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

# Social workers can change communities

By Mary Stamp

At Eastern Washington University, Bipasha Biswas teaches students that social workers build and change communities.

As an assistant professor in the School of Social Work, she teaches the next generation of social workers to be community based and she encourages engagement in international work. She involves them in service learning with community partners and took a group last summer to her homeland in India.

“My social work identity is to be a change agent in academic and in community settings. Being a social worker is a 24-hour-a-day job. We cannot do social work 9 to 5 because poverty and domestic violence do not stop at 5 p.m.,” said Bipasha.

“Social work is my identity. Social justice is my faith,” she said.

Beyond teaching at EWU, she speaks and is involved in the community.

Her research on the intersections of stigma, violence, access and health care relate to risky sexual behavior and to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. These issues connect with violence against women, human trafficking, domestic violence, gender stereotypes in



Bipasha Biswas believes women’s rights are human rights.

media and human rights abuses.

Bipasha, who teaches a class on women’s rights and human rights with the School of Social Work and with Women’s and Gender Studies at EWU, spoke at the International Women’s Day gathering March 8 at the Riverpoint campus.

Despite ongoing oppression, she said that there has been some progress in the 20 years since the United Nations’ Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995. Representatives there from 195 countries adopted a Platform for Action to empower women.

“It’s a commitment to achieve equality, development and peace for women around the globe by removing obstacles to their participation in public and private life,” she told participants at the Spokane gathering.

When she was finishing undergraduate studies at Jadavpur University in Calcutta, Bipasha heard about the Beijing conference and about the U.S. President’s wife, Hillary Clinton, speaking there.

“I learned new words: ‘gender lens’ and ‘girl child.’ I began looking at what those words meant in my life and in India,” she said.

She knew about the violence  
*Continued on page 4*

## Creation Justice Ministries offers ecumenical resources

# Earth Day celebrations set in area

Spokane’s 45th Earth Day Celebration will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, April 18, at Riverfront Park in the Gondola Meadow, Honey Locust Lane and Fountain Meadow.

It’s a family day to celebrate Mother Earth, environmental conservation, green cities and community with music, food, entertainment, vendors, children’s activities, workshops, a farmers’ market and more.

The Procession of the Species Parade starts at 2 p.m. with participants wearing recycled masks, hats and costumes representing

their favorite species. The Oak Tree booth will assist participants with making masks and hats.

Organizers expect to have more than the 80 booths last year. For information, call 487-0702, visit earthdayspokane.com or sign up for booths at earthdayspokane2015@gmail.com.

In Coeur d’Alene, the Kootenai Environmental Alliance is planning an Earth Day Fair, “Protect our GEM: Earth Day Celebration 2015,” from noon to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 18 at the Public Library, 702 E. Front Ave.

Activities include Flash Mob

Yoga, drumming, live music, recycled art, a fun run at noon, crafts and booths. For information, call 208-667-9093, email kea@kealliance.org or visit kealliance.org/earth-day-fair.

Creation Justice Ministries, formerly the ECO-Justice Program of the National Council of Churches has Earth Day Sunday resources for congregations.

The resource, “Have you anything here to eat?” addresses sustainable food in a changing climate. There are denominational versions for the American Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterians, and United Church of Christ and United Methodist churches, as well as an ecumenical resource, which is available at creationjustice.org/earth-day-2015---sustainable-food-in-a-changing-climate.html.

There are theological notes for sermon preparation, Christian education activities for youth and adults, hymn suggestions and other resources.

For information, call 202-827-3975, email info@creationjustice.org or visit creationjustice.org.

## Pope names Thomas Daly to be Bishop of Spokane

Spokane’s new Catholic Bishop Thomas Anthony Daly, the seventh bishop of the Diocese of Spokane, visited Spokane briefly on March 12 after the announcement of his appointment by the Pope through Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò.

Since 2011, Bishop Daly, 54, has been the auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of San Jose, the 10th largest U.S. diocese with 670,000 members. Spokane’s diocese has 96,000 parishioners.

Bishop Daly, who succeeds Chicago Archbishop Blase Cupich, held a news conference and met staff of the Catholic Pastoral Center and priests.

He will return to Spokane for his installation as Bishop of Spokane on May 20 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes.

A vigil will be held the evening before the installation for representatives of clergy, deacons, religious and secular groups to welcome him and join him in prayer. Public receptions will follow the Prayer Vigil and the Installation Mass.

Bishop Daly attended Catholic schools in San Francisco. After he earned a bachelor’s from the University of San Francisco in 1982, he entered priestly formation at St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, Calif., and earned a master of divinity degree. In 1987, he was ordained and became assistant priest at Our Lady of Loreto parish in Novato until 1992.

He taught and was chaplain at Marin Catholic High School until 2003, also working as parochial vicar for parishes in Lagunitas and Nicaso from 1995 to 1999. In 1996, he earned a master’s in education from Boston College. He has also served as a part-time police chaplain, vocations director, and boys school chaplain.

For information, call 358-7300 or visit www.dioceseofspokane.org.

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## Religion News Briefs

### Around the World

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

#### Coalition to reform corporate taxation

A coalition of civil society and labor groups has launched an Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation (ICRICT) in response to rising inequality and public anger over corporate tax cheats. The World Council of Churches (WCC) helped establish the commission, which aims to start reforms leading towards a fairer, more effective and just international corporate tax system that does not reinforce global inequality and poverty.

**It will promote debate through inclusive discussion** of international tax rules to consider reforms based on public interest. Meeting in March in New York, it evaluated proposals for reform. Its recommendations will be input to the annual International Conference on Financing for Development in Ethiopia in July.

**"We, as faith leaders, must ask hard questions** and demand honest answers as to why people must be desperately poor in the midst of all the global natural resources endowed upon our nations as a free gift from God. We must insist on reforming economic and financial structures so they can be turned into just and life giving systems," said the Rev. Suzanne Matale, a commission member and general secretary of the Zambian Council of Churches. "We as faith organizations should not only concentrate on treating effects of poverty but must also advocate for just policies."

**"The world has changed** but the international tax system has not. Corporations play governments against each other, encouraging race-to-the-bottom tax incentives, and the public loses. Billions of dollars are at stake. This commission will shed light on where rules of the game and institutions that govern them need to change," said José Antonio Ocampo. "Tax policy affects everybody but for too long the debates have been presented as technical and reserved only for tax lawyers and accountants. There is a desperate need to bridge the gap between the technical challenges and everyone's right to participate and provide solutions."

#### UK churches call for eliminating nuclear weapons

Four member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC) are represented among 26 faith leaders in the United Kingdom who issued a joint statement recently calling on states with nuclear weapons to join other states in negotiations to eliminate nuclear arsenals. Signers include representatives of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist communities across the UK. The statement, issued ahead of the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, argues that nuclear arsenals "violate the principle of dignity for every human being that is common to each of our faith traditions."

**The faith leaders call for a nuclear weapon free world** and stress that it is necessary to move beyond the division of the world into nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states.

The statement is signed by heads of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland General Assembly, the Methodist Conference, the United Reformed Church, Quakers in Britain, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool; and leaders of the British Muslim Forum, the Hindu Forum of Europe, the Network of Sikh Organizations and the London Buddhist Vihara.

#### Advocacy alliance continues under the WCC

The WCC and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) have agreed to re-establish the EAA as the WCC's ecumenical initiative, preserving the future of this diverse Christian network for international action on selected issues. For 14 years, it has brought together Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical and Orthodox churches and Christian organizations for campaigns. It is designed to maximize the impact of faith-based voices and action for justice, particularly in the areas of HIV and AIDS, sustainable agriculture and food security. "We believe that the more we can speak and act together, the stronger our impact for justice will be," Richard Fee, chair of the EAA board.

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## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Benefits raise nearly half of goal for 2015

The Fig Tree has raised \$22,165 as of publication time from its 2015 Benefit Breakfast and Lunch March 11 and 13. With pledges of \$3,300, the total is \$25,435. Other gifts and pledges are expected through the year, too.

The initial goal to meet 2015 budget commitments is \$30,000. The full goal of \$50,000 will allow The Fig Tree to add the staff it needs. The Fig Tree also budgets for \$15,000 from sponsors.

The Fig Tree continues its pledge drive in this issue and online, with excerpts from benefit

speakers' comments in Sounding Board and video online.

Those videos and the Northwest Profiles video at thefigtree.org can be used by benefit attendees and supporters who want to share The Fig Tree story.

"We hope people will spread the message and encourage others to become readers and sponsors," said editor Mary Stamp. "We are so thankful for the strong support from and the energy of those who attended the breakfast and lunch.

"Now we also are into our drive for advertising underwriters for

the 2015-16 Resource Directory," she said. "Last year, we were \$5,000 short on the directory, so we need more partners who will help underwrite the publication."

There has also been so much demand for the directory that The Fig Tree plans to publish 1,500 more copies for a total of 11,500.

"The demand for directories exceeded the number of copies we published this year," Mary said. "So advance orders are important, especially for those who want bulk quantities."

For information, call 535-1813.

### Interfaith Council meets on Sunday, April 19

The Spokane Interfaith Council is holding its Annual Meeting and Potluck from 5 to 7 p.m., Sunday, April 19, at the West Central Episcopal Mission, 1832 W. Dean Ave.

The Annual Meeting is a time

when the council and members reflect on the past year and plan for the future, learning about upcoming projects and electing its board.

"We're looking to hear your feedback so we can change our

community into a more inclusive, pluralistic community together," said board president Skyler Oberst.

For information, email spokaneinterfaithcouncil.sky@gmail.com.

