

**CELEBRATING  
OUR 30TH YEAR**

**STORIES INSIDE**

**Recreation coordinator  
changes children - p. 5**

**Network helps 800  
homeless students - p. 6**

**Youth mission teams  
interact with children - p. 8**

**Family Promise seeks to  
double program - p. 12**



**Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest  
online at [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org) • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links**

# *30 years of fair trade instills hope*

Thirty years ago, after cattle were chased off the runway, Denise Attwood and Ric Conner's plane touched down at the old Kathmandu airport.

"We had no idea the defining moment in our careers had taken place," said Denise, "but after 30 years, almost as many trips, a civil war, abdication of the monarchy and the transition to some sort of democracy, our lives and work are still bound to Nepal."

While that country has seen many changes, it remains one of the poorest countries in the world.

"Our initial foray into what we now call 'fair trade' began innocently with the purchase of two wool sweaters from a Tibetan refugee family. We are proud of our association with the Tibetan community and we wouldn't be where we are today without their honesty and hard work," Ric said.

It became apparent to Ric and Denise that many talented Tibetan artisans and craftspeople could use what they could provide, access to the U.S. market and a fair wage. Within a few years, they established relationships with 12 cottage industries and development aid projects, most of which—like the Association for Craft Producers



Denise Attwood made a Tibetan retreat space with a Buddha for their back yard.

(ACP)—they still work with.

Their venture has grown into a full-time business. Now Ganesh Himal Trading LLC helps support hundreds of craft producers in Nepal and sells to more than 250 retail outlets in the United States and Canada.

Principles of fair trade provided a template for their interactions in Nepal, even before there was a fair trade movement.

Those principles are: "Treat people with respect, make sure they get a fair return for their work, provide continuity over time, safe working conditions, design assistance and financial support," Denise said.

"Over the years, we have provided other assistance to our Nepali family. Education in Nepal can help alleviate poverty," she said. "We have seen people we work with save everything to put their children through school. Now the next generation uses their education to help others.

"Our trekking guide and good friend Ram, who has a first-grade education, has two boys, whom we are putting through school. Pradeep, the eldest, helps his father with business, leads groups of college students to remote parts

*Continued on page 7*

## Garden is part of a rural ministry that is uniting two congregations

**By Mary Stamp**

Eden 99185, a sustainable garden lay people are helping develop beside the Presbyterian campus of Wilbur Uniting Church, is designed to express the abundance of God's provision in a rural community that is declining as farms consolidate.

With fewer farm families and farm workers, young people are leaving, derelict buildings dot wheat fields and storefronts are empty. The Lutheran and Presbyterian churches have formed Wilbur Uniting Church with two campuses.

The Rev. Roger Hudson, a United Methodist pastor, was appointed two years ago to serve these congregations in the Central Washington community of 800.

The emerging church vision is to create a vibrant church and community, he said.

As in Texas and South Africa, where his commitment to rural ministry was planted and grew, Roger "seeks to find how to minister to the spiritual needs of people and speak to their rural social and economic experiences."

Eden 99185—the numbers are Wilbur's zip code—is a symbolic

and real tool based on Isaiah 51: "I will transform her dead ground into Eden, her moonscape into the garden of God, a place filled with exuberance and laughter, thankful voices and melodic songs."

The vision is that the garden will fill the empty, gravel-covered lot with a patio in one corner, where people can gather for coffee and conversation, a playground where children can be exuberant, an orchard and berries in a third corner, and a corner for squash and potatoes.

Members built raised planters in the shape of a Jerusalem cross with pathways to an Aslan fountain at the center. Aslan, the lion in C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, represents Jesus.

Roger made Jerusalem cross-shaped gardens at Community United Methodist in Leavenworth and Manito United Methodist in Spokane.

"The Jerusalem cross is a teaching tool," he said.

Each quadrant is a raised bed with a cross-shaped planter box of herbs "to add flavor to our pot-

*Continued on page 9*

## Smart Justice Symposium seeks to empower change

Smart Justice Spokane Community Symposium from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 15, at the Gonzaga Law School will bring together Smart Justice Spokane's 30 partner organizations, community members and professionals to share information and tools needed to reform the criminal justice system.

The criminal justice system is expensive, ineffective and unfair, said Liz Moore, director of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane and coordinator of the symposium.

"Communities of color, people living in poverty, and neighbors with mental illness, addiction and disabilities are hardest hit," she said. "Now, non-violent people and those needing treatment end up jailed, which divides families and stifles economic opportunity."

"We work together to find solutions. Instead of warehousing a high percentage of our community in jail, particularly people who pose no danger to our neighborhoods, we need to spend tax dollars on proven programs that are fiscally responsible, reduce crime and create a strong, healthy community," Liz said.

In its three years, she said, Smart Justice Spokane has developed recommendations for comprehensive criminal justice reform and influenced the Spokane Regional Criminal Justice Commission's blueprint for reform, supported establishing the Law and Justice Council and the Community Court—a proven Smart Justice program—and advocated for banning the box that asks city job applicants about criminal records.

"Now community understanding, engagement and accountability are key to winning smart justice in Spokane," Liz said.

*Continued on page 3*

## 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*

#### There is no excuse for violence against women

To say no to all kinds of excuses that justify violence against women and girls, the World Council of Churches (WCC) invites member churches and partners to join the World YWCA campaign "NoXcuses for Violence against Women."

"There is no excuse for violence against women. There is no excuse for ignoring it!" With this message the campaign marked the World YWCA Week without Violence observed in mid October, leading up to 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, an international campaign that starts on Nov. 25, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on Dec. 10, Human Rights Day.

The World YWCA has a website for the NoXcuses campaign, featuring testimonies of women survivors of violence, and testimonies of support from partners such as UN Women and United Nations Population Fund.

The NoXcuses website features a "Wall of Support" and live feeds from social media. The campaign calls for participation by urging people to share photos of themselves doing the X hand gesture, or posting pictures of excuses used when a violent act is committed, and by sharing them through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter using the #noXcuses hash tag.

Fulata Mbano-Moyo, the WCC's program executive for Women in Church and Society, reflected on the campaign. "Throughout history, both men and women have given excuses to justify sexual and gender based violence, accusing raped girls or women for their dressing or disobedience. Cultural or religious teachings have been used to justify violence," she said. "Neither religion nor the name of God should be used to condone gender injustice and violence."

"This year we are saying there is no excuse for violence against women—rape, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment at the work place, child marriage or psychological violence," said Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, general secretary of the World YWCA.

In collaboration with the WCC and the Lutheran World Federation, videos featuring religious leaders are being uploaded on YouTube. The videos feature diverse voices from the faith communities urging awareness of violence against women and girls around the world.

The NoXcuses campaign also makes use of the WCC initiative "Thursdays in Black," which, through the simple gesture of wearing black on Thursdays, promotes an end to violence against women.

#### WCC surveys theology schools on climate change

An online survey supported by the World Council of Churches (WCC) aims to promote the study of issues such as the environment, climate change and food security as part of training future pastors, priests and Christian leaders.

"Activities organized by the WCC around the world on climate change, environment and ecological justice have highlighted the need to assess what is being done, share good practices and provide theological insights on climate, environment and the wider creation," said Guillermo Kerber, WCC executive for climate justice.

The "Global Survey on Ecotheology, Climate Justice and Food Security in Theological Education and Christian Leadership Development" aims to map current training, teaching, research, resources and good practices.

The survey, which runs until the end of February 2015, is at <http://bit.ly/ecotheology>. It is aimed at teachers, lecturers and students in various forms of theological education institutions.

The survey will be presented during the Lima Climate Change Conference in December. In June 2015, at a WCC-sponsored conference at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, findings of the survey will help to prepare a handbook on green churches.

The results of the survey will contribute to an online collection of resources within the Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism (GlobeTheoLib), which is hosting the survey.

## Nurture The Fig Tree media with a 30th Anniversary Gift

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## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Planning begins for Legislative Conference

Meeting Oct. 4 in conjunction with the Faith Action Network Cluster Meeting at Salem Lutheran, the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference Planning Committee decided to hold the conference from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan 31, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 316 E. 24th Ave.

The theme will be "Raising Prophetic Voices: Faith Communities Advocate for Justice."

Workshops will include priori-

ties of the Faith Action Network of Washington:

- Wealth inequality through wage theft and minimum wage;
- The state budget related to food and hunger programs, farmers' market nutrition, restore TANF cuts, repeal tax exemptions and income tax;
- Dismantling the culture of violence related to human trafficking, smart justice, investing in public safety through higher

education in prisons, family unity, local law enforcement not honoring ICE requests and preventing gun violence;

- Environment related to tightening regulation on oil and coal trains and a carbon emissions tax;
- Housing and homelessness;
- Pax Christi speaker on ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and interfaith relations.

For information, call 216-6090 or email [malcolm@thefigtree.org](mailto:malcolm@thefigtree.org).

### UNA seeks ideas for new agenda

The United Nations Association (UNA) – Spokane is planning a Community Consultation from 2 to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at Gonzaga University's College Hall Room 101.

The UNA is working with other associations around the country, seeking information from communities on local and global issues to share ideas for the Post-2015 Development Agenda being discussed at the United Nations.

In Spokane, the consultation focus is on issues of climate change, poverty, youth and refugees.

Stacy Taninchev, coordinator of

### 600 raise \$170,000 for Transitions

More than 600 philanthropic Spokane citizens came together on Oct. 9, and raised \$170,000 to invest in Transitions' work to end poverty and homelessness for women and children. Event highlights included participant speakers, a video and keynote speech from a former participant, who is now a professional.

The theme of the event was growth and wholeness and focused on the growth that happens for women and children served at Transitions as they recover from traumatic experiences.

A former participant shared: "People in poverty who are hopeless need people to inspire them and help them understand that poverty can be temporary."

