customs, the center has supplies of these for everyone. It also offers an opportunity to shower.

Volunteers help prepare and serve meals for everyone at breakfast and lunch. There are cases of bottled water to quench their thirst because some have waited in line outside the custom offices until their case was processed. Some have even waded across the Rio Grande, which is narrow near Laredo.

Many now coming through customs are persons who were either not processed or expelled during the Trump era. In some cases, this was because Title 42, a little-known provision of U.S. health law, allows any customs officers to “prohibit … the introduction” into the U.S. of individuals when the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes “there is serious danger of the introduction of a communicable disease into the United States.”

Effectively this allows any customs officer to expel asylum seekers from the U.S. without allowing them to apply, Karen pointed out.

In other cases, the U.S. government, using the “Migrant Protection Protocols” (MPP), also known as the “Remain in Mexico” policy, returned asylum-seekers to Mexico to wait for the duration of their cases pending in the U.S. immigration court system. These people now seek to enter the U.S. to await their immigration hearings because of dangers they face from gangs along the Mexican border.

“The bus driver, Sandy Ramirez, told us a story of two little girls snatched from their family while waiting in line to cross the bridge,” Karen said.

“Another time, we expected two refugees—one from Haiti and one from Ethiopia. They never showed up and no one knew what happened to them.

“The experience was important for me. Those who ran the Re- spite Center came over the border each day from Mexico where they live,” she said. “They worked hard to ensure a safe and welcom- ing center for the immigrants.”

During Karen’s 10-day stay, the center had about 16 other volunteer Sisters primarily from the Midwest. Although there was no set length of time for volunteering, the number of volunteers stayed fairly constant during her stay. She was particularly impressed by three volunteers from Texas who would help for two weeks, travel home to rest for a couple of weeks and then return to assist again.

“The volunteers were compas- sionate, caring, able to respond to the needs around them without hav- ing to be told what to do at each step. Some spoke Spanish fluently. Others like me didn’t, but there was still plenty I could do to ‘welcome the stranger’ there.”

The center had resources to provide meals, clothing if need- ed, transportation to the bus or the airport, and overnight stays if needed.

Volunteers were the human face to all of this. They greeted people, served at mealtimes and, if needed, overnight. They assisted by giving the people a sense that someone cared and was there for them, Karen said.

For information, email kjrom-lin@gmail.com.

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Inga Laurent teaches ‘regular’ law and restorative justice.

Inga Laurent teaches ‘regular’ law and restorative justice. She has been a member of the Gonzaga Law School faculty since 2010. Inga read in Catholic schools up to ninth grade, and is fluent in Spanish, English, Russian, Portuguese, Czech, Italian, and German. When she was a child, Inga Laurent was fostered by a middle-aged couple who wanted to ensure that the little girl would be safe and learn to love. She was later adopted by a family of five and grew up with the values of community, family, and kindness.

Gonzaga University, but also she advocates for restorative justice, which she believes brings resolution to issues that come before the courts by working to find a solution that recognizes the humanity of everyone involved, figures out their needs and holds people accountable, while recognizing everyone’s dignity and value.

Inga says that restorative justice is a way to see everyone’s humanity, teach law at Gonzaga University, and that modern-day iterations of restorative justice come from the Quaker religion and the belief of being in right relationship with people.

“I do a lot of RJ (restorative justice) 101, because the most important thing is trying to get people to hear that it’s something that old but new in our age, and so much of it is proclaiming the gospel of it,” Inga said.

Inga also believes that restorative justice comes from the underlying theory of restorative justice, which she believes is a value that transcends all religions.

“Because restorative justice does not have a formal home as an academic discipline, it can be challenging to teach about its tenets, she said.

In the classroom, her goal is to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the legal profession, ‘equipping them with tools for honest and critical assessments of systems and people,’ she said.

In addition to her work in the community, Inga also teaches about restorative justice at Gonzaga’s Law School. She teaches a class on restorative justice and places students who are particularly interested in restorative justice on projects in the community where they are needed.

“It’s my joy and privilege to be in that space where we can propose an alternative, where we can look critically at the current system as it exists and unpack it. I bring that lens with me into my regular classes but especially enjoy spending a whole semester in restorative justice, she said.

The culmination of her research project was “From Retribution to Restoration: Implementing Nationwide Restorative Justice Initiatives - Lessons From Jamaica,” which was published, turned into a series of reflections on what it looks like when restorative justice is implemented in a community on a nationwide scale and lessons society can learn from it.

