

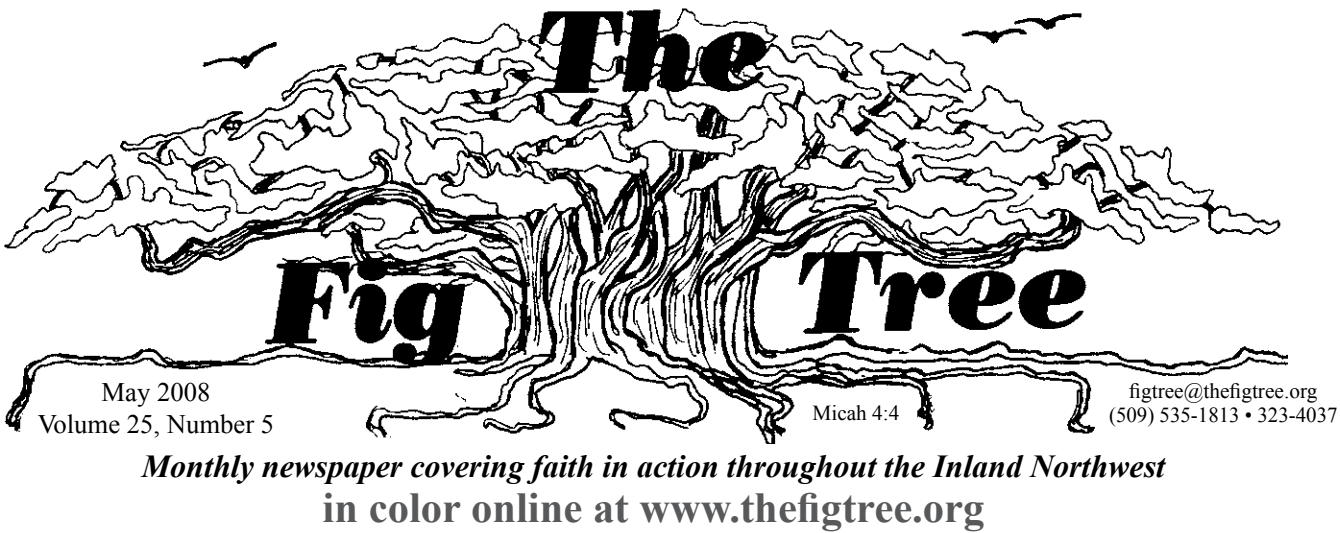
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Teacher boosts life-long habits

By Mary Stamp

In teaching and volunteer activities, Fannie Bush helps children and youth develop or change habits so they gain more from their education and can establish life-long health and fitness.

"I see a sense of need every day in the eyes of children," she said. "I see their need for love and attention. I see children acting positively or negatively to draw attention."

"Every day working with the students is revitalizing," said Fannie. "There is never a day that is the same as a previous day."

As health and fitness teacher at Adams and Regal elementary schools, she knows that many children need mentoring and tutoring to meet Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) test requirements. She also has a volunteer avenue to help make such assistance possible.

She is one of 20 local members of The Links, Inc., an African-American women's community-service organization, connecting volunteers and service-learning students at Eastern Washington University (EWU) and Washington State University (WSU) with



Fannie Bush guides students inside and outside classroom.

middle and high school students who need help.

The channel is Keys to Success, a weekend mentoring and tutoring program.

The Links, Inc., started Keys to Success by linking several organizations—the NATIVE Project, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, AHANA (Asian, Hispanic, African American and Native American) Business and Professional Association, Spokane Public Schools and the National Sorority of Phi Kappa Delta (for African American teachers).

Their goal is to excite children and youth to improve math, science, language arts and social skills, and to give students confidence in taking the WASL test.

Both in teaching health and fitness and in the Keys to Success program, Fannie encourages students to understand their own roles in their education and she seeks ways to involve parents.

Keys to Success started with \$15,000 from the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Olympia in 2006.

"An alarming number of students were not meeting requirements,"
Continued on page 4

On St. John farm and in USDA consulting

Couple sows seeds to save soil

Lacking her husband's farming heritage or any ties to farming, Ann Swannack knew little of soil erosion and conservation in the early years of their marriage.

Her husband, Steve, is the fourth generation to farm the land where he grew up 18 miles west of St. John, land settled by his English immigrant ancestors.

Now, however, they share a commitment to conserving the soil of the Palouse and keeping it healthy.

Steve employs direct seeding practices on the 1,350 acres he farms.

Ann, as United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservationist, advises area landowners how to practice con-

servation on cropland, rangeland and irrigated land.

In addition to conserving soil as the primary resource on his 900 acres of cropland, Steve raises natural beef and hogs on 500 acres of scab rock land. A nearby land owner also pays him per acre to tend and harvest the crop on 250 acres.

"My father was always conservation minded," Steve said. "It rubbed off on me."

Steve sees his decision to do direct seeding as a stewardship decision.

"God gave us the ground. We are blessed with it while we are here. It is good stewardship to protect the resource we have by reducing soil erosion on this land

my family has farmed for more than 100 years," said Steve, who attends St. John United Methodist Church.

"We no longer farm the original topsoil. Most is lost, even in the draws and low areas," he said. "We plowed so long that the fertile soil that was once on the hills and eroded into the bottoms is now covered by the infertile soil that has washed down over it."

He and Ann graduated from Washington State University in 1976, he in agronomy and soils, and she in animal science. She has since taken continuing education classes in agronomy.

After rearing their children, Ann began part-time work with the local Conservation District. She now works full-time with the Natural Resources Conservation Services of the USDA in Davenport and Ritzville.

While she has learned from Steve's practices and shared those with others, she has also encouraged him to enter some of the conservation programs.

When he returned to farm more
Continued on page 6

Spokane group assists in Gulf Coast recovery

By Virginia de Leon

Nearly three years after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast, a group of Spokane volunteers continues to help pave the road to recovery. Now that images of flooded homes and shocked victims no longer dominate the news, many Americans have forgotten about the storm and its aftermath.

For some Catholics in the Spokane diocese, however, Katrina's devastation continues to shape the lives of people they know—hurricane survivors with whom they've worked side-by-side and whose stories have intertwined with their lives.

Last summer, 18 high school students and eight adult chaperones from several parishes traveled to Waveland, Miss., a town that was nearly wiped off the map.

They spent a week doing carpentry, plumbing and other construction work. They also established relationships with residents and experienced first-hand their struggle to rebuild.

During their visit, people often stopped to talk, shake hands and express gratitude, said Dan Glatt, youth minister at Our Lady of Fatima parish and primary organizer of the trips.

"So many people came forward to say, 'Thank you for not forgetting us—we are so glad you're here,'" he said. "The gratitude was overwhelming."

This July, Dan and 17-year-old Molly Wakeling from St. John Vianney will return to Waveland with 12 others. They will continue the work they started last year in order to help displaced families return to their homes.

Basically, they want Waveland residents to know they're not alone and people from other parts of the country still care.

Continued on page 7

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Scrap farm export subsidies, says ethicist

Geneva (ENI). Agricultural export subsidies in developed countries that destroy local food production and incomes of farmers in the global South, contribute to the world food crisis and therefore need to be withdrawn, said Swiss ethicist Christoph Stückelberger, the executive of the Geneva-based worldwide ethics-network Globethics.net and professor of ethics at the University of Basel.

“The right to adequate food implies three kinds of obligations for states: to respect, to protect and to provide,” he is quoted as saying in an April 17 article in a Swiss newspaper.

The “obligation to respect,” he said, requires countries to refrain from any measure that could prevent access to adequate food and food aid, and that this responsibility prohibits nations from destroying food or the infrastructure necessary to produce it. “The doubling of the price of wheat and soy in the last 10 months, as well as the 75 percent rise in the price of rice and the 66 percent increase in the price of corn in the same period, has led to unrest in several developing countries,” Christoph said.