### Martin Luther King Center dinner set

The Martin Luther King Jr Family Outreach Center Benefit Dinner is from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 18, at the Spokane Convention Center Centennial

Lobby Ballrooms ABCD, 334 W Spokane Falls Blvd.

Proceeds from this benefit will be used to further and expand the array of social services provided

through the Center to Spokane area children, youth, and families.

For information, call 455-8722, email varguello@mlkspokane.org or visit mlkspokane.org.

### CROP Hunger Walk is Sunday, April 26

Spokane's 38th CROP Hunger Walk starts with registration at noon, Sunday, April 26, at the Spokane Community College Lair, 1810 N. Greene. At 1:30 p.m., the walk begins.

Family Promise of Spokane and Greater Spokane Meals on Wheels will share 25 percent of proceeds,

and the rest goes to Church World Service for international disaster relief and development assistance.

The annual walk is an example of how much can be accomplished if each person does a small part, said chair Randy Goss.

Spokane's walk is one of 2,000 held around the United States.

Members of 18 area congregations participated in 2014, raising nearly \$13,000.

This year's Spokane CROP Walk will include performances before the walk and gift baskets from local businesses.

For information, call 468-4099 or email goss301@gmail.com.

### Get Lit! uplifts reading, writing

The 17th Annual Get Lit! celebration of reading and writing for all ages will hold a variety of events from Monday to Sunday, April 20 to 26 in various venues in Spokane.

Programs are to enhance the artistic, social and cultural life of people through community events, readings, workshops and poetry slams. Authors include Sherman Alexie, Sharma Shields, Walter Kim, Benjamin Percy, Jess Walter, Rick Barot, S.M. Hulse, Shawn Vestal and Melanie Rae Thon.

For information, visit their website at getlitfestival.org.



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**Our Kids Our Business opens with luncheon**

Host Robyn Nance, co-founder of Teen Closet, leads a panel with local law enforcement, pre-K, K-12, higher education, medicine and business experts for the 9th Annual "Our Kids: Our Business" Luncheon at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 1, at the Spokane Convention Center. A training session from 1 to 5 p.m. features Jody McVittie of "Sound Discipline." It focuses on "Building Resiliency for Students Exposed to Trauma." For information, visit [www.okob15.eventbrite.com](http://www.okob15.eventbrite.com).

**African art exhibit raises funds for surgeries**

African artists will exhibit their art during April at Dodson's Jewelers, 516 W. Riverside in Spokane, to support heart surgeries in Rwanda through Healing Hearts Northwest. That Spokane nonprofit that sends heart surgery teams to Rwanda every year. The art is on display 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mondays to Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays. Another team will go in October.

Brothers Emmanuel and Innocent Nkuranga of the Inema Arts Center in Kigali, Rwanda, come annually to share their talents and stories of their art center. The center supports fair trade to empower communities in impoverished nations like Rwanda.

An opening reception from 5 to 8 p.m., Friday, April 10, at Dodson's features a short presentation by Hal Goldberg, MD, on "How Art and Medicine Are Saving Lives." During April, Emmanuel and Innocent will also give presentations for community groups, said Sandy Goldberg, coordinator. For information, call 991-6867 or email [healingheartsnorthwest.com](mailto:healingheartsnorthwest.com).

**LDS church plans Family Discovery Day**

"Family Discovery Day" of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 10405 W. Melville Dr., Cheney, will hold its annual Remembering Generations event from 8:40 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 18. It is an opportunity to learn how to use genealogical research resources, techniques and records to find ancestors and learn about their lives. There will be 25 classes. For information, visit [rememberinggenerations.com](http://rememberinggenerations.com) or call 838-6489.

**Retreat center plans April tour, events**

John Sanford of Elijah House will lead the Wednesday, April 15, Coffee and Contemplation from 9 to 11 a.m. at Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., "Healing the Earth," introducing biblical perspectives on nature and healing the land.

"Roads to Discovery" a tour of IHRC will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., with lunch, on Tuesday, April 21, at the center.

Fr. Jeff Core, pastor at Sacred Heart in Pullman, will lead a Day of Prayer on prayer from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, April 22.

"Knit Together in Prayer," a knitting/crocheting mid-week retreat led by IHRC staff member Sandy Krause and Sr. Christiana Marie, SMMC, will be held from 6 p.m., Tuesday, April 28, until 1 p.m., Thursday, April 30, at the IHRC. Participants may bring work or participate in a knit-a-long to create a Trinity prayer shawl. For information, call 448-1224 or visit [ihrc.net](http://ihrc.net).

**Outreach Center sets Civic Theater benefit**

Mission Community Outreach Center will hold its annual Civic Theater fund raiser Wednesday, April 22, for "Sherlock Holmes Curse of the Sign of Four." A dessert reception precedes the performance, which starts at 7:30 p.m.

Sandy Montgomery is the new operations manager at the Mission Community Outreach Center. She worked 18 years in graphic design at the Spokesman Review and has served disadvantaged families for many years. She also works at Miriam House. For information, call 536-1084 or email [mcoc.spokane@](mailto:mcoc.spokane@)

**Monastery announces its new prioress**

After a week of prayer and discernment in early March, the community of the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho, chose Sister Mary Forman as its 14th prioress.

The community reviewed their goals to identify leadership needs, and decided by "convergence and consensus."

Sister Mary will be installed on June 13, 2015, succeeding Sister Clarissa Goeckner, who served as prioress for 10 years.

Sister Clarissa expects that Sister Mary will activate the

community's imaginations to find new possibilities and renew commitment to prayer, justice and peacemaking.

Sister Mary grew up in Boise and worked as a pharmacist after graduating from Idaho State University in 1970. Before and after entering the monastery in 1973, she was a pharmacist. She also taught release-time religious education for public school students and served various parishes as youth minister, pastoral associate and director of religious education. She was also

a retreat minister at the monastery.

She also taught Latin at the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto, was a councilor for the Federation of St. Gertrude, and a past president and board member of the American Benedictine Academy.

Currently, she is associate professor in monastic studies at the School of Theology at Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minn., and teaches at the College of St. Benedict.

For information, call 208-962-5065 or [visitstgertrudes.org](http://visitstgertrudes.org)

**Composer, GU present music by Arvo Pärt**

Gonzaga University Music Department presents "Mirror in the Mirror: A Celebration of Arvo Pärt," a concert and lecture with Donivan Johnson, composer and K-12 music teacher in the Selkirk School District, at 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 14, at the Gonzaga University Chapel, Third Floor of College Hall.

Donivan said Pärt, born in 1935 in Estonia and baptized Lutheran, converted to Russian Orthodoxy, which influences his music. He uses religious texts, but composes music for the concert hall.

Donivan's compositions, while influenced by Pärt's style, are for church services.

Pärt is one of the "most performed, honored and revered composers of contemporary classical music," said Donivan, who will discuss the technique Pärt created in the 1970s called tintinnabuli, Latin for little bells.

He explained that Pärt's style is like having a pianist's left hand play the same chord while the right hand plays the melody, with each note bound to one of the three notes of the chord, so dissonances arise.

In 1976, Pärt published a solo piano work that introduced his technique in a way that reaches listeners spiritually, said Donivan.

"Using only scales and triads captures the ears, hearts and minds of listeners at all levels of musical background," he said.

"The melody represents the self-centered, egotistic voice of sin and

suffering," he explained. "The chord represents the objective realm of forgiveness."

Donivan said Pärt once spoke of making music with the "enigmatic equation of 1 + 1 = 1," meaning that the voice of the melody plus the voice of the chord creates something unique.

In addition to two piano solos, a piano duet, a choral work for guitars, and "Spiegel im Spiegel" (Mirror in the Mirror) for cello and piano, two of Donivan's works influenced by Pärt will also be performed—"Ecce Agnus Dei" for solo piano and "deeply fixed

thorns" for cello and piano.

For information, call 313-6733 or 446-2117.

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**Equal justice is theme for Whitworth Leadership Forum**

Bryan Stevenson, the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, is the featured speaker for Whitworth University's spring President's Leadership Forum, at 7:30 a.m., Tuesday, April 14, at the Spokane Convention Center.

The initiative, a nonprofit law organization in Montgomery, Ala., focuses on social justice

and human rights in the context of criminal justice reform. Bryan is a public-interest lawyer dedicated to helping the poor, the incarcerated and the condemned.

Under his leadership, the EJI has won legal challenges to eliminate excessive or unfair sentencing, exonerate innocent death row prisoners, confront abuse of the incarcerated and

the mentally ill, and aid children prosecuted as adults.

A graduate of Harvard Law School and School of Government, he is a professor of law at the New York University School of Law.

He is the author of *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*.

For information, call 777-4974 or visit [whitworth.edu/leadershipforum](http://whitworth.edu/leadershipforum).

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# Despite some progress in human rights, women have a long way to go

*Continued from page 1*

against women—such as gang rapes, sex trafficking and domestic violence.

“For the first time, issues of women in South Asia were important to talk about,” said Bipasha.

She went on to earn a master’s in social work in 1997 at Bombay University and a doctoral degree in 2008 at Washington University at St. Louis. She stayed there and taught at St. Louis University School of Social Work as an assistant professor until 2012, when she came to EWU.

“I chose to come to EWU as a public university, because I wanted to work with first-generation college students who are from migrant, immigrant, minority or poverty backgrounds,” she said. “I wanted to work with vulnerable populations.”

In India, both as a student and after earning her master’s degree, she worked seven years with agencies addressing STI/HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support services. That work intersected with poverty and with stigma related to women, marginalized and oppressed people.