For information, call 509-328-6702, email [mtracey@help4women.org](mailto:mtracey@help4women.org) or visit [help4women.org](http://help4women.org).



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**BOOKS  
NOT  
WAR!**

**PJALS Benefit Book Sale  
& Coffeeshop  
Saturday, Nov 8**  
10 am - 3 pm at the Community Building Lobby - 35 W. Main  
BRING book donations Nov 1-7 to the Peace & Justice Action League of Spokane  
**838-7870 or pjals.org**

### America has a legal system. It needs a justice system.

A dramatic reading of the actual words of six wrongfully condemned persons who emerged from death row to reclaim their lives.

Written by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen  
Directed by Bryan Harnetiaux and Jack Delehanty  
Hosted by Gonzaga University Department of Theatre and Arts  
at the Magnuson Theatre at Gonzaga - 502 E. Boone - Spokane  
**Friday, Nov. 21 & Saturday, Nov. 22 at 7:30 p.m.**  
Tickets: \$10 general admission / \$5 students available at [pjals.org/exonerated](http://pjals.org/exonerated)  
Produced by PJALS Inland NW Death Penalty Abolition Group  
For more information, contact Shar Lichty [slichty@pjals.org](mailto:slichty@pjals.org) or 509-838-7870

### WONDER WOMEN! THE UNTOLD STORY OF AMERICAN SUPERHEROINES

**Documentary Screening &  
Panel Discussion  
Wednesday, Nov. 5  
7 to 9 p.m. - Jepson 017  
at Gonzaga University**

**A FILM BY KRISTY GUEVARA-FLANAGAN, BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES  
Northwest Alliance Responsible Media  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP  
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M.A. Communication & Leadership Studies  
<https://online.gonzaga.edu/communication-leadership>



### INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

**10 A.M. THURSDAY, Nov. 27**

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS  
INDIANA AND POST

### Celebrating Community

Speaker - The Rev. Andrea CastroLang  
Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ

A celebration in stories, song and chant from different religious traditions.

Bring canned food for Second Harvest  
A freewill offering will be shared by the sponsors:  
the Interfaith Council and Second Harvest

For information, call 294-5113

## Nonprofit sends backpacks, supplies to West Africa

For Kimberly Sonko, whose husband's family is from The Gambia and Sierra Leone, the Ebola crisis hits close to home. Christ's Hands on Africa, a Spokane Valley nonprofit she heads is collecting bar soap, hand sanitizer, bleach, towels, gloves and body wash disinfectant so school children can wash their hands without harsh bleach that makes their hands cracked and vulnerable to sores, she said. The group is collecting the items and funds for shipping from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 1, at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 3606 S. Schafer; Crabwalk Studios, 13807 E. 20th, and Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 7307 N. Nevada.

The nonprofit also recently collected more than 100 backpacks with school supplies for children in The Gambia who lost a parent in peacekeeping missions. They will raise funds to ship the backpacks at "Shop With A Purpose" from 5 to 9 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at Redeemer Lutheran Church. The event includes local vendors, a silent auction, entertainment and dinner. For information, call 413-6389 or email christshandsonafrica@gmail.com.

## International Marketplace has two new vendors

The Jubilee International Marketplace, which is Friday and Saturday, Nov. 7 and 8, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, features two new vendors and 30 long-time vendors. One new vendor is Benedicto, who will bring paintings from Guatemala benedictomayanartist.org/. The second is Vida Nueva with rugs from a cooperative in Mexico. Clothing will be a new feature of some returning vendors. For information, call 747-1058.

## Fall Folk Fest will be on Nov. 8 and 9

The 19th annual Spokane Folklore Society Fall Folk Festival will be held on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 8 and 9, with eight stages of traditional and ethnic dance, music, workshops, entertainment, crafts and jamming at the Spokane Community College Lair.

About 5,000 attend the festival, organized by the Spokane Folklore Society to support regional folk musicians and local folk artists in 100 performing groups representing Celtic, bluegrass, blues, African, Asia and Middle Eastern traditions. For information, call 624-5693 or visit spokanefolkfestival.org.

## Retreat center announces events

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC) has a Weekend Grief Retreat, "Life after Loss," Friday to Sunday, Nov. 14 to 16, led by Lori DeRoche, a registered nurse and grief recovery educator.

Father David Kuttner, a spiritual director at IHRC and pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Tekoa, and St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish, Oakesdale, will lead an Advent of Prayer, "Journey to Christmas," from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 3.

Sr. Julie Wokash, OSB, leads a Serenity 12-Step Retreat Friday to Sunday, Dec. 5 to 7. The programs are at the center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd. For information, call 448-1224 or visit ihrc.org.

## Drama presents innocent people freed from death row

"The Exonerated," a dramatic reading with words of six wrongfully condemned persons who emerged from death row to reclaim their lives, will be presented at 7:30 p.m., Friday, Nov. 21 and Saturday, Nov. 22, at Gonzaga University's Magnuson Theatre.

"With 146 exonerations nationally and an undetermined number of innocents still on death row or executed, we should explore sentencing options that keep us safe, cost less and do not kill innocent people caught in a broken criminal justice system," said Shar Lichy of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane's Inland NW Death Penalty Abolition Group. "We hope these performances will increase awareness." For information, call 838-7870.

## Event includes 16 workshops

*Continued from page 1*

"If we are successful, Spokane will lead the way in the state and country in comprehensive criminal justice reform."

Featured speakers at the symposium are Jennifer Kim, policy director at Ella Baker Center, on "The Power of Grassroots People to Drive Change," and Julian Adler, director of the Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn, NY, on "Smart Justice Programs in Action."

Ella Barker Center advances racial and economic justice to ensure dignity and opportunity for low-income people and people of color.

For more than 17 years, it has formed coalitions and broken the cycle of disinvestment and incarceration in communities of color. It has closed abusive youth prisons in California and reduced prison populations by 80 percent.

Red Hook Center, the nation's first multi-jurisdictional community court, diverted more than 500 people from jail last year. Julian is also an investigator on the Misdemeanor Assessment Project, a federally-funded, multi-site study of risks and needs of misdemeanor populations. He helped start Newark Community Solutions, the first community court in New Jersey.

Symposium workshops include: an overview of the smart justice vision, mental health and addiction treatment, reducing barriers to employment for ex-offenders, reforming legal financial obligations, racism and the criminal justice system, restorative justice, problem-solving courts and non-jail solutions.

There will also be workshops on action skills and tools, the grassroots campaign, knowing rights, moving the agenda through the Law and Justice Council, sharing stories, media strategies for messaging to the middle, communicating with legislators, and naming racism and shifting the story line.

For information, call 838-7870 or visit smartjusticespokane.org.

## SAVE THE DATES

### for The Fig Tree's

### 2015 Deepening Our Roots

**Benefit Breakfast - Wednesday, March 11**

**Benefit Lunch - Friday, March 13**

*at Cataldo Hall - Gonzaga University*

**Sustain The Fig Tree's Present & Future**  
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**Nov. 8 and 9**

Saturday - 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday - 11 noon to 5 p.m.

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**Music: 8 stages • 85 performances**

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## Fall Folk Festival

*The Fall Folk Festival is sponsored by the Spokane Folklore Society  
a non-profit organization serving Spokane since 1977.*

For information call (509) 747-2640 or visit [www.spokanefolklore.org](http://www.spokanefolklore.org)

## SAVE THE DATE

### 2015

### Eastern Washington Legislative Conference

**Saturday, Jan. 31**

**9 a.m.-2 p.m.**

**St Mark's Lutheran Church**

316 E. 24th Ave. - Spokane

*Presentations will be on justice issues  
before the Washington State Legislature*

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Spokane

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# Bazaars

Fair Trade, Bake, Craft and Book Sales, Auctions & Meals

**Cheney United Church of Christ Bazaar**  
Saturday, Nov 8  
9 am - 2 pm • 11 am - 1 pm lunch  
Crafts, Silent Auction, Raffle  
423 N. 6th - Cheney

**A Completely Bazaar Day in Cheney**  
Saturday, Nov. 8

Loads of craft and baked goods  
Come for breakfast, stay for lunch  
Raffle prizes, White Elephant gifts  
Visit all four churches!!!  
Cheney United Methodist Church  
4th & G St • 9 am - 3 pm  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
639 Elm St • 9 am - 3 pm  
Cheney United Church of Christ  
423 N 6th St • 9 am - 2 pm  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
635 C St • 9 am - 2 pm

**St. John's Cathedral**

**Home-Spun**

**HOLIDAY  
BAZAAR**

at 12th & Grand

**9:30 am - 3 pm**

**Saturday, Nov. 15**

Lunch Available  
11:30 am to 1 pm

Raffles  
Food & Crafts



## St. Luke's Snowflake Faire!

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# JUBILEE

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**Friday, November 7 Saturday, November 8**  
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(located at the Maple St. exit from I-90, downtown Spokane)

For more information, visit the Jubilee page at [www.spokanefpc.org](http://www.spokanefpc.org)

## Fall Bazaar

**Pilgrim Lutheran Church**

2733 W. Northwest Blvd.

**Saturday, Nov. 8**

9 am - 3 pm

**Lake City Assembly of God**  
Medical Lake  
**8th Annual Hollyfaire**  
**Sat. Nov. 8 - 9 am-4 pm**  
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Crafts • Food • Collectibles • Party Lines

## Emmanuel Presbyterian

1926 W. Chelan Ave.

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9 am - 2 pm - 326-1252

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## Holiday Bazaar

**Northwood Presbyterian Church**

6721 N. Monroe St.

**Sunday, Dec. 7**

noon to 2 pm

## Millwood church opens community center

The \$1.5 million, 7,000 square-foot Millwood Community Center opened on Wednesday, Oct. 22, at 8863 E. Euclid.

Millwood Community Presbyterian Church coordinated planning, fund raising and construction of the center, which will be run as a community center serving the needs of the Millwood/West Valley neighborhood.