Agricultural subsidies governments pay to farmers and agribusiness to supplement their incomes in the United States and Europe influence the prices and supplies of commodities on international markets, according to analysts.

Hedge funds, or private investment funds, have shifted from financial markets to raw materials markets because of the current financial crisis in some countries. Christoph said they are amplifying the volatility of food prices.

He asserted the funds should be regulated so countries can fulfill their obligations to the right to food prescribed and accepted by international organizations.

“One of the principles of socially-responsible investments must be that staple foods should not be objects of speculation,” Christoph said.

Eighteen Swiss development organizations and Jean Ziegler, the United Nations special reporter on the Right to Food, support calls by representatives of private industry and politicians for a moratorium on the “first generation biofuels” made from food crop feed stocks from the global South.

Christoph pointed to first generation bioethanol, which is made by fermenting ethanol or plant-derived sugars. The process has been likened to that in wine and beer-making.

He said that second and third generation biofuels should continue to be tested because it appears they could offer solutions for the ecological production of renewable energies without harming food production or without demanding a huge usage of water.

Danish churches agree to Islamic dialogue call

Copenhagen (ENI). A number of Danish churches have praised an open letter published by 138 prominent Muslim scholars and have pledged to meet with leaders of Islam in Denmark to continue this exchange. The dean of Copenhagen cathedral, the Rev. Anders Gadegaard, told Ecumenical News International that he and the general secretary of the Danish National Council of Churches, Mads Christoffersen, sent a response on behalf of churches in Denmark to the Muslim scholars’ letter of October 2007 to church leaders around the world.

“The letter is a comprehensive, brave and learned document that incorporates an opening in relation to Christianity that is unique in the history of the world,” said the response signed by Anders and Mads, and published on April 10 in the Danish newspaper, the Kristeligt Dagblad (Christian Daily).

The 16 church council members who signed the response said the Muslim letter “represents an important step in the essential dialogue between adherents of the world’s two largest religions.” They expressed support of the need for dialogue.

“We believe that inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation cannot be viewed as being optional, but must be seen as a necessity if one wants to promote true respect and avoid violent conflicts,” said Anders and Mads in their letter.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

BIOAg Tour planned May 28 in Palouse

A one-day BIOAg Tour on Wednesday, May 28, will highlight several Eastern Washington examples of Biologically Intensive Agriculture and Organic Farming (BIOAg).

The program is being sponsored by Washington State University’s BIOAg program in cooperation with the Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network.

BIOAg is designed to build sustainable agriculture for healthy farms, communities and ecosystems by fostering the development, understanding and use of biologically-intensive and organic strategies.

The tour will visit learning sites at Colfax and Benge—a small

town in Adams County—introducing a pilot project on “Beefing up the Palouse,” direct-seed farming and biofuels research, said coordinator Steve Van Vleet.

BIOAg refers to organic and/or sustainable bio-intensive farming practices, including use of cover crops, management-intensive grazing, composting, and alternative pest and weed control.

Biologically intensive farming practices rely on biological processes that are renewable, non-polluting and beneficial to farmers and society.

Organizers say BIOAg practices:

- Increase farm income by reducing costs and adding value in marketing as “green”;
- Increase access to fresh nu-

tritious foods through direct marketing and farm-to-school programs;

- Increase the nutritional value of foods;

- Improve rural social issues arising from depopulation by developing and demonstrating sustainable systems and new economic opportunities;

- Improve environmental and human health by reducing petrochemical input and emission of greenhouse gases and pollutants, by supplying viable alternatives for pesticides and fertilizers, and

- Supply an educated workforce for growing organic foods, bio-economy and sustainable society.

For information, call 397-6290 or email svanvleet@wsu.org.

‘Experience AIDS’ introduces four children

“Experience AIDS” brings the lives and stories of four African children—Babirye, Mathabo, Kombo and Emmanuel—to Spokane, challenging ways people view the AIDS pandemic.

Several Spokane churches and World Vision, the Christian, humanitarian organization that created the exhibit, will provide visitors the opportunity to walk through a replica of an African village. It will run from Friday, May 16 through Monday, May 19, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

The Presbyterian church is hosting the event, working with St. Aloysius Catholic Parish, Whitworth Community Presbyterian Church and Life Center to raise awareness within the global and local community about is-

sues behind the growing AIDS pandemic, especially its effects on children.

The Rev. Kevin Finch, associate pastor of First Presbyterian, said the exhibit presents AIDS as one of “the greatest humanitarian crises” because of its effect on so many children.

He added that the “Experience AIDS” campaign seeks to break the issue of AIDS down, so that it does not appear as daunting as people might think. He hopes the exhibit will provide ways for community members to tackle critical issues together.

After listening to one of the four children’s stories and walking through the exhibit, visitors will have the opportunity through sponsorship or congregational partnerships to help World Vision

assist children and communities in the fight to end poverty and injustice around the globe.

“This event is meant to educate and provide opportunities for the Spokane community to become involved in the AIDS pandemic,” said Hannah Kimball, the exhibit’s special events coordinator.

“If people come out thinking, ‘What can I do next?’ we know we’ve accomplished something,” she said.

Open to 8:30 p.m. each day, the exhibit starts at 11 a.m., Friday, 9 a.m., Saturday and 8 a.m., Sunday.

The World Vision exhibit is visiting 33 cities from April through July.

For information, call 747-1058 or visit www.worldvisionexperience.org.

VOA designates 100th ‘Safe Place’ site

Volunteers of America has designated the 100th Safe Place site since the program’s Spokane launch last April.

Rosauers president Jeff Philipps and Volunteers of America director Marilee Roloff said the grocery chain’s participation makes the 100th business in the Spokane area to step forward to support the program.

Safe Place makes it possible for any youth to access a safe place to go and find help at locations including banks, fast-food restaurants, fire stations, libraries and

other organizations that display the distinctive yellow-and-black Safe Place sign.

The program offers concrete opportunities for local individuals within businesses and other organizations to combat child abuse and neglect and support one of Spokane’s five promises to children: safe places.

Youth can find help at Safe Place sites in their own neighborhood and connect with immediate safety and support services.

A similar Volunteers of America program, based on the national Safe Place model, has been operating successfully in Coeur d’Alene since 1999.

For information, call 624-2378.

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Editorial Team

Editor/Publisher/Photos - Mary Stamp
Sr. Rose Theresa Costello, Mary Mackay, Nancy Minard, Sara Weaver

Coordinators & Contract

Malcolm Haworth - Community Outreach
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Christ Clinic begins construction of new clinic

Christ Clinic will break ground at 11 a.m., Tuesday, May 6, at 2410 N. Monroe, to begin construction of a 4,800-square-foot clinic adjacent to Christ Kitchen.

The two ministries were previously both located together at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2709 W. Boone. Christ Kitchen grew out of concern of a volunteer counselor at Christ Clinic that many women who came as patients needed job skills.

Christ Clinic, which is still at the church, opened in April 1991, sponsored by the Christian Medical and Dental Society, to offer basic, ongoing medical care to the under-insured, uninsured and working poor people.

Ten physicians currently volunteer their services, assisted by a part-time staff nurse practitioner. Patients pay on a sliding scale to help maintain the clinic.

The clinic sees about 10 pa-

tients a day and turns away 10 to 15 more, said Monica Meyerhofer, development director.

Open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, and 9 a.m. to noon, Fridays, it has a patient base of 4,000 and anticipates the new facility will initially add 1,000 patients. In the next three years, they expect to triple the number of patients they can serve.

