Couple inspire interracial awareness

By Mary Stamp


“We want to make a difference in the world, bringing out the best in people by helping them realize their potential without giving up their culture or heritage,” said James.

“We seek to foster respect and dignity, celebrating human diversity.

In workshops and presentations, Roberta has trained more than 1,000 counselors, teachers, government workers and social workers locally, nationally and internationally.

James brings knowledge of African American history, first-hand experience navigating living South during the Jim Crow era, and experience working with schools. A master African drummer, percussionist and vocalist, he speaks in schools and at cultural events.

In June 2017, he retired after more than seven years as achievement gap intervention specialist and community engagement program manager, serving in several schools and the Spokane Public Schools district office.

Roberta, who has worked 12 years at Whitworth University, is associate dean for graduate studies in education and diversity initiatives.

With starting this program, they see their coming to Spokane as a fulfillment of their calling.

“When God puts you in a place, it’s God’s plan,” said Roberta, associate minister at Jesus Is the Answer Church.

James, a past president of NAACP Spokane, began receiving requests for motivational speaking in the community.

From DNA tests, they found their ancestors came from Congo and Cameroon—37 percent for James and 34 percent, Roberta. James also has 34 percent from Benin. Their ancestors also trace to Virginia.

James grew up in black towns of Marion and Sunset, Ark., where elders helped him understand the repressive segregation laws and violence in the Jim Crow era.

“Fascinated to learn about our history, I have been on a journey to help other African Americans and people of color understand how they are affected by things that happened in history,” he said. “The younger

Continued on page 4

With new name, logo, director, Joya continues interventions for children

In its logo, the sun rising out of a cloud represents the joy and hope parents feel Joya Child and Family Development—formerly the Spokane Guilds’ School and Neuromuscular Center—brings to families of little children with developmental delays and disabilities.

After 41 years as executive director, Dick Boysen retired June 30 and stepped into a volunteer capital campaign role as executive director emeritus.

Joya’s program coordinator, Colleen Fuhs, who served as acting director for several months, began as executive director on July 1.

Dick made Joya a respected, comprehensive program with certified special education teachers, licensed therapists, pediatric nurses, social workers and a pediatrician medical director.

The program for children from birth through their third birthday is expanding. In 2017, Joya purchased the former St. Joseph Family Center at 1016 N. Superior in the University District to build a larger facility to meet the demand and one in adult education.

“Two degrees help, because parent education is important. Children do better if their parents are involved. We help children do better than experts expected,” said Dick, whose inspiration was David, a Burbank, Calif., neighbor and childhood friend who had muscular dystrophy.

“It planted a seed in me. David went on a bus to a school in Glendale because our school was not accessible,” he said.

Dick said a group of local women, who were part of the Washington State Guilds for Retarded Children—even though none had a child with a disability—started the program in September 1960.

State NAACP Convention marks local chapter’s 100th

“Stay Woke to Vote” is the theme for the annual convention of the NAACP State Area Conference of Alaska, Oregon and Washington Friday to Sunday, Sept. 13 to 15, at the Northern Quest Resort and Casino in Airway Heights.

Participants will celebrate accomplishments, discuss challenges, and unify to defend civil rights in the region.

The highlight is Spokane NAACP’s Centennial Celebration Banquet Dinner at 6 p.m., Saturday, with a keynote presentation by actor/activist Danny Glover and the Bernie Sanders 2020 co-chair Nina Turner.

“Our region leads the nation on issues that strengthen our communities, like reducing employment discrimination with ban-the-box ordinances, ending the death penalty, calling for police accountability and criminal justice reform, and bringing equality to the work place and classrooms,” said Serena Sataran, communications coordinator.

While NAACP has worked to protect and defend civil rights, helping desegregate schools and lunch counters, and solidifying the right to vote, “we continue to witness a rise in racial hatred, white supremacy, voter suppression and educational disparities,” she said.

Actor, producer and humanitarian Glover has a more than 30-year performance career. Off-screen, he is respected for his community activism and philanthropic efforts. He served as a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Program, focusing on poverty, disease and development in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. He is now UNICEF ambassador.

Continued on page 2
Community Partners make directory possible

Community Partners, advertisers and other donors have made possible the publication of the 2019-20 Resource Directory, which have been mailed and are being delivered in bulk to local, county, state and federal government agencies and social services at the federal, state and county levels and on public reservations in Eastern Washington and North Idaho.

There will be new features to make it more accessible at thefigtree.org.

Those needing to update their information, may call 216-6090 or email resource diretory@thefigtree.org.

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**NAACP convention celebrates 100th year**

More than 105 nonprofits, universities, faith agencies, businesses, cultural groups and faith groups were among the more than 200 organizations at the 100th Unity in the Community.

The 25th year the event has been held in Spokane beginning with the African Methodist Episcopal Church gathering African American and other cultural and faith organizations at Liberty Park in Spokane.

Co-organizer April Anderson said, "We take heart that multi-religious actors and institutions are exemplifying the theme, "Thriving Together. Rising Together." We are grateful for 49 years of determined focus on building authentic community," they said. "The supreme good for us is the promise that the homebound elderly and disabled, regardless of race or gender, will be able to tour booths and learn about diverse organizations, even as it serves the peace for which the human heart hungers."

