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On human trafficking

Awareness invites action

By Mary Stamp

Karen Boone uses her experience as a once-displaced homemaker to identify with, be available to and advocate on behalf of women and youth who experience similar displacement and marginalization.

As prevention and education coordinator of the SAFeT Response center at Lutheran Community Services of the Northwest in Spokane, she applies skills gained from 17 years of volunteering and working with nonprofit agencies on community development, racial justice and civic leadership.

Her involvement through work with the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs has introduced her to the issue of human trafficking in and through Spokane and Eastern Washington.

"Lutheran Community Service's concern arises from our work on sexual assault, because victims of trafficking are often also victims of sexual assault," said Karen, a naturalized citizen, who was born in Spain, lived in England until she was six and in Jackson, Miss., until she moved to Spokane at the age of 15.

Her advocacy on human traffick-
Continued on page 9



Karen Boone offers information about human trafficking in the region.

Summer break can be a time to give, volunteer

When people leave for time off in the summer, nonprofits and congregations continue to serve people and need funding to carry on their ministries and programs.

Several have expressed recently how tight their budgets are at this time.

"We encourage people to keep up their giving or provide some pre-vacation gifts to keep much needed services in place," said Fig Tree editor, Mary Stamp.

"There have been many disasters in 2005 and 2006. Added to that have been the rising energy and gas prices, touching everyone and touching off inflation through food items and other basic necessities," she said.

Mary pointed out that the recent rising prices have hit particularly hard people with low incomes and fixed incomes.

For those for whom summer is time off, there are plenty of opportunities for volunteering time to feed the hungry, work with children, build houses and use other gifts that will nurture local people and communities, Mary said.

Volunteer experiences 'diverted' Rob McCann to Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities executive director Rob McCann facetiously says his life was "ruined" by volunteer experiences with campus ministry and the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC).

He went to college thinking he would go to law school and be an attorney in New York City like others in his family.

His plans were diverted by volunteer work through campus ministry at local shelters and a two-month summer program with Jesuit Social Services in Ecuador, and by his involvement with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps both teaching migrant kindergarten children in Woodburn, Ore., and doing community outreach in Torreon, Mexico, and East Los Angeles.

By "ruined," he means "transformed."

"It's easy to live life and not know how others live, but once you become aware of people who live in poverty, suffer and lack basic human dignity, it changes how you look at life," he said. "Once you have that moment, you can choose to ignore what it means or to be part of the solution."

His choice to be part of the solution meant that in September 2005, he succeeded Donna Hanson, who was executive director of Catholic Charities in Spokane for 27 years and who mentored him in his work as associate director since 2000.

In his new role, he fosters opportunities for volunteers—based on their comfort levels and skills—at House of Charity, St. Margaret's Shelter, St. Anne's Child and Family Center, and 62 other Catholic Charities' programs in Eastern Washington. Perhaps he helps disrupt and transform some other lives, changing people and their outlooks.

After graduating from Fairfield University in Connecticut in 1991 with a degree in American studies and political science, Rob spent two years with the JVC.

"I had opportunities to see how the rest of the world lives and felt I needed to do something about it," he said.

His first step was to earn a master's degree in organizational leadership at Gonzaga in 1995. Then, while he was young, single

and could fit all his belongings into the back of a car, he wanted overseas experience.

For several years, he was a program evaluator with the Catholic Relief Services' Harvest of Hope Program, traveling to 31 countries—including Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo.

Catholic Relief Services is an international disaster relief and development agency, serving some of the most poverty-stricken areas of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

In 1997 in India, he worked with and learned from Mother Teresa.

Through CRS, he visited agricultural programs, mother-child programs, health programs, refugee camps, water projects and other programs. Along with tips for success for each country program he visited, Rob developed a list of the top 10 mistakes learned in other countries. He reported back to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and CRS headquarters in Baltimore.

"I saw similar programs in
Continued on page 12

Running is more than a sport

By Derinda Moerer

Among more than 40,000 runners, joggers and walkers finishing the 30th Lilac Bloomsday Run was Kristine Newby, 52, who ran the Boston Marathon a month before.

Running has not always been her passion. Until four years ago, she considered it good for everyone in her family except her. Now it is an important part of her life, physically, emotionally and spiritually. She says she now runs with God.

"Yesterday I ran seven miles across the prairie and, wow!" she said. "I don't experience that in a car. I saw the beauty of God's creation. I wave and smile at people driving by. It may be the only smile they see for the day."

Although she coached a grade school cross-country team, she had not liked running.

Then a post card came from the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) Team in Training. It offered to provide training to run or walk a marathon to raise funds for leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma research, and patient services.

Instead of tossing the card, she was drawn toward the competition. Feeling God urging her to do the program, Kristine returned the card and changed her life.

"I felt I needed to do this, even though no one in my family had leukemia or lymphoma," said Kristine, a member of Lake City Community Church in Coeur d'Alene.

Her oldest daughter, Kari, 26, then in Moscow, agreed to join her. LLS coaches worked with volunteers in Spokane, too far for either, so they trained individually for their first marathon—the 2002 Portland Marathon.

"Because I trained alone, I used my running time as prayer time," Kristine said. "If I had a problem, while running I talked with God and figured it out."

Through the months of training, she never lost sight of her
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Religion News Briefs

Around the World

*Ecumenical News International, PO Box 2100
CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111
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Churches affirm freedom of religion

Geneva (ENI). A joint effort by the Vatican and the World Council of Churches to seek a common code for religious conversions affirms freedom of religion as a "non-negotiable" human right. It says the "obsession with converting others" needs to be cured. At a meeting near Velletri, they launched a three-year joint study to develop a shared code of conduct on conversion, because charges of proselytizing trigger tensions in some societies.

Drunken driving is a sin, Indian cardinal says

New Delhi (ENI). An Indian cardinal has issued a pastoral letter declaring that drunken driving is a sin and those who commit it should confess. In a letter read in parishes under his archdiocese in the southern state of Kerala, Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil lamented that more than 3,000 people were killed in road accidents out of the 33 million people living in the state during 2005.

Church loan program 'lifts' Filipino's lives

La Trinidad, Philippines (ENI). Entrepreneurs with small enterprises in the northern Philippines say a church-backed financing program improves the quality of their lives and strengthens their Christian faith. The Ecumenical Church Loan Fund loans, at 2.5 percent interest plus rebates, are more affordable and accessible than commercial bank loans or private moneylenders.

Solzhenitsyn disputes Western 'freedom'

Warsaw (ENI). Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, for many years a dissident against Soviet communism, has defended an Orthodox church-sponsored document, calling for a new concept of human rights to counter Western notions of freedom said to lack "moral norms." "Limitless human rights are what our cave-dwelling ancestor had. Nothing prevented him from depriving his neighbor of prey or finishing him off with a cudgel," Solzhenitsyn told a weekly newspaper. "To call for self-restraint is considered ridiculous and funny. However, only self-restraint offers a moral and reliable way out of any conflict."

Test together for HIV, UN envoy tells leaders

Nairobi (ENI). Stephen Lewis, UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, says churches are becoming increasingly crucial in the war against the pandemic. He suggests that church and political leaders test together for HIV to set an example.

French churches challenge fragmented societies

Geneva (ENI). The decision by Lutherans and Reformed churches in France's eastern Alsace-Lorraine region to form a union of churches will strengthen Christian witness, said World Alliance of Reformed Churches general secretary, the Rev. Setri Nyomi. "In face of the world's injustices, people need to hear the gospel clearly, and churches need to mediate fullness of life. Churches have a responsibility to rise above divisions and give a clear witness," he said at a service in Strasbourg.

Church attendance highest in South

New York (ENI). People in the southern United States—known as the "Bible Belt"—are more likely to attend religious services regularly than residents of New England or the West, according to a Gallup survey of more than 68,000 people. About 31 percent said they attend services once a week, and another 11 percent attend "almost" every week.

'Da Vinci Code' filming fee funds rebuttal

London (ENI). The \$36,640 paid by the Sony Corporation for permission to film scenes from the "Da Vinci Code" inside Winchester Cathedral in southern England last October funds an exhibit that responds critically to the fictional thriller. "Cracking the Code," which visitors can see as part of an admission fee, opened on April 24. It will run to July 21 with lectures sharing the Christian faith and pointing to mistakes in the book.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Marion Best will lead dialogue Nov. 10-11

Marion Best, of the executive committee of the World Council of Churches, will share a taste of the recent global assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, when she speaks for the Fig Tree Dialogue, Friday and Saturday, Nov. 10 and 11, in Spokane.

Using the assembly theme, "God, in Your Grace, Transform the World," she will share on Friday from the music, worship,

dialogue, stories and decisions made at the 9th Assembly. She was moderator of several sessions of consensus decision-making.

On Saturday, she will lead a workshop on "The Transformative Power of Stories," guiding people in drawing out and listening to each other's stories and how they influence "what we remember, what we tell one another and what we make out of

what happens," she said.