Monica is working to raise \$3.1 million for the building, which will expand Christ Clinic from three to six exam rooms plus a counselor's office for mental health care. They had raised \$1.4 million by the end of April.

At the groundbreaking, the clinic will launch a "A Place of Healing, A Vision of Hope" capital campaign to raise the remaining funds. Their goal is to occupy the new building in November.

About two years ago, Christ

Kitchen moved to 2410 N. Monroe, with the vision that Christ Clinic would join them at that location, building the new clinic to serve low-income people.

While volunteering with Christ Clinic, Jan Martinez, director of Christ Kitchen, decided to respond to the needs of women she counseled there and started Christ Kitchen in 1997.

The program began in the fellowship hall across from the clinic, starting with a few women coming Thursdays for about six hours for work and Bible study.

The women package dry foods, baking mixes and soups to sell. Eventually, they began catering meals with their products.

Christ Kitchen provides work, job training and fellowship for women in poverty. The nonprofit ministry sells food products and gift baskets.

For information, call 325-0393.

Fig Tree Dialogue

Bishops plan fall panel Julia Esquivel cancels visit

Four regional church bishops have agreed to participate in a panel discussion on "25 Years of Ecumenism in the Inland Northwest," including the impact of The Fig Tree, beginning at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 6, at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

The event will be part of the 25th year celebrations of The Fig Tree and part of its annual dialogue events.

Bishop Walton Mize of Christ Holy Sanctified Church, Bishop William Skylstad of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane, Bishop Jim Waggoner of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane and Bishop Martin Wells of the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be the panelists.

There will be gathering time for fellowship, the panel and discussion, followed by a worship service led by the bishops and other area church and faith leaders.

Julia Esquivel, Guatemalan poet-theologian, who had been scheduled in the fall and canceled because of health concerns, again has had to cancel plans to be in Spokane May 8 to 18 because of health.

For information, call 535-1813.

Organizations participate in Equal Voices Campaign

Five Spokane organizations are collaborating with the Equal Voices Campaign to sponsor the Spokane Town Hall Meeting from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, May 17, at the East Central Community Center, 500 S. Stone.

Co-sponsors of the event in Spokane with VOICES include KYRS Thin-Air Radio, the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Odyssey Youth Center and the Spokane Alliance.

The nationwide effort seeks to hear from thousands of low-income individuals and families as experts on their own lives and what they believe would work to increase opportunities so they can prosper.

They hope to reach thousands of individuals and families to bring their ideas and solutions to build a national platform that addresses their concerns. The plan is for 10,000 to participate in a multi-city—Los Angeles, Chicago and Birmingham, Ala.—convention on Sept. 6.

"We know families are at risk with more and more finding it difficult to provide for their basic needs," said Cathy Mann, director of VOICES (Voices for Opportunities, Income, Child Care, Education and Support). "Too many of us struggle on incomes below the poverty line. The working poor can't make ends meet on the wages they are paid."

The campaign is building a movement to bring about policy changes to create a more equitable society.

For information, call 326-4135.

Center plans series about following 'In Jesus' Footsteps'

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center and Catholic Charities are co-sponsoring a three-part weekend retreat series "In the Footsteps of Jesus: A Pilgrimage of the Heart," from Friday to Sunday, June 6 to 8, at the retreat center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd.

Participants will explore an overview of the Catholic perspective on social justice, living the Gospel as Jesus taught and reflecting on how better to serve the poor.

Featured speakers include Msgr. Frank Bach, Father Michael Maher, Sister Mary Garvin, Father Tom Caswell, Scott Cooper and Rob McCann.

For information, call 448-1224.

Alliance for Responsible Media sets film

The Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media will hold its second educational film in a series on media literacy.

"Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity" will be shown at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 6, at the Magic Lantern Theatre, 25 W. Main, followed by a discussion at 35 W. Main.

The film reviews the relationship between media and masculine identities. Its thesis is that

widespread violence in the society is part of an ongoing crisis in masculinity.

The Northwest alliance monitors the impact of media on society, educates the community and works with professionals to influence media to act responsibly, said John Caputo, director. It is part of Gonzaga University's master's degree in communication and leadership.

For information, call 323-3578.

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What seizes your imagination will affect everything!

Groups link to excite students about education

Continued from page 1
and an alarming number of those were students of color and low economic status,” she said. “We wanted to see what we could do through mentoring and tutoring.”

It surprises some that participation in and support for Keys to Success is cross-racial, she said, because The Links women are predominantly African American. The program held serves students that the district recommends.

The Links coordinates the organizations to provide tutors, calculators and other supplies.

“We started with five students from fourth to 11th grades,” Fannie said, “primarily middle-school and high-school students.

“We also want to engage parents to support their students academically and emotionally, so they fit into the school environment,” Fannie said, describing challenges of recruiting students.

While five students from five middle schools and high schools come regularly, other students come and go because of jobs and other activities.

The Links, Inc., works to involve more students regularly.

On second Saturdays, service-learning students from EWU mentor, tutor and listen, working one-to-one with the younger students.

Keys to Success also offered a series

of sessions on robots. About 40 students and families met with the National Society of Black Engineers from the University of Idaho. In the first session, they learned science and math to create working robots. The second session, they made a more advanced robots.

“We encourage students to ask questions when they feel unsure. Much of what we do is confidence building to prepare people for the future, to give them options,” said Fannie, a 1972 graduate of Texas College in Tyler, Tex., in physical education and biology.

After earning a master’s degree in health and physical education at Texas A and M in Commerce, Tex., she taught a year Kansas City, Kans., public schools, five years at Texas College and three years in Tyler before moving to Spokane 26 years ago with her husband, Ivan.

In Spokane, Fannie, the mother of three daughters—Shayla, Ivy and Oceana—taught at seven schools in grades four to six, before coming to Adams and Regal.

Seeking friends when she moved here with no relatives in the area, she joined the Spokane chapter of The Links, Inc., which formed in 1978 with 20 members. It is one of 276 chapters nationwide.

Nationally, Links was formed in 1946

in Philadelphia by women needing companionship and friendship, because many of their spouses had been in World War II. As their friendships grew, the women decided to do something in their communities. The mission of The Links is both friendship and community service.

Over the years, the Spokane chapter has donated books about African Americans to the East Central library. Now it is distributing those books to other library branches. The Links also sponsors The Ebony Fashion Fair at Northern Quest Casino to support scholarships and fund its programs.

Locally, Fannie said The Links, Inc., also provides scholarships to help students attend college and pay for books, clothes, transportation and other expenses. Along with the funds, members offer students emotional support.

In the process, she said the organization has helped her.

“I want to give back what it has given to me by supporting and giving an extra boost to students,” said Fannie, a member at Morning Star Baptist Church.

“My faith calls me to help other people reach their potential, go beyond it and stretch it,” she said.

“Faith helps us persist and have the

courage to carry on,” she added.

To help students in her classes understand their role in their own fitness, health, nutrition and education, Fannie offers them ways to help them discern and develop habits that will benefit them throughout their lives.

To involve her students, she has them fill out activity logs at home, recording when they take a walk, give someone a hug or smile or help prepare a meal. They write down what they eat and what other activities they do alone or with their families.

The challenge is to have students understand how changing their habits will affect them long term, she said.

Although she started teaching as a physical education teacher, she values the focus on fitness.

It eliminates the emphasis on competition, so all children are included in sports and fitness activities in elementary school, she said.

Fannie teaches each of her 483 students in 30-minute classes twice each week. Teaching so many students so little time, she is committed to knowing each student’s name and something about them to express her caring.

“Children need to belong, to be recognized and valued,” she said of teaching, family life and Keys to Success.

For information, call 534-9071 or email ifbush@aol.com.