"Our church enjoys many unique partnerships with civic groups, and this multi-purpose building will allow growth of this type of service," said the Rev. Craig Goodwin, pastor.

Partners include West Valley School District, which works with the church's youth outreach programs, City of Millwood, Hutton Settlement, Second Harvest Food Bank, Boy Scouts and local support groups. Conversations continue with the goal of drawing other partners to serve the neighborhood and community.

Because it will focus on children and adults, the Millwood Community Center received grants from the Harriet Cheney Cowles Foun-

dation and Inland Northwest Community Foundation.

Craig said additional grants are still needed to complete the oversized kitchen and equip the facility with audio-visual equipment. Most funding for the facility came from private contributions of Presbyterian church members in Millwood.

"As long as 60 years ago, members of the congregation wanted to construct a community center, and in recent years, people have come forward to secure the funding to make it a reality," Craig said.

The center will be used for sports, recreation, community events and receptions, training and education, children's and youth programs and more.

When the commercial kitchen is complete, it will be available for micro-enterprise and after-school programs.

For information, call 924-2350 or email craig@millwoodpc.org.

## Hour Children will use Opus Prize for housing

Sr. Teresa Fitzgerald, of the Sisters of St. Joseph, director of Hour Children in Queens, New York, said after being awarded the \$1 million Opus Prize on Oct. 16 in Spokane, that she will use the award to provide housing for the women offenders and their children, whom Hour Children serves.

The housing will be living space for welcoming women from prison as they reunite with their children. The homes facilitate community building and interaction among the women.

The two additional finalists for the Opus Prize, Gollapalli Israel, of the Janodayam Social Education Centre in Chennai, India, and the Rev. Joseph Maier, of the Mercy Centre Human Development Foundation in Bangkok, received \$100,000 each.

The awards were announced at a ceremony and community reception at the Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, hosted by Gonzaga in partnership with the Opus Prize Foundation.

Michael Herzog, chair of Gonzaga's Opus Prize Steering Committee, said "The Opus Prize Foundation intends for this philanthropic work to inspire college students, and it has provided an exceptional, broad educational experience for all those involved."

Don Neureuther, executive director of the Opus Prize Foundation, said Sister Tesa's work represents the best faith-based humanitarian work being done in the world today.

"Our penchant in the U.S. for incarcerating record numbers of men and women, particularly people of color, makes this one of the great social issues of our time," he said. "Sister Tesa and

her staff have developed one of the most successful program models in the country because they respond with passion to the needs of each woman and child, and their personal commitment is grounded in a deep faith that is lived in service to others."

Gonzaga President Thayne McCulloh was grateful for the opportunities the Opus Prize has given Gonzaga faculty, staff and students to learn from some of the world's best social entrepreneurs about how to create social change.

After the awards ceremony, Gonzaga planned two follow up events. One was a session on Oct. 28 on "What Is a Concerned Zag to Do? Lessons Learned and Potential Work around Faith That Does Justice." The second at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 4, at Jepson Center's Wolff Auditorium is a "Wrap-up: What's Next for Gonzaga and Opus? What's Next for YOU?"

For information, call (718) 433-4724 x305 or 313-6095, or email don.teamliftinc@gmail.com.



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Stevens, Pend Oreille, Northern Ferry Counties -  
Rural Resources Community Action      (877) 219-5542  
Whitman County - Rural Resources Community Action      (509) 332-0365



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Nov. 18 & 25, Dec. 2 & 9

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Sr. Patricia Novak, OSF

Suggested Donation: \$25  
includes book

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Day of prayer & reflection

Saturday, December 6, 2014

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Facilitator:  
Sr. Patricia Novak, OSF

Suggested Donation: \$25

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# Recreation coordinator plants seeds to change world one child at a time

Believing change starts with children and youth, Kevin Trim seeks to reach young people through the summer and after-school programs he coordinates at the East Central Community Center.

He began as recreation coordinator in June 2013.

**Kevin invests in children** by planting seeds of personal accountability so they will be able to be productive people in society. He encourages children to plan to go to college, work hard, set attainable goals and never give up.

"I seek to change the world one child at a time," he said.

Kevin has developed a tennis program in a neighborhood where it's not the norm. Starting with two children last May, the program now has about 40.

He also brings a commitment to instill reading, writing, math, manners, respect and empathy.

**"For me, teaching tennis** is about more than hitting a tennis ball. It's about what kind of person each child will be after spending time learning tennis from me," he said.

"As a soccer and tennis coach, I was hired to bring fresh thinking and create opportunities for kids. Like my parents, I believe in creating an environment where any child can progress, regardless of race or gender," he said.

**To motivate youth**, Kevin turned two windows in the gym into "Windows of Significance," placing photos and stories of six significant people, including Hillary Clinton, Serena Williams, Bill Gates and others, who by persevering, being honest and showing compassion for others have made significant differences in the world. Kevin tells children they can also become significant by persevering, trusting and caring.

It's his first venture in the non-profit realm.

"In nonprofit work, your heart has to be in it, because it's not about making money," said Kevin, who has usually held two jobs. "It's about building relationships to provide services that empower people to better themselves."

As an ambitious African-American man, Kevin is a role model.

**"I want to provide opportunities** for youth, regardless of color, to further their minds and hearts so they can choose their roads. There are more poor white children here than poor black children," he said. "My parents pushed the value of opportunity. That's why we chose to live in Spokane."

"You have nothing if you have no opportunity," he said.

Kevin grew up living in Germany and moving where his father was stationed in the army. Despite



Kevin Trim shares information on people of significance.

roots in New Orleans, his family settled in Spokane. His father was a master sergeant, who was commanding officer of the Army Reserve Center in Hillyard. He came in 1965, when Kevin was 12, and retired in Spokane.

His family attended Calvary Baptist. After graduating from Rogers High School, Kevin grew away from the church, but not the values.

**The various jobs** he has held include with several restaurants, Safeway, Kaiser and Rosauers.

He has coached since 1974, both volunteering and working in coaching tennis and soccer with SYSA, Rogers, the Spokane Parks and Recreation Department, Gonzaga Prep, Shadle Park and Central Valley high schools, 24-Hour Fitness, the Spokane Club and Spokane Racquet Club.

He has been a certified tennis teaching professional since 1998, privately coaching tennis players, often at \$50 an hour.

In 1985, he earned an associate's degree at Spokane Falls Community College. From 1988 to 1991, he attended Gonzaga University's education program. Working as foreman at Safeway for 10 years, he put himself through Eastern Washington University, earning a bachelor's in exercise science in 1998.

From 1998 to 2008, he started his own business as a tennis pro. From then until 2013, he was an assistant pro at the Spokane Club and began working at the Spokane Racquet Club 2008.

**The East Central Community** Center has operated since 2012 as a nonprofit under the East Central Community Organization (ECCO) Board, which took over from the city as fiscal managers of the center.

With the shift to ECCO in December 2012, city funds dropped from \$900,000 to \$325,000. Programs that had been free for 35 years, now have to be funded

The after-school program runs from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. It offers homework help, art, music, architecture and engineering, sports and dinner. A van picks up children at Franklin, Sheridan, Lincoln Heights and Stevens schools. A bus picks up students from Sacajawea.

"Children need to bring homework to be in the program," he said. "It's homework first and sports second. Our goal is to strengthen literacy, reinforce teachers and nourish a love of reading."

He continues to recruit children for the after-school program, because as more come, he can add programs in music, architecture and engineering, ballet and clay art.

For two summers, Kevin met five days a week with children in the Ben Burr Summer Camp and a Summer Tennis Camp.

**"I teach a philosophy** I learned at Gonzaga: to be fair, firm and friendly," he said. "Most kids want to do well. I let kids be kids, but I expect them to do well."

Kevin finds coaching harder now than five years ago with the saturation of social media.

"Media highlights the negative, the flash in the pan, not long-term values or working hard," he

said. "Media bombard kids, so I spend much time on discipline to encourage their passion to learn."

"As a coach, I look for success on a larger scale," Kevin said.

A tennis pro colleague once told him he would have to leave Spokane to become a successful tennis pro. His mother, however, had told him that character and relationships are more important than money.

"When a person makes something happen where it's not likely to happen, that's a confirmation," he said.

**This work has helped him** find his role in the community.

"This is where I should be, helping kids," he said. "If the program I offer for a seven-year-old builds confidence, develops character, challenges the mind, gives courage and teaches perseverance, then I'm in the right place."

"Whether parents pay \$300 or \$20 or less a month for me to give their child tennis lessons, I expect the child to do something," said Kevin. "2014 is about more than Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream speech in 1968. It's about what we are doing now to change lives of children and youth for generations to come."

For information, call 808-2126 or email katblack29@gmail.com.

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# Valley network connects people, groups to help 800 homeless students

From volunteering with Central Valley School District, MJ Bolt and community leaders began connecting people, congregations, education, city council, state representatives and nonprofits in 2012 as the Greater Valley Support Network (GVSN).

"We need to reach outside our 'silos' to address needs unique to Spokane Valley," she said. "We did not want to reinvent anything but to partner to share resources."

At 9:30 a.m., second Thursdays, about 40 people gather from the Spokane Valley area to the Idaho border and south to Rockford. Its email list includes 230 people.

**GVSN seeks to be a caring, responsive network, working to meet community needs. They seek to promote well-being and empower people in need by partnering to foster solutions.**

"Many who come deal directly with people in need," MJ said. "We have no funds as of now. Everyone is a volunteer."

**In 2009, the HEART in HAND Program was organized through the Central Valley PTSA Council to help those identified in the school district's HEART Program (Homeless Education and Resource Team). The federal McKinney Vento Act mandates identifying students who are homeless or in transitional housing, so schools can transport them to school from wherever they live, make sure they are fed through school meal programs and access other assistance related to school.**

HEART in HAND partners with the school's HEART program to assist with other needs, such as rent, clothing, gas, utilities and school expenses.