They see that freedoms of all kinds have come under attack.

"Our hearts grieve over the misuse of our faiths, especially the ways they have been twisted to fuel violence and hate," reads the text. "We see the profound differences, even as it serves the peace for which the human heart hungers.

More than 105 nonprofits, universities, faith agencies, businesses, cultural groups and faith groups were among the more than 200 organizations at the 25th year the event has been held in Spokane, beginning with the African Methodist Episcopal Church gathering African American and other cultural and faith organizations at Liberty Park in Spokane.

Co-organizer April Anderson felt this year’s event was effective at connecting the community and exemplifying the theme, “Thriving Together, Rising Together.”

"I was lifted by the smiles and laughter all around me,” she said. With more than 5,000 attendees, she said it was “one of the largest crowds we have had.”

The Cultural Village used the Howard Street bridge for children to stroll booths and learn about different cultures.

When they filled their “passports” with stamps they received a bag of school supplies.

"We always look for ways to add to it. This year, dragon dancers performed,” she said. Mareena Henderson is co-chair with April, and co-executive director of the NW Unity nonprofit.

They recruit a committee that begins meeting in March for the summer event.

For information, email anta@naacpwsac.org.

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**Meal programs seek volunteers**

Meals on Wheels (MOW) Spokane needs volunteers to help home bound elderly and disabled maintain their independence and dignity of remaining in their own homes.

Volunteers provide loving contact that seniors need along with the meals. They see the impact they can make in a senior’s day as they deliver care, hope, and commit to the homebound elderly and disabled people are looked after.

Mid-City Concerns (MOW) seeks volunteers as substitute delivery drivers, delivering as often as they like Mondays to Fridays on the day they choose.

For information, call 456-6597 or email volunteer@mowspokane.org.
The 2019 Ethnicity, Race and Indigenous Peoples (ERIP) Conference Thursday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Sept. 12 to 14, at the Gonzaga University campus will draw scholars, activists and students from around the world to consider the theme “ Bridges and Walls Across the Americas: Dialogues of Survival, Endurance and Resistance.”

The conference brings together the disciplines of anthropology, history, sociology, political science, linguistics, Spanish, Portuguese, geography, literature and law, said Taty Vantimich, professor of political science at Gonzaga and member of the planning committee.

ERIP is a section of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), which is co-sponsoring the conference with Gonzaga and the Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies Journal.

There will be an exhibit on “Ethnicity and Identity as Themes in Art” at the Jund Art Museum. There will be five keynote speakers and numerous small panel presentations.

Highlights include presentations by keynote speakers Pamela Palma, associate professor and chair in indigenous governance at Ryerson University, and a lawyer, author and social justice activist at 5 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 12, at the Hemmingson Ballroom, and Fr. Ismael Moreno Coto (Padre Melo), director of Radio Progreso and the Reflection, Research and Communication Team coordinator of the Central American Media Commission of the Company of Jesus, at 3:45 to 5:15 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 14, at the Hemmingson Auditorium Room 904.

There will be film screenings of 2017 films, “500 Years” and “United by Water,” and an ERIP Fiesta with music by Milonga.

ERIP 2019 intends to provide a forum for discussion, debate, and critical engagement with respect to the best paths for moving forward in the face of complex challenges facing the contemporary world, said Stacy.

Planning co-chairs from Gonzaga and the Hemmingson Ballroom, and Law.”

The conference to attend regular workshops, roundtables and panels to choose from, including “Native Dialogue Space Sharing Tribal Narratives,” and sessions on “Immigrant and Refugee rights and Empowerment.”

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For information, call Rebecca at 313-3644, Pavel at 313-5761, email ERPinfo@ Gonzaga.edu or visit Gonzaga.edu/ERIP.
Cultural sensitivity needed in today's society

Continued from page 3 generation has no idea of history and heritage.

One high school student whose skin color matched James’ was upset that a teacher let a white student go to the bathroom, but did not let him go. The teacher sent him to the office when he actually did need to go to the bathroom. When James suggested he look at his skin, the student said, “I’m white. That’s how someone listed him as white. His mother is white.”

“He was confused,” James said. “This racial tension makes problems make a difference, but they can be difficult to address because most counseling theories are based on European American models.”

Roberta said, “When students of color are adopted or bircacial, their white parents may have no idea how to educate them culturally, so the children do not know how to navigate the system.

“We have not reached Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream of judging people by the content of their character, not their skin color,” she said. “We need more than the equivalent of people of color and can be effective in diverse groups.”

“Motivated by my passion to learn about and share African-American history with people to have conversations,” she said. “Many students at Whitworth are taking classes to learn how to challenge people to have conversations,” she said. “Many students at Whitworth have had limited experience with other cultural groups. I help them learn to broach topics so they are not defensive but ask questions.