Teacher instills skills in education, health and fitness

Nonprofit fair trade shop closes, a for-profit shop will open in fall

After 15 years in business as a nonprofit fair-trade retail outlet, Global Folk Art in the Community Building at 35 W. Main closed its doors as of April 30.

Kristina Rood, a member of its board of directors for five years and a volunteer for six years, said the nonprofit business model requiring reliance on volunteers and management by a board operating under nonprofit requirements was too difficult.

Having owned a successful retail gift store in Julian, Calif., before moving to Spokane, she knows that doing retail work for profit also has its difficulties. For example, she said that she became tired of working 80 hours a week.

Since she began volunteering, Global Folk Art has had three part-time managers, each with different styles from managing 15 occasional volunteers to having a core group of three to six volunteers run the store.

“We are closing because we have too many bills,” Kristina said, noting that a drop in Christmas sales left the store without funds to restock.

The going-out-of business sale in April was geared to pay off most of those debts, and Kristina said she would stay on a bit if needed to sell off more.

Global Folk Art started as a project of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) and then became an independent nonprofit.

Nancy Nelson, co-director of PJALS, and Denise Attwood of Ganesh Himal Trading initially established it.

“My belief in fair trade has led me to dedicate time to the store,” Kristina said, “because it means we are paying people in lesser developed countries fairly.

“It’s a wonderful contribution to the world community to shop fair trade and know people who produce the products are not being exploited,” she said.

Kristina said that her Buddhist faith is about compassion for all beings.

“My philosophy is to have compassion for people producing for us. It’s a good motivator,” she said, adding that other volunteers include Buddhists, a Lutheran and other Christians.

“Faith plays a large part in motivating us to want to contribute to the world of compassion and fairness,” said Kristina, who is involved with the Zen Center at the Community Building.

Lisa Ogle, the manager for the last three years, said that the highlights of her work with Global Folk Art has been talking with people around the world, working with fair trade vendors, learning the stories of the people who produced the items and understanding how fair trade has helped them.

Kim Harmson, who works with Ganesh Himal, is negotiating with the Community Building to open a

for-profit fair trade, earth-friendly store in the fall.

The new store will have a new

name and new look, and will offer more selection, said Kim.

For information, call 448-6561.





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Medical mission leads Spokane nurse to challenge domestic violence

By Bronwyn Worthington

Nancy Mortlock, a Spokane nurse, works to combat domestic violence in Romania and Spokane.

In 1999, she never guessed she would make more than 25 trips to Romania in the next decade. Before a group from Fourth Memorial Church invited her to accompany their medical team there, she had hardly heard of the Eastern European country.

Drawn by her nursing skills to participate in the team, she has become aware of health conditions in Romania, concerned about the extent of violence against women there and aware that such violence is also a part of the American experience.

In spite of momentary uncertainty about going, she decided to join the 1999 medical team that summer to provide health care to Romanians in need. She found people still experiencing turmoil from the Communist fall of 1989 and desperately needing medical services.

She found people who wanted to share their stories and develop relationships.

"I understood I could not have enough life to do everything I saw needed to be done. I told my family it does not take an army of people to make a difference in lives. It only takes awareness, availability, modest resources and a willingness to go," she said.

A registered nurse for 34 years, Nancy has worked as a medical consultant with various organizations. She continues to live in Spokane, where she and her husband reared their two sons.

"I understand that a medical background is valuable and can bridge a gap between cultures," she said. "It also can help people in places where health care is marginal or unavailable."

In 2002, Nancy went on her second visit to Romania to organize city-wide educational health forums for communities of women. Information on nutrition, exercise, cancer and hepatitis addressed needs specific to the women there.

"Women had limited information about themselves and their health," she said.

While teaching forums, she found Romanian women with leadership traits. Intent on helping them become leaders in their communities, she took a third trip to Romania.

Over the next three years, she and her team traveled to the neigh-



Nancy Mortlock regularly takes medical teams to Romania.

boring Carpathian Mountains where they met for several days with women.

During those events, women worked on unity, esteem building and goal development.

Nancy's friendship with Paula Oprea, her medical translator on the first trip, has grown into a partnership. Paula, who converted to Christianity shortly after the fall of communism in 1989, has a 14-year history of serving in church leadership.

As Nancy and Paula delved into meeting the medical needs of women, they discovered another issue needing attention.

"We became aware of domestic violence because the majority of women who came to the clinic told us their stories," said Nancy.

Unable to ignore the abuse, Nancy and Paula discussed plans to create a refuge for Romanian women trapped in domestic violence.

In 2006, Nancy and Paula developed a three-step vision that included opening a counseling center, providing a residential shelter for women in need of safety, and equipping clients with life skills and rehabilitation.

That year, to help Paula gain skills to use in Romania, Nancy arranged for her to work as an intern at Ogden Hall, a women's homeless shelter in Spokane.

Last November, Paula came to Spokane a second time. Together, Nancy and Paula have presented their plan to combat domestic violence in Romania to local institutions such as churches, schools, community service clubs and retirement centers.

Nancy said the counseling center, due to open this year, may receive support from grants in the United States and Romania, but

a domestic violence center. They interviewed social-work students for employment in the center.

To learn more about effects of domestic violence, Nancy volunteered at Hope House in Spokane for several months last year.

"I learned how pervasive destructive behavior is in our community," she said. "The difference between Spokane and Romania is that Spokane has multiple programs, shelters, social service departments and resources."

She hopes her efforts to address domestic violence in Romania will speak to women in abusive relationships.

"They need to know that it's okay to break the silence, seek a safe place and transition to a better life," she said.

In Spokane, Nancy encourages churches to address domestic violence by raising awareness from the pulpit, providing counseling and giving support through small groups.

A willingness to take advantage of opportunities for service permeates Nancy's philosophy. Aside from traveling to Romania, she has also provided aid to

programs in countries such as Egypt, where she spoke to groups of medical professionals on basic health-care issues, and China, where she taught medical concepts to nursing specialists.

"I learned that saying 'yes' to opportunity opens the door. Saying 'no' most likely turns opportunities away. This philosophy has led me to China on many occasions, and other countries where women can help other women."

While Nancy's journey has taken her beyond the original vision of addressing basic health care needs, she continues to remember the roots of her ministry.

Each spring, she trains a medical team, preparing them to meet the medical and emotional needs of Romanian citizens.

Nancy said of these teams: "The quality of our work is the foundation of our testimony in their community. I believe that all we do, we do with energy, accuracy and passion. The joy is in the personal experience."

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Farmer finds direct seeding serves conservation his faith inspires

Continued from page 1
than 25 years ago, he began transitioning to direct seeding—also called “no-till” farming. Making the switch was at first expensive, because he had to buy new equipment. Now, Steve said, it is less expensive.

Not tilling the land reduces the number of trips he takes across the acres in his tractor.

Steve is a member of the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association in Moscow. The association’s website—www.directseed.org—points out that “increasing soil-stored carbon” benefits agriculture production and society.

About seven to 15 percent of area farmers use direct seeding, according to Russ Evans, director of the association.

Along with reducing carbon emissions released by tilling, he said direct seeding “improves soil health by maintaining surface residue that breaks down slowly and feeds soil bacteria and fungi, making the soil more alive. The soil is healthier and uses the nutrients more efficiently”

Russ said the residue retains more moisture in the soil, so there is less runoff and more moisture for the crop.

“Over the long term, we have anecdotal evidence that direct seeding results in farmers reducing use of herbicides after a transition of the weed and disease profiles,” Russ explained.

Along with direct seeding, Steve uses crop rotation.

His primary crop is wheat—winter, spring, soft, hard, white and red wheat—plus barley and triticale. He also plants canola and mustard, and has tried corn, soybeans and sunflowers as rotation crops to improve success with direct seeding. Other rotation crops include legumes, peas and lentils.

