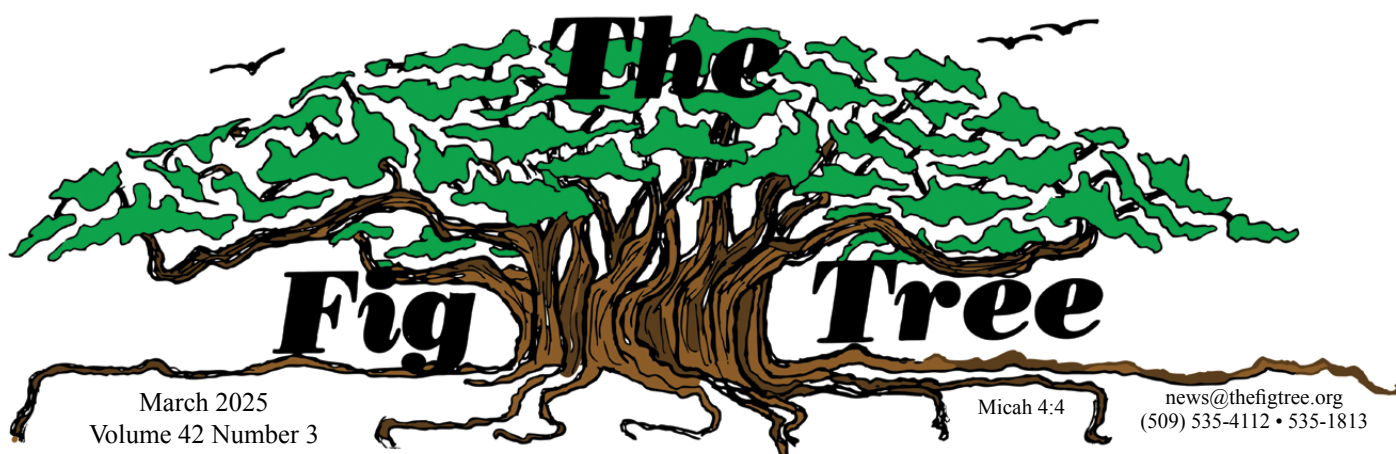


Stories inside

- Marketing director brings good to seniors - p. 5
- Youth reflect on being prophetic - p. 7
- Rally, march draw 1,000 voicing concerns - p. 10
- Church, agency partner to aid homeless - p. 12

CALENDAR ON PAGE 11
FEATURES 70+ EVENTS



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

Groups rally to tackle threats to refugees

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

Faith and nonprofit groups who do refugee resettlement in the region and rely on federal funds have grappled with the dire effects of recent executive orders related to refugees and immigrants.

Those orders include suspending entry of undocumented migrants for any reason at the southern border; canceling use of an app for asylum seekers to schedule appointments; using the U.S. Northern Command to seal borders and repealing the 14th Amendment that grants birthright citizenship.

Some recent Spokesman Review articles, which tell stories of some who have been detained, contradict the claim that the priority would be to deport undocumented migrants who pose threats to security.

The threats of these policies and their actual implementation have had impact on activities of some area agencies that work with immigrants and refugees.

According to Christi Armstrong, executive director of World Relief, which resettles refugees in Spokane, the first of the executive orders froze funding for any refugee resettlement. This closed off entry for refugees already au-



Some of the signs carried by people at February 17 Residents' Day Rally and March conveyed varied sentiments about welcoming refugees and immigrants in the community and nation. Excerpts from speakers are on page 10.

thorized to come to the U.S.

"Between Oct. 1, 2024, and Sept. 30, 2025, we were supposed to receive 750 refugees who had already been vigorously vetted and accepted by the federal government. As of now we have received a little over 300 people," she said.

After the inauguration, World Relief received notice from the State Department about refugees who were scheduled to arrive. Since then, their flights were cancelled, and the refugees were abandoned—unable to go to their destination or return.

Similar cancellations happened to migrants at the southern border who had waited months and succeeded in using the CBP One app to obtain appointments with the Customs and Border Patrol to have their cases heard. These appointments were cancelled at noon on inauguration day, Christi said.

With the funding freeze on refugee resettlement, those already here are also affected.

"The suspended federal funding for grants and loans and freezing our resettlement contract means that we can't pay the money promised to refugees already here for things like rent, food, clothing

Continued on page 4

Panel of Indigenous leaders discuss their work for future generations

At the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference (EWLC) in January, leaders from the Colville Confederated, Spokane and Coeur d'Alene tribes not only told of issues facing reservations and waterways but also reported on work being done on behalf of future generations.

Panelists were Margo Hill-Ferguson, Caj Matheson, DR Michel and Twa-le Abrahamson.

Margo, a Spokane tribal citizen and Coeur d'Alene descendent, grew up in Wellpinit on the Spo-

kane Reservation, where she later served 10 years as an attorney for the tribe. She now lives in North Spokane, teaches urban and regional planning at Eastern Washington University and is director of American Indian studies.

Caj, as director of natural resources for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and second vice president for Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians, addresses toxins in Coeur d'Alene Lake and salmon passage in Hangman Creek.

DR, a citizen of the Colville

Confederated Tribe, has brought his tribe together with the Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, Kootenai and Kalispel tribes for common action in his work for 17 years as executive director of Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT).

Twa-le, a citizen of the Spokane Tribe and descendant of the Coeur d'Alene and Navajo Nations, serves on the Washington State Office of Equity Community Advisory Board and the Indigenous Environmental Network Board of Directors. She has been a social, health and environmental justice organizer for more than 20 years.

Margo discussed issues for urban and reservation tribal people—such as environmental protection, drug addiction and gangs, health equity and community health, sovereignty and jurisdictional issues for law enforcement, retaining police officers and transportation.

"We continue to fight addiction," she said, telling of a niece dying from a drug overdose before she was to start a job.

The challenge in fighting drug
Continued on page 6

Fig Tree Benefits explore need to pass on wisdom

"Sharing Wisdom: Connecting the Generations," the theme for The Fig Tree's 2025 Benefit events emerges from articles in recent issues.

The Benefit Lunch will have more than 40 tables. There is open seating and seating at hosted tables. Guests will hear speakers and celebrate The Fig Tree's 41 years of publishing.

The buffet is open from 11 a.m. to noon and the program is from noon to 1 p.m., Saturday, March 8, at the Hemmingson Center Ballroom at Gonzaga University. The program is also available on gonzaga.edu/livestream.

Those wishing to participate in the Breakfast-Time Benefit can sign up to attend on Zoom from 7:30 to 9 a.m., Wednesday, March 12, to visit and view the speakers and video.

"**We filled the space at Cataldo Hall** last year with guests at 30 tables and already have hosts for 40 tables. We welcome others who wish to host or just sign up to attend," said editor Mary Stamp. "We appreciate the enthusiasm to support our solutions journalism style of stories that share the faith and values of interviewees."

Four speakers will briefly discuss how The Fig Tree shares wisdom among the generations.

They are Cameron Conner, Fig Tree columnist commenting on people power; Pingala Dhital, who works at Thrive International in Spokane to help refugee women support themselves; Kristine Hoover, who as chair of Gonzaga's master's in leadership studies helped do a documentary on Holocaust survivor Carla Peperzak, and Kassahun Kebede, Eastern Washington University (EWU) Africana studies professor who started a library in Ethiopia.

Hamilton Studio is preparing the mission video that will feature Fig Tree volunteers at work, plus comments from other

Continued on page 2

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Religion News Briefs Around the World

World Council of Churches News, PO Box 2100
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WCC head calls proposal 'ethnic cleansing'

World Council of Churches general secretary Jerry Pillay described President Trump's proposal—for the U.S. take over the Gaza Strip, Palestinians to leave and the area be a new Riviera—as “tantamount to proposing full-scale ethnic cleansing and neo-colonization of the homeland of 2 million Palestinians in Gaza.”

He said it violates every principle of international humanitarian and human rights law, flouts decades of efforts by the international community, including the U.S., for a just, sustainable peace for the region. If implemented, he said it would constitute multiple international crimes and diminish the standing of the U.S. as a responsible member of the international community.

Jerusalem church heads issue humanitarian plea

In a Feb. 14 statement, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem issued a humanitarian plea for Gaza. “As custodians of the Christian faith and conscience in this sacred land, we raise our voices in sorrow and steadfast resolve in the face of the ongoing suffering in Gaza. The devastation that has unfolded before the eyes of the world is a profound moral and humanitarian tragedy,” they said, noting that innocent lives have been lost, communities are in ruin and the most vulnerable endure unimaginable hardship.

“Amid this anguish, we speak against the grave threat of mass displacement, an injustice that strikes at the heart of human dignity,” they continued. “The people of Gaza, families who have lived for generations in the land of their ancestors, must not be forced into exile, stripped of whatever is left of their homes, heritage and right to remain in the land that forms the essence of their identity.”

“As Christians, we cannot be indifferent to such suffering,” they said, calling also for the release of all captives and appealing to all people of faith, governments and the international community to act swiftly and decisively to halt this catastrophe.

They also call for an immediate humanitarian access to those in desperate need: “May the God of mercy strengthen the afflicted, soften the hearts of those in power and bring a peace that upholds justice, preserves human dignity and safeguards the presence of all people in the land to which they belong.”

WCC calls for reform in global tax system

The World Council of Churches (WCC), global leaders, economists and faiths met in Vatican City for the High-Level Dialogue on Tax Justice and Solidarit. There, the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences called for urgent reforms in the global tax system. Affirming that tax justice can promote global equity and sustainability, they discussed the moral imperative of fair taxation to address economic inequality, climate change and debt burdens on the world's most vulnerable nations.

Athena Peralta, director of the WCC Commission on Climate Justice and Sustainable Development, said, “The scandalous levels of inequality we see today destabilize efforts to fight runaway climate change. The wealthiest 10 percent is responsible for nearly half of global carbon emissions. Billionaire lifestyles—private jets, yachts—produce thousands of times the emissions of average persons. Their carbon footprint is a million times higher when we include emissions from their investments.”