Inga also spoke to the importance of understanding the underlying theory of restorative justice, because one must understand the theory to be able to effectively implement the system. Currently, she works to operationalize restorative justice in different organizations and situations.

For example, she works with Spokane Public Schools on restorative justice projects and advises in one-time situations such as working with Oregon’s criminal justice commission, which recently has been trying to implement restorative justice in its systems. She also teaches community members about restorative justice and how it works.

In the classroom, Inga says that restorative justice comes from the underlying theory of restorative justice, which she believes is a value that transcends all religions.

The best chance at resolving conflicts is not to let rumor, conjecture or assumptions impede action,” she said, acknowledging that modern-day iterations of restorative justice come from the Quaker religion and the belief of being in right relationship with people.

She has attended non-denominational Christian and Unitarian Universalist churches, but focused on the heart of Jesus’ message to care deeply about people’s wellbeing, which she believes is a value that transcends all religions.

“I do a lot of RJ (restorative justice) 101, because the most important thing is trying to get people to hear that it’s something that old but new in our age, and so much of it is proclaiming the gospel of it,” Inga said.

Inga also believes that restorative justice is needed in our world, because we are deeply troubled as a society, and she admits that it is hard to say that because many don’t like to hear that.

“However, I believe that if we can get a kind of awareness, we are honest and reflective about it, the only way to help something we love to grow is to treat it and care for it and be honest with it,” Inga said.

With a father who is Haitian and a mother who is German and Czech, Inga grew up with the languages, foods and perspectives of those cultures, and sees herself as a “merger of the clash of cultures and values.”

Aware that western ways are one way to do justice and traditional ways of other cultures are another way, she advocates for racial equity in terms of both addressing racial disproportionality in the criminal justice system and ways of those cultures. For more information, call 509-313-3747 or email lauren@ Gonzaga.edu.
Kiantha Duncan, NAACP Spokane president, will converse with Tina Wyatt, third great-grand niece of Harriet Tubman from 3 to 4:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 17, online.

Harriet escaped from slavery and helped others gain their freedom as a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad.

“I want to learn, beyond the romanticized story, what her aunt’s life and legacy mean for the family,” she said. “Is there a gene for advocacy and activism that passed on to her descendants?”

This presentation is part of the “Descendants Series” of the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM) in Seattle with Kiantha conducting interviews.

In August, she hosted Arthur McFarlane II, the great-grandson of W.E.B. DuBois, one of the founders of the NAACP in 1909. He was a civil rights activist, author and historian who lived until 2003. Arthur is a population health analyst at Children’s Hospital of Colorado.

“Arthur shared pictures of his great granddad, one of him with a child’s cup with DuBois., who lived to be 91. Arthur was five when he died,” she said. Kiantha invited him to be introspective about how DuBois as an activist might see the things he fought for 100 years ago and whether they had enough of an effect. She also wondered what that had to say about how activism of people in 2021 might be seen 100 years from now.

NAAM opened its doors in 2008, realizing a 25-year dream of having 36 affordable apartment units above a museum established to expand knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of African American histories, arts and cultures.

For information, call 206-518-6000, or email kiantha.l.duncan@gmail.com or visit https://www.naamnw.org/events/descendants-series-tubman.

Kiantha Duncan hosts descendants series

CdA Chorale plans concerts

Pent-up music will find its voice when the 70 Chorale Coeur d’Alene singers gather for the first time after more than a year since the pandemic started. The chorus plans two public concerts to celebrate new beginnings in music.

The first, “Sing On,” is 7 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 26, at Peace Lutheran Church, 8134 N. Meyer Rd., in Post Falls. Three Christmas concerts, are at 7 p.m., Friday and 2 and 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 10 and 11, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 812 N. 5th St, in Coeur d’Alene.

The concerts are the first under the direction of the chorale’s new artistic director Keith Whitlock, director of choirs at Gonzaga Preparatory School in Spokane.

The fall concert will highlight works by two contemporary American composers, Mack Wilberg and Elaine Hagenberg. The Christmas concerts will feature works by Randol Bass and Ola Gjeilo, a Norwegian-born composer who’s been living and working in the U.S. since 2001.

There is a freewill offering at the Post Falls concert and there are tickets for the Coeur d’Alene concert available at www.choralecda.com or from a chorale member.