“Most schools teach from a Eurocentric perspective, so it’s hard for children of color. They then think, do and act white. Their paren
ts work and don’t sit at the dinner table to talk with them,” he said. “It’s also important to have African-American teachers so stu
dents have role models to aspir
to,” said James, who is publishing a memoir titled, "Most schools teach from a Euro
centric perspective, so it’s hard for children of color. They then think, do and act white. Their parents work and don’t sit at the dinner table to talk with them,” he said. “It’s also important to have African-American teachers so students have role models to aspire to," said James, who is publishing a memoir titled, "We need more than the equivalent of 40 acres and a mule."

The Wilburns find it’s hard to have conversations in Spokane where there are few people of color and systems treat them unfairly. Even though people of color gradu
te from school and college, em
ployers say they can’t find “quali
cified people of color.

As a Police Department omb
dusman commissioner, James sees disproportionate use of force against people of color. He con

We welcome you to join us for reflection and contemplation.

All events held at The Ministry Institute (TMI) Chapel 405 E Sinto, 2 blocks north of St. Aloysius Church
Two immersion weekends at a homeless shelter that connected with service agencies in the 32 blocks of Skid Row in Los Angeles helped solidify Harrison Hustling’s commitment to “walk with” homeless people as they overcome barriers and find their way back to lives they want.

Through the Catholic Charities Supported Employment program, Harrison walks with about 30 men and women from many backdrops as they overcome barriers to employment and find jobs that fit their passion.

The immersion weekends were during his studies of economics and urban studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. After graduating in 2017, he served with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) at the House of Charity in Spokane from August 2017 to July 2018.

He lived and reflected with 13 other Jesuit volunteers at two community houses near Gonzaga University. Others worked with St. Mary’s Soup Kitchen and Parenting Assistance, Food for All, Second Harvest, Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery, L’Arche and Recovery Café.

At the House of Charity, Harrison served as the residential life coordinator, coordinating the day-to-day operations of a program that supported individuals by providing volunteer opportunities and case management to help clients achieve housing and employment.

Sam—a part of the solution, I found work that makes that possible,” Harrison said.

When his JVC term ended, he began at the Supported Employment program, one of four parts of Catholic Charities’ Housing Stabilization program. The others are Supportive Housing, Opioid Use Disorder Support and Coordinated SSS (SSSO) Outreach, Access and Recovery Initiatives.

Harrison, who grew up in Woodbridge, a small town near Sacramento, was drawn to the spirituality at Loyola Marymount, a Jesuit University.

From living in both the urban setting of LA and a small town, he finds Spokane is a mix of both.

Catholic Charities’ supported employment program began two years ago as part of the state’s Foundational Community Supports program under expanded Medicaid. Passages, Compass and Goodwill also do it.

Samantha (Sam) Dompier, director of Catholic Charities’ Housing Stabilization, said supported employment and supportive housing seek to have people stabilized in housing and jobs to improve their health and wellbeing, reducing Medicaid and healthcare costs.

Sam—who grew up in Salem, Ore., and graduated from George Fox University in 2011—earned a master’s degree in social work at Eastern Washington University in 2012, married and stayed in Spokane. For two years, she was director of the House of Charity and helped start the housing stabilization program in 2018.

“In the House of Charity and St. Margaret’s shelter programs, I saw need for services to support vulnerable families with stable housing,” said Sam, who now supports a team of case managers to work with more than 70 house-holds in the community to help them find or maintain housing.

Currently, 40 are housed and 37 are looking for housing.

Her department works with social service coordinators to provide case management for vulnerable households living in Catholic Charities tax-credit buildings, which have more than 300 units for formerly homeless households. They are at Father Bach Haven, Bader Haven, Donna Hanson Haven, Pope Francis Haven (for families), or Sisters Haven (for families) beside the former Holy Names Convent.

Two other tax-credit housing units under construction will open in January 2020 and April 2020.

“We partner with Catholic Housing Communities, who provide property management and on-site case management, peer support and behavioral health/counseling services,” Sam said.

Harrison Hustling helps homeless people overcome barriers.

Supported employment is a service under case management. Its goal is to provide ongoing support, helping people identify goals and plans for themselves.

“In the community, I foster relationships to find potential employers, and connect people with employers,” Harrison said.

Harrison learns employers’ hiring needs, introduces them to some of the job seekers, matches employers’ needs with job seekers’ goals, helps with applications and appropriate clothing. Then he does one-to-one job coaching after clients are employed.

“Some need extra time to be trained into a position and support to understand what they are expected to do,” he said.

Harrison spends time one-to-one with Catholic Charities office or homes of clients, with 60 percent of his time in the community, taking people to work and helping them find or maintain housing.

“He takes me through the process and whatever they need,” Harrison said, adding that’s what he does. “I believe God and God wants everyone to believe in them. I believe in them and advocate for them,” he said.

“Now more than ever, we can walk with them and be there for them,” Harrison added, saying that’s what Catholic Charities does. “We do not ask people to change or make them change, but support them in the direction they want to take to improve their lives.”

“I believe economic empowerment helps people live the lives they choose, facing and overcoming barriers as small hurdles,” he said. “My passion is to help people gain financial independence, which is key to their health and stability.