Speakers condemned the “structures of sin”—tax havens and financial loopholes—that enable corporations and the ultra-wealthy to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. Presidents Lula da Silva of Brazil and Pedro Sánchez of Spain called for a new financial architecture with a UN Tax Convention to curb corporate tax avoidance and ensure fair taxation where profits are generated.

“With 2025 designated as a Jubilee Year by Pope Francis, the WCC said debt cancellation and tax justice must go hand in hand to address growing inequalities,” said Athena. “The link between tax justice, gender justice and climate justice reflects the biblical call for justice and stewardship. We urge faith communities to raise their prophetic voice to advocate for systemic reforms.”

WCC has the Zacchaeus Tax Campaign and broader advocacy efforts for tax justice. For information, visit oikoumene.org/resources/documents/calls-of-the-zacchaeus-tax-campaign.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Benefit reservations are due by March 3

Continued from page 1
people who were interviewed.

- Liv Larson Andrews, director for evangelical mission with the Northwest Intermountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- Linda Braune of the Dorothy Day Labor Forum in Spokane,
- Gary Jewell, moderator of

The Fig Tree Board,

- Bruce Dentler of Dementia Friendly Spokane,

- Ali Norris, executive director of Mission Community Outreach,
- April Eberhardt, editor of The Black Lens,

- Nikita Habimana, Shadle Park High School student,
- Nick CastroLang of the Spo-

kane Regional Health District,

- Tevita Fakasiieiki, EWU student.

They describe the impact of The Fig Tree on their lives, their work and the community.

To RSVP by March 3, call 535-4112, email event@thefigtree.org or visit secure.givelively.org/donate/the-fig-tree/2025-benefit.

Latter-Day Saints donate food locally

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has donated 4,320 gallons of milk to Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest, and nearly 40,000 pounds of shelf-stable food to The Salvation Army Hope Market for families facing food insecurity.

Freezing temperatures are forcing families to choose between heating their homes and feeding their families, so the donation comes at a crucial time, said Jennifer Hicks, communication director of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

“Need continues to rise, but the overall amount of food that we obtain has stayed about the same, so this extra donation is greatly appreciated,” said Eric Williams of Second Harvest. “Ninety percent of food that we distribute is donated, including produce raised on the church's farms in our region.”

The Salvation Army Spokane has seen increased demand, serving 220 families in January, up from 175 in November. They distribute about 15,000 pounds of food daily, making the need

for donations critical, she said.

Both donations arrived from the church's Welfare Square in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Welfare Square includes a 178-foot grain silo, a milk and cheese processing plant, a cannery, a bakery and other facilities that serve the poor and needy in the world, regardless of religious affiliation. Church members globally and in the Spokane area, donate to the food program.

For information, call 270-4950, or visit 2-harvest.org and spokane.salvationarmy.org.

PJALS Action Conference is March 15

Peace and Justice Action League (PJALS) is holding its Action Conference, “Empowered Together: Collective Action for a Just Future,” for activists in the Inland Northwest to sharpen skills, deepen analysis and strengthen relationships.

It will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, March 15, at Spokane Public Library Central Branch and on Zoom.

This year's theme invites activists, community organizers and advocates to unite for a trans-

formative experience focused on peace, justice and collective liberation.

The conference is a platform for deepening understanding, enhancing skills and strengthening alliances to build a more just and equitable world, said Liz Moore, executive director of PJALS.

The keynote speaker is Aaron Scott, author of “Bring Back Your People: 10 Ways Regular Folks Can Put a Dent in White Christian Nationalism.” He is from the Washington Poor Peo-

ple's Campaign and co-founder of Chaplains on the Harbor.

A second-generation preacher and third-generation organizer, he is a trans father and a Christian who grew up in poverty. He received his master's degree in biblical studies from Union Theological Seminary in 2009 and is a contributing author to the book “We Cry Justice: Reading the Bible with the Poor People's Campaign.”

For information on workshops and speakers, visit pjals.org.

Country Homes sells land for housing

On Feb. 18, Country Homes Christian Church at 8415 N. Wall signed papers to sell 2.5 acres of its excess land to the Spokane Housing Authority, said Max Webb, a member who has been working for several years to help the church decide what to do with the land.

The Spokane Housing Authority plans to build 100 units of senior housing. In 2006 or 2007, it will begin building a four-story

structure, which will be called Chalice Place, he said, noting that a chalice is the symbol for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination.

Max looks forward to the church having new neighbors to connect with.

“For 25 years the church has been looking for ways to use the land. It's clear that the biggest need in the community is affordable housing,” said Jason Jones, pastor. “Along with the sale adding funds to our operating budget, we hope we will be good neighbors and offer resources for

100 new neighbors we can love and serve.”

The church, which was founded in the 1960s, has about 40 at worship on a Sunday, but the building is like a community center, busy during the week with the Country Homes English Language School, a preschool, an exercise group and other activities.

Since it started in 1978, the language school has had 400 volunteer teachers help 600 students from 58 countries.

For information, call 466-3414 or email office@chchristian.org.

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Mardi Bras events gather items for women

Mardi Bras gathers undergarments and hygiene supplies for more than 700 women, non-binary and transgender people experiencing homelessness through Transitions' Women's Hearth, the Volunteers of America and other community partners.

In 2024, Women's Hearth distributed more than 24,000 items to nearly 5,500 women. These supplies and a shower provide dignity, safety and confidence to help improve lives. Businesses, congregations and nonprofits host parties, gather items, offer donation bins or visit the Drive-Thru event, 4 to 6 p.m., March 14 at Women's Hearth, 906 W. 2nd Ave.

For information, visit help4women.org/spokane-mardi-bras.

Groups host author Sarah Augustine

Westminster United Church of Christ and the Spokane Alliance are hosting "Decolonization in Action: Creating a Posture of Repair" with author Sarah Augustine speaking at 7 p.m., Saturday, March 8, at Westminster, 411 S. Washington.

Sarah, executive director of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, will share how decolonization is a climate justice issue and actions people can take. She has represented the interests of indigenous partners with the United Nations, the World Council of Churches, the World Health Organization and other international bodies.

For information, email mary.l.rupert@gmail.com.

Nonprofit consultant offers training

Nonprofit consultant Nancy Bacon is offering three nonprofit training sessions on boards, budgeting and disaster planning. The first was Tuesday, Feb. 11. The next are noon to 1:30 p.m., Tuesdays, March 11 and April 15, on Zoom.

Nancy has served in nonprofit roles of executive director, founding program director, board member and volunteer since 1996. She created a portfolio of nonprofit classes and resources for nonprofits. In 2022, she launched the Nonprofit Learning Center so nonprofit leaders anywhere in the country have access to classes. For information, visit nonprofitlearning.center.

Alliance for Media Arts presents two films

The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture will present two new documentaries at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., Saturday, March 1, at the Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main. At 2 p.m., there will be music, art, resource tables and crafts vendors in the lobby. From 5 to 6:30, attendees will connect around tables with food.

- "Borderland | The Line Within" by Pamela Yates and Paco de Onis explores immigrant life and the border-industrial complex. Conversation with the filmmakers on Zoom follows.

- "Acts of Reparation," the 7 p.m. film, shows a conversation between two friends, Selina, who is Black, and Macky, who is white, film-making partners travelling to the South to reckon with their roots as enslaved and enslaver.

For information, visit thealliance.media.

Hamblen holds 'Everyday Peacemaking' workshop

Jer Swigart of Global Immersion will lead a session called "Everyday Peacemaking Workshop" to help people bridge the theological and ideological divides from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, March 29, at Hamblen Park Presbyterian Church, 4102 S. Crestline St. He is author of "Mending the Divides: Creative Love in a Conflicted World."

For information, visit hamblenpres.org.

Way to Justice begins annual collection

Partnering with the Spokane Eastside Reunion Association (SERA), The Way to Justice has offered a back-to-school giveaway at the SERA Community Celebration in August for three years.

They are gearing up in March to appeal to businesses, congregations, nonprofits and other organizations to give funds and items for underserved children from kindergarten through 12th grade.

"Thanks to the generosity of our community, we distributed over 5,600 pairs of quality footwear, plus backpacks and school supplies," said Alethea Dumas, community engagement coordinator with The Way to Justice.

"The goal is to meet immediate needs of students and to empower children and families with the confidence, comfort and resources to improve their stability and self-esteem," she added.

The Way to Justice asks groups to support families with funds to purchase these resources to invest "in a brighter future for our youth, our community and humanity," said Alethea, describing the donations as a way to "do justice" and make a difference.

Alethea said her role includes other community outreach, such as hosting Justice Nights, which are free legal clinics in Spokane, Tacoma, Seattle, Yakima and Moses Lake.

In addition, they offer youth empowerment events as a safe

space to teach youth about their rights and what justice means.

Last year Cam Zorroza, chief executive officer, took 35 youths from Rogers and Ferris High Schools to Washington, D.C., to tour the capitol and visit Howard University.

Alethea, who has worked with The Way to Justice a year, previously worked with Better Health Together. She is a 2012 graduate of Lewis and Clark High School and 2016 graduate of Washington State University in women's studies, critical culture, gender studies, human development, sociology and popular culture. For information, call 822-7514 or email alethea@thewaytojustice.org.

KYRS presents Latino/Hispanic programs

KYRS Thin Air Community Radio presents "El Puente: La Voz Latina," a new program to inform, entertain and empower the area Latino/Hispanic community.

Hosted by Rafael Zamora, El Puente is a cultural, informational bridge, addressing needs of a growing yet often underserved population.

"Spokane's Latino community faces a gap in accessible resources, health services and opportunities," said Rafael. "Many newcomers, refugees or migrants don't speak English fluently. El Puente bridges that gap, offering information and fostering cultural belonging."