After studies in nursing, Marion became an adult educator. She used her skills in group process and conflict resolution to help the United Church of Canada grapple with divisive issues during the three years she was moderator of the national church.

Marion lives in Naramata, B.C., in the Canadian Okanagan.

For information, call 535-1813.

Gardeners help Plant a Row for the Hungry

As planting season is underway, the Plant a Row for the Hungry Campaign invites gardeners to add a row to their gardens and donate the vegetables from it to local food banks.

In 2005, Spokane County gardeners grew and donated more than 85,000 pounds of produce, enough for 340,000 meals. In 2006, Plant a Row for the Hungry has set a goal of 130,000 pounds for 520,000 meals.

This year the campaign will also help food banks in Sandpoint.

Pat Munts, media coordinator for Plant a Row, said that the motivation for the project is that every year 36 million Americans go hungry.

"In the Inland Northwest, Second Harvest still sees an increase in requests for emergency food, despite reports of an improved economy," she said. "Half of the

hungry are children."

"Fresh fruits and vegetables are first on the list of food that clients of food banks want more of," she said. "People in low-income brackets have trouble finding affordable high-quality low-calorie foods such as vegetables."

Ann Price, director of development and communication at Second Harvest Inland Northwest, said "The value of fresh produce—with home-grown being a piece of that—is its nutritional value. It is among the most expensive items that low-income people buy at the store. When home gardeners take it directly to a neighborhood food bank, clients can pick up spinach, broccoli or zucchini that can add to the nutritional value of their meals."

The Veradale United Church of Christ spent \$2,700 to bring water to a garden site by their

church. It produced 500 pounds the first year. Growing the food also taught young people about helping the community and their neighbors.

"It planted a seed about helping our neighbors around the world," said Linda Crowe, pastor.

Beverly Hawker and the Young Women's Program of the 17th Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at Newman Lake grew corn and donated it to the Valley Food Bank and St. Vincent De Paul's Food Bank.

The food raised in 2006 will go to 19 participating food banks.

Locally, Plant a Row is an initiative of the Inland Empire Gardeners.

Home gardeners may have a receipt so they can take a \$1.50-per-pound tax deduction.

For information, call 534-6678.

Unity in the Community will be on Aug. 19

Plans are underway for the 12th annual Unity in the Community celebration from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.,

Saturday, Aug. 19, at Liberty Park in Spokane.

The 2006 theme is "Color Your World."

The multi-cultural showcase of the region's diversity is designed to unite the community by connecting people, said Ben Cabildo, director of the AHANA Business and Professional Association.

The focus will be on youth and cultures with different educational and interactive cultural villages.

Businesses and organizations may reserve booths. Proceeds go towards the AHANA Youth Leadership Program and ethnic youth scholarships in the community.

For information, call 838-1881 or visit www.ahana.org.

Council board discusses plans

The board of directors of the Interfaith Council of the Inland Northwest has been exploring future plans and possibilities for the organization since Kateri Caron resigned in April as director.

Elliott Fabric, president, said the board is meeting to consider options for carrying on the programs, services and educational events it has established and does.

The council's directory of resources for the faith community will be published and distributed shortly.

For information, call 329-1410.

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Africa support team becomes cultural association

Because it can be hard for someone who grew up in Africa, especially for refugees, to adjust to life in Spokane, the informal Africa Support Team formed four years ago is formalizing itself as the Inland Northwest African Cultural Association.

The support team, founded by Mary Lou McDonough before she retired as volunteer coordinator of World Relief Services, has been a link for African refugees for friendships, assistance, mutual support, resources for newcomers about America and information for the Spokane community about African cultures.

Leaders of the new association are Rwandan Evaristo Mulindangwe and Ethiopian Agwa Taka.

The Rev. Lawrence Hudson, pastor of First Covenant Church, helped the group create by-laws

and structure, because the association will exist under the umbrella of Immanuel Urban Ministries, a nonprofit organization spearheaded by his church to provide nonprofit status for other ministries.

"God has blessed Spokane with people representing at least 11 countries from the African continent," Lawrence said. "These new residents offer our community a rich diversity of perspectives and cultural backgrounds. The association offers the opportunity to learn from, participate with and enjoy these new friends as they settle into life in Spokane."

"Many refugees have come to us through lives of struggle and duress," he added. "I have been deeply challenged and blessed as I have heard their stories."

The goals are to provide mutual

support for African individuals and families in the Inland Northwest through integration, education, sharing experiences, cultural exchange and social activities.

The new board of directors includes men and women from Tanzania, Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia and the Spokane area.

The board hopes more Africans will become involved, eventually with a representative from each country in Africa with refugees living in Spokane.

The association's first event will be a potluck party and dance at 6 p.m., Saturday, June 3, at First Covenant Church, 212 S. Division.

The association plans to participate in such community events as the Fall Folk Festival at Spokane Community College.

For information, call 710-0204.



Joy Peterson

Woman plans to ride her bicycle from Alaska to the tip of Argentina

Among 240 walkers raising \$21,000 for global and local hunger in the Spokane CROP Walk, Joy Peterson, 80, is a regular.

The next week the outdoorswoman, who is a member of Veradale United Church of Christ, completed Bloomsday second in her age group.

The venturesome spirit of this 4-foot 10-inch woman—who has taken church and scout groups, disabled and troubled children and youth on climbs, hikes and cam-

pouts in the region—continues.

June 2 she begins an 11-month bicycle tour from Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, to the tip of South America. She is one of four who plans to ride the complete way. They will be joined by others for segments along the way.

"I just ask for prayers," said Joy at the CROP Walk.

She has also decided to gather pledges for expanding the Dishman Hills Natural Area.

For information, call 926-1188.

Habitat, Thrivent combine efforts

Habitat for Humanity-Spokane and the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Spokane Region began a partnership in 2006 to build three homes in Spokane as part of a national effort to build more than 312 homes for low-income families in 200 communities in 42 states.

A \$235,000 Thrivent grant will be generated locally to build a triplex at 5645-5649 E. Union Ave.—with \$165,000 from Thrivent, \$47,160 from Habitat-Spokane and \$23,580 from area Lutheran congregations, Thrivent chapters and members.

Local volunteers will do the work.

The four-year alliance makes Thrivent Financial Habitat's largest ally in eliminating substandard housing and rebuilding communities.

Thrivent will invest \$105 million to increase annual building by 500 U.S. homes—adding to more than 5,000 homes Habitat affiliates build annually—and more around the world.

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Two people infected with HIV establish prevention, education programs

With African churches burying more people than they baptize because of HIV and AIDS, Sue Parry, coordinator of the Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa, works to "build an AIDS-competent church."

At the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in February in Brazil, Sue spoke with a panel of others on HIV and AIDS.

She said that HIV and AIDS should be mainstreamed as a justice issue, crossing poverty, gender, economic and trade issues: "The 14 million people who live with HIV or AIDS affect other people in their families, communities, societies and the world."

Ugandan Anglican Canon Gideon Byamugisha, co-founder of the African Network for Religious Leaders Living with and Personally Affected by HIV or AIDS (ANERELA+), and Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga, a human rights activist in Bolivia, told of their experiences of living with HIV and AIDS.

Gideon believes speaking of HIV and AIDS, not HIV/AIDS, will help address response.

"HIV is the virus. AIDS results when people lack access to medicines to help them sustain life," he said.

ANERELA, an interfaith network of nearly 1,400 Christians, Muslims, Baha'i and African indigenous churches, helps members accept themselves—through fellowship, mutual support and empowerment—and break the silence to overcome 1) self stigma that drives people into suffering and shame; 2) societal stigma that excludes people from opportunities and a livelihood, and 3) faith-based stigma that arises from negative, moralistic messages.

By breaking the silence, they build awareness and advocate for prevention, care, support, treatment and behavior change.

Richland group hosts Pastors for Peace

World Citizens for Peace will host the Cuba Friendship Caravan when it comes through Richland Thursday, June 22. It plans a gathering with them at 7 p.m. that evening at Shalom United Church of Christ.

The caravan is a project of Pastors for Peace, rooted in non-violent civil disobedience, said Jim Stoffels of World Citizens for Peace.

Despite U.S. sanctions, Pastors for Peace has made 14 annual trips to visit hospitals, schools and social projects in Cuba.

For information, call 946-8087 or email info@wepeace.org.



Canon Gideon Byamugisha

ANERELA urges that churches take seriously people who have HIV or AIDS, dealing with both their human rights and their needs, said Gideon.

In 1992, he learned he was HIV positive and began treatment.

"I hope my life symbolizes that HIV is treatable," he said. "I lost my first wife to AIDS. Now I'm remarried. Being aware, I can prevent transmission. AIDS is preventable and manageable."

He could have kept his infection quiet, so it wouldn't be a stumbling block. Instead, he chose to be open in order to break down stigma, shame and denial.