“Employment is a way to find purpose. Catholic social teaching says everyone has the right to work and to fulfill a purpose,” he said. “I seek to help people regain hope and purpose.”

For information, call 202-5066 or email info@supportedemployment@ccspokane.org.

**Supported Employment program intersects with Catholic Charities’ approach**

“Employment is a way to find purpose,” Harrison said. “I seek to help people regain hope and purpose.”
Joya ‘pours on’ intensive, comprehensive services in child’s first three years

Physical therapist Sarah helps Sultana cross plastic stepping stones.

"Good outcomes mean savings for the community," she said. "We refer children to Head Start, community preschools and neighbor-hood play groups." Others qualify for special education in public schools, entering with skills to build on.

For information, call 326-1651 or email colleen.fuchs@joya.org.

[Event Information]
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
24th & Grand
Blessing of the Animals
celebrating St. Francis Day
Sunday, Oct. 6
10:45 a.m.

[Event Details]
2019 Spokane Global Compassion Games Interfaith Potluck & Speed Faithing Dialogue with people of diverse faiths 5 to 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 15
6702 or pwc@help4women.org

Earth and Spirit Festival - Keynote Matthew Fox 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 28 - Unity Center of Divine Love & Light - 4123 Lincoln Rd
Pathways to Peace "Working Together Toward a More Compassionate Community" 64 p.m., Friday, Sept. 20 - Gonzaga Hemminger Center
World Peace Flag Ceremony and Program on Nuclear Disarmament

"We changed the name to Joya because it means ‘treasure’ or ‘jewel,’ and that’s how we see the children. We added Child and Family Development, because parents said we help them as much as their children,” he said. “The name, Guilds’ School and Neuromuscular Center, sounded like a sad, scary place, and it’s not really a school. It is now under the State Department of Health category of Neurodevelopmental Centers of Excellence. It’s one of 19 and the only one in Eastern Washington.

“Many infants are ‘graduates’ of neonatal intensive care. We find that because of an infant’s brain’s neuroplasticity, many recover. It was previously believed that once the brain was injured, it would always be injured,” he said.

Dick, who grew up Catholic, said faith instilled in him optimism and faith that people can create more positive outcomes.

Colleen has been connected to Joya for many years, first coming in 2000 after her fourth son, Tommy, had a stroke at the stem of his brain 16 days after he was born. He was not expected to survive. He was deaf, blind and comatose for two weeks. At eight weeks, after he began to wake up, at three, he “graduated,” qualified for Head Start, and at five, he “graduated,” qualified for special education and attended St. Aloysius School, where Colleen taught. At 12, he was secure.

He has just graduated from Gonzaga Prep and is beginning EMT training at Spokane Community College.

Colleen, who has lived within three blocks of the house on 400 E. Sinto where her father grew up, graduated from Gonzaga University in 1991 with a degree in early childhood special education. She taught many years half-time at St. Aloysius School. Her career includes being a public school liaison to St. Als qualified to teach special education, starting a catering business and collecting data for the University of Washington on early learning centers.

For his seventh grade service project, Tommy decided to do public speaking about the Guilds’ School. He spoke at its benefit.

“I always dreamed of working at the Guilds’ School, but knew no one leaves. At that banquet, the program coordinator, Marilyn Hen-derson, said she would retire the next June after 38 years.” Colleen talked with Dick and was hired.

She supervised teachers and therapists and was acting director when Dick was on a health leave. After he retired, they hired her to help the program expand.

“We are where families are sent when their children have medically complex diagnoses,” Colleen said.

“Our philosophy is to pour on intensive, multidisciplinary services for a child’s first three years.

On intake, Joya assesses gross and fine motor skills, speech and language, cognitive skills, self-feeding, social and emotional skills. Staff see children first in their homes. A resource coordina-tor coordinates the team working with parents.

If children are ready, they join toddler groups—two or three days a week for two to three hours—that include models who help them build language and socialization skills.

"Playgroups and story time are enriching for them, too," Colleen said. "The shift is from them going to play groups with Billy who has Down syndrome to playing with their friend Billy.”

Fifty-one percent left at or before the age of three with age appropriate skills, so they qualify for regular public school education.

For the Guilds’ School, they need to cover costs of services children need, so families do not decide to forego services because it raises money to cover costs of services children need.

The program trains students in the disciplines at the medical schools and universities there. Students gain and retain skills that give them an advantage when they graduate.

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Out of the Shadows Theatre gives opportunity for people with disabilities to act

By Kaye Holt

One night during an audition for play, actress Wendy Carroll realized her son, Toby, who had attended her rehearsals in Coeur d’Alene and Spokane theaters, might want to act. Toby has several disabilities.

He brings actors water at rehearsals and helps tidy the theater lobbies. The theater community embraces him, she said.

In April 2016, she created Out of the Shadows Theatre. Productions feature actors with disabilities accompanied by show actors who support the actors at rehearsals and during productions.

Wendy called on friends and colleagues in the theater community. They began planning their first production, “Beauty and the Beast Jr.”

The play ran two productions one weekend in November 2016.