Airing at 2 p.m., Mondays, on KYRS 88.1 & 92.3 FM live, streaming at kyrs.org and in the archives, El Puente highlights the diversity of Latin American

cultures through music, traditions and storytelling.

The program also offers resources on health, education, legal aid, and employment, plus conversations with Latin leaders, activists and artists.

It promotes cross-cultural understanding and inclusivity. Its bilingual format makes it accessible to a wide audience and Spanish-language learning.

"It's a lifeline for many and a platform to amplify underrepresented voices," Rafael said.

KYRS Thin Air Community Radio has served Eastern Wash-

ington since 2003, providing a platform for diverse voices and fostering community engagement.

For information, visit kyrs.org.

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2025 Benefit Events

Benefit Lunch - Saturday, March 8

Buffet Opens at 11 a.m. • Program is 12 to 1 p.m.
Hemmingson Ballroom at Gonzaga University

Breakfast-Time - Wednesday, March 12

Gather at 7:30 a.m. to chat • Program: 8 to 9 a.m. - Zoom
There is no charge to attend. Guests are asked to donate

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Facing impact from executive orders, area refugee groups act

Continued from page 1
and furnishings for their first 90 days here as they were promised. We can't pay our staff either," Christi explained.

Thrive International works with refugees on a different model and relies less on federal funding. Spokane Thrive, housed in a former downtown motel, provides temporary refugee housing, education and programs under one roof.

It seeks to move refugees from surviving to thriving through programs on affordable housing and to empower women and youth. Thrive has started a second similar operation in Tacoma, where the major Washington State detention center for immigrants is located.

Policies and threats of the current administration galvanized its executive director Mark Finney to gather a group of faith-based folks who serve the immigrant community.

On Feb. 6, about 30 people met at the Thrive headquarters for a Unified Faith Forum to develop a coordinated response to support those vulnerable to the administration's actions.

Bishop Gretchen Rehberg, the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, began the session by challenging those present and laying out the call to people of faith in this time.

"The first thing that people of faith need to do in this time is to be people of faith—not people of despair, not people of anger or division or hatred. There are enough people who are that already. Be people of faith! We need to observe, discern what God is calling us to do and be here and now, then to plan, to organize and to work. We have to do the work and bear good fruit," she said.

After table discussions, the group made suggestions for responses to the concerns expressed by questions raised by those assembled. Suggestions included building a directory of resources to guide faith communities to make effective responses in different situations.

For Lutheran Community Services Northwest's Inland Northwest District in Spokane, the main program affected is the one that places unaccompanied refugee minor youth in foster homes in Spokane and its satellite office in Tri-Cities, said Shelly Hahn, district director. Once these young people are placed, the program supports them as they navigate a path to independent living. The services include case management, health and mental health care.

The unaccompanied young people have come from places as diverse as Eritrea and Guatemala and include some who crossed the southern border.

"We rely on federal funding, that filters through the Washington State Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance and has not been cut as of now," Shelly said. "What stopped is travel. So far 26 youth traveling from overseas to various resettlement programs across the U.S. were stopped by a 90-day travel pause. In the last Trump administration, travel never resumed after the 90-day pause. We don't know what to expect this time."

Many organizations that work with immigrants and refugees in the region have been holding Know Your Rights trainings since the election. At a workshop for the League of Women Voters, Sam Smith, director of immigrant legal aid at Manzanita House, handed out small red cards with a list of rights to know in case one is detained. He listed those rights.

- 1) Be silent. Ask to speak to a lawyer and stop talking. Do NOT provide false information.
- 2) Don't open your door unless the agent has a judicial warrant from a court, not from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- 3) Don't sign anything. You may be admitting to or giving up something by signing.
- 4) You are free from unreasonable search, no matter where you are.
- 5) Document everything, including the names and badge numbers of agents. You can use your phone to record what is happening unless it is on government property.
- 6) Have a plan in place for your family in case a family member is detained.

Asked in the session if he saw evidence that parents were keeping children home from school for fear of ICE coming to the school, Sam said he had not.

However, in areas with larger immigrant populations like the Yakima Valley, such a fear caused a temporary drop in attendance in spite of the state's Keep Washington Working Act that limits law enforcement and protects immigrants.

More than 100 concerned Yakima Valley citizens met in January before the inauguration to share what they were hearing and develop strategies of response. They set strategies in 10 areas—advocacy and direct action, know your rights, communications, Yakama Nation, rapid response, government relations, support for schools, accompaniment, actions

for faith communities and family safety planning.

By mid-February, the presence of ICE vehicles had been documented in towns from Yakima to the lower Valley. Sister Mary Ellen Robinson, SNJM, a long-time resident of Wapato, praised the work of Yakima Immigrant Response Network (YIRN). "When there is a reported sighting, they check it out and let us know whether it is true or only a rumor. They help keep us informed."

Sister Mary Ellen also talked about the use of fear as part of ICE tactics, things like parking a well-marked immigration enforcement vehicle near stores that immigrants are known to frequent to intimidate potential shoppers," she said.

Mike Gonzalez, who owns Fiesta Foods in Sunnyside, affirmed that trend. It prompted him to call a meeting with city council members to inform them.

Recently, the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) executive director Catalina Velasquez decried the administration's new policies and told what the organization is doing to counteract the situation.

She reported that WAISN has expanded its hours of operation for its Deportation Defense Hotline (844-724-3737). It is now available from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, in more than 300 languages.

In addition, a WAISN press release said its Fair Fight Bond Fund pays for "the release of individuals from the violence and injustice of immigration detention," adding, "we are also equipping our communities with Know-Your-Rights information and collaborating with partners to host family preparedness clinics."

Those in refugee and immigrant work agree that contrary

to the call to make America great again, the policies and deportations carried out by the American military are causing negative repercussions internationally.

For example, a flight returned 88 Brazilians arriving in handcuffs and with shackles on their feet. They had not been given water or allowed to use a restroom. The Brazilian government called it "flagrant disregard" for migrants' rights and formed a working group with U.S. representatives "to guarantee the humane reception" of deportees.

While there is general agreement that the U.S. immigration system is broken, there is no agreement on how to fix it.

Pope Francis wrote to American Catholic bishops on Feb. 10, critiquing the immigration policy and suggesting humane principles on which to base a good system.

"The rightly formed conscience cannot fail to make a critical judgment and express its disagreement with any measure that tacitly or explicitly identifies the illegal status of some migrants with criminality," he

wrote. "Deporting people who in many cases left their land for reasons of extreme poverty, insecurity, exploitation, persecution or serious deterioration of the environment damages the dignity of men, women and families, and places them in a state of vulnerability and defenselessness."

The Pope continued, saying that an authentic rule of law is verified in the dignified treatment all people deserve—especially the poorest and most marginalized. The common good is promoted when society and government welcome, protect, promote and integrate the most fragile, unprotected and vulnerable.

He added that developing a policy that regulates orderly and legal migration cannot "come about through the privilege of some and sacrifice of others. What is built on the basis of force and not on the truth of the equal dignity of every human being, begins badly and will end badly."

For information, visit worldrelief.org/spokane, thriveint.org, lcsnw.org, manzanitahousespokane.org or waisn.org.



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IHRC Chef Matt McDaniels
5:30 - 8:30 pm
Individuals: \$46/Couples: \$90
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April 14 - 19
Holy Week Silent Retreats: "Participation in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ"
Bishop Michael Warfel
Women: Apr. 14, 4:30 pm - Apr. 16, 1 pm
Men: Apr. 17, 4:30 pm - Apr. 19, 1 pm
\$267 (includes lodging & up to 6 meals)

May 10
A Wholehearted Women's Day of Prayer: "Refreshing the Oil in Our Lamps"
Sr. Mary Eucharista, SMMC
Alisa Kosticka
9 am - 3 pm (8:30 am check-in)
Individuals: \$46 (\$56 with room)
(includes lunch)

June 13 - 15
Weekend Recovery Retreat: A Weekend of Rest, Refreshment and Community for People in 12-Step Recovery
Fr. Tom W., SJ
June 13, 6 pm - June 15, 1 pm
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June 26
Day of Work and Prayer: A Volunteer Opportunity
Fr. David Anderson, SJ
9 am - 4 pm
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July 26 - August 3
8-Day Silent Ignatian Retreat
Fr. Tom Lamanna, SJ
July 26, 4:30 pm - Aug. 3, 1 pm
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Marketing director finds ways to 'bring good' into lives of seniors

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

Coming from years of working in health care, Sheila Fritts has found fulfillment since April 2019 in her role in marketing at Fairwood Retirement Village and Assisted Living.

Overseeing sales, she has input with owners and management about marketing decisions, regional and national senior housing issues and trends, plus senior housing construction in North Spokane.

Since she was 19, Sheila—whose family goes back four generations in Spokane—worked in providing direct health care, especially with seniors, vulnerable populations and medically compromised people.

"I had envisioned working in a medical field since I was 11," said Sheila, who attended Bethany Mission College in Bloomington, Minn., and traveled abroad to serve at-risk populations.

Her transition to marketing came from compassion fatigue when she was exposed to trauma, such as patients making end-of-life decisions. She knew it was time for a change, but wanted to be useful in the senior industry, to provide another layer of care to this population.

She looked for a way to use her skills working with seniors and her knowledge of how the healthcare industry works, how insurance companies operate, how seniors think and how age is a distinct culture.

Before she started in marketing, she studied aging and adult psychology at Washington State University. There she learned that seniors are less likely to respond to fear-based marketing than marketing that features desirable aspects of a senior community. She also learned about differences between older and younger seniors.

"In my role at Fairwood, I mostly engage with people over 80 with whom I have different conversations than with 60-year-olds," Sheila pointed out. "They have a unique culture with unique values. Older seniors are not used to looking at their phone or computer. They want me to be fully present and



Sheila Fritts moved from health care to marketing senior living. Photo courtesy of Sheila Fritts

to offer a cup of coffee.