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Check out srhd.org/events for future community vaccine clinics that will have the flu shot available.
Children Run Better Unleaded gives ongoing oversight to remedies

By Kaye Hult

Children Run Better Unleaded is one of the community groups—along with federal, state, tribal and industrial groups—helping provide ongoing oversight to ensure the completion of remediation at the 1,500-square-mile Bunker Hill Superfund Site that extends 166 miles along the Bloxham and streams from Northern Idaho into Eastern Washington.

Several women who see the impact of lead poisoning on children are carrying on its work.

In 1983, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established the U.S. largest Superfund Site to clean up contamination from mining and milling silver, lead and zinc beginning in the 1800s. Mines left lead, zinc, silver, cadmium and arsenic toxins in slag piles that entered streams and rivers, blew into yards, homes and parks. The toxins are not only hazardous to fish and waterfowl, but also to the health of people, especially small children then and presently.

Children Run Better Unleaded (CRBU) is an outreach of the Silver Valley Community Resource Center (SVCRC).

In 1986, Barbara Miller returned to the Silver Valley, where she grew up, to address the devastation from mining. After exploring needs, she formed and is now executive director of the SVCRC.

Barb Assenmacher, a school bus driver and an original volunteer with CRBU, recently became active again, teaming up with Betty Belisle, a home health aide, and Gail Rowe, who works with children at the library who joined in February.

They revived the work of Children Run Better Unleaded (CRBU), started in 2005 to address mandated lead testing laws for children exposed to lead. CRBU educates people about lead exposure and tests people for lead.

“Carla sees daily the repercussions of how lead harms children, both in her daughter and in the children riding the school bus,” said Gail, who joined in February. “I also see the effects of lead poisoning in children I work with at the library. Betty, who was also involved in the program’s early years, rejoined the committee last fall. She lived in Kellogg during the 1950s through the 1970s.

“She didn’t know anything about lead. Just about smoked the whole town,” she said.

In spring 2021, she wrote on a Facebook page entitled “You know how to cook with the Silver Valley—” that ended sentence saying, “…if you know what smelter smoke is.”

Other responses included:

• “Most of us who grew up in the area in the 1950s ended up with something wrong with them, mainly lung problems. I have scar tissue in my lungs and have to be careful about colds.”

• “I remember my mom hanging sheets out to dry. She forgot them overnight. The next morning they were full of holes from zinc plant smoke.”

• “I remember the taste in my mouth walking to school.”

• “If smelter smoke killed vegetation, it wasn’t a healthy environment.”

• “My daughter was born with one kidney.”

Many said that “unless you lived there, you have no idea how we lived or what we dealt with as kids or teens in Smelterville, Silver King, Kellogg, Worley through Wallace and nearby areas. That’s the way it was.”

Gail and her son, Eli, moved to the Silver Valley in 1991 to be with her parents. Some of her family members died from long-term lead exposure. Her son is affected, too.

According to the Center for Disease Control, children in California can damage the brain and nervous system, slowing growth and development. That results in learning, behavior, hearing and speech problems.

“Eli was tested for lead every year,” Gail said, “but there was no paperwork. They just told him, ‘You’re okay. See you next year.’” But I didn’t know what was going on. I realized that the law wasn’t followed.”

Barbara said no data can be found in Idaho on any children tested for lead since 1974. There’s no paper trail.

Through CRBU, Betty learned about lead. She also did research, viewing YouTube videos.

She learned about the pervasiveness of the slag piles. She learned that slag was used to repair roads.

“We had a flood in the early 1970s,” she said. “I helped fill sandbags with slag. Later, we found out how terrible that practice was.”

Barbara told of families realizing their children weren’t developing well mentally. They saw other families experiencing the same problems and requested help, but never received it.

“I learned that money was doled out to test houses for lead and clean up the land. The houses were not remediated,” Betty said.

“There is no mental health help other than Medicaid.”

Betty and Gail are distressed that the EPA decided in 2016 to locate a waste repository in lower Burke Canyon above Wallace. Barbara said few people know it exists.

“It’s right next to a low-in-come housing development,” said Gail. “Children live across the street from the repository. There is just a sign saying, ‘Do Not Enter.’”

“There’s a sandy area where children play,” said Betty. “Just beyond that area is the repository. When the area was tested for lead, they found more than 16,000 micrograms per million. Eight micrograms is the current ‘acceptable’ level. No lead is the actual acceptable level.