Productions have been in November since then: “Fiddler on the Roof Jr.” in 2017 and “Mary Poppins Jr.” in 2018.

“We don’t ask what the issues are with our actors,” Wendy said.

Some are autistic or blind. Others have Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, developmental disabilities or are in stroke recovery.

The actors and shadow actors range from 10 to 63 years old — most are 20 to 30. Shadow actors wear dark clothing and help actors learn lines. They have the script on stage and make sure actors move to the correct places. Actors and shadows often become friends.

“After the play, we have coffee and it is to please the audience. In our theater, it’s not about the audience. It’s about the actors,” Wendy said.

“Seek to give actors the opportunity to be on stage. If the audience is pleased, that’s a bonus.”

The audience may know they are seeing disabilities, but Wendy said they don’t see half of it.

Actors are dealing with many new experiences — putting on makeup, putting on a microphone or wearing annoying fabrics.

To see them is to realize how hard they work and how supportive everyone around them is.

“Our actors like the theater and the opportunity, she said. They like that people are staring at them for their abilities, not their disabilities.

“We do what the actors need to feel comfortable,” Wendy said. “While we bend rules, we hold to a commitment. That means giving their word they will stick with it.”

Wendy cited examples of what it has meant to some actors:

• A young girl with Down Syndrome had to bring her doll on stage. She needed to wear sound suppressors because of a sensitivity to noise. On opening night, she kept the doll but gave up the sound suppressors.

• A boy had cerebral palsy and autism. His grandmother said when he is acting he no longer has autism because his character doesn’t have it. He has gone on to be cast in community theater productions with Lake City Playhouse and Aspire Theater.

• In “Beauty and the Beast Jr.,” wheelchairs were used as part of the wolfes’ costumes.

• A shy young girl in “Beauty” struggled with her single line: “Boo!” By her third production she delighted audiences with her brilliant portrayal of Mary Poppins’ young charge Jane Banks, complete with English accent! She has become outgoing and verbal.

• A young woman became a member of the junior board of directors at Liberty Lake Community Theater and has been cast in several productions and a Shakespearean play. She also has begun to write for theater.

“When our actors go off on a line, the audience is patient and supportive,” Wendy said.

Therapists find theater participation is therapeutic, particularly for people with autism. They see that actors retain the social issues for schools and libraries. After 15 years, she moved in 1994 to Arizona, and taught screen acting at Mesa Community College’s film and TV department.


Out of the Shadows performs Beauty and the Beast Jr in 2016

They soon learn that Out of the Shadows’ goal is for actors to do their best. Most return production after production.

A seasoned TV, film and stage actor told Wendy after seeing the show in 2016, “This is the most important theater I’ve ever seen. I have to work on the next show.”

The creative director of Spokane Civic Theater gave Out of the Shadows access to some Mary Poppins costumes. After seeing the shows, he said, “I get it. I want to be involved.”

Every year, theater professionals and inexperienced folks from the community donate time and talent from September into November. This year the costume designer just finished Coeur d’Alene’s Summer Theater’s 2019 season. The set and lighting designer is returning.

The choreographer adapts dances to include actors who require walkers and wheelchairs.

The leaf community values use of American Sign Language interpreters at select performances.

In 2016, Out of the Shadows performed Beauty and the Beast Jr in 2016.

Out of the Shadows performs Beauty and the Beast Jr in 2016

In 2018, Out of the Shadows became a nonprofit, called Celebrate Inc. Beyond theater, Out of the Shadows wants to introduce other fine arts to individuals with disabilities, using professional tools and instruction. They seek a location and artists willing to donate their time.

Currently, Out of the Shadows is preparing the November 2019 production of “Music Man Jr.” It will run two weeks, Nov. 1 to 3, and 8 to 10.

The shows they have produced have been sold out. They are already booked for 2020 and 2021.

“The experience is life-changing and inspiring not only for the actors, but also for the shadow actors, production team, back stage crew and audience,” Wendy said.

For information, call 208-818-0953 or visit outofshadows-theater.com.
Volunteers keep food pantry humming

Because it is difficult for people in the outlying areas and in the community to access programs for low-income people in downtown Spokane, it makes sense to address concerns of people in North Spokane County in their own locations before they reach a crisis.

The North County Food Pantry at 40015 N. Collins Road in Elk is doing that in one of the poorest areas of the county with high unemployment and many seniors, said volunteer Bon Wakabayashi.

The pantry serves people in 99009 Chattaroy, 99003 Elk, and the Spokane County parts 99156 zip code who “shop” for groceries.

When people come in, they take a grocery cart and choose items.

The North County Food Pantry is co-directed by volunteers Sandy and Joe Harvey with the assistance of 37 volunteers year round and 45 in the summer with the community garden.

They create a welcoming community center, Bon said.

Bon coordinates a volunteer team of medical equipment specialists to help elderly and disabled people, and people in financial distress learn how to access programs.

She began by using area resource guides, like The Fig Tree’s annual comprehensive directory that includes to the community, checking websites and talking to organizations about the services they could provide for clients.

Some clients have just enough gas to drive to the pantry, she said. “A volunteer looks at me with a great sense of intimidation for someone in stress over a difficult situation, she said.