"I've learned that it is more important to seek to understand than to be understood—to know and understand someone before providing solutions," she said. "It is crucial to be respectful of their wisdom, who they are and what they need."

Sheila has found that whether seniors are wealthy or in need, they may be vulnerable. Well-off seniors may be more targeted for fraud. They need protection and support from trustworthy sources when making financial decisions. "I am honored and humbled to be in a role of trust," she said. Sheila described some commonalities and differences.

Seniors of all ages face loneliness, particularly when family members don't visit or provide the support they need.

Some seniors grew up as rugged individualists. Others faced the breakdown in society in the 1960s, thumbed their noses at authority, experienced divorce and other breakdowns in their extended and nuclear families. Older seniors today face concerns that would have been unusual in previous generations.

For some, complexities in family relationships and pressures might appear as a lack of concern. Some seniors may feel isolated because their family members may not reach out to them in ways they expect—such as with letters or face-to-face meetings, rather than texting or Zoom.

To meet their needs and create caregiver solutions, Sheila said the role of Fairwood is to help seniors continue to remain independent and active by pro-

viding activities, social stimulation, nutrition and transportation that become a new normal.

"I am happy to be providing happy and healthy programs for 230 seniors," said Sheila.

Every day, Fairwood provides activities to engage residents, but not obligating participation. A variety of activities connect with people's interests, like exercise programs—seated fitness and water therapy—and games—Bingo and bridge.

"I see them light up, laughing when they play bridge," she said.

Groups form, like a monthly men's breakfast group that offers guest speakers and outings.

Fairwood organizes some outings, but residents can plan other outings, events and activities through the activity director.

For spiritual enrichment, Fairwood holds two Bible stud-

ies, one for men and one for women. They offer transportation to church, asking residents which church they want to go to. The top three they currently transport people to are Northview Bible, St. Luke Lutheran and St. Thomas More Catholic, Sheila said.

If residents choose to attend other churches, Fairwood can take them, but they also encourage residents to contact those faith communities for transportation.

"Churches need to know that seniors value the faith connection highly, and they would be remiss not to provide ways to engage with seniors," Sheila pointed out. "If two residents want to attend church, they might also ask another resident to take them, because there are 100 drivers in the community."

Fairwood has a restaurant-style dining room and has meeting rooms residents can use for groups. On its 18 acres, Fairwood also has large homes with kitchens and laundries, so residents can host company. There is a library and a garden.

There are outdoor walking paths, indoor walkways and skywalks, which encourage seniors to walk to maintain or improve their health. The walks are easy, so the residents are more likely to walk. Sheila said walking helps seniors stave off cognitive decline, strengthen their bodies and change their mood to impact

their health positively.

Residents walking in their home and on the grounds often see improvements in their health. They also walk for socialization.

"We don't sell that, but I see that every day, people live better," Sheila commented.

"As part of my duty as a person on the earth and from my faith perspective, I want to be useful and helpful. I'm called to protect those who need to be protected," said Sheila.

Now as she plays a part in people enjoying their lives, she finds meaning just by bringing good into seniors' lives in simple ways that are transformative.

For information, call 467-2365 or email sheila@fairwood-retirement.com.



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Tribal leaders present overview of issues impacting their communities

Continued from page 1
dealers and enforcing laws is the checkerboard of jurisdictions in reservations affecting what law enforcement entity has authority, she explained. When police come, they decide if it's reservation land, government trust land or private land, if the perpetrator is tribal or non-tribal, and if it's a felony—for the FBI and U.S. Attorney—or a misdemeanor under tribal or local jurisdiction.

Margo added that the state cooperates with tribal justice systems to fund fentanyl prevention in tribal schools and behavioral health facilities to treat substance use disorder.

She described some current bills tribal communities are supporting.

- SB 5060 forms a hiring grant program to fill vacancies and retain police officers in local and tribal law enforcement.

- SB 5374 gives tribes—the largest employer in some counties—a seat on the Regional Transportation Consortium.

- SB 5301 extends governmental services provided by cities outside cities to tribes.

- SB 5110 provides a tuition waiver for tribal elders to attend community colleges.

“We continue to fight for fresh, cool, clean water for fish and for people,” she added.

Because a UCUT film addressed issues of natural resources, Caj focused on values that affect the tribal approach to natural resources.

Sharing about coyote stories, he gave background on why viewing the natural world as a resource is contrary to the tribes' perspective of the world.

“I grew up on coyote stories. It was a privilege and fun to hear these stories about the animals and the animal peoples before human contact,” he said.

Caj said Coyote, the primary character, is a goofball who always does something selfish, scheming to plot something that almost always fails. He is often an example of what not to do.

“In the process we laugh,” he said.

Sometimes Coyote ends up doing something righteous for all the animal peoples, and good things come out of it. An example is the creation story. Coyote rescued the animals from a monster that was gobbling them up. Then he used parts of the monster to create all the Indian tribes in the region.

“Growing up hearing these stories over and over and over and over, they're incredible,” Caj commented.

Caj gave an example of the stories' impact. Nine years ago, he was driving an elder, Felix Aripa, to an event reintroducing canoes on the lake for the first time in 100 years. Felix was telling how important canoes were



Margo Hill-Ferguson, Caj Matheson, DR Michel and Twa-le Abrahamson engage in panel.

for people to heal when they came around a corner and saw a coyote run across the road.

Felix said, ‘Oh look, there goes Coyote. I wonder what he's up to.’ I chuckled, realizing how hearing these stories over and over has an impact on us. It makes us think about our values, so if we see a coyote, it's Coyote,” Caj said.

“That forms our thinking about natural resources as elements in the world. They are not objects but people. That changes how we interact, so it's difficult to take the life of an animal. If we do, we do not let any part go to waste. An animal is not a coyote, but Coyote,” he explained.

Every element or animal in the natural world is like people—not creatures or resources, but land people or water people—the first peoples on the planet before human beings.

“That changes the way we perceive, approach and manage the world, mindful of the impact for seven generations,” Caj said. “We understand we are a part of the greater ecology, not outside it. We don't view something as an extraction resource but respect its reciprocal role. We shouldn't take more than what we need and should be responsible for how we do it.

“That impacts how the Coeur d'Alene and other tribes manage resources. Coeur d'Alene Lake is a major Superfund site. Some contaminants flow into Washington. We lead the charge to clean up the lake to protect the environment, including what flows into Washington, which is also Coeur d'Alene tribal territory.

“We also have interest in salmon reintroduction in Hangman Creek, where we are concerned about sediment from agriculture and work to keep the water clean for salmon to return and spawn. As part of the system, we want to care for it in a sustainable way for all future generations,” Caj said.

DR described UCUT's proactive, collaborative, science-based approach to promoting fish, water, wildlife and a diverse habitat to help maintain tribal cultures in the Northwest.

“UCUT provides a common voice for our region through the collaboration of the five tribes

with nearly 15,000 tribal citizens who manage and influence 2,000,000 acres of reservation land, 14,000,000 acres of aboriginal land and 500 miles of waterways, 40 interior lakes, 30 dams and reservoirs.

“Our mission is to unite the Upper Columbia River tribes to protect, preserve and enhance treaty rights, sovereignty, culture, fish, water, wildlife, habitat and other common concerns through cooperation and coordination for the benefit of all,” DR. said. “An important part of our mission is that what we do as tribes doesn't just benefit our tribes. It benefits everyone.”

Working with those in charge of the systems for power generation and flood prevention, DR said many are programmed to think that power and flood risk management are benefits and salmon and natural resources are costs.

He points out that there are economic opportunities in bringing the salmon home. So UCUT did economic studies.

“It was hard for us to put an economic value on something the Creator gave us,” he said, “but to advance those issues we thought it important to show the economic opportunities and values, because that seems to drive society.”

UCUT's study found that the annual value of ecosystem services is \$190 billion, while the value of hydropower is \$3.3 billion per year.

“We're looking for a compromise where we can have inexpensive power and flood management, and also have salmon come back and address natural resources so we can restore our cultural ties to the river,” said DR, introducing a 12-minute video with people from member tribes telling “how we work together to benefit all.”

DR then showed the video on UCUT's work to restore salmon, to take care of the land and water, to collaborate with agencies to mitigate the impacts of the dams, to work with the governmental entities managing resources, to raise and release young fish from hatcheries so one day 20,000 to 50,000 will come back and to bring back ceremonies, traditional canoe journeys and races for healing.

“I do this work for my great-granddaughter,” says DR on the video, “so our children and grandchildren can enjoy some of the way things were thousands of years ago. We can now see how far we've come.”

Twa-le summarized the panelists' calls to action and issues they raised about concerns of reservation and urban communities.

“We ask you to support us in the fights our ancestors fought for us to be here today. In our lifetime we've seen amazing changes. We've fought some hard battles,” said Twa-le, giving an example that the year before she was born it was illegal to practice her tribe's religion.

“Our languages have survived because of our ancestors' efforts,” she added, likening their struggles to the resilience of salmon fighting to swim upstream to their home waters, jumping, hitting rocks and dams, as they fight to return.

“As indigenous people, we need to fight as hard as they do to protect our future generations,” she said. “In my lifetime, I hope my daughters are able to see and harvest some of our relatives that are coming home.”

Advances include the presence of tribal representatives like Twa-le as leaders in state government and agencies.

“They not only fight for their tribes and districts but also for all tribes in our state and states across the borders, because we're looking at issues that are upstream and downstream from us and having success by collaborating on issues like transportation,” she said.

Many communities on the Colville reservation are isolated, only accessible by ferry. That makes it hard for first responders to reach communities in emergencies and fires.

Spokane is threatened by nuclear waste being transported through town from Hanford to the Four Corners in the Southwest where Twa-le has relatives.

The Spokane Tribe also faces hundreds of thousands of years of toxic uranium mine waste in Superfund sites on the reservation, requiring perpetual water treatment and a nonstop waste stream flowing into the rivers.

“Our issues impact others, so we need to make sure we don't push toxins downstream or to other communities,” she said. “Instead, we must create solutions that benefit everyone.”