I joined CRBU because I want to see regular testing and offer help with follow-up on medical care,” she said. “Families need help with their children. They need family support systems and a local clinic that they will not be afraid to visit.”

Betty thinks few people know about lead poisoning. She only learned of it because of her own research.

“We have a beautiful area, but it’s filled with waste dumps and repositories beside housing and schools,” said Betty, who believes Panhandle Health should inform new families with children so they find housing away from contaminated areas.

Gail also seeks to inform people on issues and to work for improvements.

Awareness for children living here today is important,” she said. “We can help make a difference by communicating with people, sharing resources and answering people’s questions about their own health.”

In 1992, community members identified the need for a Community Lead Health Clinic/Center. By 1996, Barbara had a design.

SVCRC has taken the request for the health center to the EPA 20 times, said Barbara, who also seeks help from the Court Alene Tribe. In 2005, SVCRC began its own health program with the help of Bob and Jeri McCrookcy, who donated a van. That’s when it formed CRBU.

The original project was to work with seven children in three families. They did the testing. When testers found elevated lead levels, they followed up with the children and families to identify the source of exposure, moved families into other housing, offered medical referrals and monitored the children. Money for that project ran out. So CRBU writes grants for education.

“We have to continue to educate parents,” said Barbara. “We can refer to a list of medical people. The community still seeks funds to build the lead health center.”

Gail said the library, Head Start and day care offer families education on the need for testing.

“I’m angry we are still in this mess,” Betty said. “I hope with CRBU, we can draw help, clean houses inside and remove toxic waste repositories. If we had a lead health clinic, we would help families, and for it to exist there should be a mandate for money to come from the EPA. They should be accountable.

“I grew up in a good neighborhood. Neighbors helped us because my dad was paraplegic,” she added. “I decided to give back to my community because my neighbors’ actions showed me that’s what one should do.”

“Children are our future. We need to make sure they’re taken care of,” Betty said.

For information, 208-784-8891 or email svcommunityresourcecenter@gmail.com.
Washington State University and Palouse Habitat for Humanity (HFH) announce a long-term partnership to study practical ways to create affordable, energy efficient housing.

They held a celebration Sept. 2 at the Uniontown build site, 503 Prairie Ave., as the final walls were raised in their first partnership home.

“How do our low- and moderate-income neighbors afford a home when there is a significant shortage of affordable entry level housing?” asked Jennifer Wallace, executive director of Palouse Habitat for Humanity. “It’s a problem nationwide, and it’s a problem here in our own backyard.”

Habitat for Humanity is an international housing ministry that builds affordable housing. One element of affordability, Jennifer said, is a home’s long-term energy use. The group is addressing this challenge by building homes with extended eaves, high R insulation and low E windows.

“We know there is more we can do. The home building industry as a whole must do more, especially with the energy code just adopted by the State of Washington,” Jennifer said.

The Housing Energy Affordability Lab, or HEAL, is a partnership to test energy use across a number of Habitat built homes. The homes will be designed by WSU students and built with the help of staff and student volunteers. Researchers in WSU’s School of Design and Construction will study construction elements in the homes that might improve energy efficiency and affordability.

WSU’s Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) has a key role in bringing about the partnership, working with faculty to incorporate service learning into their coursework.

“We can look critically at design, new materials, innovative methods, and find ways to make energy efficient homes affordable,” said Ryan Smith, director of the School of Design and Construction who is leading the effort.

“Energy costs are expected to continue to rise, so improving energy efficiency in homes is going to be increasingly important for long-term affordability and comfort, he said.

Those energy efficient elements have to come with an affordable initial price tag, or we defeat the purpose,” he added.

The first home, HEAL House 1, is the Hansen family home under construction in Uniontown. For that home, the partnership has an added gift, materials designed for use in an energy efficient home left over from a WSU project.

“The gift of lumber and other building materials couldn’t come at a better time,” said Jennifer. “The cost of materials has gone through the roof. With funds to build Habitat homes raised from the local community and online fundraisers, our income has reduced at the same time as costs are going up. We don’t currently have enough raised to finish the home, but are closer.”

Students can register to volunteer through the CCE website: https://wsu.givepulse.com/event/237619-Palouse-Habitat-for-Humanity.