Gideon said that "morality is not just what is right or legal but also what is safe."

In Bolivia, Gracia said there is no church program. Since learning she is infected, she has helped start a self-help group, People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), working as a volunteer.

Walking home from a dance one night in 1998, she was raped by two men in an alley near her home. She contracted HIV.

"I knew God loved me, but I found it hard to accept myself as a person with HIV and then AIDS," she said. "Now I rely on God, because no one can help me. It's dreadful to experience sexual violence in a country that has no way to deal with HIV or AIDS."

"Now I see how God's grace can transform the world," she said, calling for people to take seriously the church's commitment to love others.

Her parents named her Gracia, because of their belief that God's grace enables people to be saved. As a rebellious teen, the pastor's daughter began using her second name, Violeta, and ignored God's commandments.

Seeking love, she had many boyfriends. Her parents tried to keep her home and prayed for her. While she knew how to prevent pregnancy, she was unaware of the risk of AIDS.

While she was doing research for a thesis on micro-enterprise loans in a village, a mosquito bite became infected. When she went to be tested for malaria, her sister suggested they test for HIV, too. It came back positive.

Gracia was depressed a long time, expecting rejection. Instead, when she told her parents, they received her with open arms, ready to support her until her last day.

"Their love reflects God's love," Gracia said. "I realize that not even AIDS could separate me from God's love. I no longer worry how long I will live."

Now working with other people living with HIV and AIDS, she knows many die alone, abandoned by their families. As she learned



Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga

about the illness, she has put aside prejudices about causes.

Knowing Jesus touched and healed lepers, who faced discrimination then, PLWHA works on prevention and advocacy, assists the ill and informs families, community groups and government.

Renu Chahil-Graf, UNAIDS manager in Brazil, said the United Nations believes churches and faith organizations play a key role in preventing and reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Their efforts include: 1) prevention education by churches;

2) advocacy with people who live with AIDS, and 3) economic empowerment so people with HIV or AIDS can be productive.

Renu said anti-retrovirals have created a new complacency among Americans and Europeans, reducing advocacy and education.

"Both need to be sustained for each new generation," she said.

Jape Heath, co-founder and leader of ANERELA in South Africa, challenges the idea that people brought it on themselves.

"Poverty, gender, vulnerability of children, mother-child transmission and lack of access to accurate information are factors," Jape said.

"To prevent it, we must deal with it holistically, promoting safe practices related to sex, drugs and blood transfusions," Jape continued. "Voluntary testing and counseling are imperative, so people know their status. It's best to be faithful, but those who are not should be tested. Otherwise, they deceive people with false security. Contraception is only one means of prevention."

For information, visit www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/mission/hiv-aids-e.html.

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CHURCH CAMPING IN THE INLAND NORTHWEST

Summer camps tie actions and activities with faith

Campfires and s'mores weave with singing and prayer to nurture community. Climbing walls and ropes courses provide adventure for drawing spiritual parallels. Swimming and hiking immerse campers in God's creation—alone and with others. Sitting down for meals and conversing remind campers of the lost art of family meals. Wilderness experiences and bicycling around lakes stretch new muscles and mindsets for facing hardships. Paid and volunteer staff and counselors introduce campers to role models, racial and cultural diversity. Sounds of birds, frogs and crickets mix with voices of youngsters laughing, squealing, talking. Faith-based camping plants seeds in such settings to have ongoing impact on personal and family lives, on friendships and local-to-wider church fellowship, on community life and cross-cultural understanding. The camp directors and managers express their roles with different words and emphases, but each shares the common aim of building up God's kingdom, Christ's body—discipleship, salvation, love, peace, respect—each uses different words for nurturing leaders to strengthen faith communities to create healthy communities to stir responsible decisions. Camps are fun places with lofty goals to accomplish in a weekend or a week, in a summer camp or retreat away, beyond, outside the everyday inside a new setting, along with others without the usual distractions of busy lives. A time to meet God, people, oneself again, anew, and to return renewed, refreshed, re-inspired and ready.



New "toys" increase a camp's appeal. Ross Point shared this photo of "the blob."

This special section offers an overview on church camping in the region. It gives a glimpse, based on interviews with some camp directors, into opportunities for children, youth and families. It tells of taking time at lakes, in mountains and in forests to be with God and others in intentional community to renew congregations and communities.

Camping focus consistent

Zephyr has been so much a part of Gary Hann's life and identity that one camper called him "Gary Zephyr." After nearly 27 years as director of Zephyr Conference Center at Liberty Lake, he retired May 31 and moved to Greenacres.

For five years, he has been half-time at Zephyr and half-time pastor of Greenacres Christian Church, which he will continue to do. He served Eastside Christian Church in Tacoma from 1970 to 1979, coming to Zephyr when it sought a director with theological background to lead retreats year-round.

"What I have valued most about camping over the years is still part of camping: building community life, helping children and youth respect others, encouraging campers to care for each other and to honor differences, sharing the ethics of Jesus and discovering how to work together in the life of the church," he said.

"The activities may change, but those emphases continue to draw campers back year after year," said Gary, who worked at camps while studying at Northwest Christian College in Eugene. "Zephyr is an extension of churches' ministries for children and lay leaders who volunteer to help.

"With adult retreats, I observe the shift in body language, from people arriving tired from the week of work and unsure if they have energy for a retreat," he said. "They leave re-energized and revitalized for their lives and the life of their churches."

Nico McClellan, a member of Greenacres Christian Church who has been named the interim manager, hopes to put the lodge, which was built in 1902, on the historical registry to make funding available for restoration and updating. She also wants to add more activities—such as horseback riding and archery—to spark campers' interest.

"Through our camp programs, children and youth build memories, strengthen spirituality, spread the Good News and start life-long friendships," she said.

At noon, Sunday, June 4, Zephyr is holding a salad potluck, open house, worship service, children's activities, a farewell talk and camp tours to honor Gary. Nico hopes it will also be a time to introduce or re-introduce the camp facilities to members of congregations and neighbors in the local community. For information, call 255-6122.

Camp invites low-income children to consider what makes good choices

Of the 140 campers each week at Camp Gifford, 90 percent are low-income, nearly 20 percent are from foster homes and three percent are homeless.

The Salvation Army camp on Deer Lake—between Spokane and Colville—has a sliding scale for payment and raises the rest through year-round use and direct-mail appeals.

Food is subsidized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture summer food program, because it serves low-income children.

Twelve of 32 paid counselors and staff are foreign students from Scotland, the United Kingdom and a Youth Leadership School in Australia that may include two from Zimbabwe.

In previous years, some counselors have been from Africa and Asia.

"The initial response of some children, coming with racial bias, has been resistance," Jeff said. "Over the week, they discover the counselors are 'neat' people who care about them. Their British accent adds to their charisma.

"Campers' perspectives change," he said, so he has had international counselors every year since he began as director at Camp Gifford.

"We provide a moral foundation from which campers can learn to make better choices," he said. "We teach them that choices have consequences, asking if a drunk

on the street or person in prison chose that life. We point out that those people had dreams, but bad choices made while growing up meant their dreams died."

On arrival, 20 percent of campers say one choice can change someone's life. By the end of the week, 100 percent believe one choice can change a life.

"We discuss what makes choices good or bad," he said. "We affirm that we believe the Bible and a personal relationship with Jesus can help us know the difference between good and bad choices. We want them to know that God loves them and wants them to be successful."

Camp Gifford also surveys parents later in the year, asking if camp helped their children make better choices. About 85 percent

say, "Yes, definitely"; 12 percent, "maybe," and two percent, "definitely not," he said.

Because campers are selected through schools and agencies based on need, few return. Camps run Mondays to Fridays from mid-June to early August. Each week, there is a youth camp for seven- to 12-year-olds and a wilderness camp for 13- to 17-year-olds.

Activities include canoeing, paddleboating, swimming, a floating diving dock, fishing, high ropes, archery, basketball, soccer, hiking, camp fires and classes led by counselors.

Because of bonding among counselors over the summer, eight couples have married in Jeff's 11 years at Camp Gifford.

For information, call 233-2511 or visit www.campgifford.org.

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Camp offers a time to talk about peacemaking in lives, world

N-Sid-Sen's managing director Randy Crowe finds the National Council of Churches' 2006 summer camp curriculum theme, "Peace Talks," fitting "for these times."

He has found that to be the case in the 23 years N-Sid-Sen has used the NCC curricula—16 of which he has been managing director. Before then, he and his wife Linda volunteered as directors for junior high camps, coming from the United Church of Christ in Kirkland.

"Given where we are as a society, it's the best time we could talk about peace," said Randy, noting that many peace and justice songs like "If I Had a Hammer," "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" and "We Shall Overcome," are now camp songs.

"We will create peace dove banners and make peace cranes. We will trace campers' hands on fabric and sew them on a banner to form peace doves. We will hang it in the welcome lodge we are building," he said.