Continued on page 9



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Youth panel discuss what ‘being prophetic’ means in their lives

By Mary Stamp

Brianna Dilts, the Eastern Washington regional organizer for Faith Action Network, moderated a panel of youth and young adults at the recent Eastern Washington Legislative Conference. They discussed working across the generations to advance social justice.

Panelists were Molly Milton, a senior at Gonzaga University in political science, religious studies and dance; Micaela Figueroa, a senior in social work at Eastern Washington University (EWU) and intern at Nuestras Raíces; Nikita Habimana, a junior at Shadle Park High School and member of the NAACP Spokane Youth Council, and Tevita Fakasiieiki, an EWU student studying international affairs and member of the Pacific Islander Community Association (PICA) Youth Council.

Brianna opened asking for their comments on the conference theme: “What does it mean to be prophetic in today’s world?”

Molly, who is Catholic, was uncertain what a prophet was other than Old Testament prophets. When she asked, a religious studies professor told her that historically prophets are disliked “because they make people uncomfortable by pointing out inconsistencies in their behavior.”

She noted that prophets remind people to return to their faith and to love everyone to make a more positive world.

“It relates to my participation in social justice,” Molly said, noting that “young people are learning how to do that.”

Micaela at first thought that prophecy was about looking into the future, saying what will happen, seeing the future in a positive way and reinforcing a positive mindset.

Nikita, who moved to Spokane a year ago from South Africa and attends a Pentecostal church, said that “religiously and historically being prophetic is speaking out against injustice. Prophets speak truth to power. They leave people uncomfortable because they speak the truth and advocate for people who can’t advocate for themselves. They speak for justice for all people.”

Tevita, who is involved in the United Church of Christ, said the Pacific Islander culture uses the terms, “wayfinder” or “navigator.” He added, “To be prophetic means to speak truth



Brianna Dilts, Molly Milton, Micaela Figueroa, Nikita Habimana and Tevita Fakasiieiki.

to power and interweave ideas in the community. Navigators used the stars to journey throughout the Pacific Ocean to find and connect people.”

Brianna asked how their faith influences their work for justice or prophetic action.

Molly said her experience with social justice has developed as a student at Gonzaga University, a Jesuit institution that focuses on the whole person and teaches courses on social justice. She values having the university “guide us on social justice and different ways to participate in our community to bring effective change.”

Nikita said she has started speaking truth to power by joining the NAACP Youth Council, writing for The Black Lens and volunteering with other organizations that help people.

Tevita has been informed by his ancestors, family and friends who have done community work. He worked with church youth to learn about and challenge the downtown Spokane statue of John Monaghan, who was killed while participating in a genocidal, colonial raid when fighting Samoans in 1906.

“With PICA and my church, I spoke at several City Council meetings for it to be removed,” he said. “It’s important to converse on these issues.”

Brianna then asked them how they build and nurture supportive networks.

Tevita pointed out the need to work with others in the community. Through PICA leaders he has learned that many Marshall Islanders who were exposed to radiation from nuclear testing now live in Spokane and struggle with health issues.

In her internship with Nuestras Raíces, Micaela has learned how people in her Hispanic and Latino culture help each other, build each other up and share information by word of mouth—

telling people that the agency is there to help them.

For Molly, “community and social justice go hand in hand, but there’s a lack of intergenerational collaboration. Gen Z is passionate, but we don’t know how to get involved in organizations to act on our passions...I think social media, used positively, can be a great tool to involve young adults. We hope organizations will bridge the gap between adults and the youth to benefit social justice initiatives.”

Nikita also believes community is important for social justice and belonging. She encourages young people to be involved in the community so people “nurture our voices, help us be the best people we can, and support youth by listening to try to understand us.” She spoke of the South African proverb “ubuntu,” meaning, “I am because you are” and “a person is a person among other people.”

By engaging in community, she said, people help each other and make the world better.

Brianna next asked the young people how to bridge the gap between different generations of leaders—learning from the wisdom of elders while making their unique paths today.

Micaela suggested “collaborating with each other and working with each other,” inviting young people to set aside misconceptions that elders are stuck in “an old-school mindset,” because many, many elders have

fought for justice and freedom. “We can ask what protests they went to, what their passions are, what they advocated for and

what may not have worked then that may work now,” she said.

“We should understand each other’s generations,” said Nikita. “We need to chat. Older people grew up in a different time with a different mindset and a different world. Young people can be stubborn in the way we think of other generations. We need to put our grievances aside and learn from each other. That way we can work together to help the

Continued on page 9

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Habitat forms Faith Action Committee to connect with congregations

Habitat for Humanity Spokane is creating a Faith in Action Committee to gather people to advance the organization's mission of ensuring everyone has a safe, affordable place to live.

"Housing costs have gone up so much that it's hard for many families to realize their dream of home ownership," volunteer and faith outreach manager Gloria Penaflor said. "We hope that by working with many faith organizations, we can build more homes to build communities."

Gloria is recruiting members by networking with area faith and nonprofit groups. Recruitment will be ongoing, with the goal of 15 to 20 members.

Gloria plans to hold the initial

meeting the first week of March as an orientation with introductions, selecting a chair and goal setting for the rest of the year.

The committee will meet once a month and involve members for two to four hours a month. Terms will be one to two years.

The group will help advance Habitat's goal of building 25 homes in Spokane County in the near future. It can help organize volunteer groups, raise donations or participate in Faith Builds.

"We have different beliefs, but the one thing that connects us all is our love for our community and our neighbors," Gloria said.

Committee members will be liaisons between Habitat and their faith communities. Gloria

invites people of different ages, demographics, races, nationalities and religious beliefs—or no beliefs—to sign up. She hopes "the faith community is reflected in the committee."

"Habitat's mission is to put God's love into action. We envision a world where everyone has a decent place to live," she said. "The committee will identify needs of our community and families to reach that vision."

"One thing that ties most religions and cultures together, even though we have differences, is the golden rule—love your neighbor as you love yourself," she said.

The Faith in Action Committee will advance current partnerships.

Habitat-Spokane has always worked with churches and faith groups, but Gloria said it's often more one-on-one rather than through a group setting.

"We would be stronger together as a group," she said. "Despite our differences, what binds us together is our love for our community and our commitment to making the community better."

Many Habitat organizations across the country have a similar committee.

"Since the beginning, Habitat has been built on a foundation of faith with a mission to provide for our neighbors," she said.

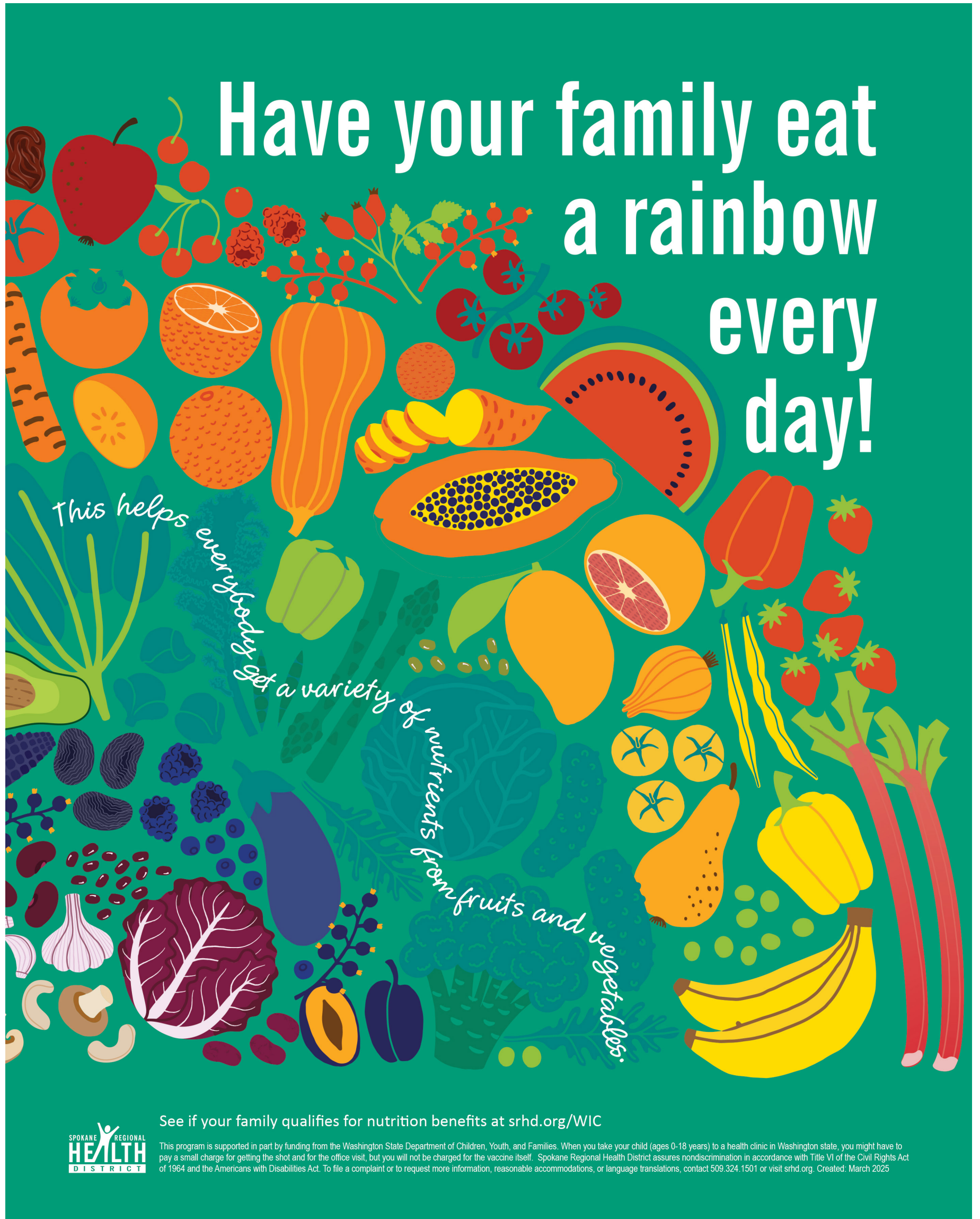
"Building houses in the community, volunteering at Habitat, doing builds and coming togeth-

er unite us," she said. "Getting to know each other and celebrating our differences, we can work for our common goals."