Bon compiled information that was posted on bulletin boards and put it in a binder volunteers can use to refer clients to the services.

People can talk with volunteers about concerns such as medical insurance, dental care, and paying for prescriptions, hearing aids, prescription eyeglasses and medical equipment. Some need legal advice or advice on caregiving for family members.

Along with volunteers helping veterans and others with benefits, on first Mondays a Spokane Valley Vet Center van brings people to meet with veterans on their needs. They have computer access to military records to provide guidance or help veterans apply for benefits, on first Wednesdays, and second and fourth Wednesdays.

They serve lunch to about 50.

Sandy, who grew up in Spokane, said “When she and Joe married nearly 50 years ago, they wanted to live in the country and found a home in Chatteroy. Joe grew up south of Spokane. Sandy worked 38 years for the U.S. Postal Service. Joe stayed at home raising their two boys until they were older, and then began working at a local foundry.

Darlene Hansen was pantry director for five years before Sandy and Joe took over as co-directors in 2014. They have volunteered for 19 years. Joe receives the freight, keeps inventory and sets up the items. Sandy does the administration and paperwork.

Country Church of the Open Bible next door started the pantry more than 25 years ago. It was also housed at Riverside High School and a nearby Grange until moving to its present location just north of the church.

“We serve about 280 families a month or 725 individuals,” said Sandy. “This is one of the poorest parts of Spokane County with high unemployment and a large elderly population. We serve whoever needs food regardless of income. Signs on shelves suggest how much food people can take.”

The pantry also distributes government commodities, a senior box with 60 pounds of cereals, canned goods, juices, vegetables, fruit, crackers, cheese and instant or shelf-stable milk.

About 14 nearby churches supply food, cash and other donations from food drives. Rotary 1 Deer Park and St. Joseph’s Parish in Colbert help.

“Our work is part of my faith. It’s God’s calling for me to pay back for the good things God has given me. People are so thankful it touches my heart,” said Sandy, who attends Chatteroy Community Church with Joe.

She said she has seen miracles:

• One day the cook was out of meat for hamburgers. An hour later, a farmer arrived with a donation of 215 pounds of hamburger.

• At times from February to May the cupboards are bare, but she said “God seems to know what we need and provide it. It blows me away.”

• A single elderly woman needed a plumbers, and a volunteer went home with her and fixed the pipes.

• The volunteers and people who come are like a big family taking care of each other,” Sandy said. “In the morning we pray before we open. Many volunteers are big donors. I thank the Lord every day for this opportunity.”

After 14 years as co-directors, however, Sandy and Joe want to travel and are looking for someone to take on their roles. For information, call 238-6464 or visit www.northcountypofoodpantry.com.

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Upcoming Retreats

at Spirit Center at the Monastery of St. Gertrude

A Watercolor Journey
Sunday, March 10 - October 2

The Creative Word: A Contemplative Writing Retreat – November 4-8

Silence the Christmas Noise: An Advent Retreat – customized retreats December 1 through 18

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From Yesterday...

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39th Annual Roger Williams Symposium

The Rev. Dr. Robin R. Myers

author, syndicated columnist and NPR commentator, senior minister of Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) and professor of social justice emeritus at Oklahoma City University

Spiritual Defiance: Building a Beloved Community of Resistance

7 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 2 - Community Congregational UCC, 525 NE Campus St. Pullman

10:30 a.m., Sunday Nov. 3 - Great Feaster Church - Community Congregational UCC. 525 NE Campus St. Pullman

American Heretics: The Politics of the Gospel - 9m and workshop 2-4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 3

St. James Episcopal Church, 1410 NE Stadium Way Pullman

Climate Change as a Moral Imperative - lecture sponsored by the Thomas Foley Institute at WSU, noon Monday, Nov. 4, 4m Bryan Hall

All events are free • https://interfaith-house.com/events/symposium

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The 2019 Global Unity Compassion Games Sept. 8 to 28 include Interfaith Potluck and Speed Faithing, Pathways to Peace and the World Peace Flag Ceremony, and the Earth and Spirit Festival with theologian Matthew Fox as keynote speaker.

The Interfaith Potluck and Speed Faithing, an amalgamation of three sharing perspectives on spiritual practices to discover commonalities and honor differences, said Joan Broeckling of One Peace Many Paths (OPMP). Pathways to Peace—co-sponsored by OPMP, Gonzaga University, PJALS and PaxChristi—is from 6 to 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 20, in Gonzaga’s Hemminger Center. It includes a panel discussion on decolonization, followed by the annual World Peace Flag Ceremony.

“The ceremony affirms peace is possible when people join in action, especially through the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) uniting people globally,” Joan said.

The Earth and Spirit Festival, from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 28, at Unity Spiritual Center, 2900 S. Bernard, is co-sponsored by OPMP, Unity Spiritual Center and the Sisters of the Holy Names. “It celebrates our connection to the Earth to help us develop more sustainable, compassionate habits,” Joan added.