Senior high aqua camper enjoys a quiet row on the lake.

Photo provided by N-Sid-Sen

Volunteer directors from congregations around the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ are using the curriculum for resource ideas. For example, campers will create a peace pole by painting or wood-burning words for peace in different languages on a driftwood pole to be installed at camp.

"We need to be aware of what our country is doing around the world and that there are alternatives, especially for people of

faith," he said. "Our faith as Christians has a strong message about peace. Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. We need to try to be peacemakers in a society that does not work as it should."

"If we do not teach children and youth that peacemaking is part of our faith, then we are complicit in injustices," he said.

Camp works in partnership with churches to further their Christian education in the outdoors. It gathers children to meet other

children and youth from across the region so they build new friendships as they live in international Christian community.

Randy finds that campers, counselors, resource people and staff can experience "incredible growth in faith" in a week.

Randy sees his role as offering a ministry of hospitality at camps and retreats, providing for physical needs and comfort, so people can be open to spiritual insights.

"My own faith has been deepened by bounds, as we welcome people with HIV and AIDS who come to retreats and feel safe; as we welcome children who come from abusive home situations and start to blossom, and as a child—worried about his mother's illness—came and let go, becoming a "gung-ho" camper.

"Safe, nurturing, intentional Christian community grows each week," Randy said.

For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit www.n-sid-sen.org.

Adventure, team-building activities nurture discipleship

To nurture discipleship and encourage young people to live more Christ-like lives, Ross Point Camp and Conference Center on the Spokane River in Post Falls has broadened adventure and team-building activities with a high ropes course, a climbing tower and a bouldering wall.

These programs supplement traditional water sports on the river such as canoeing, swimming and boating, said John Batchelder, director of the Washington Baptist Convention's camp.

Other activities include beach volleyball, miniature golf, horseshoes, karaoke, kayaks, an aqua jump and slide, a blow-up blob and log rolling.

Through three youth camps and three family camps for up to 200 campers, he said, "we focus on building the kingdom of God."

Since starting a family weekend 25 years ago, Ross Point has expanded family camping program to meet the demand.

Staff encourage campers to apply Scripture and Christ's com-

mandments "in daily life, every moment, not just on occasion," he said. "People often make an initial commitment to accept Christ as Lord and Savior, a recommitment or a career decision to enter ordained or other ministries."

For John, spiritual growth also includes learning to love God, self and others, learning how to live in Christian community, discovering personal gifts, practicing stewardship of creation and becoming committed to a life of service.

Campfires at the end of each day

reinforce what campers learn.

To help six year-round staff, John hires 12 summer staff for the kitchen, cleaning and lifeguarding. Youth and adults volunteer as counselors and directors, developing the program with John, who has been in camping 20 years and at Ross Point since 2001.

The camp, which started in 1948, is open year round. Built in the late 1990s, motel-style accommodations serve 90 people.

For information, call (208) 773-1655 or visit www.rosspoint.org.



High ropes build confidence.

Photo provided by Ross Point Camp

Camps strengthen personal growth, relationships and community

The YMCA's Camp Reed on Fan Lake, 30 miles north of Spokane, encourages personal growth, Christian values and community in a wilderness setting.

Through new challenges and relationships, it hopes to turn ideals into lasting behaviors, said Lisa Vogt, its executive director.

The camp's program involves four two-week leadership camps for 15- and 16-year-olds, week-long camps for children from eight to 14 years old and mini-camps for six- to eight-year-olds.

"We seek to instill honesty, respect, responsibility and caring among campers," she said.

Staff and counselors share their stories and let campers know they care for and believe in them.

In the leadership camps, teens work one week on teamwork, a work ethic, serving others and life choices. The second week they do a 300-mile bike trip from Fan Lake around Lake Coeur d'Alene and Hayden Lake and back. About 100 youth will participate



Camp friendships often become life-long friendships.

Photo provided by Camp Reed

this summer, 25 in each session.

Camp Reed serves campers from many backgrounds. For campers from the YWCA's homeless program, Morningstar Boys Ranch, St. Margaret's Shelter and eight schools, it provides full scholarships and sleeping bags with funds raised in a golf tournament. It draws many repeat campers, including children of former campers.

The eighth week of the summer session for 25 years has included

hosting 20 students and teachers from 10 schools in Spokane's sister city, Nishinomya, Japan.

After 15 years as an attorney in Spokane, Lisa learned of the opening while attending a women's retreat in 2001.

About that time this member of Life Center in Spokane was deciding she wanted to find a way to make a difference in children's lives.

She and her husband, Tom, a teacher at Longfellow School,

filled in for a summer.

A Camp Reed camper since she was seven years old, then a dishwasher and a counselor while in college, Lisa is now full-time director. Tom works with her in the summer, when they live onsite

with their three children.

Schools and other groups rent the facility for use in the off season. It is closed from December to March. For information, call 838-3577x142 or visit www.campreed.org.

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CHURCH CAMPING IN THE INLAND NORTHWEST

Camp provides leadership for offsite day camps, as well as onsite camps

Adding to its nearly 25-year tradition of offsite day camps, Camp Lutherhaven—now in its 60th season—will sponsor an onsite day camp this year bringing children to camp from Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls and Stateline.

"We seek to meet the needs of working parents by providing a safe, fun, values-centered program for first through sixth graders," said Bob Baker, executive director.

Day campers do a gamut of camp activities in a shelter by the waterfront, interacting with onsite campers in water activities.

"Some parents and some children are not ready for overnights. Some children have signed up for all eight weeks," he said. "We will serve up to 20 children each week,

so staff can provide the relational aspect of our ministry."

This summer, Lutherhaven will also run 35 day camps in communities around the region—including Lewiston, Moscow, St. Maries and Pierce, Idaho, and Seattle, Yakima, Wenatchee, Tri Cities, Davenport, Reardan, Odessa, Pullman and Spokane.

Four staff go to churches, a park or community center to run "a glorified vacation Bible school" with volunteers from the church and community.

Unlike VBS, it's all day and for up through eighth graders, plus it includes archery, building camp fires, hiking and going to the local pool, he said.

Lutherhaven has hired and trained 65 summer staff, primarily



Counselor interacts with children at an offsite day camp in Mexico during 2005.

Photo provided by Lutherhaven

college students and graduates, who rotate into the different programs, onsite and offsite, from mid-June to mid-August.

"They switch responsibilities each week to keep fresh, energized and creative," Bob said.

This year he expects 1,600 campers to participate in offsite day camps—with four offered each week. Ten years ago, they offered eight day camps.

Last year, one was offered at an orphanage in Mexico and another was a bilingual camp for migrant children in the Yakima Valley.

Bob has been executive director at Lutherhaven for 13 years, coming from parish youth and family ministry in western Montana.

With 12 year-round staff, he runs Lutherhaven as a retreat center for churches, the community at large and nondenominational churches that have no camp.

This year, the Full Gospel Mission Youth Camp—also known as Hamp's Camp—for inner-city Spokane children and youth will be at Lutherhaven the first week-end of August.

"Camping is different now from 60 years ago. In the last decade,

the number of choices of summer activities for children and youth has skyrocketed with more than 250 options in the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene area," Bob said.

In 2005, Lutherhaven served 14,000 overnight guests in the summer and year round at its camp on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

"A week at camp equals a year of Sunday school," he said, citing an adage in camping circles, "because we concentrate on relational faith. Campers build relationships with each other and strengthen their relationship with God and Jesus Christ, as well as strengthening themselves in ways they build on over the following year.

"We see growth in their faith each year. Many join staff and become church leaders—elders, teachers and church council members," Bob said.

"Many Lutheran seminary students point to camp as where they decided to do ministry. It's where they learned about community relationships and trust of self, others and God," he pointed out.

For information, call 208-667-3459 or visit www.lutherhaven.com.

Children learn their place in God's family

Even with 40 more beds expanding Camp Spalding's capacity to 180, three camps were full by mid-May, said Andy Sonneland, executive director for the Inland Northwest Presbytery's camp and conference center.

He expects the camp will serve 1,500 summer campers this year, it's 50th. Growth is among both Presbyterian and non-Presbyterian campers.

Andy attributes it to more staff, more programs and new "toys."

A new activity this summer is mountainboarding on a big skateboard with air-filled tires on a course down a hill onsite. It's like snowboarding. There's also a frisbee golf course.

Some of the toys are just for fun and some are designed to draw a spiritual parallel, Andy said.

"Junior and senior high camps are most in demand. Elementary camps are growing. Family camps are full," said Andy.

Working with the campers are four year-round and 31 summer staff.

College-age counselors come for 10 weeks, also helping on the waterfront, with mountain biking and other activities. They come two weeks before camps start for 10 days of training in CPR, team building and counseling.

"They need to focus on campers' relationship with Jesus Christ and what to expect of different ages. Some come back summer after summer," he said.