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Youth tell what gives them hope for future

Continued from page 7
community because we have different gifts. Young people have strength with social media being one of them and older people have wisdom and skills relevant in their time. We need to communicate more effectively, rather than arguing about who's right, because in a way, we all are."

Tevita said, "We used the word 'we' a lot, but every individual is different." To understand each other, he invited people to communicate about how they are navigating this journey called life.

"We have to gain experiential knowledge from everybody by getting to know one another, interweaving ourselves with one another," he said.

Brianna asked how they maintain resilience and hope in the face of injustice, especially in today's political climate.

"I maintain hope and resilience," said Micaela, "by working with Nuestras Raices, because my culture and the population I work with is targeted now. I let them know their rights, because many come to us scared and feel hopeless. I let them know we're here to help them."

Seeing people at their lowest strive and progress to a better future makes her feel there is hope.

Sometimes overwhelmed by events of the world, Molly said that dwelling on it makes it hard "to see through the fog of this craziness and chaos. Sometimes we have to put on our hope glasses and look for those little moments that fill up our hope tank." Seeing the number of people gathered at the conference who are interested in addressing issues and learning from each other gives her hope.

"Our practice and participation are the best ways to get through the daunting nature of social justice in all the chaos in our world," she said.

Nikita said it's sometimes hard to maintain hope. She finds strength in the community, being with people who "uplift me and choose joy. We need to choose joy sometimes. Joy is also a form of resistance."

Being religious, she takes time alone to pray, read the word of God and focus on her mental health so she is able to fight for social justice. "There are many injustices, and many people are being wronged. So we have to uplift each other, even those we don't agree with," she said. "We need to put our grievances aside and understand we're all human and trying to live a better life."

Tevita finds hope in "the 3R's—resistance, respect and resilience. We are to *resist* oppression, be *resilient* in the face of oppression and *respect* our elders."

He sees hope in youth joining protests, in their taking wisdom from elders and using voices through social media.

Brianna asked, "What is one thing you hope people in the audience do today as a result of our conversation?"

Molly said, "learn from, absorb and appreciate what young adults add to the conversation."

Micaela said, "be open-minded and learn new things because things are changing always."

Nikita said, "understand people and their values, know how your words may affect people who do not have the same benefits and may be harmed by your words."

Tevita hopes people will have conversations with one another to deeply understand each other.

For information, call 535-4112.

See Legislative Conference videos at thefigtree.org – click "Videos" in the menu. On The Fig Tree YouTube page also click "Playlists."

Speaker invites people to come

Continued from page 6
Twa-le said Margo listed issues on jurisdictions, treaty rights and agencies' obligations to consult with tribes, pointing to the need for more resources to address issues and have agencies consult with community members "so decisions are not made about us without us," Twa-le said.

"Our people and children are impacted forever by the dams and toxins," she added.

The record deaths of elders in the COVID epidemic revealed the disparities in health care for tribal communities and weakened immune systems from nuclear mines and facilities.

Their deaths also reduced the number of fluent Salish language

speakers. At one point there were fewer than 10.

"Now we are directing much effort to save our language, because with that comes our worldview," Twa-le said. "With our language, we teach our youth our values and the creation stories we were taught and knowledge we need to pass down at pow-wows, canoe journeys and ceremonies as salmon come back."

"We invite you to participate in some of these events in our community," she said. "When you see announcements of pow wows, canoe journeys or salmon releases, please come to join them with your families and friends."

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Columnist calls for recreating government of, by and for the people

Why did we, the people, give up our power?

Around the world in the late 20th century, humanity witnessed and fought for a golden age of democracy. Dictatorships fell and constitutions were written as people decided they wanted freedom and power to decide for themselves what was needed.

Millions of people bound themselves together. Beneath their feet fell Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship in the Philippines, Franco's fascist government in Spain, South Africa's apartheid, the last Hindu monarchy in Nepal and more.

Movements of disciplined, organized people made powerful commitments to human dignity. The U.S. Civil Rights Act outlawed racial segregation. The Philippines' and South Africa's constitutions were among the most progressive ever.

Universal housing became a right, along with healthcare, education and the ability for all citizens to vote. Greater liberty supercharged economies and reduced inequality. U.S. economists called this period "the great compression." A new day was dawning, full of potential and hope that things would continue to get better.

With these victories came a promise: power was returned to the hands of the people, so that government would work for the good of all—not just a few.

The promise had an unanticipated consequence. If the government was to represent the people, what need was there for alliances of unions, churches, universities, neighborhoods and civic groups that applied political pressure to bring the changes?

As movement leaders assumed positions in new governments, the message

for everyone else was clear: go home. Power transferred from the people to the state. People accepted that because, after years and decades of fighting, they were exhausted by mass incarcerations and assassinations.

The coalition that ousted Marcos in the "People Power Revolution" disbanded, the South African Network of Civic Associations was absorbed by the African National Congress (ANC), many American civil rights leaders took on elected offices and power passed from the people to governments they trusted and, for the first time, saw themselves represented in.

For a while, things worked. There was progress. Homes were built, schools desegregated, incomes grew and barriers to healthcare, employment and dignity lowered. Gradually, this changed. Without persistent pressure from people's organizations and as those who remembered battles aged out of office, other voices gained momentum. Private interests then exerted a heavier pull on elected officials than public voices.

Unchecked by organizations calling for accountability, private interests made the government a tool of their interests: revoking the 1933 Glass-Steagall Banking Act, lowering corporate taxes, undermining labor unions and repealing regulations.

With the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United changing campaign finance limits, candidates depended more on corporations than constituents for donations, tilting the balance of power.

With deregulation, where economic growth once was plowed back into public goods—education, infrastructure and public health—for all people, leaders

were untethered from this responsibility. Economic growth became good for the rich and bad for everyone else. Public goods were exploited and depleted.

By the time communities noticed the interests of their elected officials had shifted from fearing the power of people's organizations to mobilize constituents, to fearing that corporate donors would withdraw campaign funds, it was too late. Citizens were reduced to mere voters.

We forgot how to do more than march and protest. Gone were the local, people-driven movements to back up demands with political might instead of empty appeals to justice and morality.

Networks of organizations—Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Congress of Racial Equity, and unions and union leaders who drove American automakers to the bargaining table and set the foundation for America's middle class—withered from the political landscape.

Policy followed power. Business boomed because of political loyalty to big business. The unprecedented economic growth failed to trickle down.

Politicians tied themselves in knots to explain how the economy could reach record highs as everyday families reached new lows. Inequality ballooned in what economists labeled the "great divergence."

After many elections and candidates promising change would come by voting in the right politician, people felt they were lied to. Promises in idealistic documents, constitutions and covenants were not delivered and seemed further away.

Countries that threw off dictators found

little changed in 30 years of democracy. The elite remained entrenched. The majority grew poorer. The government worked for someone, but not them.

The 2008 crash revealed that the system exists to serve those at the top. Everyday people can suffer, lose their homes and life savings, but God forbid if a banker goes to jail.

For many, democracy lost its credibility. It became associated with incompetence, gridlock, ineptitude and an inability to do anything about the concrete problems. Frustrated, people become more open to fantasies. The system had been a lie, so why save it? They wanted someone to take our pain seriously and do something about it.

Around the globe and on nightly news, we see the growth of authoritarian politics and populist rhetoric at the expense of values of liberal democracy.

The common solution posed to this "crisis of democracy" is that we need better leaders to pass the right laws and protect our liberties. Better laws and new leaders do not solve the problem. We need better citizens.

Only by teaching people again how to build power to hold their representatives accountable can we ensure our interests drive the agenda.

We may think the challenge of our times is that people are drawn to authoritarianism. It is not. These are symptoms, not the cause.

The challenge of our times is—as it has been at other turning points in American history—to recreate and reconsecrate a government that is of the people, by the people and for the people.

Cameron Conner - Columnist



Pastoral Letter Excerpt

Sounding Board

Rally and March Speakers

Yakima bishop names challenges, speakers at rally voice concerns

In a recent pastoral letter, the Most Rev. Joseph Tyson, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Yakima in an agricultural region with many immigrants, reminds people of the need for faith and hope now.

He told of visiting Kennewick where 300 middle and high school students fear their parents will be deported. He saw 400 youth protesting in downtown Yakima. He hopes the removal orders from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will be a surgical tactic, targeting only those convicted of serious crimes, but notes that "early indicators suggest that more than half of those caught by ICE recently were NOT convicted criminals."

Bishop Tyson is disturbed by false assertions about the ministry of the U.S. Catholic Church to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. For six years, he led the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops efforts for the pastoral care for migrants and refugees, so he knows the operation of the church's national outreach to them.

The bishop challenges the assertion that "we are complicit in settling migrants and refugees that are poorly screened. He affirmed that every refugee the church resettles is screened 12 and 24 months by the federal government.

He also challenges the suggestion that assistance to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers encourages illegal immigration and human trafficking, noting that the church follows Jesus' command to "love our neighbor" and "welcome the stranger."

He commended parishioners in the diocese for "the gracious way you find a place in your homes, places of business, social networks and parish contacts to quietly shadow and provide refuge for our neighbors in need."

He reminded that "the undocumented are our fellow parishioners and neighbors,"

coming to provide a better life for themselves and their children. Some have fled persecution and violence.

He challenged the administration for engendering fear as a tactic that is contrary to the teaching of Christ and the Church.

People say, "follow the law," not realizing current immigration law is "hard to follow, capricious and lacks common sense. We need secure borders to know who is coming and going. We need an immigration system that works for the well-being of all."