HEART in HAND was created when MJ's pastor at One, a Spokane Valley church, talked with her about doing something to help local children in need, in addition to Christmas shoe boxes they send to other countries. She then asked the school district about how many students were homeless or in transitional housing to learn how great the needs were.

"It was evident we needed a year-round, greater-than-church presence to help," she said.

**Spokane Valley does not have shelters or access for students to have showers outside of schools,**" said MJ, who is on the Central Valley School District Board. "Students may come to school smelling like smoke from a campfire. They might not have eaten breakfast, so schools have breakfast programs."

There are few places for families to go in Spokane Valley when they need a meal, so Food 4 Thought, a weekend student meal program through Spokane



**Diann Ross, MJ Bolt and David Ross are among the leaders of the Greater Valley Support Network.**

Valley Partners, now offers meals for days students are not in school.

"We decided there was need for people and agencies with resources to meet and talk," she said.

Steve Brown of Spokane Valley Partners and the Homeless Coalition and MJ started meeting with other leaders in November 2012. Dave and Diann Ross of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints (LDS) public affairs started meeting with the group in March. They joined MJ for The Fig Tree interview.

MJ, who grew up in Weiser, Idaho, and graduated from Mead High School, has lived in Spokane Valley for 12 years. Since her children entered school, she has been involved in the schools.

At Ponderosa Elementary School, she worked with teachers to help children in need by creating the Pat Thompson Memorial Fund to help families with gas, heat and other needs.

**Nearly 300 students were identified in Central Valley School District in 2009. At the end of the last school year, West Valley, Central Valley and East Valley schools identified more than 800 students who are homeless, in transitional housing or doubled up with family.**

Diann said, "We look around and the area looks pretty, but there is a subculture of people in need."

**MJ said homelessness is complex.** So last year GVSN identified five issues and set up teams.

- The housing team has found need for emergency and transitional housing, and for more low-income housing. They will help Family Promise recruit nine host congregations and more support congregations to expand in the Spokane Valley.

- The health team is working on organizing medical services and health education to focus on childhood obesity and nutrition.

- The mentoring team seeks volunteers to connect with schools to advocate for and tutor students.

- The community resources and networking team is developing a network for resources and people

to connect with those in need.

- The food team decided to promote Food 4 Thought and Adopt-A-Student to double the number of meals for students.

**Every GVSN meeting has time for teams to meet.** MJ said meetings start and end on time because participants are busy. Her goal is to build collaboration.

Because issues are complex, GVSN seeks to find "real needs so we offer more than bandaids," MJ said. "We need to be conscious of what we do so we make a difference and do not make a problem worse."

**Diann added that GVSN is concerned about the elderly and ill, as well as school children.**

Dave said that through GVSN, people are finding unity and friendships are developing.

He and Diann moved to Spokane Valley in 1995, establishing a financial services business that runs itself. That gives them time to volunteer in the community. Dave does outreach to connect with other churches.

GVSN collaborated with Food 4 Thought, helping organizations partner to reach 120 students for weekend meals. GVSN, Food 4 Thought and the LDS church held a food drive in September to provide more food to increase the number of students served.

**GVSN uses a free online tool** to list partners and their resources in jobs, housing, dental and other services. It also lists families' needs partners post when it seems there are no resources available.

Spokane Cares.org is expanding its website of resources.

MJ said it is easy to partner with Spokane Valley schools because some have initiatives to address issues outside school that affect learning. When a counselor or teacher learns a family cannot pay rent and has needs, they can use the website to help find resources.

**MJ said the strength** is in who is at the table: "We have an amazing caring community," she said.

Diann pointed out that there is much duplication in nonprofits because churches and nonprofits often work on their own and may

involved include Seventh-day Adventist, Latter-day Saints, Spokane Valley United Methodist, Redeemer Lutheran, Spokane Valley Baptist, Opportunity Christian Fellowship, One and Valley Assemblies of God churches.

"Churches and nonprofits have differences, but it's about how we come together on what we *can* agree to do," she said.

Diann said, "Despite differences, groups find similarities so we can work together."

**MJ seeks to create** an environment for discussions that empowers the committees.

To build unity into discussions, participants are asked to frame disagreements constructively, think before speaking, respect the contributions of others, ask for clarification and give others "equal air time."

For information, call 995-8107 or email [bmjbolt@comcast.net](mailto:bmjbolt@comcast.net).

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## Teen creates nonprofit to foster ‘conscious connections’ with Nepal, here

Cameron Conner and Austin Zimmerman have helped form a new nonprofit, Conscious Connections Foundation.

They created it to advance marginalized individuals by promoting access to education, health care, skills development and improved facilities. The goal is to create vibrant, economically viable communities to educate North Americans on their ability to have a positive impact on individuals' lives through direct donations.

The initial project is the Power of 5, which raises scholarship money to educate girls in Nepal.

Cameron grew up immersed in his parents' fair trade business. Denise Atwood and Ric Conner co-founded Ganesh Himal Trading as a wholesale business to market products from Nepal.

When he was five months old, Cameron sat on the lap of a Nepalese woman craft maker, one of many he at age 17 considers part of his family.

He has visited Nepal seven times, and he spent his freshman year of high school traveling with his parents in Western Europe, the former Yugoslavia, Asia, North Africa and South America.

“Travel has given me a thirst to contribute to the world, as much as the world has contributed to my life. The cultures are as different from each other, as they are from U.S. culture,” Cameron said. “I want to open people’s eyes as mine have been opened.”

From immersion in different cultures, he knows people fear what they do not understand. His travels dissipated his fears, by



**Austin Zimmerman and Cameron Conner collaborated to form the nonprofit Conscious Connections Foundation.**

exposing him to cultures, even if he does not fully understand them.

Cameron, a senior at West Valley High, where he is in wrestling and tennis, is applying for college, open to many potential majors.

The daughter of friends of Ric and Denise, Austin has known them most of her life. She first helped Ganesh Himal as Cameron's summer nanny, which she did through high school. In the summers during college, Austin helped with the business, learning about fair trade as Ganesh Himal Trading grew from a trailer to a warehouse to a website.

After graduating in 2007 from the University of Colorado with a bachelor's in sociology and pre-law, Austin lived three years in Europe—playing professional volleyball—and decided to return to Spokane.

At 25, she considered coaching volleyball, but was interested in

fair trade and worked part time with Ganesh Himal while Denise and family spent a year abroad.

“I love being in a business that influences the world on a micro and macro scale,” Austin said. “I have seen relationships ripple into generational change.”

She first traveled to Nepal with Ric and Denise in 2012 and 2013. Her first experience in a third-world country was overwhelming.

She took mental notes as she met producers and discussed products, beginning with the relationship building questions: “How are you? How is your family?”

“I’m the same age as many of the producers’ children. Some run their parents’ business or have started their own projects. While parents had one to three years of education, some of their children have gone to college, a big change in one generation,” Austin said.

On her trips with Denise to

Nepal, Austin met recipients of the Girl Child Education Fund, set up by the Association for Craft Producers with whom Ric and Denise have worked since 1985.

When Austin met Heema, 16, and her mother, she thought Heema would be happy about the scholarship that allowed her to go to school.

“I asked how she liked school and what she wanted to be when she grew up,” Austin said.

Heema was not sure she would finish, because the scholarships lasted for only three years and she had exhausted hers. Her mother cried.

“I thought, for \$60 a year, or \$5 a month, I could sponsor her, but Denise said that to be fair. We had to support all 180 children in the program, not just one or two.”

After returning, Denise watched the documentary “Half the Sky” and awoke at 3 a.m. with the idea that became the Power of 5: asking people to donate \$5 for a bookmark and use the money for scholarships. One bookmark equals one more month of school for a girl. Austin and Cameron picked up the idea.

Cameron, who last visited Nepal when he was 14, wants to have impact on Nepalese people because they are part of his life. On the 2010 trip, when the Baseri Health Clinic opened, he helped celebrate the grand opening by handing out 500 toothbrushes. Ric and Denise had worked for several years with their friend, Sita Gurung, to set up the clinic.

Returning from travel in poor countries, Cameron has found it hard to communicate his experi-

ences with his peers. Now he has the chance to channel his insights into the Conscious Connection Foundation.

Cameron, Denise and Austin realized the Power of 5 and Baseri Clinic needed to be under a nonprofit. This spring and summer, Cameron researched how to create a nonprofit and filed with the Internal Revenue Service at the end of July. The status was approved in September.

Austin, who helped design the logo and bookmarks, said The Power of 5 is an easy concept for people to rally behind. In 2012 and in 2013, 150 people who came to their fund raiser at Nyne Bar and Bistro raised \$5,000.

The foundation’s board recently started the Joy Atwood college scholarship fund, in honor of Denise’s late mother. Heema, who will graduate from high school this year, will be the first recipient.

In addition to support from Ganesh Himal friends, the 250 fair-trade retail stores it serves help promote the Power of 5 by displaying the bookmarks and collecting \$5 donations. Each bookmark has a photo of a girl and represents a month of school for one girl.

Conscious Connections Foundation is an umbrella nonprofit. The board hopes to include more projects.

The 2014 fund raiser and auction for the Power of 5 is from 2 to 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 22, at Nyne Bar and Bistro, 232 E. Sprague.

For information, call 499-3320 or email [cameron.conner@eagles.ewu.edu](mailto:cameron.conner@eagles.ewu.edu) or [austin@ganeshhimal-trading.com](mailto:austin@ganeshhimal-trading.com).

## Next generation in Nepal is educated and carries on fair trade

*Continued from page 1*  
of Nepal and dreams of building the first school in his village,” Ric said.

Denise’s friend, Laxmi, a village weaver who organized weavers, used money she made to send her daughter, Sudha, to high school, college and graduate school for social work.

Sudha came back to take over her mother’s work organizing village weavers and creating new products.