Bipasha returns to India for five weeks each year. She had intended to return after her doctoral degree, but she married an American computer programmer, and they decided to live in the United States.

In 2014, she took 15 EWU students for three weeks to India to introduce them to her work there and take them “out of their comfort zone.”

“Human trafficking, violence against women, gender inequality and discrimination are issues not only in other countries but also in the United States,” she said.

On International Women’s Day, Bipasha discussed what the Beijing Conference on Women means now.

She showed a video summarizing the platform’s call to remove obstacles to women, to be in solidarity with and to empower women—so they have equal access to education, health care and economic development—and to see women as peacemakers.

“Women’s rights are human rights,” the declaration concluded.

In teaching the class on that topic, she was sad to learn that many EWU students, women and men, did not know they had human rights.

Bipasha also teaches about the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It was adopted by the UN in 1979 and signed by President Jimmy Carter. However, only the U.S. and six other countries did not ratify it.

“Women have made progress but have a long way to go to be equal,” Bipasha said. “There is more to do so all girls can go to school, so there is equal pay for equal work, and so there is an end to violence against women.”

The Beijing Platform lists 12 areas to improve to achieve women’s equality and empowerment: poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, decision-making, institutional advancement, human rights, the media, the environment and the girl child.

It identifies actions needed by governments, financial and development institutions, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), women’s groups and the

private sector.

It calls for women to be a part of decision-making, but in 20 years women have just gone from being 20 percent to 22 percent of Parliaments, and there have been just a few prime ministers.

**The video reported that:**

- Women lag in wages and education.
- One in three women experience physical or sexual violence by intimate partners.
- There is a huge disparity in female infanticide.
- About 800 women die every day of pregnancy related issues.
- Women suffer greatly in armed conflicts.
- Women are denied the right to acquire property in 60 countries.
- In media, 46 percent of stories promote gender stereotypes.

These need to be dealt with together, Bipasha said. For example, after sex workers are rescued in India, it’s important to connect them with microfinance banks to help them start businesses.

Commercial sexual exploitation, which is behind 95 percent of human trafficking, stems from the ability to recruit women and children out of poverty. Fathers will sell daughters and wives, she said. It needs to be addressed as modern slavery and a global human rights violation.

Bipasha said many women are so intimidated, they give up and believe it’s their destiny to be raped by 100 men a day and develop sexually transmitted diseases.

“The challenge is to understand how to help them find power to take back their lives,” she said, “and then how to use their own pain and isolation as motivation to teach or do other jobs. They need

to understand they can move from pain to power.”

Bipasha encountered many such women when she worked on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support among women in households, and women and children caught in prostitution or rescued from it.

“In 1997, nearly 70 percent of women in prostitution in Bombay were HIV infected,” she said.

The challenge to society is to undo the barriers to victims, said Bipasha, who grew up in India in West Bengal, under a democratically elected Communist government. That formed her commitment to social justice, which was reinforced by her studies and by teaching at a social-justice oriented Jesuit university.

“It’s fashionable to talk about human trafficking as a discussion topic,” she said, “but we also need to open minds and hearts in compassion to accept and employ victims and survivors of trafficking,” she said.

“Commercial sexual exploitation exists in Spokane,” she said,

calling people to be involved locally and globally.

Locally, Bipasha connects with people working at Hope House for women, at the YWCA’s Alternatives to Domestic Violence Program, with Human Rights Watch, with a United Methodist pastor, with the Spokane Regional Health District and Spokane AIDS Network on HIV and AIDS.

“We can work to solve the world’s problems in our own back yards, as well as in other countries,” she said.

For information, call 359-7739 or email [bbiswas@ewu.edu](mailto:bbiswas@ewu.edu).

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## LCSNW plans educational events during April

With April being national Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Child Abuse Prevention Month and including Crime Victim’s Rights Week, Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW), plans several educational events.

• The Clothesline Project will be displayed during April at the Chase Gallery at City Hall. This display acknowledges stories of victims of assault and their advocates, said Kristina Grundmanis, LCSNW education events coordinator.

• LCSNW will also host a month-long Online Activist Advent with daily posts to raise

awareness and action on its Facebook page.

• “On April 7, we ask Spokane to wear teal to raise awareness of the issues of sexual assault,” said Kristina. “On April 29, National Denim Day, people are to wear denim for the same purpose.”

• To address campus sexual assault, a coalition of local campuses will showcase their response to the prompt “We Will...” on at 3 p.m., April 16 at River Park Square.

• The documentary, “The Hunting Ground,” will be shown on April 19 at the Magic Lantern. A panel discussion will follow.

• On April 18, LCSNW hosts its Chocolate and Champagne Gala Fundraiser to help children victims of sexual assault heal.

“We can end this violence by involving the community,” said Kristina. “Sexual violence impacts more than victims. We all have a role in awareness, prevention and response. At LCSNW, we embrace the Start by Believing Campaign to broach the conversation of how to respond when someone discloses that they have been a victim of assault or other crimes.”

For information, call 747-8224 or visit [lcsnw.org](http://lcsnw.org).



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# Human Rights Education Institute celebrates diversity in North Idaho

By Kaye Hult

For the past ten years, the Human Rights Education Institute (HREI) has offered programs and exhibits to the five northern counties of Idaho in a historical building that Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations (KCTFHR) member Tony Stewart calls the “Gateway to the City of Coeur d’Alene regarding human rights.”

The HREI, the educational arm of the task force, was started as the Human Rights Education Foundation in 1998. It took several years to establish its strategic plan, mission, building, program and staffing.

Since its inception, Tony said, it has been “committed to the importance of accepting diversity and promoting tolerance among the citizens of Kootenai County, the State of Idaho, and the Inland Northwest.”

In 2001, philanthropist and Idaho native Greg Carr gave the foundation a \$1,000,000 grant as seed money to build a human rights center in Coeur d’Alene. The foundation then broadened its mission and changed its name to “institute.” They used part of the grant to remodel the building they leased from the City of Coeur d’Alene.

Anneliese Miller has served on the institute’s board of directors for five years and as president for three. Involved for about half of the institute’s life, she has seen it evolve and grow.

HREI’s mission is to “celebrate diversity and promote human rights by educating, raising awareness and inspiring transformation in the community,” she said.

So it provides cultural education, raises awareness of critical human rights issues and honors differences while working toward common goals. It seeks to uphold human rights, education, respect, dignity, diversity, inclusivity and partnerships.

Anneliese, who grew up in Coeur d’Alene, has always known about the task force.

When she was in the fourth grade, a friend of hers was brain-injured in a car accident. The school decided he should remain in the classroom but behind a



Anneliese Miller has seen human rights institute grow. Courtesy of HREI

cardboard partition. He and his classmates could not see each other. Anneliese thought it was degrading.

“I always wanted to make people feel included,” she said.

She would invite friends who did not have good home lives to her home to give them some relief.

In high school, she wrote papers about human rights issues. She reported on the Rajneesh group in Oregon, when they reputedly poisoned the water to make a political statement.

She interviewed Fr. Bill Wassmuth, who then was the priest at St Pius X Catholic Church in Coeur d’Alene. He was involved with the task force as it challenged the Aryan Nations.

Every January since 2005, the institute has joined with the task force and the Post Falls and Coeur d’Alene School Districts to bring together the area fifth graders for an annual Martin Luther King Jr. Children’s Program.

The institute’s exhibit the first year was The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Art Exhibit. In late 2006, it offered the Anne Frank Exhibit, which drew hundreds of area students, as well as the public.

Recent HREI exhibits have included one on the persecution of homosexuals by the Nazis, a traveling exhibit of the U.S. Holocaust Museum, and a Civil Rights Museum exhibit, featuring the Emmett Louis Till Murder Trial in honor of Black History Month. It is on display through June.

Last month, they hosted a freedom rider from the civil rights

era and offered a program with women reenacting some notable women in U.S. history.

From July through September 2015, the institute will host a traveling exhibit from the Oregon Cultural Heritage Museum entitled “Uprooted – Japanese Internment Camp.”

James Meredith, who was shot while on a civil rights walk, an experience that helped galvanize support for the civil rights movement, will speak in Coeur d’Alene on October 16 and then in Moscow the next day.

Anneliese said the institute’s other programs include a Wednesday evening book club, home-day and transgender vigils in November, inviting students to write Holocaust essays in the spring and funding four \$1,000 scholarships for minority students at North Idaho College each year.



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Scholarships and civil rights awards will both be presented at the HREI’s upcoming annual Human Rights Banquet. It begins with a reception at 5 p.m., followed by dinner at 6 p.m., Monday, April 13, at the Coeur d’Alene Inn, 506 W. Appleway.

Rock Hill, S.C., Mayor Doug Echols will be the 2015 keynote speaker, telling how people in his city corrected a racial injustice 54 years later. The Friendship 9, eight African-American junior college students and Thomas Gaither from the Congress on Racial Equality staged a sit-in at a local lunch counter in 1961. For “trespassing and breach of peace” when they challenged the store’s “whites only” segregation policy, they were sentenced and chose to serve 30 days of hard labor.

On Jan. 28 this year, Rock Hill Municipal Court Judge John Hayes vacated their sentences. Their actions changed sit-ins for the civil rights period to a “jail, not bail” tactic.

The judge said, “We cannot rewrite history, but we can right history.”

The mayor, who has been an educator and administrator in

public schools and higher education, is in his fifth term.

HREI board members are active, organizing events and speaking at programs.

HREI’s acting director, Lisa Manning, brings energy and passion for human rights to her position, and she has been instrumental in procuring recent exhibits, said Anneliese, who is an architect with Miller Stauffer Architects.