Andy said that the younger children need to learn about their place in God's family. Junior high campers learn more about the Gospel and have a chance to respond. High school campers



Climbing encourages campers to persevere in hardships.

Photo provided by Camp Spalding

focus on discipleship.

"It's a unique opportunity for children and youth to be away for a week in God's creation with Christian role models to consider Jesus' call to follow," he said.

"Our focus is for campers to have a relationship with Christ and to leave here having had an encounter with God. We want the week to be a 'blast' so they sign up to come again," he said.

Morning and evening campfires include worship and speakers. Then campers have small group discussions in cabins and one-to-one time with counselors, establishing relationships so they are open to spiritual parallels counselors draw in activities.

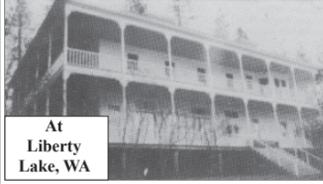
Camp Spalding in the Selkirk Mountains is open year-round as a conference center for church groups on weekends and Elderhostels, corporate groups and other retreats midweek.

Now in his 15th year as director,

Andy is committed to camping because "it's an opportunity for children, youth and adults to make significant spiritual decisions away from their daily routines. It's a time to consider God's call in their lives and their potential for ministry.

Along with age-specific camps, this facility has pioneer, arts, leadership, family and college-prep camps, and mom-dad-and-me overnights.

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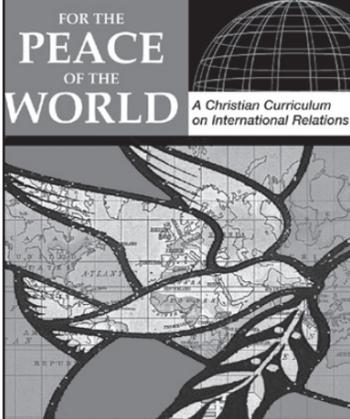
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Older campers often have opportunities to engage in mission projects

Offsite and onsite, campers will consider and act on the theme, "We Are All One in Mission: Mission Possible," in 2006 summer programs through Camp Cross and the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane.

In 2006, the diocese offers several offsite mission camps, including one taking 50 youth and adults to Arlington, Texas, June 25 to July 2, as part of a pilot program of the national Episcopal Church. Participants will lead a vacation Bible school for youth in two inner-city areas.

Other off-site mission camps in Coeur d'Alene, Moses Lake and Spokane include service projects. For two years, a group has gone to Moses Lake.

They do a car wash there to raise money for a church-sponsored community park and food



Mission camps connect campers with community needs.

Photo provided by Camp Cross

bank, and repair picnic tables.

Onsite camps include age-group camps and a family frontier camp that has campers use Dutch ovens, play old-time games, learn archery from a "mountain man," hike and have family reunions.

"We want campers to know that by working together anything is

possible," said Evita Kristlock, the camp's executive director and the diocesan youth director.

Camp Cross intentionally includes environmental education, appreciation of nature and stewardship awareness, tying them to Bible studies and liturgy.

"We have campers eat healthy,

family style meals and encourage them to be conscious of manners," Evita said. "It may be a contrast to home, where people are busy and may not sit down to eat."

The camp is also intentional about developing leaders, drawing youth into counseling, mentoring and leadership in a safe space.

"We help young people to be aware of and to challenge racism, sexual misconduct and injustices in the social structure, rather than assuming that what is on TV and what the society promotes is okay," said Evita, who previously worked for a railroad and volunteered with the Central Valley School District.

In the setting and structure of camp, young people can experience being leaders, even "messing up" without being mortified, Evita said. "They learn the layers behind what happens, skills needed and the role of prayer."

The camp also brings international staff—this year from Latin America and Spain—to create cross-cultural understanding.

In her year-round work with diocesan youth, Evita also seeks to help them overcome racism, foster dialogue and encourage inclusion.

"In my seven years in this ministry, I have noticed that there are many more demands on people, especially students, in the summer—with debate programs, and basketball, band and football camps. Summer is no longer about carefree days.

"With so much going on and so many demands from communities and society, it's hard for young people to keep a spiritual connection," Evita said.

To keep parishioners connected to Camp Cross, the camp offers Sunday brunches from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., starting June 4.

Camp Cross, which accommodates 96 people—including 10 staff—is a May-to-September camp because access to the site on the west side of Lake Coeur d'Alene is by boat.

For information, call 624-5780 or visit www.campcross.org.

Camps strengthen local churches

For Brian White, who grew up spending summers at United Methodist camps in Oregon and Idaho, camp and retreat ministries extend tools of local churches to strengthen mission, relationships, community and faith.

After working summers in college as a camp lifeguard, he was asked to be full-time program director at Camp Magruder at Rockaway Beach, Ore. He started in 1994, knowing he did not want to pursue a career in biochemistry, his major at Whitman College.

After 12 years at Camp Magruder, Twinlow Camp and Retreat Center on Lower Twin Lake near Rathdrum, Idaho, invited him to be interim director in April 2005. In January, he became director.

"This ministry is a place away from the local church where people are strengthened in relationships that build community and build each person's relationship with Jesus in an intense, peaceful, relaxed time," Brian said.

Although camp is away from church and daily life, it does not exist in isolation but as a partner with local churches.

"It's no longer just a place for children and youth to go in the summer, but also a place for adults, families and church groups summer and year round," he said. "When there is snow, we have winter activities—skiing at nearby ski areas or tubing and sledding onsite."

Brian said when people play and have fun they open themselves to discover new things about themselves and others.

"Camp is more experiential than a Sunday school class. It's



Learning to swim is one of the basic skills for life and camping.

Photo provided by Twinlow Camp

hands on—swimming, climbing, hiking and relating life and faith to the activities.

"It's about discovering who we are and what we believe," he said. "Camp helped me form my values and make decisions."

For Brian, ministry is daily life, and daily life is ministry. He is excited about a career in which he is challenged to grow in faith.

As manager and director, he cooks, cleans, pays bills and develops programs. A part-time person assists with maintenance. About 15 summer staff lifeguard and serve in the kitchen.

Each part of the camp facility and program is geared to strengthen campers' relationships with Jesus Christ and connections to the local churches.

To diversify its approach, Twin-

low is also doing day camps. This year, day campers will do a "world tour," learn about animals, have a campout and more.

Children from five to 12 years old are picked up by bus in Spokane, Coeur d'Alene and Athol at 8 a.m. and returned at 5 p.m.

During sessions from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., day campers do water sports, crafts, music and Bible stories. They share the dining hall with the week-long campers, but meet in their own space.

"It's helpful for working parents and small children who may not want to stay overnight," he said.

About 22 are coming, some for a week, some for four weeks and some for seven weeks. One will come Tuesdays to Thursdays.

For information, call (208) 687-1146 or visit twinlowcamp.org.

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People God brings to her door motivate woman's advocacy, education

Continued from page 1
ing differs from her advocacy for women and youth, because, as far as she knows, she has no personal contact with people who are trafficked. She shares information from agency and government reports.

"God has given me gifts to use to benefit the community," said Karen, a member of Pentecostals of Spokane.

Those gifts include insights from studies at Spokane Community College and Eastern Washington University in government, women's studies, social work, psychology and communication, and her experience starting over after 10 years of marriage as a displaced homemaker.

The gifts also include people "God has brought to my door to welcome and care for," she said.

"It would be hypocritical for me to close my door to someone in need and then advocate on that person's behalf," said Karen, who opened her home informally as a temporary safe haven for youth while they resolved issues with their families.

On human trafficking, Lutheran Community Services is a clearinghouse for information.

Karen's role includes informing social service providers, so they can recognize if anyone they assist with housing, food, employment, health care or other needs might be someone who has been trafficked.

Washington is one of two gateways into the Northwest United States because of people coming from Mexico and its border with Canada. Most of those trafficked into the United States are from Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Karen said Benton, Chelan, Colville, Grant, Lewis, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla and Yakima are

Seminar on Human Trafficking: Modern Day Slavery

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday, June 13

Cataldo Hall
Gonzaga University
358-7949

among 18 counties in the state where there is some trafficking.

"Human trafficking involves recruiting, harboring, transporting or selling people, providing or obtaining any person for services involving forced labor or servitude," she said. "It's hard to identify victims or have victims identify themselves as victims."

"For some, it's easier to stay trapped, because they and their families are threatened; they lack immigration status and language ability; they are constrained by

cultural fears, or they are shamed about being forced into the sex industry. Most suffer trauma.

"Trafficking, a modern form of slavery and a \$9 billion activity of organized crime, affects four million people around the world," she said. "The Department of Justice reported that 45,000 people were trafficked into the United States in 1997."

Violence, threats and coercion maintain forced labor in agriculture, restaurants, sweatshops, domestic work and prostitution.

Some trafficking involves international matchmaking.

"Some Russian women come as mail-order brides with the promise of coming to the United States for economic opportunity," Karen said. "Although many go back and tell of the violence, it's not enough to keep others without hope from coming."