More than 30 organizations partnered and drew more than 1,000 people for a Residents Day Rally and March on Monday, Feb. 17, to counter the onslaught of executive orders and actions. Speakers challenged the exploitation, white supremacy, profiteering, imperialism, misogyny and authoritarianism they see.

The following are excerpts of speakers:

Pastor Walter Kendrick of Morningstar Baptist Church, said, "We are here to lift our voices to say we have had enough. We know freedom comes with a price. I am not afraid anymore. Enough is enough."

Justice Forral, coordinator with Spokane Community Against Racism, invited people to sign a petition at bit.ly/spokan-eaction, to talk to neighbors, so they know them before they are taken and to learn to have conversations with people, to "make our ideas palatable to someone else."

Pui-Yan Lam, an immigrant from Hong Kong who is citizen and sociology professor at Eastern Washington University, said, "We must not be afraid of the threats of an authoritarian regime that seeks to destroy education. It fears the liberating power of education. Knowledge sets us free. Being from Hong Kong, I have seen what

happens. This is no time to hesitate. Ask elected officials to stand for schools and universities to protect academic freedom.

Kurtis Robinson, executive director of Revive Center for Returning Citizens/I Did The Time, said, "We have a lot of work to do. We must not just point our fingers but also look at ourselves. We can capture the opportunity in this adversity and be the change we need to see by doing work in us, while doing the work around us. We came to march. What is next? It's time to get to work."

Pat Castenada said that as director of Manzanita House, a citizen and immigrant from Venezuela, "I cannot keep quiet. I refuse to watch my fellow immigrants live in fear, to see families separated, to see our friends forced into the shadows. This is not the America I believe in. This is not the Spokane we are building together."

Mark Finney, pastor of Emmaus Church and founding director of Thrive, said that in the nine years he has worked with refugees, 4,000 have come to Spokane. "Bienvenidos. You are welcome. You bring so much to our community." This is Residents Day—of the people, by the people and for the people.

"Someone has captured our flag," he said, pointing out that 80 years ago his grandfather fought Nazis in World War II. Now, 80 years later, I will not give up this flag," he said, pointing out that one pledges allegiance to the flag and the republic for which it stands, "one nation, indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

"I am here for Black people, White people, Asians, Latinos, Indigenous and Islanders, people born here and immigrants, gay, straight and queer," he said inviting a litany of response to whose state, city, nation, flag, freedom and future the people were marching for: "Ours!"

Anwar Peace of the Police Accountability Board said that in 1994 Congress gave the Department of Justice authority to investigate police departments for patterns and practices of Use-of-Force abuses and/or misconduct. In the last 51 days in Spokane, he said, three people were killed by police. He also calls on City Council to prohibit police from working with ICE.

Evee Polanski of the Spokane Coalition Against Racism who is now a naturalized citizen, told of 32 years being undocumented, brought from Mexico in 1991 by her parents, then hiding and assimilating, afraid and ashamed. One day her parents were gone, picked up by ICE. She feared working because she was on DACA and did not want that to happen to her children. "I fight for my brothers and sisters who live in the shadows, facing oppression," she said.

War Bear, an EWU student of Lakota, Dakota and Cheyenne tribes, was invited to give a land acknowledgement but challenged that too often land acknowledgements are tokenism. "We need sovereignty citizen rights now. We have had seven generations of genocide, mutilation, rape and more. My people have been here 40,000 years. If you are not indigenous, you are an immigrant. If you act like a relative, you are a relative. If you act like a colonizer, you are my enemy. If you are a relative, come to our ceremonies. My people have been resisting for 533 years. We are here. We are strong. We are resilient. We are survivors."

Organizers of the march called on city and county, and on state legislators to take immediate action to codify protections and rights that are increasingly under threat at the federal level.

Read more commentaries
online at thefigtree.org

Calendar of Events

Area codes are (509) unless otherwise listed
Send events to development@thefigtree.org by the third Fridays

- To Mar 1** • **"Inviting Leadership: Dialogue and Inclusion,"** 2025 Leadership Symposium, Gonzaga University, gonzagalead@gonzaga.edu
- **Connective Strands of Spirit**, 10 artists from the Colville Confederated Tribes, Th-Sat 4 to 7 p.m., Terrain Gallery, 628 N. Monroe, terrainspokane.com
- **Our Time, Our Voice**, art from Spokane public high schools, Kolva-Sullivan Gallery, 115 S. Adams, 458-5517, mivile.kolva.comcastbiz.net
- To Mar 9** • **Woman, Artist, Catalyst: Art from the Permanent Collection**, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture (NWMAC), 2316 W. 1st, Tues-Sat 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 456-3931
- To Mar 14** • **Mardi Bras with Transitions**, Drive Thru event at Women's Hearth, 4 to 6 p.m., help4women.org/spokane-mardi-bras
- Mar 1** • **Heat Speak**, Hamilton Studio Listening Room, 6 p.m., eventbrite.com/e/heat-speak-tickets-1138395033189
- **The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture** documentary films, Magic Lantern, 3 p.m., 7 p.m., thealliance.media
- Mar 1, 2** • **Northwest BachFest**, Barrister Wintery, 1213 W. Railroad, Sat 7 to 9 p.m., Sun, 3 to 5 p.m., 326-4942, gertrude@nwbachfest.com, nwbachfest.com
- **Masterworks 6: L.A. Stories**, Spokane Symphony, Dvorak's Seventh Symphony, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, Sat 7:30 p.m., Sun 3 p.m., 624-1200, foxtheaterspokane.org
- Mar 1-Apr 5** • **Diffusions-Benedict for Everyone**, Sr. Teresa Jackson, Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, stgertrudes.org/retreats/2023/diffusions-benedict-for-everyone/
- Mar 2** • **Intentional Community Gathering**, Harmony Woods Retreat, 11507 S. Keeney, 1 to 4 p.m., 993-2968, harmonywoods.org
- **Art History Lecture Series: Art and Feminism**, The NWMAC, 2316 W. First, 2 p.m., nwmac.org
- **Judy Chicago's "A Seat at the Table,"** Meredith Shimizu, art history professor at Whitworth University, NWMAC, 2316 W. First, 2 p.m., 456-3931, northwestmuseum.org
- **"Fish War,"** film on tribal fishing rights, panel discussion with DR Michel, Twa-le Abrahamson and Tom Keefe, Globe Room, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 4 p.m., arnoldi@gonzaga.edu
- Mar 2, 4** • **Fat Tuesday Jazz Mass**, Dan Keberle and St. Marks' Chancel Choir, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, Sun 8:30 a.m. and Tue 10:45 a.m., 747-6677, stmarks-spokane.org
- Mar 2, 9, 16, 23** • **Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR)** Coffee, Saranac Commons, 19 W. Main Ave., 9 a.m., scarspokane.org
- Mar 3, 10, 17, 24** • **Heartistry: Artistic Wellbeing**, Spark Central, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy, 3 to 5 p.m., 279-0299
- Mar 4** • **Coffee Chat**, The Isaac Foundation, 606 W. Sharp, 10 to 11:30 a.m., 325-1515, theisaacfoundation.org
- Mar 4-5** • **Idaho Nonprofit Center Regional Conference**, Coeur d'Alene, 209 E. Sherman, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., idahononprofits.org/regionals.html
- Mar 4, 15** • **Sensory Relaxed Movie Screenings**, Garland Theater, 924 W. Garland, Tue 6:30 p.m., Sat 11:30 a.m., 327-1050, garlandtheater.org
- Mar 4, 18** • **The Echoes Within: Monthly Sound Healing**, I AM Alliance, 7 S. Howard, Ste 222, 6:30 to 8 p.m., 981-5698, iamalliance.me
- Mar 4, 11, 18, 25** • **Tuesday Gallery Talks** on current exhibit, NWMAC, 11 a.m., 456-3931, northwestmuseum.org
- Mar 5** • **Monthly Bird Walk**, Doris Morrison Learning Center, 1330 S. Henry, Greenacres, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., 477-7579
- **Day of Prayer**, "Ash Wednesday: Return to Jesus," Fr. David Anderson, SJ, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1244, ihrc.net
- **Dementia: Warning Signs & Early Diagnosis**, South Hill Library, 3324 S. Perry, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., 444-5300, spokanelibrary.org
- **National Society of Leadership and Success** Speaker, Malcolm Gladwell, author and columnist for The New Yorker, EWU Pence Union Building Room 319, 4 p.m., ewu.edu/campus-events/?trumbaEmbed=view%3Devent%26eventid%3D1242713534
- **The Expanse**, Harmony Woods, 11507 S. Keeney, 6:30 to 8 p.m., 981-5698, iamalliance.me
- **Delfeayo Marsalis and the Uptown Jazz Orchestra**, Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts, 211 E. Desmet, 7:30 p.m., 313-2787, gonzagaperformingarts.venue.net
- **The Black Jacket Symphony Presents: The Beatles' "Abbey Road,"** Fox Theater, 8 p.m., foxtheaterspokane.org/events
- Mar 5, 19** • **Open Art Night**, Lunarium, 1925 N. Monroe, 6 to 9 p.m., facebook.com/Lunarium.Spokane
- Mar 5, 12, 19, 26** • **SCAR Meeting**, Saranac, 19 W. Main, noon, scarspokane.org
- **Practical Centering Yoga**, NWMAC, 2316 W. First, 1:30 p.m., 456-3931, northwestmuseum.org
- Mar 6** • **Books & Bites**, Gander & Ryegrass, Auntie's Bookstore with Women Helping Women, 404 W. Main, 5:30 to 8 p.m., whwspokane.org/events
- Mar 6, 13, 20, 27** • **Taizé Prayer**, Mater Dei, Zoom, 4:15 p.m., bartlett@gonzaga.edu
- Mar 7** • **March for Meals**, Meals on Wheels of Greater Spokane County, Spokane Valley Mall, 8 to 10 a.m., mowgsc.org/events
- **International Women's Day**, Central Library, 10 to 1