Anneliese’s mother had encouraged her interest in architecture by taking her to Spokane to see places like the Campbell House, the Patsy Clark House, the Museum of Arts and Culture and other architecture in Brown’s Addition. Her grandmother and mother influenced her to be a life-long learner.

Prejudged because she is a blonde female, Anneliese tries not to judge others. Travel in developing countries has also changed her perspectives.

“I want everyone to feel welcome,” she said, expressing her passion for education and human rights.

For information, call 208-292-2359 or visit www.hrei.org.

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# Couple embark on another experience of living in an impoverished country

After working several years in South Africa and Cambodia, Sabrina and Stephen Himley returned to Spokane last summer.

In March, they left again, this time to live in Yangon, Myanmar.

Stephen will be health project manager for HelpAge International. Over his career, he has applied engineering skills to improve medical and other technologies.

Sabrina hopes to find an opportunity to teach Burmese children, plans to work on art and will continue to share their insights, as she has since 2009, on her blog at RhinoCrashSafari.blogspot.com.

They hope friends will follow and learn from their experiences of living and working among a poor population in another country and culture.

Stephen has a two-year contract to help the University of Public Health transition from infectious to non-infectious diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

**From 2010 to 2013, they were in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.** Sabrina taught English to preschool Khmer children. Stephen was Cambodia country director for Medical Teams International, based in Portland, Ore.

From November 2013 to March 2015, Stephen consulted with Catapult Design and PATH, to develop products for low-resource settings.

In July 2014, he returned to Sacred Heart Medical Center, where he previously worked 11 years as senior biomedical engineer in the heart transplant and mechanical heart program. They have been attending Manito Presbyterian Church since then.

**Their decision to go to Myanmar comes from their wrestling with poverty because of their belief that faith is about justice.**

In the U.S., they could live comfortably. In Myanmar, they live in a developing country to help relieve the burdens of people living in poverty.

**“Jesus’ message is to care about marginalized people, especially those in developing countries that suffer the greatest,”** Sabrina said. “In the U.S., we can enjoy the conveniences and comforts of a developed country, but it’s hard to enjoy them when we know so many people elsewhere are suffering.

“Having lived in South Africa and Southeast Asia, we know about the conditions,” she said. “I know there’s something I can do.”

**Stephen came from a non-Christian home, but his parents sent him to a Lutheran high school, where he learned about the Bible and came into faith.**

“I’ve been in evangelical churches since I was 16, but



Stephen and Sabrina Himley before they left for Myanmar.

had a crisis of faith later when I encountered devastating poverty in Haiti, when I took youth from Garland Ave. Alliance Church there in 2003 and then in 2004 went to South Africa.”

He was discouraged by how government, churches and agencies spend money, while children continue to die of diarrhea and people continue to fight in civil wars.

**“The good news is about God’s kingdom. I believe God’s dream is that we have a life expectancy of 100, that there is no infant mortality and that the lion lies down with the lamb,”** Stephen said. “God’s kingdom is about announcing good news to the poor.”

Sabrina said that in Cambodia she felt she was able to live the words of faith. Walking to the store, she would pass a woman who held her hand out.

“I gave her 25-cents and knew it would make a difference for her,” she said. “There is no safety net there. There are opportunities to make a difference, to feel life has meaning.”

**Growing up in western Montana in a rural area 45 minutes from Troy High School, she decided to study at Whitworth University, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in music pedagogy in 2000.** She started a piano teaching business, and returned to earn a master’s in teaching at Whitworth in 2004.

As part of the studies, she spent a month in Thailand where she taught English to Thai children.

She loved Thailand, its culture and people, and hoped to return to live and teach there.

From 2004 to 2008, she taught in elementary schools in Houston, Texas, and then in Seattle.

Sabrina had met Stephen when she was teaching piano in Spokane. They married in 2006, and lived in Seattle while he studied at the University of Washington.

Stephen, who grew up in Sacramento, earned a bachelor’s degree

in mechanical engineering in 1982 and a master’s in engineering in 1984 at the University of California Davis.

**His work in rocket engineering at Aerojet from 1984 to 1988 led him into an Aerojet spin-off company, Nimbus Medical, which developed artificial heart technology after the National Institute of Health convinced Congress to fund that work.**

He helped design and develop a mechanical heart and artificial heart technology there and at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation from 1988 to 1995, except for a year in Spokane, developing a clinical chemistry analyzer for lab work.

**Because he liked clinical work,** he became a mechanical heart engineer in the Heart Transplant and Mechanical Heart Program at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, serving from 1995 to 2006.

“I scrubbed in for surgery and helped with implants, preparing a device to work in a particular patient,” he said.

**His visits to Haiti and South Africa were during those years.**

“I could not believe the effects of grinding poverty, especially in contrast with my work with high-cost mechanical heart implants,” Stephen commented.

**In 2004, he worked with AIDS orphans in South Africa through Agathos Foundation, helping address clinical concerns of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that was creating more orphans.** He went twice for a few months.

On the second trip, he met a physician who attends Northview Bible Church. They visited Doctors without Borders and learned about the gap in treatment. Few were given antiretroviral (ARV) drug treatment, even though the cost of that drug had dropped.

**To try to alleviate some of the suffering he saw, Stephen founded a nonprofit organization, Two Tunics, in 2004, with Mike Nash, MD, then medical director, now**

executive director. After serving Two Tunics’ as executive director until early 2006, Stephen decided to study public health.

So he went to the University of Washington and earned a master’s degree in 2008.

**In Seattle, Sabrina taught school, and Stephen also designed products for HaloSource, a company that was developing safe drinking water treatment technologies for Tanzania, India, Cambodia and other countries.**

He continued work on safe drinking water at PATH in Seattle until 2009, when he and Sabrina moved to rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Sabrina taught English to Zulu children, and Stephen managed research on multi-drug resistant tuberculosis for Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

**Just before they went to South Africa, Sabrina had been diagnosed with Lupus. The living**

conditions and insufficient medical care made it hard for her to cope with the pain from lupus. So they left South Africa in 2010, and Stephen worked at Medical Teams International in Portland, Ore.

**In Portland, Sabrina had access to medical care that put her in remission, so they could live and work in Cambodia and now can serve in Myanmar.**

For information, email himley@gmail.com.

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## Faith journeys lead to teaching

Years of questioning and study led Joe Mudd and Anastasia Wendlinder, co-directors of Gonzaga University's new online Master's of Arts in Theology and Leadership (MATL), into teaching systematic theology at Gonzaga. The program weaves study of Scripture, ethics, church history and theology with leadership, social justice, intercultural communication and reconciliation.

Joe, an assistant professor, has been at Gonzaga five years and Anastasia, an associate professor, has been at Gonzaga for more than seven years.

## Asking questions resonates

After graduating in religious studies at the University of Montana, Joe spent 10 years in Boston, earning a master of divinity at Harvard and completing doctoral studies at Boston College.

Having grown up in a progressive Catholic church in Missoula, he decided, after participating in the campus Newman Center, to enter campus ministries.

Joe kept asking questions about the meaning of life. As he began to see the disparity between public discourse on Christ and what the church says about itself, he began studying liberation theology, which is a way to read the gospel through the experience of systematic injustice and to "find Jesus as not just a cosmic savior but also a political revolutionary."

"There's a tendency to flatten the radical, political edge of Jesus' mission and ministry, and make faith otherworldly, simply about how to get to heaven," Joe said. "Liberation theology calls Christians to look at the Gospel's political dimensions. The goal of Christians is discipleship in history, which is inherently political."

His doctoral studies focused on liturgical and Eucharistic theology and ecclesiology, as well as Christian doctrine from a liberation perspective.

In El Salvador, he experienced worship in "base communities," which study the Bible, and reflect on their own realities and the role of worship as a political act.

He looked at torture and Eucharist in contrast to liturgies of the state, such as during the Pinochet regime in Chile, where liturgy became "a vending machine for tickets to heaven."

Joe continues to ask questions. Most recently, he has been asking: "What is evil?"

"We use 'evil' to describe things in the contemporary global situation. What does it mean for Christians? Do we talk just of metaphysical or also of political content and context? Much talk emerged about evil after 9-11. Is it an adequate way to identify a group or actions, or is it more complex?"

"We have a culture in which evil and violence are forms of entertainment—horror movies,



Joe Mudd

cage-match boxing and video games. It's an interesting phenomenon that in late modernity liturgies emerge that speak to violent impulses. What is evil? Where does it reside—in others only or in us?"

Joe finds asking these questions in undergraduate and graduate classes resonates with students.

"They are aware of themselves and their struggles," he said. "They sense things are not right and are unsure why."

"Systematic injustice, war, poverty and natural disasters are compounded by human action," said Joe, who finds that talking about evil in a political context balances talk of evil in a strictly supernatural sense.

For information, call 313-6799 or email [mudd@gonzaga.edu](mailto:mudd@gonzaga.edu).

## Ecumenism calls forth listening, respect

Anastasia Wendlinder grew up in a pre-Vatican II Catholic family in Burlington, a mostly Protestant farm and ranch community in eastern Colorado. Her father didn't want her to play with Protestant children, but she did.

She was born in 1965 as the Second Vatican Council ended. Her church, St. Catherine's, accepted Vatican II and integrated the new theology, but her father did not. Her family prayed at church every day, but at home, she learned the Baltimore catechism.

Interested in what it means to be human, Anastasia studied psychology and sociology at the University of Colorado in Boulder, graduating in 1987. She worked through faith questions with Paulist Fathers at St. Thomas Aquinas Church and at Newman Center. After graduating, she worked for the law school and the Boulder Law Review.