In their countries of origin, trafficking victims may experience oppression, persecution, bonded labor, armed conflict, civil unrest and few opportunities. People desperate to escape poverty are willing to provide cheap labor and use informal methods of transportation that may infringe on their health, rights and safety.

"As commercial sexual exploitation rises in some countries, it is a factor in some women's leaving," she said. "Washington also exports perpetrators of sexual violence in men going to Thailand and other

destinations for sex tourism."

Karen shared some examples of how trafficking works:

- Joyce signed to attend a dance school to be an entertainer in Seattle. When she arrived, she was told she had a debt of \$4,000 and had to pay \$500 a month rent to stay in the broker's home and could only earn \$100 a week dancing at the club. As her debts mounted, she knew she could earn more by performing sex acts.

- Nadia came planning to go to school. A businessman, Tom, picked her out of a mail-order bride catalogue and sent her a fiancé visa. He kept her busy 16 hours a day, caring for his children from a previous marriage, so she could not go to school. He kept her visa in his safety deposit box. She was afraid of him.

- After Carlos paid a Mexican coyote—immigrant smuggler—to transport him to an apple farm, he was told that the cost of smuggling him was \$2,500 and that he would be beaten if he tried to leave. His work paid for rent and food only. He worked on other farms, but could not earn enough to leave.

"People are promised one thing in their country, but when they arrive here, terms change. They realize the person who has their passport and identity papers owns them," Karen said.

Women, men and children are trafficked. Women and children are particularly vulnerable, she said, because of gender bias in

politics, economics and culture.

"Women, children and poor people are considered of less value. Unemployment, the feminization of poverty and the lack of access to resources or education also lead to desperation," she said. "These are systemic issues."

Along with the border and ports, other factors conducive to trafficking in Eastern Washington include geographic isolation making social isolation possible, the presence of adult prostitution zones and the presence of transient, unattached males as migrant farmworkers and on military bases.

Karen believes the faith community can help increase public awareness with speakers, videos and contacts with social services. People can volunteer to report ads for mail-order brides. They can also form support groups and advocate for legislation.

Washington is one of the first states to pass a law on trafficking in 2003, after the U.S. Senate passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2000.

In addition to Lutheran Community Services, other agencies addressing trafficking include Washington State University, the Spokane County Domestic Violence Consortium, the Sisters of the Holy Names, Refugee Resettlement and the local Federal Bureau of Investigation.

For information, call 747-8224.

Children drew mother to coach cross-country, charity drew her to marathons

Continued from page 1
commitment to raise funds for LLS. Her husband, Vern, helped her raise funds.

"I'd pick up money while running—a reminder that God provides the fund," said Kristine, who raised more than \$4,000 and finished in under five hours.

Although she considered quitting after that, she continued to run. She has run the Portland Marathon every year with Kari, improving her time each year. In 2005, finishing in 3 hours and 55 minutes qualified her for the Boston Marathon. Kari qualified every year, so mother and daughter began training for that.

"We bonded as a result of running," she said.

Kristine had heard of the Boston Marathon since she was a little girl. Her three brothers ran, and names such as Gerry Lindgren, Don Kardong, Steve Prefontaine, Bill Rodgers and Frank Shorter were frequently mentioned at the dinner table.

After running the Boston Marathon on April 17 in four hours, 19 minutes, she wrote by her number

on a wall, "A dream come true."

Kristine said, "People were cheering along the route, some ringing cow bells, other blowing whistles. They had matching shirts. Children held out pieces of oranges for us."

While races are exhilarating, training has taught her life lessons. It's hard to make the time and effort to run on a regular basis. Mental discipline propels her.

"Marathon training trained me to do things I might not want to do, but would benefit me in the long run," Kristine said. "I go on faith that it will be good for me in the future, if not today, so I am not discouraged."

She wasn't a runner while rearing her five children, but knew the importance of the sport and encouraged her children to run in elementary school. Kari joined Hamblen Elementary School's cross-country team in Spokane.

When the family moved to Coeur d'Alene, Hayden Lake Elementary did not have a cross-country program. So Kristine helped Kari start one in 1987. Three years later, Dalton and



Kristine Newby with daughter, Kari, after a marathon.

Ramsey elementary schools added the sport, so they started an elementary district meet, which continues to add schools.

"My mom's efforts have directly or indirectly affected thousands of children in this area, because she saw how much fun and enjoyment running gave her daughter," said Kari, who ran at Coeur d'Alene High and at Linfield College in McMinnville, Ore.

Kari's siblings also ran. Her brother, Travis, ran cross country and track, finishing fourth in state his senior year in high school. Despite an injury, he persevered with mental discipline and drive.

Her sister, Gina, excelled in

pole vaulting in college until a fall. Mindy ran track and cross country. Her youngest sister, Piper, at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va., set the school steeple-chase record.

Kristine is proud of her children's accomplishments and of the other Coeur d'Alene and Lake City high school graduates who continued running in college.

Kristine said seeing how the elementary school cross-country program developed has been "a God thing."

"There were many latch-key kids with nobody at home. We gave them an hour of supervised activity and something to be a part

of," she said.

Kristine did it to help children, not because she loved to run. In a Christmas letter, she once wrote, "I can't believe I'm coaching cross country when I hate running."

Children assumed she enjoyed running because she participated in Bloomsday every year. She said she went because they had a family reunion around Bloomsday activities.

Kristine, her husband, five children, three brothers, their families and her 80-year-old father ran in Bloomsday again this year.

Even though no races are on the horizon, she still trains.

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We seek to plant seeds of compassion so people will care what happens

In the midst of the daily barrage of people falling short, committing crimes, hurting other people, living double lives and abusing people, we find many stories of people caring.

In the midst of stories of institutions oppressing people, countries at war, systems that fail people and churches caught in scandals, we find many stories of organizations and churches advocating for justice.

To balance stories we see, hear and read in some movies, TV entertainment, radio talk shows, novels, nonfiction, and news reports, The Fig Tree finds what people are doing to resolve issues behind the needs created by disasters, deception, distrust and other dilemmas.

Unfulfilled relationships, unsolved crimes, unresolved conflicts may invite repeated "sales" of media offerings and may draw people back to shows or news for more, but leave the American public

hanging over the edges of cliffs.

Stories of life and faith are not about complete, final resolutions of problems, issues, concerns, needs, conflicts, struggles, injustices, faithlessness, emptiness or hopelessness, but it's important that those realities not be overblown.

Stories about people who step into the path to walk beside other people as God's servants, hands and partners give balance.

We tell about people taking the edge off someone else's pain, helping restore someone to a community, offering a hand of love, telling words of faith to comfort and challenge, hoping that people will receive a transforming message from their words or actions.

In covering stories about church camps, Habitat building, summer mission trips to Mexico, New Orleans and area communities, day-long hikes into wild areas and other summer outreach activities, we found

ways people make a conscious connection to their faith and values.

We were inspired by the different words camp directors use to express the purpose of their programs, the content of discussions and parallels they draw with the recreational activities at camp:

- create loving community,
- model God's love,
- share Jesus' salvation,
- encourage moral choices,
- invite appreciation of creation,
- connect recreation to spiritual truths,
- promote peacemaking and
- serve the wider community.

The varied approaches may not end problems of people or society, but may shake the forces of greed, addiction, hunger, hate and fear enough to make a difference for someone.

Perhaps the messages of faith will speak to people, groups, institutions or govern-

ments. Perhaps embodying God's love will help some people love themselves, love God and love their neighbors, so they will join in the cycle of loving, lifting others above themselves and their angers, pains and narrow-sightedness.

We seek to plant seeds for action, seeds to help people discern their calling, seeds of hope to connect people, seeds of compassion so people will care about what is happening.

Celebrity, conflict and casual sex may ensnare interest of "me-focused" folk, but everyday people, resolving everyday differences and fostering relationships of respect and dignity convey some refreshing stories through our pages and website.

Thanks to all who make it possible—advertisers, sponsors, congregations, nonprofits and the people who entrust us to share their stories.

Mary Stamp - editor

Our faith clearly calls for us to love aliens as we love ourselves

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you. You shall love the alien as yourself, you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 19:1, 33-37)

While living in Germany, we learned to appreciate other forms of entertainment because American television was unavailable to military personnel and their dependents. My siblings and I enjoyed listening to old radio shows. The show that caught everyone's attention was the Halloween airing of H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds."

It was aired as a newscast with updated commercials and programming scattered through. It began with a cautionary line that it was a fictional story. Even so, I remember my elementary-age brother thinking

that aliens from Mars really were attacking the United States. It took us some time to convince him that, in fact, no one was under attack. No aliens were attacking us.

I had always thought of "aliens" as some creatures flying in from outer space, ready to invade our world. I did not understand that the word refers to people "living in a country other than the one in which they were born."