- p.m., 258-5774, Kimberly.curry@rescue.org
- **First Friday, Spokane**, 5 to 8 p.m., firstfriday.org
- **R.E.S.P.E.C.T.**, tribute to Aretha Franklin, First Interstate Center for the Arts, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 7:40 p.m., 289-7000, broadwayspokane.com
- Mar 7-9** • **Spokane International Film Festival**, spokanefilmfestival.org
- Mar 8** • **Healthy Aging Conference 2025**, Senior Action Network, WSU Spokane Academic Center, 600 N. Riverpoint, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., healthyagingspokane.org/2025-conference-schedule
- **"Sharing Wisdom, Connecting the Generations,"** The Fig Tree Spring Benefit, Hemmingson Ballroom, Gonzaga, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., (509) 535-4112, thefigtree.org/donate.html
- **Second Friday Artwalk**, Downtown Coeur d'Alene, 5 to 8 p.m., (208) 415-0116, artsandculturecda.org
- **Sweets Before Supper**, Girl Scouts Eastern Washington & North Idaho, Davenport Grand Hotel, 6 to 9 p.m., gsewni.ejoinme.org
- **Share the Experience Dinner Auction** for STIX Diabetes Program, Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls, 6 to 9 p.m., 484-1366
- **Decolonization in Action:** Creating a Posture of Repair, Sarah Augustine, Westminster UCC and Spokane Alliance at Westminster, 411 S. Washington, 7 p.m., mary.l.rupert@gmail.com
- **Spokane Mom Prom**, Women Helping Women Fund, Montvale Event Center, 1019 W. First, 7 to 11 p.m., 844-5672, momprom.org
- Mar 8, 9, 15, 16** • **Seven-Point Mind Training Teachings**, Sravasti Abbey, sravastiabbey.org/event/the-seven-point-mind-training-with-ven-thubten-chodron
- Mar 10, 24** • **"Winter Stories" Native Cultural Craft Nights**, American Indian Community Center, 1025 W. Indiana, 5 to 7 p.m., 535-0886, aiccinc.org
- Mar 11** • **PJALS Action Committee**, Zoom, 5:30 p.m., sjackson@pjals.org
- Mar 11-12** • **Idaho Nonprofit Center Regional Conference**, Moscow, 1912 Center, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., idahononprofits.org/regionals.html
- Mar 12** • **Fig Tree Breakfast-Time Benefit**, Zoom, 7:30 to 9 a.m., email email.event@thefigtree.org for link
- **Executive Directory Coffee**, Nonprofit Assn of Washington, online, 9 a.m. nonprofitwa.org/calendar
- **Women Lead Spring Conference**, Hemmingson at Gonzaga, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., womenlead@gonzaga.edu
- Mar 13** • **Reuse Workshop**, Mobius Discovery Center, 331 N. Post, 10 p.m., 321-7137, artsalvagespokane.com
- **Hands On: Workshop for Little Makers**, Art Salvage, 610 E. North Foothills, 10 p.m., artsalvage.com
- **Free Immigration Clinic**, Latinos En Spokane, 1502 N. Monroe, 5 to 7 p.m., latinosenspokane.org
- Mar 15** • **PJALS Peace and Justice Conference**, Spokane Central Library, 906 W. Main, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., ftransue@pjals.org, pjals.org
- **Saturday with the CdA Symphony**, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front, 11 a.m., cdalibrary.org
- **Samurai Undressed**, up-close look at samurai armor, NWMAC, 2316 W. First, 2 p.m. bit.ly/3Cvx2EE
- **Women's Healing & Empowerment Network** Banquet, Centerplace, Spokane Valley 5 to 7 p.m., whenetwork.com
- Mar 16, 18** • **Spokane String Quartet**, Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague, 3 to 5 p.m., 227-7638
- Mar 17** • **Dementia Basics**, Shadle Library, 2111 W. Wellesley, 5:30 p.m., 444-5300, spokanelibrary.org
- Mar 18** • **Finance Unlocked**, Nonprofit Association of Washington (NAWA), Gladish Center, 115 NW State, Pullman, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., nonprofitwa.org/calendar
- Mar 20** • **Advocacy Building Blocks for Nonprofits**, NAWA, Yakima Valley Community Foundation, 316 E. Yakima, 12 to 4 p.m., nonprofitwa.org/calendar
- **NAACP Monthly Meeting**, Central Library, 906 W. Main, 6:30 to 8 p.m., facebook.com/spokane.naacp
- Mar 21-23** • **Weekend Lenten Retreat**, "The Reconquest Has Begun: A Fulton Sheen Lenten Retreat," Peter Howard, IHRC, 6 p.m. to 1 p.m., 448-1244, ihrc.net
- Mar 22** • **World Water Day Celebration**, Doris Morrison Learning Center, 1130 S. Henry, Greenacres, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 477-7459
- **El Mercado**, Latino cultural market, health clinic, immigration resources, West Central Community Center, 1603 W. Belt, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., latinosenspokane.org
- **123 Andres**, Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 E. Desmet, 2 p.m., 313-2787
- **Coeur d'Alene Symphony National Young Artists** winners, Schuler Performing Arts Center, 880 W. Garden, 7 p.m., (208) 769-7780, cdasymphony.org
- Mar 23** • **2025 Kathina and End-of-Retreat Celebration** Sravasti Abbey, Dharma talk, sravastiabbey.org
- Mar 26** • **Small Modular Nuclear Reactors: Separating Fact from Fiction**, Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment, Gonzaga, Zoom, 4 p.m., gonzaga.edu/climate-institute/events
- Mar 27** • **Policy, Law, and Public Health**, Washington Supreme Court Chief Justice Debra Stephens, Jepson Center, Gonzaga, 4 to 6 p.m., shsmarcom@gonzaga.edu
- Mar 27** • **Benefit Dinner for IHRC**, Billy Molls, modern day mountain man, "The Greatest Adventure," 5 to 9 p.m., IHRC, 448-1244 ihrc.net
- Mar 30** • **Taizé Prayer Service**, 6:30 p.m., IHRC, ihrc.net
- Mar 31, Apr 1** • **Whitworth University Film Festival**, "Black Narcissus," Weyerhaeuser, Mon 6:30 p.m., Tues 6 p.m., forms.whitworth.edu/calendar/event/detail/7863

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St. Ann's and Career Path form Dignified Workday to serve homeless

By Ariana Barrey

St. Ann's Catholic Church and Career Path Services co-founded Dignified Workday to bring change to lives of people, including addressing a basic need of homeless people for a place to do laundry for free. Avista's Named Communities Investment Fund (NCIF) stepped in with a grant to help St. Ann's remodel to install commercial-grade washers and dryers.

Ken Mead, who had felt abandoned most of his life, was able to step away from living on the streets addicted. He wanted a better life but didn't know how or who could help him. That changed when he discovered Dignified Workday in Spokane.

"If you ever had addiction issues, you're immediately separated from society," said Ken. "Housing and employment are hard to find. Sometimes you just need a helping hand, which Dignified Workday did for me."

Since joining the Dignified Workday crew, Ken has been changed. In the last six months, he worked daily on a painting crew. Through steady employment, he earned what he needed to get off the streets and move into an apartment. He owns a bicycle, a car and even a dog.

Ken is one of several unhoused people helped by the program.

"This program is the most successful I've ever seen," said Ken.

Dignified Workday offers a lifeline to those who want it, meeting people where they are.

"We want to take concrete steps to help break the spirit of poverty through the dignity of work," said Andy Dwonch, Career Path Services chief operating officer whose organization co-founded Dignified Workday. "We knew it was critical for employment to be part of the solution."

People who show up for work daily are assigned to work sites around the city to clean apartment buildings, paint low-income housing units and perform other clean-up jobs.

Career Path Services and their partner, SDS Realty, lead Dignified Workday. The non-profit secures work projects with organizations like Habitat for Humanity. They also organize



Tresa Schmautz and Andy Dwonch at St. Ann's. Photo from Avista

the work crews and manage participant payroll.

The program started with a simple request for help with weeding the St. Ann Catholic Church grounds.

Tresa Schmautz, co-founder of Dignified Workday and member of St. Ann, asked unhoused people to help do a few hours of work for payment. One man accepted her offer.

"He asked if we could do it again, so we met the following Tuesday," said Tresa. "The next week, he brought friends."

From that one appeal, Tresa's workdays grew to more than 60 people coming ready to work. Tresa and her husband, Steve, found work for the weekly group and paid wages out of their personal resources.

Andy attended the Tuesday gatherings and saw an opportunity to do more. That's how Career Path Services became the program's overseer.

Andy and the Career Path Services team developed the Dignified Workday and launched it in January 2024. Beginning with eight individuals, the program now has a roster of more than 40.

"The nonjudgmental approach is essential. We accept people as they are," said Andy. "We're here when they're ready."

Avista stepped in to help support the labor cost. The utility awarded Dignified Workday with Named Communities Investment Fund (NCIF) and Avista Foundation grants.

"The outcomes from the grant award are positive," said Avista Foundation executive director Kristine Meyer. "We've met people impacted by the program. It is amazing."

Tresa and Steve are active in the program. As a supervisor for

hour and Sunday Lunch Program.

"It's a unique opportunity for us," said Kristine. "Some of the biggest challenges in our community are folks struggling with addiction and homelessness. Programs like Dignified Workday help people reach their potential. It demonstrates that it's the right thing to do for our neighbors who need it most."

Avista's NCIF was approved by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission as part of Avista's Clean Energy Implementation Plan to comply with the state's 2019 Clean Energy Transformation Act.

The NCIF will invest up to \$5 million annually in projects that

benefit Avista's Washington electric customers in highly impacted and vulnerable communities.

For information, call 495-4174, email ariana.barrey@avistacorp.com or visit myavista.com/NCIF.

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