"My questions were theological: What is God? How is God relevant in my life? How do we find God?" said Anastasia.

Those questions drew her to study Meister Eckhart, a medieval mystic and scholar; Anthony DiMello, a Jesuit spiritual guru from India who wrote on inter-religious traditions, and Thomas Merton, a mystic, monk and political activist in the 1960s who was interested in Christian dialogue with Buddhism.

Her questions about God's relationship with humanity grew: "How do we put words to God who goes beyond our words?"

Anastasia did much meditation, silence and centering prayer.

Thinking she might be a campus minister, she went to the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) and Franciscan School of Theology at Berkeley, earning a



Anastasia Wendlinder

master's in theology in 1993.

Studying under C.S. Song at Pacific School of Religion, part of the GTU, she gained insights to articulate abstract questions on Christianity, Buddhism, mysticism and engagement in politics of the oppressed with liberation theology, social justice and ecumenical relations. He urged her to do doctoral studies.

Although she realized her upbringing was insulated, she became homesick and returned to Colorado. One day at Mass, she decided to do something practical. So she spent a year with the Christian Appalachian Project, an ecumenical program started by a Catholic priest in predominantly Free Baptist Eastern Kentucky.

She visited elderly people, sat with them, talked with them and prayed with them. She changed bed pans and transported people.

After the "heady" world of studies, she said being present with people helped her see God in those people and others.

Anastasia read to an elderly woman who would lie around all day, depressed. Her children did not visit. She wanted to die.

"She asked me to pray. I was unable to say anything to lift her spirits," Anastasia said. "One day as I left, she looked up and asked, 'When will you come again?' She did not need words of wisdom, but just needed me to be present."

"Theological, systematic, metaphysical, philosophical and abstract questions are about being present to a person," she realized.

The next year at Notre Dame, she felt a disconnect being in academics after having been present with suffering people. There, Anastasia studied medieval and classical theology and church history in two years of courses and a year of independent study. Then she wrote her dissertation and taught for five years.

With a strong interest in ecumenism, she involved different local pastors in discussions on sacramental theology and other topics for her classes, as she does now at Gonzaga.

Anastasia finished her doctoral studies in 2004 and taught as a visiting professor until she came to Gonzaga in 2007.

"I thought a Jesuit school would give opportunity to explore theology, ecumenism, social justice and inter-cultural competence—respect of people of different cultures—in a Catholic context," said Anastasia, who teaches graduate and undergraduate classes.

For information, call 313-6786 or email [wendlinder@gonzaga.edu](mailto:wendlinder@gonzaga.edu).

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# Community garden organizer branches out to gardens in Burundi

Through Washington State University Extension, Pat Munts has been developing community gardens in the Spokane area for nearly 10 years.

“Community gardens are 90 percent community and 10 percent gardening. It’s about having fun together, learning together, and developing a community structure people can count on,” she said.

There are now 20 publicly available community gardens here, and she’s ready to apply her knack of starting community gardens in Burundi.

In September 2015, she will go with a team of five from the Washington State University (WSU) 4H Program for two weeks to Gitega, a province in Burundi’s Great Lakes Region of East Central Africa, to lay the groundwork for people to develop gardens appropriate to their setting.

Two years ago, Mary Catherine Dean of the 4H faculty in Wenatchee went to Burundi on a work project. She returned believing that youth and adults there could benefit from the 4H Positive Youth Development Program, which helps youth develop leadership skills, work together and gain other skills for their future lives.

“Mary Catherine observed that elementary schools there have no way to feed the students and the students are too poor to bring lunches to school,” Pat said. “She proposed teaching students to grow their own food in gardens at the school.”

Burundi, part of German East Africa from 1899 to 1916, and then a Belgian colony until 1962, has 9.5 million people living in an area the size of Maryland. Burundians speak Kirunde. Most are Christians, predominantly Roman Catholic.

In 1972 Tutsis killed up to 300,000 Hutu and 300,000 more became refugees. In 1993, Hutus began to massacre Tutsi, and the Tutsi army killed thousands of Hutu. Civil war based on the ethnic lines lasted until 2005, with 300,000 killed and 500,000 displaced.

“Civil war that ended 10 years ago left the country’s economy, infrastructure and agriculture in a shambles,” Pat said, “destroying the country’s ability to feed its people and leaving scars of mistrust.”

Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services (THARS), a group in Burundi under the Quaker Church, is part of a peace effort to provide safe places for children and adults to re-engage with each other.

“In the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation process in South



Busangana Primary School in the Gitega area, where the WSU team plans to help. Courtesy of Pat Munts

Africa, THARS tries to reconnect people who were on different sides,” Pat explained.

With the economy in ruin, it’s hard for people to find jobs and ways to improve their lives.

“The trauma induced by poverty and war memories prevents the people from healing and rebuilding their country,” Pat said. “They are subsisting.”

THARS has made progress in the central province of Gitega, creating places for people to talk, sort things out and build on their resources.

“THARS has been in the forefront of economic empowerment and rehabilitation through their support and counseling services in rural communities,” Pat said. “They have relationships with nine elementary schools in Gitega.

“The challenge teachers face is that poverty brings eager, but hungry students to school,” she said. “Teachers want to start school gardens so children can eat and be able to concentrate on their schoolwork.

“Students need paper, pencils and books,” Pat added. “Teachers are also eager for professional development.”

The National 4H program already works in several African countries, teaching youth development programs, so the WSU team has access to culturally relevant teaching materials, including a community garden curriculum developed for Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Burundi’s agriculture depends on rain. There is a shortage of fertilizer. The farming is done by hand with homemade tools. Transportation is rudimentary, and

there is limited access to electricity or technology.

“By working with children in Burundi, we can be reminded that simple things, like seeds, a shovel and determination, can be more powerful than technology because they can help build communities,” Pat said.

WSU has proposed sending a team of five to eight people for two to three weeks in mid September to train THARS staff.

Pat said they will look at appropriate growing methods and at building water catchment systems to catch water running off roofs in the rainy season to use in the dry season.

She will rely on people in Gitega to know what grows best.

“We hope the children will learn and take the skills home to their parents to use in their own fields,” she said.

From past international experience, Pat knows they need to learn what the people can do, what resources they have and what they want to do.

“We will go to build community,” said Pat, who traveled to China, New Zealand, Australia, Kenya and South Africa in her 13 years working with Ambassador Programs under People to People in Spokane.

Pat, who has a bachelor’s degree in forest recreation and planning from Oregon State University, a master’s in international marketing from Eastern Washington University, worked with People to People on agriculture and business projects.

After 9-11 reduced interest in international travel, her job ended. For several years, she worked in

the nursery industry and began a column in the Spokesman-Review.

In 2006, Pat, who has a graduate certificate in sustainable agriculture, started to work with WSU as small farms and acreage coordinator. In 2010, she worked with the Spokane Conservation District.

Another aspect of the project in Burundi is to engage people in Spokane, pulling in organizations to support the project on a short-term and long-term basis.

From her years growing up in

St. David’s Episcopal Church in Shelton, Pat believes churches are in place to serve the community and to offer a hand up.

Her faith community, the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Spokane Valley, is discussing developing sister gardens or adopt-a-garden projects related to specific schools.

Her church received a \$350 grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane’s Growth and Development Fund for the project.

“We want other faith communities and groups to join us,” said Pat.

She has invited other congregations in Spokane Valley’s Tri Parish—Advent Lutheran and St. Mary’s Catholic.

Pat also invites interested people, congregations and organizations to contact her to help provide material resources, transportation for the WSU team, and funds to train teachers, students and THARS staff.

She is ready to share her skills of teaching a few people who will then teach others to build community along with community gardens.

For information, call 998-9769 or email pmunts@spokanecounty.org.

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# Child Holocaust survivor hopes to stop cycle of history repeating

**B**ob Herschkowitz, the youngest member of Seattle's Holocaust Center for Humanities speakers bureau, will speak at the annual Yom Hashoah service at 7 p.m., Sunday April 19, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave. in Spokane.

From 1938 through the end of World War II in 1945, Bob said, "the whole European continent was chasing Jewish people. Nearly 90 percent of all Jewish and Roma children 15 years old and younger were killed."

"No country would protect us," he said as he told in a recent interview of his family moving to avoid being arrested.

Bob was born in 1938 in Antwerp, Belgium. On May 10, 1940, the German invasion of Belgium began. His family left that day, crossing the border into France along with thousands of refugees. German bombers dropped bombs along the road as they fled.

They traveled from northern France, which was occupied by Nazis, south to Marseilles, a city in the unoccupied zone. There, his parents purchased false identity papers, and he attended a Catholic kindergarten at the age of four.

In November 1942, the family was sent to a French internment camp, Rivesaltes, which held Jews and other refugees.

When his mother, Irene, was discovered to be pregnant, the family was separated. Bob and his mother were taken to another camp, which was just a stone hut 120 kilometers away. They were guarded by gendarmes. On April 7, 1943, his brother, Danny, was born in a German military hospital, Bob said.

At Rivesaltes, his father, Max, was forced to work on a dam project. By then, the French government was sending Jews from Rivesaltes to Drancy, a transit camp in a Paris suburb. From there, more than 70,000 Jews were sent to Auschwitz and other death camps.

To avoid Drancy, Bob's father escaped. His younger brother, who wouldn't go when Max escaped from the dentist's office, was later gassed in Auschwitz.

Saved by a Basque family along the border between France and Spain, Max was reunited with his wife and children in Aix Les Bains. With the help of the French resistance, Bob said that gendarmes left his mother and him unguarded for 48 hours so they could escape. In September 1943, his family walked three nights through the Alps into Switzerland.