Kesang, the middle daughter of Tibetan producer partners and friends, has a family who values education. Her father, Namgyal, escaped Tibet as a child and went to school and college in India. Her mother, Pemala, has just a sixth grade education.

After finishing college in the United States, Kesang went back to Nepal. Following in her parents’ footsteps, she started a knitting group, called Padhma Creations, on the Nepal/India border. Padhma Creations works with women who are victims of abuse, abandonment, civil war or the threat of trafficking.

Over the years, Ganesh Himal has supported the “girl child education fund” of the Association for Craft Producers, a nonprofit that provides low-income women with skills training and employment.

“Two years ago, learning there wasn’t enough money in the fund to keep girls in school,” Denise said, “we promised to do what we could, and the Power of 5 was born to raise donations to fund the project each year so 180 children stay in school.”



**Ric Conner in the 1980s with a producer in Nepal.**

With the success of that campaign, and the establishment of the Baseri health clinic, Denise, their son Cameron and co-worker Austin Zimmerman formed the nonprofit, Conscious Connections Foundation.

It is an exciting time for people in Nepal as children grow up and

take their parents’ place in the struggle for dignity and fairness, Denise said.

“Fair trade is a growing idea, whose merits appeal to more consumers,” Ric said. “In addition, the value of girls and women in education and in the marketplace are being recognized.”

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Mary Frankhauser, a coordinator of the Jubilee fair-trade sale Friday and Saturday, Nov. 7 and 8, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, will show a video in honor of the 30th anniversary of Ganesh Himal.

“It sets the standard for a key component of fair trade, a long-term relationship between artisans and business owners,” said Mary.

Ric and Denise will also sponsor, with Kim Harmson of Kizuri, the annual Festival of Fair Trade

from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday through Sunday, Nov. 28 to 30 at 35 W. Main.

In honor of their 30 years of fair trade, Ric will present a slide show, “Looking Backward-Looking Forward: A Retrospective Slide Presentation Celebrating 30 Years of Fair Trade in Nepal,” at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 25, and 3 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 29, at Auntie’s Bookstore, 402 W. Main.

For information, call 464-7677, visit [festivaloffairtrade.com](http://festivaloffairtrade.com).

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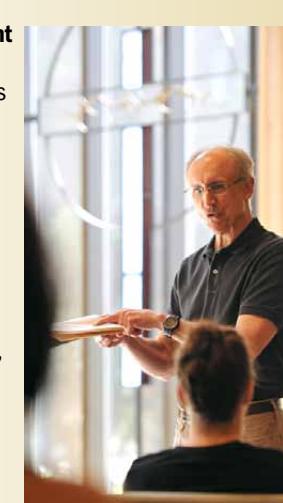
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## Episcopal Diocese develops youth mission experience with poor children

The Pacific Inland Northwest Exchange (PINE) is one of several ministries the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane is developing to encourage Episcopalians to step outside the walls of church buildings and serve neighbors.

It is a way to take the church to the people who do not come to church, said Michelle Klippert, youth minister at the Cathedral of St. John in Spokane.

**This summer PINE offered** summer mission experiences for middle- and high-school youth, while providing meals and activities for low-income children.

The diocese offered two four-week sessions from June 21 to Aug. 14. One was in Spokane at the West Central Episcopal Mission. St. John's Cathedral housed the mission teams. The other was through Between the Ridges in Yakima with housing at Campbell Farm in Wapato.

Tracey Waring, a lay leader at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and Michelle coordinated the Spokane experience.

**Michelle's participation in** and leadership of 13 mission trips strengthened her commitment to youth ministry. As part of that ministry, she facilitated a group of 45 on a mission trip to Mission Arlington in Texas.

In her ministry, Michelle has taken youth to the East Hastings drug area in Vancouver, B.C.; the Blackfoot and Fort Hall Indian Reservations; the Church of the Nativity in Lewiston; Campbell Farm in Wapato and Los Angeles, where she grew up and attended an Episcopal church.

In Los Angeles, teens worked with the Episcopal cathedral and diocese to help run a food bank, paint it and work with neighbors in LA's skid road.

She has also taken youth on mission-at-home experiences, helping agencies in Spokane.

Michelle met her husband while studying sociology and human development at Washington State University. After they married in 1986, they moved several times before settling in 1995 in Spokane. Since her husband's death last year, she has begun work to complete her studies.

**Tracey was baptized in** an Episcopal church and attended other churches as a child, coming back as a teen and leaving in her early 20s. In 1995, Michelle started going to the Cathedral of St. John in Spokane and started working in children and youth ministries there in 1999.

"I love accompanying children and youth on their journeys of faith," she said.

In her youth ministry at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Michelle uses a six-year curriculum, "Journey to Adulthood," which suggests service-learning trips.

"If youth go on a mission, they come back to the church as adults and donate time and money worth \$250,000," said Michelle, who



**Michelle Klippert and Tracey Waring put away some of the crafts from the summer youth exchange and children's program.**

completed a certificate in youth and theology through Princeton Seminary by going to conferences.

**"There is power in taking youth** out of their home town and showing them poverty somewhere else, where they can see it clearly," she said. "Once they recognize poverty, it's hard to ignore it at home."

Michelle said youth return committed to help people in need in their hometown. A mission trip sets the foundation for their engaging in ministry from helping as acolytes to volunteering at a food bank.

She has used that curriculum for 15 years for Sunday school and Wednesday night youth groups.

Through her studies at Eastern Washington University, Tracey started the Clothing Closet at Salem Lutheran, as part of the GOAL Project for people coming out of prison. It combined with Open Gate at 22 S. Howard in 2013.

**Tracey's early years were** in Stamford, Conn., but after her parents divorced, her mother moved to the Northwest to be near her family. Tracey lived in Vancouver, Wash., and worked for a medical supply firm in Seattle, but realized that to move ahead she needed a college degree. She decided to go to EWU in Cheney, because it gave credits for life experience. She moved to Spokane in 2005 and graduated in interdisciplinary studies in 2008. She earned a master's in social work in 2010 and then a master's in public administration and adult education.

"I had time for my passion to do youth ministry," said Tracey, who met Michelle at quarterly gatherings for diocesan youth ministers.

**They began talking about** mission exchange. Meanwhile, the Episcopal Church moved to a model of asset-based community development for ministries.

"Looking at the diocese's as-

sets, the idea of mission trips arose," Tracey said.

Between the Ridges, Campbell Farm, the Cathedral, St. Andrew's and West Central Episcopal Mission decided to create mission opportunities for youth.

In Spokane, youth started the day at a summer food program based in the West Central Episcopal Mission, formerly Holy Trinity Church. Teens served meals and worked with children. In the afternoon, they worked with Our Place, Project Hope and other agencies to do yard cleanup for West Central Neighbors.

In Yakima, youth worked with Campbell Farm's summer food program in the morning and at different agencies in the afternoon, such as the food bank, Noah's Ark and a Yakama Indian Nation yard clean-up program.

Late afternoons and early evenings, there was recreation. Each day closed with worship.

**Each youth kept a notebook** with responses to questions designed to stir theological reflection on what they were doing and why they did it: "Who are my neighbors? Where did I see the face of Christ today?" They also discussed their experiences.

The teens talked as they packed 1,000 pounds of tea into smaller bags at the food bank. They understood they were part of something bigger, Tracey said.

The program is for teens in youth groups. Adults accompany those under 18, as young as 10.

Part of the mission of PINE in Spokane was to run a Stone Soup Café for 10 weeks, serving breakfast and lunch, and offering a program using "Godly Play," building Bible stories in Lego, music, crafts and other activities.

Dixie, a youth participant, learned that many children don't have access to art and craft supplies at home.

"Putting a piece of paper in their hand and watching their creative side fly was the best part of working with PINE," she said.

Over the summer, the Stone Soup Café served 36 three-to-13-year-old children and about 40 teens from Project Hope a total of 4,761 meals. Youth in Project Hope run two urban farms, grow vegetables, mow lawns and sell what they grow in an open market.

Children caught "doing good" earned blessing bucks they used to buy ice cream or school supplies for their backpacks.

**PINE received a mission zone** initiative grant through the national Episcopal Center. Bishop James Waggoner, Jr., contributed \$5,000 and spent time with the children. The USDA funded food.

About \$10,000 is left from the grant, and the diocese now includes PINE in its budget. Each youth paid \$300 for the week.

With 10 a week, fees raised \$3,000.

Michelle noticed that during the first week or two, children took three helpings at the meals, not knowing when they would have food again. It decreased as the summer progressed.

**We fed children** in different ways. They were hungry for food and for interaction with caring adults," said Michelle, who noted that their attention span for reading and their physical agility grew.

"If children are hungry, they can't concentrate and learn," she said.

Along with the summer program, Michelle and Tracey educate people about what mission is as they share about the summer.

Most mission trip plans start in January, so they are beginning to recruit for next summer.

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# Jerusalem cross encourages devotion, compassion, justice and worship

*Continued from page 1*  
 lucks," he said. "The quadrants represent four disciplines—devotion, compassion, justice and worship—that flavor our walk with God."

**Devotion** refers to members doing daily devotions that keep them aware of the link between life and spirituality, Roger said.

Outside semi-circular beds of local crops, such as winter wheat and winter canola, there are meditation benches where people can pause to reflect and pray.

Gathering at the cross, the congregation has blessed seeds farmers are planting plant and has held a harvest festival.

"The garden integrates the story of Christ into the agricultural story of the many farmers in the church," said Roger.

**Members express compassion** through the food pantry at the Presbyterian campus, supported by Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic and Four Square churches.

When it is open one day a month, a community meal is served as an opportunity to build relationships.

Roger said it helps meet needs of some people on food assistance, who move to town for cheap housing. Because there is no work here, many of those people leave when they find jobs.