For information, call 509-335-3066 for Ryan or 208-883-8502 for Jennifer or email r.e.smith@wsu.edu or director@palouse-habitat.org.
Samoan congregation instills to language, culture and families

For members of Spokane’s American Samoan community and many other indigenous cultures, the language and the cultural traditions keep connection to immediate and extended family living in the U.S. and American Samoa.

Isa’aoko Mata’utia, pastor of the First Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, which meets at Country Homes Christian Church, described the importance of those ties for Samoans living in the islands and living in every state, particularly on the West Coast.

There are more Samoans in the U.S.—100,000—than in the islands—about 66,000.

“We come together to help one another. We also have a blessing for the future family in Samoa, “he said.

Many Samoans come to the U.S. for education, military service or sports. Often family members who work abroad send money to family on the islands.

American Samoa, established as an unincorporated U.S. territory in 1900, consists of five main islands and two coral atolls in the South Pacific, southeast of the independent state of Samoa and north of Tonga. American Samoa has a governor.

“Samoans in the U.S. have always been a part of our society with villages run by chiefs who head extended families,” Isa’aoko explained.

American Samoans, although born in a U.S. territory, are considered “nationals” with the right to reside in all parts of the U.S. without immigration regulations, but they have to apply to be U.S. citizens. Isa’aoko has done, to vote in U.S. elections and to work in some jobs. If they are U.S. citizens, they cannot vote for the governor of American Samoa.

(Persons born in other U.S. territories like Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens at birth and can vote in federal, state and local elections when they move to one of the 50 states.)

Isa’aoko said Christian missions had a positive impact on Samoan life and culture. Before they came in the 1830s from the London Missionary Society, Samoan culture lived by strict rules with severe consequences for wrongdoing. Like “an eye for an eye.”

If rules were broken the whole family might be punished, for example by providing food for the village of the victim or having family pitch in to build the victim’s house or to beg for forgiveness. If the family did not accept his plea, they would punish the chief in front of everyone, he said.

“Christianity brought forgiveness, second chances and loving one another,” he said. “So now there is forgiveness, and there are jury trials.”

Worship in Spokane is in both Samoan and English, because most Samoans are bilingual.

Isa’aoko said it’s important for the children in the seven families of 60 people related to the church to speak Samoan at home and in the church, because those are the only two places for them to learn Samoan.

“Children are in school and with friends all day speaking English. They are receptive and understand Samoan, but many find it hard to speak,” he said, noting the importance of learning Samoan so they can accept leadership when they are older and become the “chiefs” in their families.

“To return to Samoa, it’s important to know the language and culture,” he said.

Traditional dancing, singing and skits help teach language, culture, respect and Bible stories. On the second Sunday of October, called White Sunday, children, wearing white, lead worship, performing skits and reciting Bible verses.

The church performs fa’asavagula, evangelical and spiritual dancing and plays to teach Christian values, in addition to doing community performances on occasion.

“We understand better through seeing actions rather than just by listening,” said Isa’aoko. “The only way we can really teach others is through our actions that show how we work together. For people to understand, we need to put our values into action.”

“We bring our children to church to teach them by showing them how to relate, so they can teach others when they are older,” he said.

“Many things are hard to change—like disease, hate and global warming. As people of faith, we can pray that God will help bring changes,” he said, adding, “I believe in faith and work, so we need to do our part to put our faith into action.”

Isa’aoko explained that there are different levels in the language—everyday language and the chief’s language used by elders and proverbs and deep understandings of life.

The Samoan language, he added, has many ways to say “thank you.” In Samoan, “please” and “thank you” are key words, conveying respect and appreciation, and explaining that the people are grounded in respectful relationships of adults to adults, adults to children, children to adults and children to children.

Isa’aoko’s father completed studies at the Kanana Fou Theological Seminary (KFTS), in Pago Pago, which trains clergy for the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS). Then he was pastor at a church in the village of Tafuna, where Isa’aoko and his siblings graduated from high school and went on to careers. His father is now a minister in Manusi.

After Isa’aoko graduated in 1999, he studied criminal justice at the American Samoan Community College, graduating in 2002 and serving several years as a police officer in the U.S. military.

“None of my siblings entered ministry, but I felt called to ministry and went to KFTS, graduating with a diploma in theology in 2010 and a bachelor of divinity in 2011,” said Isa’aoko, who then moved to Vancouver, Wash., to begin a master of divinity at Multnomah Seminary in Portland.

Graduating in 2014, he moved to Airway Heights to live with his brother, who was stationed at the Spokane Military Entrance Processing Station.