Bob said the Swiss army caught them at the border and put them in jail briefly as "illegal aliens."



Bob Herschkowitz shares memories to educate others.

Photo courtesy of Bob Herschkowitz

"As an illegal alien, I have a police file from the Swiss federal police one-and-a-half inches thick," Bob said.

They were allowed to stay because his mother had family in Switzerland.

Of 250,000 who entered Switzerland, only 25,000 were allowed to stay. The rest were sent back to the border where they were often shot.

Bob said he, his parents and brother stayed in a camp, a big circus tent in a soccer field, sleeping on straw with other prisoners including U.S. airmen, German deserters and mostly Jewish refugees. It was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by the Swiss army.

His mother's cousin adopted Bob so he could stay with her and go to school.

Seven days after the war ended in 1945, the Swiss sent Belgian Jews home by train.

"When we returned to Belgium, everything was destroyed," said Bob, who nonetheless was able to go to school.

He eventually earned bachelor's degrees in mechanical engineering and in naval engineering.

He joined the Belgium Navy and was a Lieutenant when Boeing recruited him in 1966 to move to Seattle and work for them.

Boeing paid for him to study at the University of Washington to earn a master's degree in mechanical engineering. Bob also served 24 years in the Naval Reserve, where he earned a second master's degree in naval history and international relations. He retired as a commander. He worked for Boeing 41 years until July 2013, when he retired.

"For many years, we did not speak about the Holocaust," said

Bob, who started speaking about the Holocaust 20 years ago and now speaks all over the state.

"I talk with high school students on genocide, racism and bullying. They are all under the same chapter heading," he said.

Bob shares his memories so others will never forget.

Last year, the Holocaust Center for Humanity speakers bureau spoke to 35,000 students and to teachers in the Seattle area.

"The young people become emotional and involved," he said.

At one school with 1,200 students representing most minorities, the speakers were well received and students worked on projects on the Holocaust.

"Some asked for my autograph," Bob said.

"The only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from history. What happened in Germany has happened in Rwanda, Sudan, Mali, Ivory Coast and more places," he said.

While on the one hand, he sees that history repeats, he believes that dynamic can be changed by people speaking about their experiences.

He feels his sharing helped motivate a group of high school students to go one summer to Rwanda to build a school and provide school supplies.

Other school groups have made connections in Sudan, Ethiopia and East Africa.

Bob used to travel for Boeing to inspect airplane fleet maintenance, so he has visited countries all over the world.

At Temple Beth Shalom, Bob will talk about how he survived and escaped being one of the 1.5 million children killed in the Holocaust.

Since 1989, the Holocaust Cen-

ter has taught about the Holocaust in Northwest schools and communities. It has programs, artifacts, books, exhibits, online resources and speakers—survivors, witnesses, liberators, second generation and World War II veterans.

Now 15 speakers share their stories to bring the Holocaust to life and encourage people to connect lessons of the past with contemporary issues of hate crimes, bullying and genocide. They seek to help students find their voices and be responsible citizens in their communities, the nation and the world. The center also has video

called "Survivor Voices: Online Video Testimonies."

Bob has one son, Stephen, a senior deputy prosecutor in King County, who some day will be the one to tell his story.

This year in Spokane, there is an art contest, as well as a writing contest for middle and high school students. The theme is "Words That Kill: Nazi Use of Propaganda to Justify Genocide," said Hershel Zellman, coordinator of Yom Hashoah at Temple Beth Shalom.

For information, call 747-3304 or email info@holocaustcenter-seattle.org.

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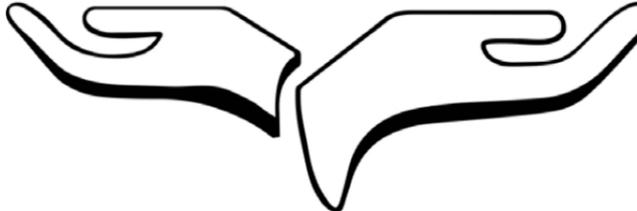
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## Spring Compost Fair & Arbor Day Celebration

Saturday, April 25, 2015

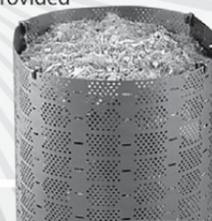
11 am-2 pm

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Learn how to compost at home from Master Composter/Recyclers

Spokane County residents from jurisdictions participating in the new County Regional Solid Waste System may take home a free compost bin. Limit one per household. Bins provided by a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Please arrive no later than 1:30 pm and bring proof of residency.



For more information call 625-6580 or go to [www.spokanecountysolidwaste.org](http://www.spokanecountysolidwaste.org)

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## As multipliers of respect and reconciliation, Fig Tree media need support

A link to the KSPS-TV Northwest Profiles' program on The Fig Tree last spring at thefigtree.org is a way to share our story.

Recent hate-based threats locally, racism and injustice nationally, and wars and oppression globally make it clear that our work to spread respect and reconciliation as we cover religion news is crucial.

We inform and inspire people to be involved by telling stories of people who sacrifice, speak out and persist to strive for love and justice, for dignity and equality because of their values and faith.

People need to know about good things being done by people motivated by faith.

Mainstream media cover news we need to know. It includes events that anger, frustrate, discourage and scare us. Those things are happening, and people respond to them.

Aware of those realities, we tell how people make a difference by living their faith. Their stories inspire people to be multipliers, giving hope.

Stories of people's involvement and caring inspire more people to be involved, aware they're not alone. Human-interest feature stories do that. Our focus is on faith in action, a unique version of religion news that builds ecumenical, interfaith, community and interpersonal understanding.

We hope you see your face and hear your voice in The Fig Tree—in stories of people of the area's many races and cultures, faiths and nonprofits, income and education levels, genders and generations.

Through the Resource Directory, we connect people with resources. It's so popular, we are increasing circulation from 10,000 to 11,500. We recommend that people, congregations and agencies make advance orders and consider being underwriters through advertising and donating.

We believe, as historian Howard Zinn says, "Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world."

Our media are multipliers that inform, inspire and involve people.

Along with your donations, become one of the faces of The Fig Tree by helping with displays, writing, delivery, events and editing.

Help The Fig Tree reach and nurture more readers! Be a face of The Fig Tree! Help us reach new generations of readers and supporters.

As a multiplier of the stories and actions we cover, you can help transform the world.

We give thanks for sponsors and benefit donors who make The Fig Tree possible!

**Mary Stamp - editor**

## The Fig Tree provides good food to sustain our spirits so we can serve

It is said that "we are what we eat."

In some ways, this is true, but I believe I am more of what I hear, see, read and watch. In a normal day, I am bombarded with information that molds and shapes me.

A few days of news on CNN can shift my perspective. I'm overwhelmed with the human potential for cruelty. Sometimes I have to turn it off for my mental health.

I need to ingest a large dose of The Fig Tree. It recognizes and acknowledges the reality of evil but raises up people who take evil seriously and lift up hope. God is still in charge.

In the February edition, I read about nearly 3,000 people marching in Spokane

in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. How amazing! In Coeur d'Alene, the 2nd Street Commons provides innovative solutions and connections for people in need. Hope!

In reality, Fig Tree readers are filled with hope. They are living their faith with quiet, humble acts, with small miracles, like feeding the hungry, fighting for justice, saving the planet, one child, one tree, one piece of legislation at a time. The Fig Tree is a voice to share your story.

Here's a story that shares a reality:

One evening, an elderly Cherokee brave told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people.

He said, "My son, the battle is between

two 'wolves' inside us all. One is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one that you feed."

The Fig Tree provides good food for our spirits, food which can sustain us. With this nourishment, we are better able to serve the community and the world. We move from

informed to inspired to involved.

As The Fig Tree sustains its readers, we need you to sustain The Fig Tree. We need your financial support, especially as we move into the future. Please invest in The Fig Tree, in its present and its future, in an amount that is significant for you. We especially value pledges, which can provide stability for planning and sustainability.

You can donate online at thefigtree.org/donate.html. Your gift to The Fig Tree is an investment in hope.

What is the value of good food for our spirits, our souls, for the good that lies within us? Share that with The Fig Tree.

**Deidre Jacobson - Fig Tree treasurer**

Benefit Events

## Sounding Board

Speech Excerpts

**Speakers at the 2015 Fig Tree Benefit Breakfast and Benefit Lunch share insights of the value of The Fig Tree as it "Informs, Inspires and Involves" people.**

**Dawn Bayman** - director of member services at Friends of KSPS Public Television and member of the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media Board

KSPS Public TV shares two principles with The Fig Tree: why we exist and how we exist.

KSPS provides programs that entertain, engage and educate to enrich the communities we serve. The Fig Tree connects people, shares stories, builds understanding, stirs compassion, explores issues, opens dialogue and inspires people.

To make our work possible, we rely on the financial backing of people who value what we do. KSPS has pledge drives to reach out to people who think it's a resource that ought to be here to benefit everyone.

The benefits are The Fig Tree's pledge drive. If you value what The Fig Tree does, step up and put your backing behind it.

Now more than ever, positive reporting, sharing stories, fostering engagement and opening dialogue are so important. People who want to see this positive, thoughtful reporting, join together to help make The Fig Tree possible.

**Diane Sanderson** - member of the Spokane Valley Tri-Parish ecumenical partnership of St. Mary's Catholic, Resurrection Episcopal and Advent Lutheran churches

For 40 years, three Spokane Valley churches have been gathering as we strive for: unity, mutual prayer, service and love.