Wilbur Uniting is one of seven churches in an 18-month training in the Inland Northwest Presbytery to help congregations move into their neighborhoods. The denominations working together in Wilbur all encourage new modes of ecumenical, rural ministries.

"We need to listen to our neighbors, to find where the Holy Spirit is at work and set lay people free to risk in starting new ministries," he said.

"In a rural context, people have access to the whole community—the doctor, dentist, mayor, retailers and farmers. Experiencing the full picture, they can connect the dots to serve their communities," said Roger, who seeks to help people discern their calling.

**Justice in a small town** requires engaging in the community.

Roger joined the Chamber of Commerce, which is reviving Wild Goose Days, named for town founder "Wild Goose" Bill Condit. This summer, the event brought parades, biplanes, sheep dog demos and other events.

"We are building a narrative to market the community. We also have many artists—including a



**Roger Hudson helped Wilbur Uniting plant a Jerusalem cross shaped garden in an empty lot. Produce is available outside the church. The Aslan fountain is solar powered.**

local guitar maker, a flute maker, a wrought iron sculptor and a soap maker," he said.

"The church needs to be involved, beyond ecclesiastical issues, in the economic and social sides of town, because they relate to spiritual life," he said. "How can Wilbur Uniting work toward making God's kingdom real here—through businesses thriving and jobs that strengthen the community.

"How can the church and the community make choices that revitalize both?" Roger asked.

**Building a just community** means looking at potential assets:

- A two-year construction project to enlarge the powerhouse at Grand Coulee Dam may locate workers in Wilbur.

- With 3,300 cars passing through Wilbur each day, what might lead them to stop? How might the artists have a role in that?

"We need to tell our local story so we don't become another small dying town. There is much to celebrate in small-town America," he said.

- How can church people become active in mission? Along with serving in the community, members can engage in global mission opportunities through church channels.

**Worship has involved** discussion and changes for all.

At first, Roger led an early service at the Lutheran campus and a later service at the Presbyterian campus. Part of the agreement for him to come was that the congregations be open to move toward some kind of unity. So they call their church "Wilbur Uniting Church."

About 30 attended the Lutheran church and 45, the Presbyterian. By summer, 100 attended. Because summer attendance usually drops, the churches decided to worship together in the summer.

**Relationships formed** at the joint services," Roger said.

In September, the churches voted to continue with one service on alternate campuses, with Sunday school meeting at that campus.

"We celebrate our denominational and theological differences as we experiment with new worship styles to appeal to the younger generation who seek an authentic encounter with the Divine," he said.

Each month, there's a Lutheran liturgy and a Presbyterian liturgy, leaving two Sundays free to experiment. Worship is at alternate campuses.

The opening of worship features contemporary songs and a children's message. Then children go to Sunday school.

"We are feeling our way into a worship style all can accept. All give up something. We continue to engage in much discussion and prayer," he said.

**Roger's roots in South Africa** as the son of a minister in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa contribute to his vision of ministry. After high school, he joined his parents in Dallas, Texas, where his father went in 1975 to study for a doctor of ministries at Perkins School of Theology.

Roger earned a bachelor's in business in 1982 at the University of Texas, worked in an import-export business and studied computer programming. His master of divinity studies at Perkins included doing a one-year intern-

ship in South Africa.

After graduating in 1986, he "cut his teeth in small-town ministry" in Krum, Texas, where he turned around a dysfunctional church, built its attendance from 45 to 120, and was ordained.

Roger, who by then was married to Carla and had two boys, felt called to go back to South Africa to be part of ending apartheid.

**When they went in 1989,** Nelson Mandela was in prison. Roger ran a lay training institute at a rural mission station in Indaleni. As he tried to play a peacemaking role, he saw many die in violent clashes between African National Congress youth and Inkatha youth allied with South African police.

Not wanting to risk his family's lives, he went to serve Victoria Methodist Church in East London for five years. There, he became involved in rural development that became a full-time job in rural ministry.

"I integrated Christian spirituality and rural development, linking the liturgical year with agricultural seasons and linking food production with celebrating God's intent for spiritual and physical health," he said.

When funding ended, he honored his commitment to Carla to return to the U.S. During their 15 years in South Africa, Mandela was released, and the first democratic elections were held.

Carla, who earned a teaching certificate at Rhodes University, started teaching and witnessed the

integration of schools.

**When they went to Leavenworth,** she taught at a two-room schoolhouse at Plain and he served the Community UMC, helping it grow, improve the building and plant a garden.

Carla earned a master's and became principal in Wilbur four years ago. Roger began commuting to Manito UMC in Spokane several days a week. When he was in Wilbur, he met members of the Presbyterian and Lutheran churches, which were looking for a pastor. When they asked if he would be pastor for both churches,

**Roger began conversing** with Lutheran Bishop Martin Wells, Presbytery executive minister Sheryl Kinder Pyle, and United Methodist Inland District Superintendent Dale Cockrum.

Lutherans, who are in full communion with United Methodists, readily recognized his ministry. The Presbyterian Church USA decided to recognize his ministry, too. So the UMC appointed him as pastor.

For information, call 509-647-5402, or email wilburunitingpastor@gmail.com.

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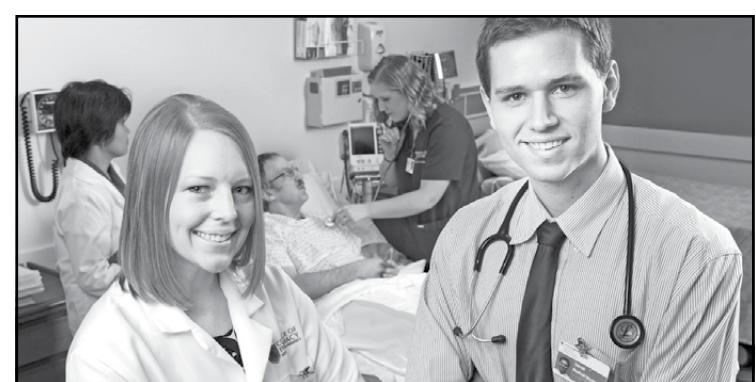
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**Editorial Reflections****Stemming the spread of Ebola calls for education and collaboration**

Contradicting those who call the Ebola outbreak in West Africa a "natural disaster," Harvard Medical School professor Paul Farmer has said, "This is the terrorism of poverty....The idea that some lives matter less is the root of what's wrong with the world."

He is co-founder of Partners in Health, which provides medical services in disaster areas and organizes basic health care systems in impoverished areas. He has written on health, human rights and the role of social inequality in infectious diseases.

Joanne Liu, international president of Doctors without Borders, calls the outbreak "an emergency within an emergency."

Both organizations establish clinics and hospitals in impoverished areas, creating the framework for routine care and routinely dealing with outbreaks of typhoid, malaria and cholera.

Now those clinics and hospitals in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia are overwhelmed with Ebola patients. Others who need the usual services are afraid to go or are turned away because of overcrowding.

Doctors without Borders has been warning the World Health Organization (WHO) that this outbreak was more serious than

previous ones. Like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), WHO has suffered severe budget cuts. Its epidemic response unit was severely cut. Its work in Africa is complicated because its Africa director does not report directly to the director-general and executives in the three countries are political appointees. Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia are among the world's poorest countries, with civil unrest, corruption, poor infrastructure and few social services.

Globally, response was slow. Time was lost looking for someone to blame. Seeing screaming headlines and lacking real information, people began worrying and believing we were all in danger.

Ebola is nasty and difficult to treat, but is not highly contagious. It is spread only by people who are symptomatic. People who are exposed but have not become sick are not communicable. It is not spread through the air, but by close contact through body fluids. Those most likely to develop it live or have travelled in West African countries or have cared for Ebola patients.

Ways to minimize risks of catching it are what we because flu season is approaching: cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands

frequently, don't shake hands much, don't hug when sniffly and stay home when sick.

Our response to Ebola might have been faster if we had a Surgeon General. A few in the U.S. Senate have been holding up a vote on the nominee for years.

"Stopping Ebola at its source is the single most effective way to protect Americans," said Tom Frieden, head of the CDC.

Senegal and Nigeria also have had cases. Both have been declared Ebola free by WHO. Their actions are instructive.

Senegal had one case: a student from Guinea exposed before flying to Senegal. He was treated and recovered.

As soon as the case was discovered, Senegal closed its 200 mile border with Guinea, and suspended air and sea contact with West Africa. It later allowed air transport of medical supplies and personnel.

Experts were consulted. The patient was isolated and treated. His contacts were traced. They were monitored for the 21-day incubation period. They were given money, food and counseling. Confidentiality kept them from being social outcasts. Extensive public education was done.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country,

did not close its borders. It carefully screens travelers. Authorities mobilized within days of the arrival of the first case, a Liberian official who collapsed at Lagos' airport.

Experts from WHO and CDC were brought in. Partisan politics was set aside. The government and opposition worked together. Managers were put in charge. Patients were isolated and treated. Contacts were traced and monitored. Those who developed symptoms were isolated. More than 900 contacts of 20 Ebola patients were traced and monitored twice a day. There were 18,500 face-to-face interviews.

An extensive, multi-language, multi-media public awareness program educated the public, encouraged the sick to seek treatment and dispelled rumors. Teams went to 26,000 households near those exposed.

The U.S. educational response depends on the CDC and state, regional and local health departments. The Spokane Regional Health District has an Ebola webpage at [www.srhd.org](http://www.srhd.org) with links to the CDC and Department of Health resources. The CDC Ebola webpage is [cdc.gov/vhf/ebola](http://cdc.gov/vhf/ebola).

Faiths can best help by educating people.

**Nancy Minard - Contributing Editor**

**Statements of Solidarity****Sounding Board****Letter to the Editor**

*The following are excerpts from comments shared at Temple Beth Shalom, which opened their Shabbat celebration of the Sukkot harvest festival for the community to gather in solidarity after defacement of the temple by a swastika painted on their building on Oct. 3, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.*

**For Sukkot, we are instructed** to build and eat in a sukkah, a small outdoor booth open to the elements. This practice is in celebration of the beauty and bounty of nature, and reminiscent of the temporary dwellings Israelites created when they wandered in the desert. The booths remind us of our vulnerability to nature and to God.