Then, when my father and our family were sent to live in Germany, I began to understand what it meant to be a resident alien: physically living, working and going to school in one country but keeping the language, heritage and allegiances to the land in which we were born.

There are many reasons why people leave the land of their birth. It almost always entails the hope of a better life for oneself and a better future for one's family.

I know that is why my great-grandfather left Sweden for America. There were international reasons for the U.S. military to have a strong presence in Europe during the Cold War. Even though we were there to say we were willing to fight for democracy and freedom, we Americans were not always welcomed by our host nation. It was not always easy to live beyond the "little America" the military set up for its personnel.

I cannot compare my life in Germany with the lives of those who come, at great risk, across the border from Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras or El Salvador to live in America.

I do know, however, what it is like to long to hear a familiar language, to meet someone on a foreign street who hails from the United States, or to find a restaurant that served "good old American hamburgers."

In the middle of a strange land for a brief moment, I occasionally would make a connection with home.

These memories help me see the people who live in our midst not as aliens but a people living far from home, seeking to feed, clothe and educate their families while struggling to live in a strange culture and learn to speak a strange and difficult language.

How are we called by God to treat the "resident alien" in our midst? How do we struggle with our feelings of fear, distrust and resentment, even as we are called to "love God" and to "love our neighbor as ourselves"? Are we ready to ask, "Who is my neighbor?" Are we ready for the answer?

The Rev. Ginny Johnson
St. Paul Lutheran - Quincy
guest editorial

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

Participating in the Habitat Blitz week here fulfilled a childhood dream, because I was able to play contractor for a day and use a power saw. The fact Jesus was a carpenter does not mean every pastor has to be a carpenter.

As I watched the work come together, I noticed:

- Everyone is enthusiastic about doing what we are doing and about being a part of it with no sense of guilt or compulsion.
- Regardless of our skills, people are contributing. While some pound nails, others make trips to the hardware store, and others prepare lunch.
- People are even participating beyond their skills and experience. We are growing as we try something for the first time, even when we're well outside our comfort zones and may feel a bit foolish about it.

Those three observations sound biblical to me when I think about our commitment to common ministry. Giving of ourselves joyfully, giving according to what we have and challenging ourselves to give beyond what feels normal or comfortable. These are hallmarks of faithful corporate discipleship. When we act like this together, we become a little more like what the body of Christ is meant to be.

The Rev. Forest Claassen
First Presbyterian - Clarkston

Spirituality has become vogue in our culture, but I often wonder what has happened to its theological roots. Theology is the attention we give to God, the effort we put forth to find out who God is, exactly, or mysteriously, as revealed through scripture and all of creation. Spirituality insists that everything God reveals in those ways can be lived out by ordinary folks, like you

and me, in everyday lives of working, playing, parenting, pondering, suffering, healing, singing, driving, eating, daring and dreaming.

The way I understand it, our spirituality keeps our theology from becoming something we simply talk about in order to keep God at a safe distance, while our theology keeps our spirituality grounded in something more than feel-good emotions that never quite require us to risk thinking about why it is we believe what we do and how, in practical encounters and circumstances, we plan to live out our beliefs in our everyday lives and relationships.

The Rev. Tammy Bell
First Congregational
United Church of Christ - Colville

Stewardship in the broadest understanding is our life as a church. It begins with our relationship to God: how it awakens our sense of gratefulness for all we have been given; how it engages our sense of responsibility to tend what has been put into our care; how it stretches us spiritually in the best sort of way.

Why do we seem to begin this conversation at budget time? Last year, the congregation I served broadened the stewardship conversation to a two-month series, "The Gifts of God for the People of God."

We first listed the many gifts God has given us and selected eight, recruiting some people who would talk about each gift. We began with being aware of what is around us and what God has given to us. We looked at the gift of our giftedness, the gift of our health, the gift of the earth, the gift of our elders, the gift of time, the gift of community.

We looked at each gift through the lenses

of awareness, gratitude and responsibility. How might we take these gifts for granted. What do we notice when we are really aware? How do we express our gratitude? How do awareness and gratitude lead us to a sense of responsibility or action?

The Rev. Kristi Philip
Episcopal Diocese of Spokane

I have been developing my photographic eye since buying a digital camera, because I can take all kinds of pictures without it costing anything for development.

Have you ever taken a picture of a beautiful sunset and discovered it was ruined with electrical lines running through the scene? I was so focused on the colors I didn't see the lines or pole.

I have looked at beautiful flowers and commented, "There's a beautiful picture here somewhere." I've learned that the angle from which the picture is taken is crucial. So is placement of the main object, depth of field—what is in or out of focus—exposure—lighting—and background. There is much to think about.

The same flower in one picture may look nice, not spectacular. The same flower from a different angle and perspective might make an amazing, eye-popping picture. The challenge is to learn to see what is there and visualize the shot.

Sometimes I have tunnel vision, seeing just one thing but missing the larger setting. Sometimes I see only the foreground and miss the background. Sometimes I recognize the beauty in the ordinary that I walked past so many times before. Sometimes I see it and it all comes together.

The Christian life is all about trying to see life from the perspective of God, to see even

the "least of these" as created in God's image, to see the conflict among peoples from God's perspective. I have been trying all my years to develop the eye of seeing with the heart and mind of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. It involves focus, perspective, lighting, and seeing both what is there and what I want to see. I keep trying.

The Rev. David Helseth
Englewood Christian - Yakima

Here's a much-rehearsed theme among ministers: Why don't you come to church every Sunday?

Our sanctuary was packed on Easter so latecomers had trouble finding a seat. I like that. So did everybody who was here.

The norm for worship in scripture is corporate worship. I know you can sense God alone on a mountain, at the seashore or in a crashing thunderstorm. So can a horse.

One winter day my first year here, the weather was so bad people really had an excuse not to come.

That winter day, seven of us gathered in the church library. We had church. How much more I enjoyed church on Easter! I need all of you to help me lift my heart toward God in that unique way that only corporate worship affords.

You need me, too. We need all the others whose hearts are turned toward worship through hymns, readings and corporate expressions that made Easter Sunday so rich and memorable.

Which do you like better, coming to church for worship and being the only one there or coming to church for worship and having the place filled with people like yourself who have come to worship God?

The Rev. Dan Berg
Open Door United Church of Christ

Conservation groups offer hikes in wild areas

The Selkirk Conservation Alliance is offering summer hikes into the Priest Lake area, the last area in the United States where there is a herd of caribou.

"We want to introduce the area to people, so they will want to preserve it. Otherwise, it may be gone forever," said Barbara Williams of Diamond Lake, who shares her part-time job as development and outreach director with her friend, Christy Lafayette of Usk.

The Selkirk Conservation Alliance, which has its office in Priest River, Idaho, engages people in resource and land management issues in order to protect endangered wildlife, their habitats, healthy watersheds and sustainable forests.

Endangered wildlife include Selkirk woodland or mountain caribou and other imperiled wildlife—grizzly bears, Canada lynx, bull trout, wolverine and fisher. The mountains and streams are home to mountain goats, bighorn sheep, wolves, moose, elk, mountain lions and cutthroat trout.

"People in the area do not want

uncontrolled development, which they fear will happen because Idaho has no growth management plan," she said.

The Selkirk Conservation Alliance is sponsoring four-, five-, seven- and 10-mile hikes, starting at 9 a.m. in Priest River, June 10, 17 and 24; July 8, 15 and 22, and Aug. 5, 12, 19 and 20 into wildlife habitat in mountains, through forests, along rapids and creeks, overlooking Priest Lake, across meadows and into areas where they may encounter some wildlife.

In addition to the hikes, the Selkirk Conservation Alliance is collaborating with Eco-Cell to collect cell-phones at Auntie's Bookstore in downtown Spokane and Café Deliscio at Montgomery and Monroe.

Eco-Cell will use funds from recycling the phones to protect gorilla habitat. The alliance will use its portion to save the 37 caribou that migrate across the Canadian border and have habitat in the Priest Lake area.

The alliance is also working with KYRS, the Lands Council,

the Kootenai Environmental Alliance and the SHAWL Society to sponsor the third annual Green and Blues Fest at Bluz at the Bend, 2721 N. Market in Spokane, from 5 p.m. to 1:30 a.m., July 15.

For information, call 208-448-2971 or visit www.scawild.org.

The Sierra Club, the Lands Council, Conservation Northwest and the Mountaineers are also offering Saturday five- to eight-mile hikes this summer to introduce people to scenic and wild areas in the region. The hikes are July 15, on the Sherman Peak Loop; July 22, at Abercrombie Mountain; July 29, on Grassy Top Mountain; Aug. 5, in Hoodoo Canyon to Emerald Lake; Aug. 12, on Thirteen Mile Creek Trail; Aug. 19, on Noisy Creek Trail on Hall Mountain, and Aug. 26, on Kettle Crest Trail in a roadless area.

They also plan a hike on Sunday, Sept. 24, on Columbia Mountain Loop.