Matthew is the author of 37 books, a “think-outside-the-box” theologian, an Episcopal priest, an activist for eco-justice and co-founder of the Order of the Sacred Earth (OSE). OSE is a movement of people of various beliefs and non-beliefs who vow to love and defend the Earth.

He envisions reinventing work, education and worship to bring a non-violent revolution. He is speaking on “Passion and Compassion: How the Suffering of Mother Earth and the Poor Are Waking Us Up to Love and Action.” Tickets for his lecture are at buytickets.at/onepeacemanypaths/287037.

The festival also includes children’s activities, a resource fair and the following workshops:

- A panel of community leaders will discuss “Building a Sustainable Spokane” related to the international SDGs. Panelists are Breean Beggs of the Spokane City Council, Patrick Jones of Spokane Community Indicators, Maggie Gates of The Lands Council and Karl MacIntyre of 350 Spokane.
- In an “Earth Stewardship Interfaith Panel,” Thubten Jampa of Srasasti Abbey, Todd Eklof of the Unitarian Universalist Church, and Pat McCormick of 350 Spokane will share approaches to taking compassionate action to protect and heal the Earth.
- “Earthing” is the practice of connecting with Mother Earth’s energies for healing and restoration.
- “Native American Spirituality” features David Brown Eagle of the Spokane Tribe on “Mother Earth: We’re with Her or She Moves on without Us.”

Service Projects, listed on p. 11, for volunteers are Fall Cleanup at Drumseller Springs Park, Unity World Day of Prayer Vigil and Labyrinth Walk, The Lands Council Spokane River Cleanup, food sorting at Northwest Harvest and a 350Spokane Climate Strike.

For information, call email onepeacemanypaths@gmail.com.

YWCA honors 10 women leaders

The YWCA Spokane has announced 2019 Women of Achievement they will honor at their awards luncheon, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 11, at the Spokane Convention Center. Over 37 years, YWCA Spokane has celebrated achievements of more than 230 Spokane women to increase awareness and appreciation of contributions of women.

The recipients embody the YWCA Spokane’s mission to enhance and promote peace, justice, non-violence who vow to love and defend the Earth.

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With divisiveness in our country filtering down to divisiveness in our communities close to home, we must choose how to respond to the rise of divisiveness and shining through the Aug. 13 “Truthful Tuesday Vigil” outside Spokane Valley City Hall. The purpose of the vigil is to attract Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC) has set up Truthful Tuesday Vigils so that they can bring attention to the ideologies of white supremacy, national and Christian Dominionism, and the threat that extremism poses to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for many in our communities and nation.

In the vigil, presenters call on citizens and city leaders to speak out and take action to build inclusiveness so all can live together in peace.

In fact, the Rev. Gen Heywood, pastor of Verdale United Church of Christ and convener of the FLLC, shared a meditation on how to do justice.

One hand extends in the universal sign for stop. “With this hand,” said Gen, “we must stop. You must stop what you are doing or saying that is hurting me, my community and my neighbor.”

The second hand reaches out in invitation to include the other in relationship, but only after harmful, divisive actions cease.

Creating two hands of forgiveness fosters hope that opposing sides can come together in forgiveness and repentance to find reconciliation. This requires choice to recognize and acknowledge any harm done and to work toward common ground.

Kurtis Robinson, president of the Spokane NAACP, shared with the crowd about his experience working with a prisoner and his decision to pursue what he called “inclusionary” or “education and intervention” rather than violence and harm.

Monica Viellette, whose aunt, uncle and eight-year-old cousin were murdered in a racist attack on their property in Arkansas in 1996, shared her story of the murder of Alphonse Pinckney, a white upholsterer from the Spokane area, and called for end to restrictive housing covenants, which, while declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court, continue to be written into home owners’ association rules.

Today we raise our voices together as leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States offered a film with the BIG Supply of edible food are quickly disappearing. The word “sustainable” may seem like a buzz word, but it is used continually in our work to build a foundation contributing to sustainability. The planet is pushing back. At the invitation of Spokane City Councilman and Mayor, volunteer citizens have been trying to update our metrics and indicators. The SDGs are afforded to every person and all have rights.

Faith leaders and civic leaders need to move to sustainable living

The word “sustainable” may seem like a buzz word, but it is used continually in our work to build a foundation contributing to sustainability. The planet is pushing back.

At the invitation of Spokane City Councilman and Mayor, volunteer citizens have been trying to update our metrics and indicators. The SDGs are afforded to every person and all have rights.

I was impressed by summer (Jury) edition of "The Fig Tree"! Their projects are about home for the homeless youth. I do have a question: what about "JOBS"? They are always about PROFITS! We implore all legislative bodies to pass gun violence prevention research. Finally, we pledge our support to the end of the scar of rage and hatred that has gripped our nation. We will be unfailing in our efforts to call for legislation that works to end gun violence quickly and effectively.

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The controversy over the smelter at New clinic, volunteer citizens have been trying to update our metrics and indicators. The SDGs are afforded to every person and all have rights.
Cindy Fine and Mark Haberman invite seniors to re-engage with the world safely and avoid falls by helping Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) counter the myth that growing older means a person will be weaker, less active and stay at home sitting in a recliner.