The sukkot booth is not just open to the elements, but also encourages us to go outside the walls of cozy homes we create for ourselves for comfort and shelter. Our homes can separate us from the outside world, keeping us in the silos we live in. Sukkot invites us outside to see the world, welcome guests and connect with others.

Recently the comfort of our home was shattered by an act of Anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism comes in many forms—as subtle stereotypes about Jews and money, as Jews controlling media or government, as anti-Israel sentiment, and as overt acts of hatred and intimidation, such as the swastika on our building and violence towards the Jewish community, such as the shooting this spring in the Overland Park Jewish Community Center.

Pretending it doesn't exist or minimizing its impact does no good. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, teaches: "Anti-semitism is never ultimately about Jews. It is about a profound human failure to accept that we are diverse and must create space for diversity if we are to preserve our humanity."

Speaking against Anti-Semitism and all forms of prejudice, racial and ethnic hatred, and teaching our children to do so are powerful tools to preserve our humanity.

Those who came to the service spoke out against hate, intimidation and fear. We opened the walls of our sukkah and welcomed them. We experienced connection, support and strength to weather Anti-Semitism. As we have blessed the Source of life and one another, so may we be blessed.

**Rabbi Tamar Malino**  
**Temple Beth Shalom**

**At an Atlanta conference**, I met the Rev. C.T. Vivian, who received the 2013 Presidential Medal of Freedom for his

work as a civil rights leader. As an aide to Martin Luther King Jr., he helped develop the nonviolent movement. He advocated for religious leaders to be active in the civil rights movement—emphasizing that hatred is a sickness. You don't get angry with sick people. You heal them. Healing is spiritual.

When I said I was from Spokane, he smiled and said, "You have been doing good work in your neck of the woods, but still have a ways to go. We all do. It takes radical love to defeat radical evil."

After hearing what happened on Yom Kippur, I thought, "One step forward, three steps back." We will never stop hatred if we aren't willing to love. Love cannot exist if we allow ourselves to feel dejected and insular. It takes courage and vulnerability to love. In that vulnerability, we enter into partnership with one another. I can only be fully human if those around me can as well.

With a rich history of pluralism here, we need to lean on one another and include ALL of the community to make Spokane a better place to live.

The Buddha went to the market place to be with others after enlightenment. Christ gave the Sermon on the Mount after his Transfiguration. After receiving the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, Moses came down to be with his people. The prophet Mohammed (PBUH), after receiving revelation, shared the teachings with his community. The lesson is: Once you find yourself, share with others and make your community a better place.

When I help build Dr. King's "beloved community," my actions affect others. I draw motivation and meaning from others, because I can only be fully myself with others. Radical love will defeat radical evil.

**Skyler Oberst**  
**Spokane Human Rights Commission**  
**New president of Spokane Interfaith Council**

**I express not only my heartfelt** support and solidarity, but also my deep sadness. No children are born bigots. They are taught to be so. That is why we Christians need to clearly denounce such hateful actions and sentiments and commit ourselves to educate our children to reject anti-Semitism.

We need to recognize the sad history in which Christians were responsible for so much suffering and persecution of Jews over the centuries....After meditation at Jerusalem's Western Wall in 2000, St. Pope John Paul II placed in the wall a written prayer to God expressing deep sadness for all the wrongs done to Jews by Christians. It ended, "Asking your forgiveness, we

wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant."

With similar sentiments, I say to Rabbi Malino that Catholics in Eastern Washington stand with her community and unhesitatingly and completely denounce in the strongest terms possible this deplorable action and the bigotry it represents.

...I ask that the Jewish people be remembered in general intercessions, asking God to purify the hearts of those who harbor bigotry towards them, and to remove the veil of hatred and ignorance from the hearts of those who were responsible for this abhorrence.

**The Most Rev. Blase Cupich,**  
**Bishop of Spokane – read by Father**  
**Patrick Hartin, ecumenical officer**

**I echo these concerns** about the desecration against Temple Beth Shalom's house of worship and the hate crime against that community.

Speaking on behalf of Manito Presbyterian Church, when we learned of this despicable act, our hearts broke. We immediately wanted to stand in solidarity with TBS in this difficult time.

I also bring an official message from the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest, which represents 46 congregations in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, comprising thousands of Christians. We also stand with you and condemn this hateful threat.

As an ordained theologian in the Presbyterian Church (USA), I affirm the commitment our national church made in 1987 in "A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews," "never again to participate in, to contribute to, or (insofar as we are able) to allow the persecution or denigration of Jews."

As your neighbors, Manito Presbyterian Church is saddened and sobered by the fact that it took until 1987 to make such a clear, strong declaration in support of our Jewish brothers and sisters. So in our commitment to stand with you, we do not stand as 'pure people,' but as a people who have had hateful hearts in the past and had the ability to fear the stranger.

We come with a renewed pledge to commit to one another in love, respect, dialogue, honor and service. One of the best ways we can stand together against such hateful, terrible, awful acts is to work together ceaselessly for the causes of justice and peace. I look forward to ways we can do that together in the future.

**The Rev. Scott Starbuck - Pastor of**  
**Manito Presbyterian Church**

**When a spiritual community has** its building desecrated, whether it is Jewish, Islamic, Christian or Sikh, I feel an inner compulsion to do what I can do to let them know there are other spiritual communities in the area that support their right to peacefully co-exist.

Our country was based on the idea of religious freedom. When the early colonies tried to create a single religious state, people and leaders rose up and said "no." The moral value of each and every religion's right to having its own forum prevailed. I understand that, at the time, this did not include Native American Shamanism, but with time, that has changed and Shamanism is now recognized and honored as a religion within our country.

When we look at the current global scenario, human strife and violence embraces almost half the world, based on the lack of respect one religion has for another.

We can say this has nothing to do with us, until a synagogue is desecrated in our own town.

Some teachers among us believe theirs is the only way and disregard hundreds, if not thousands, of years of spiritual history. Global strife begins within homes where religious "racism" is alive and well.

The Spokane Interfaith Council educates and brings together members of different faith paths who break bread together. By getting to know each other, we work toward mutual respect.

**The Rev. Joe Niemic**  
**Center for Spiritual Living**  
**Recent past president of the Spokane**  
**Interfaith Council**

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

I appreciate the editorial by Nancy Minard in the October 2014 issue of The Fig Tree, "Negative attitudes toward labor: lax enforcement leaves workers unprotected." The details and facts were especially interesting. They helped me to understand the circumstances in which wages due were not paid.

The references to source materials and authorities helped me to better understand the situation. The reference to Deut. 24:14-15 provided a context to understand an underlying requirement for the duties of wage payment and enforcement.

The editorial on the referenced report, "Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers," both give light to preventable wage theft. Thank you for the editorial.

**Allan Bonney - Spokane**

## Legal Voice advises seniors

To meet the needs of seniors, caregivers and families, retired attorney Anne Counts from Legal Voice in Seattle is offering two "legal wellness" workshops.

One is from 12:30 to 2 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 13, at Corbin Senior Center, 827 W. Cleveland, and the other from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Friday, Nov. 14 at the Hilliard Senior Center, 4001 N. Cook.

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### Join with the United Nations Assn - Spokane for a Community Consultation

**Saturday, Dec. 6**

2 to 4:30 p.m.  
Gonzaga University - College Hall Room 101

We seek input from the community on local and global issues—climate change, poverty, refugees—to forward ideas for the Post-2015 Development Agenda being discussed at the United Nations.