The Lands Council is also offering float trips on the Upper Spokane River, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays, June 17 and July 29, and from 1 to 5 p.m., Saturday, July 1. Guided by Kitty Klitzke of the Land's Council and a Spokane Parks and Recreation instructor, the floats will introduce people to the history of, threats to and efforts to protect the river and aquifer.

For information, call 951-3541 or 625-6200.

Camas Institute sponsors conference

The Camas Institute of the Kalispel Tribe is sponsoring a conference on "Developing a Tree of Healing" on Thursday and Friday, June 1 and 2 at Northern Quest Casino, 100 N. Hayford Rd., in Airway Heights.

The event is for chemical dependency professionals, counselors, social workers, educators, and medical staff. Workshops and lectures deal with historical trauma, soul loss, domestic violence, spiritual-based programs, adolescents, alternative healing and cross-cultural issues.

For information, call 343-4313.

Calendar of Events

June 1-2	• "Developing a Tree of Healing," Camas Institute, Northern Quest Casino, Airway Heights - call
June 1-16	• Habitat Blitz Build, 5603-5607 E. Union Ave. - call 534-2552
June 1, 2	• "Developing a Tree of Healing," Camas Institute, faith-based drug and alcohol counseling workshop, Northern Quest Casino
June 3	• "Unify," Woodward Field, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, 1 to 10 p.m. • Inland Northwest African Cultural Association, First Covenant Church, 6 p.m.
June 4, 18	"The ABCs of Islam," Community Unitarian Universalist & Shalom United Church of Christ, 505 McMurray St., 4 p.m.
June 8	• Women's and Children's Free Restaurant free summer picnic, St. Paul's United Methodist, 1620 N. Monroe, 4-6 p.m.
June 10	• Race Unity Day, Coeur d'Alene City Park, 1-4 p.m.
June 11	• A Celebration of Musical Gifts, Covenant United Methodist, 15915 N. Gleneden Dr., 7 p.m.
June 13	• "Human Trafficking: Modern-Day Slavery," U.S. Attorney for District for Eastern Washington and Western Regional Institute for Community Oriented Public Safety, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. - call 358-7949
June 17	• "Building and Living a Life That Matters," Health and Business Fair, 35 W. Main, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
July 15	• Green and Blues Fest, Bluz at the Bend, 5 p.m.
July 15-16	* St. Maries Festival of the Arts - call 208-248-3417
Aug 19	• Unity in the Community, Liberty Park, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - call 838-1881
Sept 6	• Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark's Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m.
Sept 7	• Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.
Tues-Sat	• Habitat-Spokane work days - call 534-2552
Fridays	• Colville Peace Vigil - call 675-4554
Saturdays	• Hikes in natural and wilderness areas - see this page
Sundays	• Taizé service, 525 NE Campus, Pullman, 7 p.m.
1st Sat	• Ministers' Fellowship Union - call 624-0522
2nd, 4th Weds	• Pax Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, noon
3rd Mons	• NAACP - call 467-9793
3rd Thurs	• VOICES, Emmanuel Lutheran, 314 S. Spruce, 5:30 p.m.
4th Thurs	• The Lands Council, 423 W First, Suite 240, 6 p.m.

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Rob McCann finds at Catholic Charities:

Walking the path Christ walked means loving and serving people

Continued from page 1
different countries," he said. "In Sudan, I might share with local staff how an Angolan community does a water project. Knowing what worked elsewhere helped people gain expertise."

Rob went as a colleague, recognizing also that every country and culture does programs in different ways, and evaluating programs in light of the culture.

"What works in the mother-child program in Cambodia might not work in Senegal because of different family traditions, expectations, languages and tribal dynamics," he said.

In Spokane, Rob also deals with the diverse cultures of chronically mentally ill people or children from families of different cultures.

Donna hired him in 2000 as associate director to oversee construction of two new homeless shelters and St. Anne's Children and Family Center.

While working at Catholic Charities in Spokane, he completed a doctoral degree in leadership studies at Gonzaga University in 2004. He met and married his wife, Rachel, in 2001. They now have a one-year-old son, Timothy James.

As associate director, he would oversee programs, write grants, secure accreditation and do many other tasks, mentored by Donna.

"I learned the nuts-and-bolts details of how programs ran from the 'global' perspective of seeing the picture of the overall organization," he said.

"Catholic Charities focuses on the core values of respect, compassion, collaboration and justice. Those words are visible in our facilities—the mission statements on the walls," he said. "We make decisions through these four lenses. Volunteers and staff are to live these values, to walk the talk."

Having grown up in a Catholic family with Catholic education from kindergarten through PhD, he said faith is a "big piece" of what he does at Catholic Charities.

Being Catholic, however, does not limit the scope of service, because service is provided based on "need not creed." About 85 percent of staff and of those served are not Catholic.

"We look at the core values of the Catholic tradition, values shared by most other traditions—Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish and other faiths, as well as other Christian," he said, returning to the four basic values.

More than 90 years ago, Catholics in Eastern Washington wanted to respond to the poverty they saw. Farmers, bankers and other business people started Catholic Charities in this diocese to do that, he said.

"We exist in their name to serve



Rob McCann stands surrounded by drawings of new facilities.

anyone in need as a nonprofit, faith-based organization operating on the core values of the Gospel," Rob said.

In accordance with a previous requirement for non-profits and faith-based organizations receiving federal, state or local funding, there is no evangelism component.

"There are times evangelism is appropriate and times when it is not appropriate. It is not appropriate in programs we run, programs based on the unconditional love of the Gospel, whether people accept Christ or don't," he said.

"If someone is hungry, cold or homeless, that person wants a meal, a blanket and warm shelter, not necessarily religion," Rob said.

"Creed is the impetus for how and why we care, but it does not mandate who we serve. My faith tradition led me into this work, allows me to process it and gives me passion to do it."

"In my read of Catholicism, we are called to serve people in need, if we are to walk the path Christ walked. I learned through Jesuit spirituality and the Jesuit motto of 'contemplatives in action,'" he said.

"Catholic Charities measures outcomes of its service of about 50,000 people a year based on their becoming more stable, healthier, happier and more self sufficient because of the programs. Some will lead better lives. Some may not, but we hope that all we serve will at least live in more dignity."

"Some have slept at House of Charity for 20 years and may sleep there 20 more years—in dignity. Some may be assisted to leave and become homeowners or move into stable housing."

giving," he commented.

Beyond the current political talk of "faith-based initiatives," Rob said the government has long channeled funds to serve the poor through Catholic Charities and similar organizations: "Now it's a buzz word and spin on what has been happening for years."

"Catholic Charities is the biggest social-service provider in the country. Government funds are essential for us to do our job," he said. "We have respected, in receiving those funds, the original requirement of providing the services without overt evangelism. We will not change our stance of serving all people, regardless of their religious beliefs."

"Everyone is a child of God and deserves unconditional love and dignity. As a civilization, we will not be judged by the money in our banks, our technology or the number of skyscrapers, but by how we treat the weakest people among us," he said. "History judges a civilization by the quality of its relationships and how people act to end injustice."

So along with helping people in need, Catholic Charities educates people so they are aware of and act on the relationship between Catholic social justice teachings and institutional injustice. The Parish Social Services office does

the education and advocacy piece with Catholic Relief Services.

Reflecting on the growing needs, Rob said Catholic Charities seeks to expand its capacity to respond.

Over his 15 years in social services, he has seen needs continue to grow.

"I wish there were fewer homeless and hungry people. Our goal should be to close programs for a lack of need," he said.

Catholic Charities has about 8,000 volunteers, more every year. It has 220 staff, compared to 63 five years ago. The new staff fill roles in the new, expanded facilities for the House of Charity, St. Margaret's and St. Anne's, which have tripled the capacity of Catholic Charities to serve the region.

The House of Charity grew from 38 to 109 beds. St. Margaret's grew from room for four families to room for 18. The old St. Anne's Child and Family Center served 18 children, and the new facility serves 200.

Catholic Charities has added more farm-worker housing in Othello and Pasco. The agency also has 700 housing units for seniors and families throughout Eastern Washington.

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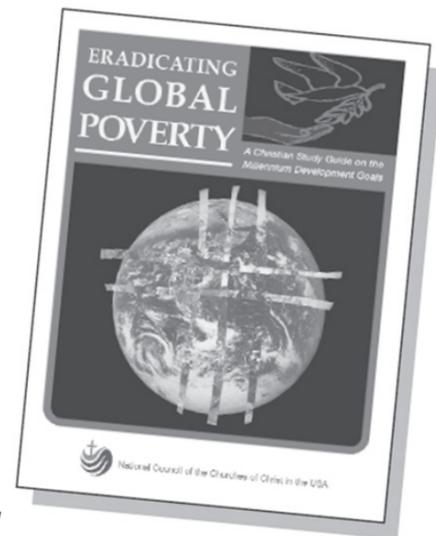
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