“We rotate them in to break disease cycles that can develop with direct seeding,” he said.

A trade off with not tilling may be more use of chemicals to inhibit weeds, along with crop rotation, he said.

“I’m selective about what chemicals I use and careful not to use persistent or long-acting chemicals that require waiting several years before legumes or broad-leaf plants will grow,” he explained.

In addition, Steve raises and sells about five steers and 45 hogs a year. Along with grazing, they are fed grass and alfalfa grown without chemicals. He gives them no antibiotics or hormones.

“I harrow the weeds out of the alfalfa without disturbing the roots so it grows back,” he said.



Ann and Steve Swannack with their daughter, Stephanie

Photo provided by Steve Swannack

With mustard prices up from 10 cents a pound to 46 cents a pound, it’s now more profitable to raise the crops.

Steve delivers his harvested grain to a cooperative elevator in Lamont, where he stores it until he sells it, based on his regular monitoring of the market on the internet.

“Biofuel is part of the market pricing structure today, part of the price competition for acres,” he said, “but it will never be the total answer to the energy crisis. It’s a good component, whether made from alcohol from grains or from oil from oil seeds.”

Steve, however, balances that with recognition that there are a limited number of acres in the world for growing crops.

Ann is pleased that her career complements her husband’s farming.

“I’m able to promote practices we use,” she said.

While the 1985 Farm Bill mandates that land that is highly subject to erosion must be protected, she said it’s difficult to promote conservation in this region because many farm operators are not the landowners. Widows, children or grandchildren of farmers are now the owners.

Many producers who lease the land or are hired to farm the land focus on earning a profit or just surviving year to year, rather than seeing themselves as part of ongoing generations farming the land. Owners who do not live on

or work the land also lose a sense of the land as heritage, she said.

“The Palouse had precious, deep, rich soil. Much of it is gone because of pressure to keep improving crop yield for profit, rather than maintaining the resource for future generations,” Ann said.

“Younger generations, who go to college, seek careers and settle elsewhere, are unaware if the operators are stewards or just concerned about profits,” Ann said.

She mentioned other factors: Dry-land farms depend on climate. Limited rainfall limits the variety of crops they can use in rotation, explained Ann, who previously worked as agronomist serving 12 counties from Canada to Oregon.

Despite these factors, she is hopeful, because she sees a change in attitudes of landowners and operators as more decide that soil quality is a resource worth protecting.

“I feel blessed to be able to promote conservation,” she said. “Rather than promoting government programs, I feel I represent the soil as the resource.”

“My faith sustains me through the frustrations,” said Ann who has taught Sunday school, vacation Bible school and Bible studies. She now leads a book group for adult education.

For both Steve and Ann, whose 27-year-old daughter lives in California, faith is key to their lives.

At church, Steve, who has sung

in the church choir since high school, is now choir director and helps lead worship. He has a lay speaker’s certificate and preaches on occasion, too.

“I preach about our need to be prepared to step up to our call,” he said, “trusting that God gives us what we need.”

Weaving his love of music with preaching, he told of a sermon on the hymn, “In the Bleak Midwinter.” Not only do the words and poetry give meaning, but also the minor key of the music increases the impact of its message, Steve said.

In the Palouse, there are “bleak midwinter” days when “frosty winds” moan, as the hymn describes.

“We celebrate Christ’s birth in midwinter, when water is like stone, when snow falls on snow, when people live in hard times,” he said. “Out of the minor key, we are pointed to hope in the hard times, hope in Christ’s birth.”

“I love the music, sound, feel and message of the song, and the reminder that in hard times there is hope,” said Steve.

He and Ann know hard times beyond the ups and downs of farming. Their 24-year-old son died Sept. 24, 2006, in a car accident near Pullman. He taught agriculture in Naches.

“When I feel blue or upset, I sit with a hymnal and sing old classics. It brings me peace.”

“If we did not have hope from our faith, where would we be?” he said.

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Hurricane victims welcome volunteer teams with gratitude

Continued from page 1

Before going to the Gulf Coast last summer, Molly thought the relief work was done and life was back to normal for most people who suffered after Katrina. When the group arrived by bus after flying to nearby New Orleans, she quickly learned that thousands of people continue to live in transitional trailers. She also realized that communities such as Waveland will never be the same again.

"The trip taught me that every little bit helps," said Molly, a junior at Spokane Valley's University High School. "The task of setting the Gulf Coast back on its feet is a daunting one, but if people work together, we can accomplish huge things and make a difference for the thousands affected by Hurricane Katrina."

Catholic Charities made the students' mission trip to the Gulf Coast possible. Catholic Charities USA gave Catholic Charities in Spokane some funds to help Katrina victims who relocated to the Spokane area. Because only a few sought refuge in Eastern Washington, Catholic Charities decided to use the remaining funds for direct aid to the Gulf Coast.

Initially, organizers thought they would go to New Orleans, said Dan, who has coordinated numerous mission trips to Mexico and has worked in youth ministry for 22 years.

After corresponding with volunteers at St. Clare Recovery in Waveland, he and others decided that this coastal community of 7,000, which is the headquarters for much of the relief work that continues in the Gulf Coast, would be a place for youth from Spokane to make a lasting impact.

The students and adult chaperones worked with St. Clare Recovery, a nonprofit that coordinates volunteer groups, providing housing, tools and materials, and connecting them with residents who need help.

St. Clare parish once had a school, convent and rectory located right on the Gulf of Mexico, Dan explained. Nothing was left after Katrina. Now, members of the parish worship in a tent.

In the spot where the church once stood, parishioners erected a sign: "Katrina was big, but God is bigger."

The message not only bolstered spirits of people at St. Clare and in Waveland, but also showed volunteers from Spokane and throughout the country that hope remains amid the tragedy.

When they arrived last August, the group were shocked to see the



Student and adult volunteers from the Catholic Diocese of Spokane help build a deck and wheelchair ramp for a resident of Waveland, Miss.

Photo provided by Dan Glatt

ruins. Some businesses on the north side of town were up and running again, Molly said, but on the south side only the foundations of buildings remained.

Despite their loss, people in Waveland were kind to visitors.

"They were so happy that somebody out there still cared, still knew that they existed," Molly repeated, expressing how overwhelming the sentiments were. "They didn't know or care whose house we worked on or how good our work would be. They were just happy we were there."

The group from Spokane arrived in the midst of a heat wave. Exacerbated by humidity, temperatures soared to more than 100 degrees. To prevent heat stroke and weather-related illnesses, they began working at 6:30 a.m. and finished at noon or 1 p.m. They also took water breaks every 15 to 20 minutes to prevent dehydration. Molly said she drank about three liters of water each day.

Surrounded by so many signs of loss, there were few complaints about the rough conditions.

"This isn't a field trip," Dan reminded the students when they arrived. "We're here to serve."

The group worked on two projects: building a 22-foot wheelchair ramp for John Storm and sheet-rocking bathrooms of a house owned by Deborah Cranmer, a woman with a brain tumor whose home was completely flooded during Katrina.

During their stay, the group slept in a warehouse—the only building in the southern part of town that was still standing. Now used to house volunteers, the warehouse was the town morgue during Katrina's aftermath.

When they weren't working, students spent the afternoons in the air-conditioned warehouse, where they shared dorm-style rooms with as many as five other people. They played games.

The Rev. Jim Kuhns, now at St. Mary's Catholic Parish in Spokane Valley, who accompanied the students, taught them how to play pinochle, Molly said.

People from town also visited them to talk about their lives and the suffering they endured during and after Katrina.

Every night, the students and adults also gathered to pray and to talk about their feelings and experiences.

For Dan and several others, one of the journey's highlights took place later in the week when Father Jim blessed Deborah's house after they finished their work.