Cindy and Mark train volunteers to teach seniors the “A Matter of Balance” curriculum through faith communities, senior centers, affordable housing centers and other organizations.

Cindy, program coordinator for a year, said that “A Matter of Balance” is an evidence-based falls prevention intervention that hospital staff and physical therapists began in 1995.

“Every 11 seconds, an older adult falls in an emergency room for a fall. Even if there is no injury, falls impact quality of life. Because many older adults have an intense fear of falling, they limit their activities and social engagement, leading to more phosphorylization, social isolation and feeling hopeless. Ultimately that fear may lead to loss of independence, said Mark, planning and resource director who has been doing the program with ALTCEW for three years.

Developed as a lay-led program in 2006, it said it is not primarily an exercise program, but is a program designed to change their viewpoints to realize that falls can be prevented, to set realistic goals to improve activity, to identify environmental adjustments to reduce risk factors and to understand how gentle movement increases flexibility, strength and balance.

Cindy said the first two of eight sessions establish cognitive restructuring of ideas about falling.

“Many expect older people will fall, but we challenge the belief that falls are a natural part of aging,” she said.

After falls, many become more sedentary, thinking that’s the best way to protect themselves. They may stop going out and step into social isolation that can lead to depression and more problems.

“Many believe fitness is for the young, but everybody can be stronger,” said Mark. “Inactivity can mask as a best friend when I do less, I’m weaker and at home. Most falls happen at home.”

Mark said a participant decided to have a joint replaced after the classes and then bought a bicycle.

The program is a way to find one’s way back into the world, he said.

“Washington has one of the nation’s highest fall rates, and Spokane, one of the highest in the state, Cindy said. It relates to health and poverty.

Mark said many delay housing transitions, staying in their homes until a crisis, because they cannot afford to move to a place more appropriate to their fitness and health.

Cindy, who grew up in Colville, earned a degree in journalism in 1978 at Eastern Washington University.

She was a family advocate with Children’s Home Society, an advocate for the Spokane Regional Health District’s unintended pregnancy and needle exchange program, and an educator with Planned Parenthood.

Having an elderly mother, she was concerned about how devastating falls can be for older people.

Mark, whose degrees are from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, and the University of Minnesota in church music and organ, worked 17 years as a church musician. Before he came to ALTCEW, he was a deacon, church musician and family minister at Coeur d’Alene United Methodist Church and did anti-poverty work for 16 years with the Community Action Agency.

In that agency, his family, the American Guild of Organists, the church and the LGBTQ community, he knew people whose deaths were precipitated by falls.

With a social component in classes, Cindy said churches are a conducive setting, because members already know each other.

“It’s good in-reach and good outreach,” she said. “We seek people in churches to be trained as coaches so people can make their faith communities safer.”

Nine “A Matter of Balance” classes will be offered this fall at Southside, Corbin and Sinto Senior Centers, Northwood and First Presbyterian, and the Unitarian Universalist Church. Coaches lead in pairs.

Cindy said co-teachers at First Presbyterian are Raeann Decker, a retired registered nurse and former parish nurse, and Patti Aspinwall. Raeann has taught nurses in critical care.

“We have an elderly person, and share ideas, tricks and tools they use,” Raeann said. “As a nurse, I had cared for many in their 80s who came in with fractured hips and did not live long after. It was sad to see someone who could have been prevented from those deaths.”

ALTCEW continually recruits coaches, because coaches agree to lead two sessions. Some do it twice, and some six times.

In five years, ALTCEW has offered 50 workshops in the five counties ALTCEW serves, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Grant, Spokane and Whitman, reaching 500 people in classes of eight to 14.

They hope to double the number of coaches from 32 to 64. ALTCEW trains volunteer coaches several times a year. The first session introduces the curriculum, so volunteers can decide if it’s for them.

“It is a specialized opportunity because it requires a significant commitment,” said Cindy. “Coaches find a satisfying, life-changing experience.”

The third to eighth sessions introduce a half-hour of low-impact exercises, adaptable to different levels. They include deep breathing, foot circles, turning the head, upper body exercise and side stepping. People determine their readiness.

In discussions, they share ideas and experiences, some modifications to overcome barriers and asking family for help.

“People learn they can be more active. Some join the Y and other exercise programs,” Mark said.

“My faith commitment is about love, service and justice. Jesus spent a lot of time with people on the margins. Older adults are on the margins,” said Mark, a UMC deacon who is appointed to serve with ALTCEW.

Believing it is important to connect the church to the world and the world to the church, he helps his congregation understand about poverty, aging and LGBTQ issues, and helps the world understand the importance of the church. What happens within the walls of the church should inspire people to make a difference in the world, he said.

Cindy, a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church for more than 30 years, has been involved in religious education and on committees.

At a summer conference of the National Council on Aging in Washington, DC, Mark and Cindy became more aware that “we are in a silver tsunami.” Previously, the young were the base of a pyramid with the old at the top, but now it’s a pillar with the numbers of people over 65 rising.

For information, call 509-2509, email cindy.fine@dhs.wa.gov or visit altcew.org.