Mindful that we come from distinct traditions, we strive to have a positive influence in our community as we do outreach together, hold a Thanksgiving vigil, do vacation Bible school and hold up each of our communities in prayer.

When I tried to find our history, The Fig Tree was an amazing source. Through the years, it has not just recorded, but also given an expression of why we do this.

Reading other media, we just get bits of information, but don't get our hearts

moved. We don't change unless our hearts are moved and connect with our lives. The Fig Tree helps do that. It says we can be converted as we know the good that others do. It makes us think and know we can each do a little more.

**Fr. Michael Savelesky** - Catholic Diocese of Spokane administrator, Fig Tree advocate and editor with the Inland Register.

The Fig Tree, as an instrument of communication among churches in the region, is a herald of good news. In Greek and Roman societies, a herald appeared at the city gates, blew a horn and then stood in the city center to announce breaking news.

We hear about breaking news every night on TV. Once when we heard that phrase, we stopped everything, believing we should listen, because something would affect our lives. Today, TV news drones on and on.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote in the gospels, the good news, what people needed as an anchor for their faith and lives.

Since the Bible was printed on Gutenberg's press, printing has flourished, but now there's a trend against the written word. A newspaper like The Fig Tree shows the importance of print media. It anchors something. Every item in every issue is worth devouring.

It is a unique instrument in our Christian community that pulls God's people together.

A Gospel story tells about a fig tree not bearing much fruit. Some want to cut it down, but the master says to fertilize it a bit more and be patient. Look where this fig tree has born fruit. It does inform. It does inspire, and it calls us to be involved in our faith communities to do what we can to build the common good and share the good news of God's word alive among us.

**The Rev. Happy Watkins** - pastor of New Hope Baptist Church and advocate for civil rights and racial equality

In 1984, I was on the ecumenical council at St. John's Cathedral when this lady walks in with the idea of starting a faith-based newspaper. It was a seed. I personally didn't think it would work, but I voted for it anyway. In 31 years, it has grown and flourished and

the success of The Fig Tree is about the goodness of people.

I grew up in the Bronx with 2.5 million people of diverse races, religions, nationalities, wealth, politics and more. When I joined the Air Force in 1961 and came to Spokane, I was isolated and depressed because I had left a community of diversity.

Later, I joined The Fig Tree, which seeks to uplift diversity. The Fig Tree writes articles on criminal justice, smart justice, racial disparity, the school-to-prison pipeline, black history, the NAACP, the black ministers fellowship, the Martin Luther King Jr. outreach center, projects, rallies and marches—even 50th wedding anniversaries of local black pastors.

It covers the courage of people working on human rights, racism concerns in this region, and how to attain peace, justice and equality.

**Bob Lawrence** - producer at KSPS-TV who prepared a 30th anniversary piece on The Fig Tree for Northwest Profiles

A year ago, I did a TV program on The Fig Tree's 30th anniversary. I wondered how to do a TV story on a print publication.

I did it on the people behind the publication. We talked about Mary Stamp's education and opportunities, Sr. Bernadine Casey's background, and volunteers, each step leading to what you read now.

I wasn't familiar with The Fig Tree before that. I was astounded by the scope and depth in the range of topics explored, faiths that have a voice and commitment and humility of those involved.

While some media outlets' goal is to pick a fight, The Fig Tree's is to provide dialogue and build relationships. Some media seek divisiveness, while The Fig Tree seeks wholeness. Most media are out to make a profit, but The Fig Tree is out to make a difference.

KSPS-TV shares similarities. We take time to tell a good story with less hype and more depth. We have a strong commitment to local stories. We cater to needs of the audience. Our main source of income is contributions from the audience. When you fund KSPS and The Fig Tree you fund values based journalism in this community.

**Norm Gissel** - Coeur d'Alene attorney active in the Kootenai County Task Force for Human Relations and the Human Rights Education Institute

In 1960, we integrated a University of Idaho fraternity, and I said our work had just begun. Now I'm 74 and, because of what's happened at the University of Oklahoma and other campuses, I say again that our work has just begun.

Because of decisions I made and beliefs I held at an early age, I couldn't be anywhere else other than where I am today.

I admire and respect the commitment The Fig Tree has made to humankind.

As the Kootenai County Task Force for Human Relations dealt with the Nazis for 30 years, it was a difficult time. Sometimes we believed we were acting in isolation. For me, The Fig Tree shared knowledge that the values we held were shared by so many. Concern for humanity can be addressed in so many ways.

Whenever we grew weary and thought we were alone, we could go to The Fig Tree and be reminded of the immense capacity for human good that reigned throughout the Inland Northwest. So anything we can do to further the good work of The Fig Tree is something I certainly support.

**Pia Hallenberg** - Spokesman-Review writer and 2014 recipient of the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media award for Media Excellence

I love newspapers. I love being a journalist. One thing essential to sound, healthy media in the community is a paper like The Fig Tree. Mary and her staff do an incredible job covering the stories we don't always get to. It's not because we don't care. We do care deeply, but we only have so much time. We rerun some Fig Tree stories in the Spokesman-Review. The Fig Tree picks up smaller stories that probably should be in the paper.

I know how difficult it is to put out a newspaper. One reason to support The Fig Tree is to maintain a diversity of media. Think of your media consumption as other consumption. Support the media that you would like to see. It is important that we support papers like The Fig Tree, papers that have credibility.



## Spokane Gives Week is a time to volunteer

A variety of opportunities to volunteer are listed online at [volunteerspokane.org](http://volunteerspokane.org) for Spokane Gives Week, which begins Saturday, April 25 and runs through May 2.

The kickoff event is "Cleaning from the Core," which includes street cleaning, sidewalk sweeping, trash removal and flower plantings to improve Spokane's downtown.

For example, Catholic Charities Spokane's program Food for All invites people to come to "Growing Veggies and Getting Dirty" from 10 a.m. to noon to the banks of Latah Creek, 1635 W. 26th Ave., to help with planting, weeding, harvesting and more.

From 3 to 5 p.m., Sunday, April 26, Catholic Charities Spokane invites people to clean up flowerbeds and trash around its main building, St. Margaret's Shelter and St. Anne's Family and Children's Center, meeting at 12 E. 5th Ave.

On Tuesday, April 28, Second Harvest is offering a volunteer opportunity to "Help the Hungry" by sorting and repacking food donations at 1234 E. Front Ave.

On Wednesday, April 29, volunteers will help Second Harvest's Mobile Food Bank distribute food to 250 hungry families at 1603 N. Belt.

From April 25 through May 1, SCRAPS (Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service) is offering a variety of volunteer opportunities.

For information, visit [volunteerspokane.org/aam/general](http://volunteerspokane.org/aam/general).

## Seattle Times reporter speaks at Whitworth

Seattle Times reporter Mónica Guzmán will speak for the first Gordon Jackson Conference in Media Law & Ethics from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, April 11, at Whitworth University.

The conference for media professionals, faculty, students and the public will explore research, practice and professional issues related to mass communication law and ethics.

Duane Swinton from the Witherspoon Kelley law firm will speak on U.S. Supreme Court decisions relevant to media.

The conference is named for Gordon Jackson, a longtime Whitworth professor of communication studies and a South African native who has taught on media ethics, censorship and South African media at Whitworth since 1983.

He is the author of books and articles on journalism ethics.

For information, call 777-4704.