Many students took part sprinkling holy water on the walls.

"It was a powerful experience," Dan said. "By working with the community, we developed relationships. It's a way to live out the Gospel."

For Molly, who was the official "cutter woman" with the miter saw at the ramp project, the most memorable part of the trip was when John Storm rode his wheelchair up the new ramp—an addition to his home that could save his life in the event of another disastrous storm.

"He was so happy. The look in his eyes was sheer joy and happiness," said Molly, who is still teary-eyed at the memory. "Even though all we did during that whole week was build him this wheelchair ramp, it made an impact not only on him but also on the rest of the community. Just

and trip, she hopes to encourage others to reach out.

"Every time I think about the time I spent in Mississippi, sweaty and covered in sawdust, I have a feeling of wholesomeness, complete satisfaction and outright joy," she said.

The trip helped her discover her passion for helping others, she said. Now, she wants to encourage others to try and make a difference in the world.

Almost three years after Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, there is much work left to be done, according to the St. Clare Recovery website. Thousands still live in makeshift homes or trailers. Many suffer in poverty and despair.

Organizers at St. Clare say that there is still a need for skilled volunteers and building materials.

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For information, call 747-7213 or visit www.stclarerecovery.com.

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Union Gospel Mission focuses on hearts of women in its crisis shelter

By Deidre Jacobson
By focusing on the hearts of women dealing with pain, homelessness, domestic violence, past imprisonment and mental illness, Union Gospel Mission's Crisis Shelter for Women and Children helps women change their lives, said its director Rich Schaus.

Most women they deal with have never known the stability of a loving relationship. So shelter staff are to love them "no matter what they do," he said.

Staff seek to provide the women with warmth and safety.

Until the shelter's doors opened in January 2007, Union Gospel Mission's Anna Ogden Hall provided crisis housing for women and children. It comprised two components: 1) rescue for those in crisis and 2) a life transformation program for women ready to make changes.

Staff observed the problems caused by this mix. Women in the program were sometimes pulled back to their old lives by friends who came to the shelter but were not ready for change.

In 2005, they decided to focus on those who wanted to change, eliminating the rescue facility and providing the program component only. As Anna Ogden Hall turned people away, their waiting list grew from 15 to more than 60 names.

In early 2006, Union Gospel Mission (UGM) staff initiated a prayer campaign, asking God to provide resources for emergency housing for women and children in crisis.

UGM began a fund-raising campaign for crisis housing and, in October of 2006, Phil Altmeyer, UGM director, began searching for property.

Touring the old Budget Saver Motel, known for prostitution, violence, drug use and alcohol abuse, he saw a billboard going up for the UGM and believed that



Rich Schaus Photo by Deidre Jacobson

was a sign from God.

The board agreed to use foundation funds to buy the property.

Rich, then assistant director of Ogden Hall, became director of the new shelter. They began deep cleaning the rooms and turned the rundown motel into the shelter for women and children.

"January 15, 2007, was an exciting day. On the first night, one woman went into labor. Ambulances or police were there for one reason or another the first three nights," said Rich.

The staff began the process of learning to face unusual dilemmas, such as men dressed as women trying to check into the shelter. Not wanting to offend anyone, they began telling potential guests: "If you have any male anatomy, you can't stay here."

Rich, who grew up Roman Catholic in the St. Louis area, had left the church, dropped out of college and had given in to drugs and alcohol. Ready to change his life, he moved home with his parents, began attending church with his girlfriend and eventually sought God's direction for his life.

Feeling God wanted him to be a missionary, he returned to college at Central Bible College planning to be a medical missionary. He

married, joined the Army Reserve, served in Europe and returned to Moses Lake to care for his wife's grandparents. His job search led him to Spokane and an ad for a director at Ogden Hall.

Rich believes God had a plan for him to be in ministry to homeless women and children.

In March 2002, he became a resident service manager at Ogden Hall and served as pastor to New Hope Center in Ritzville before deciding to focus on homeless women and children.

During 2007, the Union Gospel Mission Crisis Shelter for Women and Children served 1,073 women and children, for a total of 14,587 bed nights.

Rich said he has witnessed miracles in the lives of the women the shelter serves.

"One young woman had come and left six times. She was asked to leave because of relapse or violence, but each time, she changed a little, and was finally able to make the decision to enter the rehabilitative program at Anna Ogden Hall," he said.

"She was frightened and relapsed prior to entry, ending up near death on the sidewalk down the street from the shelter. After a passerby called for help for her,

she woke up in the hospital. Four days later she was in the program at Ogden Hall.

"The community is wealthy in services for women and children," said Rich. "Shelter residents are referred to the Salvation Army, Isabella House, Miryam's House, St Margaret's and Transitional Living Center.

"We've just started a partnership with the Interfaith Hospitality Network to provide case management for some of the families. Spokane Mental Health's Homeless Outreach Team and staff from the Spokane Neighborhood Action Program visit the shelter regularly to help the women access services in the community," he said.

Shelter staff provide crisis housing for anyone, he added. Mentally ill women are welcome if they are not dangerous.

Those who are asked to leave for any reason can return after one day. A few with serious issues must meet and contract with staff before returning.

"We never say never to anyone," said Rich. "We have a passion for Mother Teresa's model of love for the least among us."

He predicts an increase in need among more families and more

mentally ill homeless. He also sees need for a similar shelter for men with children.

The shelter needs volunteers to provide services such as bus driving, decorations, cleaning rooms and just relating with the women and children.

"Homelessness is a community issue," Rich said. "It takes the whole community to make changes."

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Rising fuel prices affect Second Harvest in their fuel tanks and their food supplies

With the economic downturn causing rising food and fuel prices, Jason Clark, director of Second Harvest, said he heard through a recent survey of agencies that they are seeing more clients.

Thirty of 300 agencies responded to the query about the impact of rising prices.

Adding to adjustments from the recent closure of St. Vincent de Paul are difficulties finding commercial food donations and the 77 percent drop in federal

commodities since 2006, he said.

"For those concerned about the hungry, there is always need for food and cash donations," Jason suggested.

Cash not only helps resupply food stock but also helps fund the cost of fuel Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest needs to spend for diesel fuel and freight to deliver the food.

"We are now spending \$4,100 a month for fuel, in contrast with about \$2,500 a month three years

ago," Jason reported.

"While food drives are about at the same level as last year, that's 900,000 pounds of food," he noted. "Food drives are a major source of high quality food, a huge help in the foundation of shelf-stable food supplies."

The positive note is that spring and summer are the area's growing season when Second Harvest receives many fresh vegetables and fruits.

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1503 W. Dean Avenue, Spokane WA
(North on Maple St. Bridge - Right on Gardner
Right on Walnut - Right on Dean)

BISHOP WILLIAM SKYLSTAD,
celebrant

Birth Mothers, Adoptees, Families, anyone else touched by adoption, and the general public are invited to attend.

Birthmother's Luncheon to follow, 1:00 P.M., St. Joseph's Parish Hall, RSVP to 325-7667

Questions?
Contact Sandy Maher at 358-4258
or Bonnie Deabler at 325-7667

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Spokane Children's Theatre presents

Fri May 16 - 7 pm

Sat May 17 - 1 pm

Sun May 18 - 1 pm

Fri May 23 - 7 pm

Sat May 24 - 1 pm

Fri May 30 - 7 pm

Sat May 31 - 10 am* & 4 pm*

Sun June 1 - 1 pm

Sat June 7 - 10 am & 4 pm

Sun June 8 - 1 pm

*denotes signed performances for the hearing impaired

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Annie

Book by Thomas Meehan
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Lyrics by Martin Charnin
Directed by Esta Rosevear

First cohort group begins studies in May

Whitworth University establishes master's degree in theology

Whitworth University has embarked on a master's degree in theology as one way to address the biblical and theological illiteracy its faculty perceives in the society and church. The master's degree in theology is a program it has long wanted to develop.