“I applied to the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS) Conference to be a missionary minister and found that Samoan people in Spokane were seeking a pastor. We started the church here in 2016,” he said.

As a missionary minister with the CCCAS, he is also affiliated in the U.S. with the CCCAS Conference, a partner with both the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), which work together in Global Ministries.

“Sharing a building with a church means that after the Disciples worship is over by 11:30 a.m., the Samoan worship begins at 1 p.m. and they can arrange to use the building any day.”

“We had many events before the pandemic, but since then we have only had the service online,” Isa’aoko said. “Many members grew up in the U.S. in military families and are westernized, but before the pandemic we met to dance. Now we can’t do that yet, even though most are vaccinated.”

“We are trying to grow and reach out to involve more of the Samoans in the community,” he said.

Because the congregation includes students who have attended or graduated from Whitworth, Gonzaga and Eastern Washington universities, members have participated in their Pacific-Asian Heritage Days.

Isa’aoko has worked during the school week for a brother’s construction company in Seattle. Recently he began another job. He is in Seattle during the week and some weekends.

The church pays him a missionary allowance. His wife, Lanuola Gidlow Mata’utia, also works as a caregiver with The Arc of Spokane. They have five children aged from two to 16, and two of his sisters live with them.

Isa’aoko said he is called to help his community, especially youth, because of the ways that the Gospel’s spiritual understandings and Samoan cultural understandings of respect go hand in hand.

“My mission is not only to bring together our people in Spokane to worship and give glory to God, but also to build the community as family to help one another,” Isa’aoko said.

For information, call 202-6256 or email famematiautia@yahoo.com.
Right now, she seeks to build community, reaching out to people who know her family or have lived in the past or has not yet met. To create community, RAP realized trainings help people be more effective in tending their personal voices on local and statewide panels and committees. “We want all voices to be heard, and WLHA is supporting community change,” she said. To hear diverse voices, WLH- HA hopes to build chapters across the state, especially in Eastern Washington, where voices are less often heard and where many think most resources are in the Seattle area. People in rural areas, where they are renting or buying, believe it is hard to have their voices heard, she said. There is a need to help people move into suitable housing and remove barriers to homeowner- ship so more are homeowners and can build generational wealth. For example, few know that first-time homeowners may have $10,000+ in assets, yet qualify for down-payment assistance. Having lived experience in housing injustice, Du- aa-Rahemaah became involved with housing issues while working with people experiencing home- lessness when she was studying for an associate of arts degree in Community College in Seattle from 2008 to 2010. She completed her bachelor of applied science in public health at Seattle Colleges finishing in 2012. While at Hightline, she did an off-campus internship at Op- eration Emergency Operation Center in Skyway in Seattle, which offers food bank, life skills classes and EBT for the neighborhood and the Fuller Institute Dis- putes Resolution Center. “Mediation helps people with a disagreement resolve it with a facilitator,” Olivia said. It precedes court, litigation or arbitration. It can involve a lawyer or not. It is based on people being self-determining,” said Olivia. Mediators are not judges, lawyers or legal advisors. They do not advocate or take sides, but remain impartial, she said. They are not rental assistance provid- ers, but can connect people to lo- cal rental assistance and resources. She said mediators are facilita- tors who help people in a conflict work together toward a solution that works for everyone. The ERPP opened its doors on coun- ty in October 2020 and was state mandated in August. Tenants behind or late on rent will receive an ERP notice from their landlord, recommending they resolve their dispute out of court. The notice gives a date two weeks later to respond. By then the tenant is to talk with a mediator. Once they connect, the eviction process pauses. The facilitator schedules a phone meeting with the tenant and talks with landlord to inform both of the conversation. The tenant can apply for rental assis- tance or determine a payment plan. Both parties work together on a plan. If it is not resolved by phone, they can meet on Zoom or take the case to court.

For more information, call 425-666-5013 or visit wniwcenter.org.
Summer news about a Senate bill requiring women to register for the draft and the death of a Buddhist acquaintance he had learned was a conscientious objector (CO) brought up old issues for John Hancock.

Now retired, he wanted to connect with other Vietnam-era conscientious objectors to share their stories for the sake not only of themselves but also of the community, and people today who are unable to register as COs.

“This summer was also the 50th anniversary of the Pentagon Papers on the U.S. role in Indo-China and some of those lessons seem to have been forgotten,” he said.