# Calendar of Events

- Mar 30-Apr 5 • Spokane Ministers Fellowship Holy Week services, 777-4603
- Apr 1-30 • **The Fig Tree Benefit Pledge Drive** continues, [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org)
- **Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities**, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, see p.4, 747-8224.
- Apr 1 • **9th Annual Our Kids: Our Business Luncheon**, "A Celebration of Early Childhood," Spokane Convention Center, 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., [www.okob15.eventbrite.com](http://www.okob15.eventbrite.com).
- Apr 6-11 • **2015 American Indian Heritage Week**, [nic.edu/events/](http://nic.edu/events/)
- Apr 9 • **Whitworth University Career Services' Summer Job and Internship Fair**, Hixson Union Building, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 777-3272
- Apr 10 • **Opening Reception for Africa Art Exhibit**, Dodson's Jewelers, 516 W. Riverside, 991-6867
- Apr 11 • **YWCA Spring Fling Champagne Brunch and Silent Auction**, Anthony's Restaurant, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 326-1190
- **Gordon Jackson Conference in Media Law and Ethics**, Whitworth University, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., 777-4704
- Apr 13 • **18th Annual Human Rights Banquet**, "Rock Hill's Civil Rights Journey from 1961 to 2015: The Friendship 9," Coeur d'Alene Inn, 414 W. Appleway, Coeur d'Alene, 5 p.m. reception, 6 p.m., dinner, 208-765-3932, [idahohumanrights.org](http://idahohumanrights.org)
- **KSPS "Last Days in Vietnam"**, 2014 documentary, The Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague, 6:30 p.m., [www.lastdaysinvietnam.com](http://www.lastdaysinvietnam.com)
- Apr 14 • **Whitworth President's Leadership Forum: Spring 2015**, Bryan Stevenson, director of the Equal Justice Initiative, Spokane Convention Center, 7:30 to 9 a.m., 777-3449, [iaevents@whitworth.edu](mailto:iaevents@whitworth.edu)
- **Unity in the Community Committee Meeting**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S Richard Allen Ct., 5:30 p.m., [mahenderson@west.com](mailto:mahenderson@west.com)
- **"Mirror in the Mirror: A Celebration of Arvo Pärt"**, Gonzaga University Chapel, 7 p.m., 313-6733
- Apr 15, 21, 22, 28 • **Immaculate Heart Retreat Center** events, p. 3, [ihrc.net](http://ihrc.net)
- Apr 16 • **YWCA Race/Social Justice Committee**, YWCA on Monroe, 4 p.m., 326-1199 or [www.ywcaspokane.org](http://www.ywcaspokane.org)
- Apr 18 • **Family Search Symposium**, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 10405 W. Melville Dr., Cheney, 8:40 a.m. to 4 p.m., 838-6489 or visit [rememberinggenerations.com](http://rememberinggenerations.com)
- **45th Earth Day Celebration**, Riverfront Park, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 487-0702, [earthdayspokane2015@gmail.com](mailto:earthdayspokane2015@gmail.com)
- **Martin Luther King Jr Family Outreach Benefit Dinner**, Spokane Convention Center, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 455-8722, [varguello@mlkspokane.org](mailto:varguello@mlkspokane.org)
- **9th Annual Viva Vino**, Hispanic Business/Professional Association Foundation benefit, Mukogawa Commons, 4000 W. Randolph Rd., 7 p.m., 847-5794 [vivavinospokane@gmail.com](mailto:vivavinospokane@gmail.com)
- Apr 18-27 • **Japan Week: A Celebration of Japanese Culture**, opening April 18 at the MAC, 2316 W. 1st, WSU Hirahara Photograph Collection, 363-5355, [japanweekspokane.com](http://japanweekspokane.com)
- Apr 19 • **Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust**, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th, 7 p.m., 747-3304
- **Spokane Interfaith Council**, West Central Episcopal Mission, 1832 W. Dean Ave., 5 to 7 p.m., [spokaneinterfaithcouncil.sky@gmail.com](mailto:spokaneinterfaithcouncil.sky@gmail.com)
- Apr 20 • **NAACP General Membership Meeting**, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m., [spokanenaacp@gmail.com](mailto:spokanenaacp@gmail.com)
- Apr 20-26 • **Get Lit!**, [getlitfestival.org](http://getlitfestival.org)
- Apr 21 • **PFLAG Spokane** (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Bethany Presbyterian, 2607 S. Ray, 6:30 p.m., [spokanepflag.org](mailto:spokanepflag.org)
- **"Grove of the Fireflies"**, Spokane Falls Community College Japan Week Film Festival, Garland Theater, 924 W. Garland, 7 p.m., 533-3367, [yasukah@spokanefalls.edu](mailto:yasukah@spokanefalls.edu)
- Apr 22 • **Mission Community Outreach** Civic Theater benefit, 7 p.m., 536-1084
- Apr 23 • **Pancakes for a Purpose**, Hearth Homes, Valley IHOP, 14706 E. Indiana, 5 to 9 p.m.
- **Night of the Living Divas**, Holy Names Music Center Benefit, Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague, 7 p.m., 800-325-SEAT
- Apr 23, 30 • **"Climate Change: Our Call to Conversion"**, The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior St., 6:30 p.m., 483-6495
- Apr 24 • **Stand Against Racism**, [standagainstracism.org](http://standagainstracism.org), 358-7554
- Apr 25 • **Spring Compost Fair and Arbor Day Celebration**, Finch Arboretum, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., [spokanecountysolidwaste.org](http://spokanecountysolidwaste.org)
- Apr 25-26 • **Fair Trade Event**, St. Joseph Parish, 4521 N. Arden Rd., Otis Orchards, Saturday 2 to 7 p.m., Sunday 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., [stjosephparish.org](http://stjosephparish.org)
- Apr 25-May 2 • **Spokane Gives Week**, [volunteerspokane.org/aam/general](http://volunteerspokane.org/aam/general)
- Apr 26 • **Spokane CROP Walk**, The Lair at Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene St., registration noon, walk begins at 1:30 p.m., 468-4099, [goss301@gmail.com](mailto:goss301@gmail.com)
- **"The Hunting Ground"**, Spokane Feminist Forum, campus sexual assault conversations, The Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main, 6 p.m., 435-5004
- Apr 29 • **A Conversation with Winona LaDuke**, Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) and Liz Moore, director of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Showalter Hall, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, 11 a.m.
- May 1 • **"Let's Get Social!"** Catholic Charities Spokane's 7th annual Gala, Davenport Hotel, 6 p.m., 358-4254, [CatholicCharitiesSpokane.org](http://CatholicCharitiesSpokane.org)
- May 5 • **Fig Tree Mailing and Delivery**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m.
- May 6 • **Fig Tree Event and Board meetings**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon - event planning, 1 p.m. board, 535-1813



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# Nonprofit considers its cemetery and funeral services to be a ministry

By Sue Orlowski SP

In the last two years, Spokane has seen a change in its cemetery and funeral services with the growth of Catholic Funeral and Cemetery Services of Spokane (CFCS), a reconfiguration of Catholic Cemeteries of Spokane.

It is still the only faith-based, mission-driven, nonprofit, charitable funeral and cemetery service in Spokane, said John Fencik, director of CFCS.

This ministry, which includes Holy Cross, St. Joseph and Queen of Peace Cemeteries and Funeral Centers, is available to Christians whether they are active members of a parish, inactive or alienated, non-Catholic family members or others who wish to be buried in these cemeteries.

John and funeral director Greg Finch see their work as ministry, because they help families cope with the reality of death.

CFCS, founded originally as Holy Cross Cemetery Association in 1931, provides education, support and professional services to people in Eastern Washington.

Bishop Blase Cupich, former Bishop of the Diocese of Spokane, along with John and Greg, was instrumental in developing this funeral ministry in recent years.

Because it is a nonprofit, they decided not to build a large funeral home at one of its cemeteries, but to use space within its existing buildings and to begin a "Care Center Model" of business.

To care for the deceased, CFCS entered into a shared services agreement with a small funeral center in town. The agreement gives Greg access to a building with a crematory, a preparation room and a controlled temperature environment.

This building is now the "Care Center" where Greg does the embalming, temporary preservation, cremation, dressing, casketing and cosmetics.

In addition, he meets with families at one of the three CGCS cemetery offices, which have rooms for viewing caskets and urns for cremains, as well as facilities for funerals and memorials.

When Greg meets with families, he guides them and suggests appropriate ceremonies, coordinates and conducts various services, and becomes a main source of support and comfort to grieving families.

"Catholic Funeral and Cemetery Services provides a sacred place for the burial of members of the body of Christ, just as the women and men cared for and buried Jesus after his death," said Greg, who ties his work into his faith as a Catholic.

"We provide not only quality services but also personal attention to families ensuring that the services chosen represent the lives lived by their loved ones," he said.

CFCS assists not only when a person dies but also offers counseling to help people prepare in advance for their own funeral services.

"It can be difficult to negotiate services with a grieving family," John said. "It's a gift to the family to know the person's wishes will be honored if the funeral preparations are pre-planned."

Pre-planning relieves families of financial and other burdens at the time of death when they are usually stressed.

Greg said that he went into the



Greg Finch and John Fencik see work as their ministries.

funeral business after working in law enforcement, because he wanted to help people.

"I wanted to give back. I felt that working as a funeral director would provide opportunities to assist families through difficult times," he said. "I feel that it is not a job but a privilege to work with the deceased and their families, because I have the chance to treat them as I would want to be treated if I were burying a loved one."

Greg holds degrees in psychology, and law and justice from Central Washington University. After serving a one-year apprenticeship in Yakima, he obtained his Washington State Funeral Directors License.

"Because I see what I do as a ministry, I am available to support families," he said. "When people

walk into my office, they often look lost. I treat them with love and compassion, and by the time they leave they are holding their heads a little higher."

Because CFCS is mission-driven, it operates differently than a for-profit corporation, said Greg, who has also worked in for-profit services and corporations.

"There is a difference, because what we do is a ministry," he said. "Being a funeral director is not a 9-to-5 job."

Availability is a major part of the ministry.

"I can be called at any time of the day or night. Sometimes I work an 18- to 20-hour day, and other times I might have nothing to do except catch up on paper work," Greg said. "The long days are worth it, though, when I receive cards of appreciation, as

well as hugs."

As the cemetery director, John oversees the day-to-day operations of the funeral services and cemeteries of CFCS. He has a master of divinity and a master in biblical studies. He was a diocesan priest for 18 years in the Rockville Diocese in New York.

As a former priest, he is prepared to meet with families because he presided at funerals and wakes, met with the sick as a hospital chaplain, and journeyed with patients and their families during the dying process.

In addition, he taught in Catholic and private schools for 40 years, as well as working with adult faith-formation.

Because of his teaching background, he is able to go to parishes and other institutions to educate members about the liturgical practices of the Catholic Church related to end of life or cremation, and the church's traditions related to funerals.

"Since Vatican II, many people have not been taught about the church's view on funerals, especially cremation. At one time cremation was not accepted by the

church," he said.

He often attends RCIA preparation classes to share this information with those seeking membership in the Catholic Church.

Like Greg, John sees his work as a ministry first and business last.

As a charitable organization and ministry in the Diocese of Spokane, CFCS offers options for end-of-life services that ensure that no one is turned away for lack of money, allowing families the opportunity to honor their loved ones in the most meaningful way.

Not being responsible to shareholders, CFCS said any profits made are put back into the corporation to pay for the services for families in need, for cremains that remain unclaimed and for burial of children.

"When unclaimed cremains are buried, they are not just put in the ground. There is a service often led by the bishop. All the staff members at CFCS attend the service, because everyone needs to be shown dignity and respect," John said.

For information, call 467-5496 or visit cfcsspokane.org.

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