"The program is more than opening heads and pouring in content," he said. "We plan to develop the heart as well."

The university already has faculty in place to teach the program. They have been involved in teaching the required and elective religion courses Whitworth offers its undergraduates.

"Many lay people lack grounding in biblical, theological and church history studies. Many don't know what happened over the 2,000 years of the church that connects to more than their own denominational experience of faith," said Tim Dolan, who is the director of the master's program.

He has been at Whitworth for 10 years—since fall of 1998—as director of the Institute for Clergy and Lay Leadership Development with the Weyerhaeuser Center for Faith and Learning. He will continue in that role along with the master's program.

"We have talked about having a graduate program ever since I started here," he said. "The center has brought people to campus to sample our faculty for non-degree programs—for certificates or diplomas."

The other main theological education resources in the Inland Northwest are Gonzaga University's Religious Studies Department and Moody Bible Institute Northwest Center for External Studies, he said.

The program will operate on a cohort model, in which participants take the same courses together as a group.

The program has more than 20 students signed up to form the first cohort learning community, which will take courses for 27 months, from May 2008 to August 2010. Students can also do the degree at their own pace. Next summer there are plans to offer an option to complete the program full-time in 16 months.

The 37-credit program includes 10 core courses and two electives. It is designed for working adults with evening, weekend and week-long classes, so that people out of the area can come.

There will be elective courses in such areas as congregational renewal, organizational leadership, youth and family ministry, the global Christian movement, church planting and leadership,



Tim Dolan is director of new master of theology program.

and theology and the practice of worship.

Tim said the program is for youth ministers, Christian education directors, volunteer coordinators, pastors, nonprofit staff, lay ministers and "anyone looking to commit to a journey of personal spiritual enrichment."

It begins with an introductory weekend retreat, May 30 and 31, when Whitworth president Bill Robinson will give a presentation on Christian Leadership.

Upcoming sessions include a week-long course on Church History I: The Great Tradition, taught by Jerry Sittser in June; a week-long course on Church History II: Reformation and Renewal, by Keith Beebe in July; a fall weekend course on Christian Spirituality taught by Karin Heller; a week-long course on Christianity and Culture taught by Todd Cioffi in January 2009; a week-long course on Pastoral Ministry taught by Tim in May 2009, and a weekend session led

by Bill in May.

Other courses will be on Old Testament Theology by Scott Starbuck; The Life of Jesus and the Early Church by Jim Edwards; Letters of the New Testament by Roger Mohrlang; Christian Theology by Adam Neder, and Teaching and Preaching the Scriptures. Faculty for the last class is to be announced.

The faculty, which includes current Whitworth faculty, represent different church backgrounds, most coming from the Reformed tradition.

"In this ecumenical program students will gain from the faculty's and other students' church traditions and theological perspectives, along with exploring their own traditions," he said.

"They will be able to explore where they come from and how similar and different they are from each other," he added.

Tim, who attends Colbert Presbyterian Church, said the program will appeal to people serving as

pastors but have no theological degree, and to certified lay pastors, lay people serving formally and informally, and anyone seeking more grounding, nurture and enrichment in their faith.

Some graduates may go on for other studies and some may want to transfer credits to a seminary for a master of divinity degree. Whitworth, which has 2,600 students in more than 50 undergraduate and graduate programs, is preparing agreements with seminaries so that will be possible.

"We live in a credentialed culture," said Tim, who teaches New Testament and the Life and Teachings of Jesus for the Whitworth's continuing studies program and the theology department.

"This is one means locally to equip people for ministry, wherever they serve and work," he said.

The students in the first group come primarily from Washington. Many have participated in Wey-

erhaeuser Center for Faith and Learning courses and have asked for such a program.

The goal is to start a new cohort every May.

Beyond academic content, the program includes community building and spiritual formation. The students will gather for Matins, evening worship and shared meals, as well as participating in classes.

For information, call 777-3222 or email theologyma@whitworth.edu.

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Media conveyed sound content and sound bites on Pope’s visit

While it’s common for media to focus on celebrities and political leaders, religious leaders are often ignored, except for the Pope, a religious leader who is also a celebrity and political leader.

During his recent visit to the United States, media gave credible time and space to his presence, his actions and his words, reflecting his statements beyond distillations in sound bites that often take content out of context.

Media followed Pope Benedict XVI like they follow superstars as he connected with young Americans, victims of sexual abuse, older Americans, victims of Sept. 11, the United Nations General Assembly, priests and laity, a Yankee-Stadium-bursting crowd and the President. Yes, he is a head of state. Yes, his words carry power, so media also followed his words and witness, conveying them on TV, internet, radio and in print.

It was “sensational” that a religious leader was the subject of positive “sensational”—large headlines and top of page/newscast

play and—media coverage for so many days, highlighting important issues in people’s lives, the power of humility and regality mixed, some words of wisdom to help heal the Catholic Church, all churches, and relationships among faiths and in the United States as a nation.

Sharing some of his personal story with seminarians at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers, he urged them “to overcome activities and mindsets that stifle hope.”

He also shared an insight from his teenage years, which he said were “marred by a sinister regime that thought it had all the answers,” a message cautioning people of any nation about expectations of their leaders and taking care to see beyond promises of their governments.

Then he described how the Nazi “influence grew, infiltrating schools, civic bodies and religion, as well as politics, before it was fully recognized as the monster it was. It banished God and thus became impervious to anything true and good.”

Such words, witness and warnings from the church are crucial not only for individuals, but also for media, so they do not let go of their roles as whistleblowers and watchdogs, so they cover people willing to march and email, protest and blog, rally and text message as outgrowths of the faith that renews their sensibility, sensitivity, caring and conscience.

We recall that part of the church in Nazi Germany was part of the Confessing Church that maintained an overt and underground challenge to the Nazi infiltration that redefined the scope and limits of faith.

We must always take care and be watchful so that government does not slip in as our god, so that businesses promoting consumption do not control our psyches with the god of consumption, and so that popularity—following the trends of polls and fashions—does not dominate our minds and world views.

While the information on the Nazi influence was in the newspaper article, it was at

the end, not in the lead.

The headline picked it up in a softened, generalized way: “Pope delves into personal history,” with a subhead, “Speaks about Nazism in his youth.”

If I had written the headline, it would have said: “Pope tells of ‘sinister’ role of Nazism,” with a subhead, “Tells how it infiltrated society.”

Meanwhile, there were many positive images uplifted, conveying subtly and positively what the church is and does.

I liked his words challenging how the spires of St. Patrick Catholic Church being dwarfed by Manhattan skyscrapers are a reminder “of the yearning of the human spirit to rise to God.”

I also liked the call for all the faithful to “act as beacons of life.”

Thus, Pope Benedict XVI’s visit and words left us with comfort, chiding and challenges for our faith journeys.

Mary Stamp
The Fig Tree editor

Martin Marty offers sound bites and substance for revitalizing churches

While listening to Martin Marty, a historian of American religion and retired seminary professor, speak at the recent Eastern Washington Idaho Synod Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on revitalizing the church today, I thought about sound bites, which can easily distract us from the content.

His delivery is often conversational. He punctuates serious points with witty asides that make the points sharper. It would be easy to enjoy his quips and miss his points. In that context, I realize sound bites are so irritating and potentially misleading because they give us the momentary impression that we have heard something significant. However, without context, what we tend to remember are catchy, dramatic elements without the meaning.

Being in the presence of one of the most delightfully informative speakers on the circuit today, I banished thoughts about sound bites and went back to context.