John decided this summer to share his story of applying to be a conscientious objector to the draft in 1970 in hopes of finding people to listen without judgment and drawing out people who may feel marginalized or silenced as pacifists living in a militaristic society.

“On the one hand, I still divide and lack accountability about government leaders and war-making,” he said.

“Professionally I have focused my energies on solutions to problems, but I now feel more alive than I thought I could be, better,” he said. “I did not protest the Vietnam War and was not a draft resister. I was a conscientious objector, which was a legal status defined and recognized in the system.”

John Hancock shares his story to draw out others.

“Draft board solutions, for three years with Friends of Compassion in Spokane he helped faith communities explore conscientious objec-

In our communities...
I love Fair Trade now more than ever. I feel so wrapped in care, in community and in a safety net. We can all live together in the world. Strange since we are also surrounded by mass uncertainty with COVID, huge political divides and hurricanes. Still, there is something about fair trade that helps me navigate, helps me stay on course through it all and I see it now with greater depth. It involves standing beside one another, extending our arms, helping each other up and living into a future where we can all be there for one another and thrive.

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Pastor starts church to bring people of four languages together

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

Luc Jasmin started the mul-
tilingual, multiracial Jasmin Evangelical Ministries/Eglise Evangelique Maranatha in 2019, gathering English, French, Swa-
hili and Creole speakers for wor-
ship and to minister to needs of the Haitian and African refugee community in Spokane, as well as support an orphanage and clinic in Haiti.

“God has always been there for me along the way. Haiti has always had a place in my heart, because I always went back and forth,” he said.

Luc lived in Haiti through secondary school. At 16, he received a scholarship to study at New York University. Unable understand classes, he went to Thomas Jefferson High School for a year and returned to NYU.

After five years, he returned to Haiti to work for the Bank of Nova Scotia a few years. After marrying, he went to Northeastern University in Boston and began studying law. On He lived there 35 years, teaching English, starting an accounting business, becoming a national vice president for Primercia Financial Services and teaching people about per-
sons with disabilities.

His four children are Luc III who recently ran for City Council, plus an engineer, school teacher and police officer in Boston.

Called to ministry, Luc started studies at Gordon Cromwell Theological Seminary in Boston and graduated from Whit-
worth University. For five years, he was mentored at Calvary Baptist Church. He was ordained two years ago and started Jasmin Evangelical Ministries/Eglise Evangelique Maranatha.

Luc also runs Simon Center of Hope for Destitute Children, an orphanage for 200 orphans from Port Au Prince, Haiti, where eight staff care for 32 orphans from the streets.

“It’s rewarding, to see these kids grow,” said Luc. “The oldest is 14. Older children help younger ones with school work.”

“They are orphans because parents died, but some have a single mother who can’t take care of them,” he said. “Some-
times neighbors take them in. Some are abused and would rather be in the streets.”

With so many street kids hav-
ing no one to care for or teach them ethics, some become delinquents.

“We provide a home for them,” said Luc.

They started with two chil-
dren, then took over an orphan-
age that was closing. They have a three-story building with two apartments, one for girls and one for boys. Evangelique Evangelique Maranatha funds the orphanage.

“One fourth of our resources stay with our local congregation and 75 percent help the orphanage and a clinic in Haiti,” said Luc.

Evangelique Evangelique Maranatha serves many Haitians who didn’t previously have a church. If they don’t speak English, they can’t worship in English, so we pro-
vide the place for them to wor-
ship in their language,” said Luc.

At the 10 a.m. Sunday wor-
ship, 20 attend, but now fewer. A 4 p.m. Sunday worship in English draws mostly Americans. The church includes some Africans from Congo, who speak French or Swahili.

The church also has an after-
noon music program for children to come and learn how to play instru-
ments. They have a reading pro-
gram, encouraging them to read self-improvement books.

Luc Jasmin locates local church with Haitian orphanage.

“We seek to understand the cultures of everyone who comes and provide an outlet for them,” said Luc.

He invites people who are not going to church, aware some have been hurt by a church. He listens to understand.

The church does much good, but sometimes people in a church harm others, so it try to be a neu-
tral ground and see what’s going on because a church should be inviting, receiving and forgiving, a place to rest, not a place to be criticized or put down,” Luc said.

“Before COVID, more people came. Since COVID, I receive phone calls from people who say they can’t come and are scared of the disease. We try to inform them,” he said.