**Everyone Welcome!**

For information, contact the UNA-Spokane, call Stacy Taninchev at 313-3610

## Calendar of Events

- Nov 2 • African Children's Choir, Washington Life Center, 1201 N. Government Way, 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 5 p.m., 327-4422
- Nov 4 • "God Between the Waters: Centuries of Evangelization on the Shores of Lake Atitlán, Guatemala," history professor Joseph Lenti and history graduate student Mike Edwards, 207 Monroe, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, 2 p.m.
- Nov 5 • "Wrap-up: What's Next for Gonzaga and Opus? What's Next for You?" Opus Prize follow-up, Wolff Auditorium in Jepson at Gonzaga University, 7 p.m., 313-6095
- Nov 6 • "Contemporary Issues in Feminist Research: Community Empowerment and Gender Equality through Fair Trade," Jenny Hyde of Alaffia, a sustainable skin care company, 207 Monroe Hall, EWU Cheney, noon
- Nov 6 • "Wonder Women! The Untold Story of American Superheroines," film and discussion, Jepson 017, Gonzaga University, 7 p.m., [nwarm.org](http://nwarm.org)
- Nov 6 • African Children's Choir, St. Aloysius Catholic, 330 E. Boone, 7 p.m., 313-5896
- Nov 6 • The Fig Tree Benefit Planning and Board meetings, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon benefit and 1 p.m., board, 535-4112
- Nov 6 • "Conversations about Dementia: Tips to help with Family Conversations," Alzheimer's Association, Salvation Army Kroc Center, 1765 W. Golf Course Rd., Coeur d'Alene, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 800-272-3900 or <https://www.krocsales.org/?site-cda>
- Nov 6 • "Color of Fear" screening, Jundt Auditorium Room 110, Gonzaga University, 7 p.m., 313-5836
- Nov 7-8 • Jubilee International Marketplace, First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, jubilee page at [spokanefpc.org](http://spokanefpc.org)
- Nov 8-9 • Fall Folk Fest, The Lair at Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene, 747-2640, [spokanefolklore.org](http://spokanefolklore.org)
- Nov 10 • "How to Be with and Medically Serve Veterans with PTSD," Walgreen's Auditorium, WSU Spokane, noon
- Nov 12 • "Corazon Journey to Guatemala," Deborah DuPey, founder and owner of Corazon Scarves, 207 Monroe Hall, EWU-Cheney, noon
- Nov 13 • African Children's Choir, Washington New Life Church, 10920 E. Sprague, 7 p.m., 926-0362
- Nov 14 • "Little Black Dress," YWCA, Nectar Tasting Room 120 S. Stevens, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 326-1190, [ywcasokane.org](http://ywcasokane.org)
- Nov 15 • International Day of Tolerance, human chain at Crosby Student Center at Gonzaga University, noon, 313-5836
- Nov 15 • Smart Justice Spokane Community Symposium, Gonzaga Law School, 11:15 a.m., 838-7870, [smartjustice.spokane.org](http://smartjustice.spokane.org)
- Nov 17 • Candlelight Vigil on poverty awareness, kick-off annual Catholic Charities Christmas Collection, House of Charity, 32 W. Pacific, 5:30 p.m., 358-4254 or [jlee@ccspokane.org](mailto:jlee@ccspokane.org)
- Nov 18, 25 • NAACP Meeting, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 7 p.m., [spkncpbr@gmail.com](mailto:spkncpbr@gmail.com)
- Nov 18 • PFLAG Spokane, Bethany Presbyterian, 2607 S. Ray, 7 p.m., [spokanepflag.org](http://spokanepflag.org)
- Nov 18, 25 • Thomas Merton's Bridges to Contemplative Living, The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, Sr. Patricia Novak, 483-6495, [sjfconline.org](http://sjfconline.org)
- Nov 19 • "Contemporary Issues in Feminist Research: Spiritual Distress and Resilience throughout the Life Course in Healing from Interpersonal Trauma," Bharon Bowland, associate professor of social work, 207 Monroe Hall, EWU-Cheney, noon
- Nov 21 • International Festival 2014, Hixson Union Building, Whitworth University 5:15 p.m. dinner, 6:30 p.m. entertainment
- Nov 22 • "The Exonerated," Gonzaga University's Magnuson Theatre, 7:30 p.m. [slichty@pjals.org](mailto:slichty@pjals.org), 838-7870
- Nov 22 • Power of 5 Fundraiser, Nyne Bar and Bistro, 232 E. Sprague, 2 to 5 p.m., 499-3320
- Nov 27 • Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, "Celebrating Community," Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Indiana and Post, 10 a.m., 294-5113
- Nov 28, 29, 30 • Festival of Fair Trade, Ganesh Himal Trading and other vendors, 35 W. Main, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 464-7677, [festivaloffairtrade.com](http://festivaloffairtrade.com)
- Dec 3 • The Fig Tree mailing and delivery, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m.
- Dec 4 • The Fig Tree Board, Emmanuel Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon benefit and 1 p.m. board, 525-4112
- Dec 6 • United Nations Association-Spokane, Community Consultation, College Hall Room 101, Gonzaga University, 2 to 4:30 p.m., 313-3610

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## Family Promise's move into new building gives space for expanding

Last October during Family Promise of Spokane's 2013 Cardboard Box City fund raiser, Steve Allen looked across the street in the early morning from Highland Park United Methodist Church and saw the building at 904 E. Hartson. A year later almost to the day, the building became the new home for Family Promise's offices and day center.

During October, about 60 volunteers donated 600 hours to help paint and remodel the building, and move a few blocks from 608 S. Richard Allen Ct.

In Spokane, Family Promise began 17 years ago as Interfaith Hospitality Network of Spokane. It shelters 15 families a year, with a rotation of 12 congregations opening their buildings for the families to stay overnight for a week at a time. Twenty support congregations assist with meals, conversation and overnight presence.

The program continues to serve 40 former homeless families, helping them meet needs through the Department of Health and Social Services and other programs.

For Steve, who began as director in August 2013, the program represents hope.

"When families have hope, they flourish," he said.

During the spring, Family Promise won \$25,000 from the Windemere Foundation Charity Challenge, by drawing the most votes on Facebook. Thrifty Rental Car donated a van.

In June, Steve saw the 1984 building was still for sale. He negotiated for a \$30,000 down payment and monthly payments that equal their rent. With a capital campaign, he hopes to pay the mortgage off in 15 years.

"With a small budget, our niche is investing deeply in a few families. About 85 percent of the 100 families we helped in the last five years are still in homes," he said.

The new location is in walking distance of resources families use, including Work Source and Goodwill Industries.

Steve said "hope" may be as simple as bus passes, soap, shampoo, toiletries or diapers now available in a closet off the entry.

"Sometimes people may not be able to go for a job interview because they have no shampoo and no place to shower," Steve said. "The new building has two showers family members can use to get ready for work or interviews."

In the entry, Brooke Price, a friend of Family Promise, painted a tree on the wall. Its roots form the word, "hope," where the names of donors and volunteers are written.

"Donors and volunteers may not be seen, but like a tree, the families will not grow without them," he said.

The names for former homeless families will be written on leaves as they leave the program. Although they leave the program, they are still connected.

"Often we become the only family these families have," Steve said. "They come back for advice, resources, toiletries or bus passes."

Because the building was formerly a group home for developmentally disabled adults, it has showers, a laundry and five bedrooms, which are used as day rooms, play rooms and homework rooms.



**Steve Allen is the new director of Family Promise of Spokane.**

The building also has a computer area, dining room, a kitchen and a basement apartment.

"It's a home away from home. Rather than all families spending time in one room at the day center, there are separate rooms," he said.

The new building gives Family Promise space to expand from three to 12 host congregations in Spokane Valley, and add three more in Spokane, so there can be two "rotations."

A rotation refers to each congregation hosting families for a week every three months.

In January and February, Steve met with the Greater Valley Support Network, which meets second Thursdays to share resources.

"There is no family shelter in the valley, but 800 students are homeless," Steve learned.

"We help three to four families at a time with case management, living with the families and identifying barriers that keep them homeless—illness or parenting. We invest in the families," he said.

About 600 volunteers help, sup-

ported by staff members Kermit Nelson, weekend coordinator; Renee Norris, case manager, and Susan Heitstuman, office manager. Emma Gibbon, a senior at Whitworth, is an intern this year.

Families arrive at churches for dinner at 5:30 p.m., stay overnight, eat breakfast and go back to the day center.

Volunteers from support churches cook meals, serve them and eat with the families. Two stay overnight. One drives the van. There are 20 support churches.

The churches include eight United Methodist, nine Catholic, nine Presbyterian, and Baptist, Latter-day Saints, United Church of Christ and Episcopal churches.

"For some families, it's the first time they have entered a church," said Steve. "They connect with volunteers. Some attend the churches."

One member of a former homeless family is now Covenant United Methodist church's Family Promise coordinator.

"We see families connect and

**Family Promise of Spokane's**  
open house at 904 E. Hartson  
is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.,  
Saturday, Nov. 15. As a "new  
home warming gift," people  
may bring: gas cards, bus  
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give back. It breaks down walls. Church members love unconditionally as they shelter, feed and care for people," he said.

Steve was a youth pastor 10 years in Bellevue and Bellingham. He earned a bachelor's in creative writing in 1994 at the University of Washington. Later he attended classes at Western Seminary in Portland and an online school in Indiana to earn a master of divinity in 2008. From 2007 to 2012, he went through Action International of Seattle with his wife and five daughters to do leadership training at a Bible school for pastors in Lusaka, Zambia.

While on furlough, he spoke at a church in Coeur d'Alene. As he left, he saw people arriving with suitcases to stay as part of Family Promise of North Idaho.

"I thought it was a brilliant idea for families to find shelter in a church and volunteers to help them," he said.

Before leaving Africa, he decided to settle in Spokane and start a church. His first year, Steve was intern at Soma Church that met in Central United Methodist Church. The pastor there knew Family Promise needed a director and thought he'd be a good fit.

"I learned in Africa the importance of investing deeply in a few people for a long time," Steve said. "I love seeing the church care for the poor and homeless.

"I went to Africa with ideas that I would change the world. Soon I realized that I couldn't fix poverty. We need to invest in poor and suffering people for years," he said. "Services for the poor are helpful, but lasting change comes from loving people and working on the issues that create poverty.

"Poverty, hunger and struggle are similar in Africa and here, but vary in degree," he said. "In Africa, poverty is in your face. All the time, people ask for food. I was fasting one day. Seeing children in the street begging, I went to the store and gave them a bag of food."

"Tomorrow?" they asked.

"They meant they would be hungry again tomorrow and where would I be tomorrow?" he said. "Responding to poverty is more than providing food for one day."

"Here, there is suffering, but it's hidden. It's not about just fixing families by giving them a home, but giving them a chance to gain skills to sustain their housing. People here may sleep in a car, a motel or with a friend—always living in crisis."

Steve said homeless families he meets defy stereotypes. About 30 percent are homeless because of domestic abuse. Many grew up in families with parents addicted to drugs or alcohol. Some families do not know how to budget or pay bills. Some fall behind because of a health crisis or losing a job.

"While some people on the street may not want to move into housing, many want opportunities," he said. "We invest in families who want to move out of homelessness."

Steve sees families enter the program and in two to three weeks, "their souls begin to rest as they know they have a place and food."

Family Promise and the Salvation Army are the only two agencies that shelter families. Family Promise shelters people for as long as it takes—20, 45 or 115 days, Steve said..

In Spokane, he finds a strong sense of community and partnership among nonprofits, and finds many caring, compassionate volunteers who sacrifice their time.

Steve came to Spokane to plant a church that would care for the poor and homeless, and love their neighbors, not be concerned about itself as a church. Last spring he helped begin CTK Spokane, affiliated with Christ the King Community Church. About 20 people meet for worship at the West Central Community Center.

For information, call 747-5487 or email [director@familypromiseofspokane.org](mailto:director@familypromiseofspokane.org).

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