Luc, who has also served as the Spokane Ministers’ Fellow-
ship’s treasurer for four years, said that group educates people how to take care of themselves in COVID with masks and vac-
cinations. They have offered information sessions and 14 were vaccinated at a recent vaccination clinic at the Martin Luther King Jr Community Center.

One African member who had COVID now goes to churches to tell people how it is to have COVID. She was reluctant to share her experience, but now she lets people know, COVID was no fun. On racism, he said many white people who are not racist go along with him, but he knows “some parents—white and black—tell their children to stay with their own kind.”

“New York was considered a racist place, but I had white and Spanish friends. It is a question of how we relate to people,” said Luc, who saw racism in Boston, learned “we cannot blame one group,” said Luc. “People there were involved with each other, because there were many stu-
dents from around the world.”

“In Spokane, tend stay to themselves,” said Luc.

In Eglise Evangelique Maar-
anatha, Spanish, African and white people are respectful. “I love everybody. Wherever I am, I am at ease because I am a citizen of heaven, and wherever I am is a piece of heaven,” said Luc.

God created each one of us, I share a mes-
sage of hope. The world needs to pay more attention to God. God is love. If we pay attention to each other, we can help each other overcome harm, disease, embarrassment and more,” he said.

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” Yes, I am my brother’s keeper, whether my brother is White, Black, Chinese or whatever. If we practice love, life will be easier. Love calls for action,” said Luc. COVID teaches us we are together in this mess, and we better help each other.”

From childhood, his parents taught him ethics, how to behave towards other people, how not to intrude in other people’s privacy and not impose his beliefs on other people.

“God created each one of us,” said Luc. “My calling is to help people understand that God is omnipotent, omnipresent. When we are thinking, acting, speaking, God is there.”

Particularly since the earth-
quake and flooding, Haiti needs financial help.

“It’s a small island, it’s always been put down,” said Luc. “It takes a brave nation with a great heart to invest in infrastructure with billions of dollars for jobs.

Instead of talking about Hai-
tian people being in the mud and leaving them there, let’s help them get out of the mud,” he said.

“Instead of investing billions in war, let’s invest in people.”

He invites the U.S., the richest coun-
try in the world, to invest in Haiti, the poorest.

When he last traveled to Haiti on July 8 to see the children at the orphanage, he had to go through the Dominican Republic on a back road and go back to the Dominican Republic to sleep at night because of safety concerns after the president was killed.

Luc started a clinic in a little side of Port au Prince, but he had to close it after the earthquake.

Recently, he managed to get $2000 from without the money comes there twice a year a help.

Recently head of the orphan-
age said the food was gone, even though Luc had sent $800, normally enough for two weeks.

“Haiti produces 30 to 40 per-
cent of the food the people need, but prices went high because some took advantage of the situation and stocked up to make more money.

People holding the wealth im-
poor people when they don’t make its available for everybody, said Luc.

“Have good people over there who want to serve,” he said.

Through Jasmin Ministries, the government permits him to do on the community.

For information, call 389-4539 or diamond.father@yahoo.com.

Become a Member

Becoming a Member of Spokane Community Against Racism allows you to support the work of holding Spokane’s systems accountable. We want our community to form a supported organization so that we are held accountable to the community we serve.

To become a member, make a $25 donation for the year or be a recurring donor for as little as $5 monthly.

Details on how to receive your welcome kit are at https://www.scarspokane.org/membership

To learn how to become a member through volunteering, email admin@scarspokane.org

The Fig Tree - Saturday, Nov 13

Sat 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Live & Virtual Folk Festival

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To become a business sponsor email us at admin@scarspokane.org

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To learn more about your rights, including how when and how to file a report, find us in stressfulness - from police encounters to jail support. Find our more at: scarspokane.org/take-action

Against Racism

2021 BUSINESS SPONSOR

We proudly support ending racism in our community.

Know Your Rights Schedule

You can download this schedule from our website:

www.scarspokane.org/your-rights

Join us to learn more about your rights, including how and when to file a report, find us in stressfulness - from police encounters to jail support. Find our more at: scarspokane.org/your-rights

Know Your Rights Schedule

Oct 7, 6 pm - How to Plan an Action
Oct 14, 7 pm - KRY: Jail Support
Nov 4, 7 pm - KRY: Jail Support
Nov 18, 6 pm - KRY: Police Encounters