According to Martin, the church today needs to go deep into its traditions and beliefs and present them in a new light.

He quoted French scientist and theologian Blaise Pascal as saying that the church does its best when it lives by the promises of God.

There are problems along the way toward

revitalization, and he said, “You can’t be revitalized if you haven’t been vitalized in the first place. I’m assuming that your baptism took.” He’s thinking of calling his next book *Baptism: a User’s Guide*.

What we as individuals do with our faith and a wider notion of ministry are vital to the revitalization of the church, he said. He briefly explored five areas of thought: the “dailiness” of faith that permeates all life; the need to break out of self-centeredness and into the light; the realization we are meant to be Christ to our neighbor; recognition that church happens in community and being saved isn’t enough, and realization that our mission is wherever we are.

As it tries to be relevant in the 21st century, the church faces what he calls “oppressive secularity.” It is often criticized for narrow views and practices that have contributed to world problems instead of solving them, but “in the 20th century we saw secular regimes that were no better.”

Skewed conceptions of spirituality can interfere with the work of the church, and they are often preceded with the comment, “I’m not religious, but I am very spiritual.” Spirituality is individual, he says, but there is a positive side. “Add an adjective and you have a community,” as in Celtic spirituality. The church exists in community.

Some see pluralism, and sometimes ecumenism, as a threat to the identity of their denomination. “Pluralism is a threat only if we think it has to mean relativism,” he said. “Ecumenism doesn’t mean you have to give up your own faith.”

Regarding the 18-29 age group, he says young people are “bored silly about polity.” They are interested in the real work of the church. According to Martin, we still have to answer German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s question: “Who is Christ for us today?”

As part of his lecture on “Global Local Faith, Local Global Faith” at Whitworth University during his visit, he addressed some responses to that question, uplifting the importance of face-to-face encounters, even as technology affords new kinds of immediate local and global contact with cell phones, internet and text messaging.

However we receive news, Martin said that “religion is bonded to the news.” Contrary to Enlightenment expectations, neither science nor atheism caused religion to die. Even though there are 3,000 fewer Christians each day in the “spiritual ice belt” from Poland across Europe and North America to Japan, there are 18,000 more Christians a day in Sub-Saharan Africa.

He challenges us to figure out what it

means when the global and local are fused and people are “techno Bedouins,” who do not move tents, but just need connectivity to move anywhere in the world.

Be it through technology, visits of ecumenical partners or youth mission trips, Martin said Americans can see the rest of the world and realize how others live.

“Think of what we can do if we realize the church can be our eyes to the world, because the whole body of Christ includes people spread in diverse countries, speaking many languages, offering more connectivity than any organization,” he said.

So global issues of immigration, relief, ethics, health, environment, market, war and culture are local issues.

He also reminds that when we want to know what we can do for others, we can do what we do every week in church: pray for them, using the power of intercession, aware that as the globe turns, Christians somewhere are waking up and praying for each other and the world.

“The church, unsleeping, never rests,” he said, adding that another way Christians pray is by caring, helping in local places, understanding a wider notion of ministry that includes digging wells and setting bones.

Nancy Minard - Editorial Team

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

As we hustle through our days, often dealing with way too much, we may discover that we are lost or have lost that which matters most—people, a purpose, our dreams—or have lost touch with our true selves, the unique person God created us to be. A loss too great to let be.

In the spirit of repentance (turning around), we are invited to reconsider and return, listening to our deepest desires and living in the holy hope Jesus gives us.

To Jesus, the lost were important above all else. He told stories about sheep and coins to illustrate the point, but beyond that, he lived his life purposefully to lead the lost, his beloved, to a love too deep to describe and life too full to contain.

That hasn’t changed, but we may have to—change our direction, even turn around—to see this truth more clearly and to live this life more fully.

The Right Rev. Jim Waggoner, Jr.
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane

I am no sailor, but in my Christian walk, I have learned that there are times when one has to “cross” through rough waters to sail into the relatively smoother

waters of God’s will.

We are living in a transition time in the life of the Church. The Christian Church no longer informs or influences the culture nor is it the cultural fellowship center of our lives. We can no longer assume that people will simply come in the doors of the church and want to be Christians. The waters we are sailing in are rough, stomach churning and uncomfortable.

We are invited to live out our faith at work during the week as well as on Sunday morning. We are encouraged to share the forgiving grace we know so well with co-workers, friends, family and even strangers we meet. Rough waters, indeed!

I find that there are two things to remember as we sail these rough seas: the first is simply this: Jesus is in the boat with us, and there is no way to get to smoother waters unless we continue to “cross the bar.”

In Mark’s rendition of Jesus’ calming the waters, Jesus is reminding us that we are not sailing the waters of transition alone. The one who stills the raging wind and waves is in our boat. He brings peace to our anxious hearts, reminding us that God, creator of wind and sea, can and will carry us through this time to “the other side.”

We are invited to trust in him, to organize our lives around his creative, redeeming, calming stirring up Word.

Once we understand that God has not forsaken us, but is in the same boat we are, we can begin to see our way through these churning waters.

The Rev. Ginny Johnson
St. Paul Lutheran - Quincy

It appears that we are at a critical crossroads in our culture and world economy. The growing global economy and market and the high demands for petroleum products and building supplies (steel and copper wire) around the world will affect our lifestyle in a direct way. Costs of goods and services are going to rise. Transportation and air travel is going to go up. Eventually this will impact every one of us in our lifestyles. It is beginning to do so already.

This is going to demand that we rethink how we have lived and how we will live in a global community. This is a theological issues as well as economic one. How are we going to use God’s earth and the resources that are available? How will we live together in this global community?

What does it mean to be family? Community?

We have had it pretty easy and that has led to the misuse of the earth. Recycling is a must; reducing our dependence on petroleum and other resources is a must; rethinking how we live and what is important for life is a must.

What can you do? What can we do?

The Rev. David Helseth
Englewood Christian - Yakima

Home is a human concept. Seeds take root wherever the wind or other animals carry them. Animals sometimes construct shelters to raise their young, abandoning the structure at the end of the breeding season. But for us, home is intentional. We build memories and associations into our house’s very structure.

Israel is for our collective community—home. Abraham was told he was to go there. Moses died getting there. David conquered and solidified the community there. The kings lost it. The prophets explained why and two millennia later, we were able to travel as a group, home.

Adie Goldberg - education director,
Temple Beth Shalom

Habitat Blitz Build runs May 30 to June 17

The area’s faith community is putting faith into action by supporting Habitat for Humanity’s annual Blitz Build, May 30 to June 17, with more than 35 clergy from the region scheduled to lead volunteers in prayer as they begin each work day.

“This tradition creates pause for those wrapped in the bustle of the excitement and reminds workers that they are building not just a home but a home for ‘all God’s people in need,’” said Michone Preston, director of Habit-Spokane.

The faith community usually provides meals for volunteers, serving more than 100 lunches a day. This year 13 faith groups will provide meals.

In addition, 12 to 15 volunteer groups from the faith community will help pound nails to build two new homes and finish several others in the 5500 block of East Union.

“Habitat for Humanity was created by people in the faith community,” said Michone “It began locally in the basement of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church more than 20 years ago.

“Still today, 182 homes later, we are honored to celebrate our heritage with the faith community through continued involvement and partnership,” she said.

Habitat-Spokane receives support from the faith community in several other ways, including annual funding and special partnership funding.

Since 2005, Habitat-Spokane has built 12 homes in partnership with Thrivent Financial and the area Lutheran community through

the Thrivent Builds Homes program, which provides funding and volunteers. Thrivent Builds is sponsoring construction on three homes in Spokane this year.

Area churches have also served as host to out-of-town college groups and church mission groups who come to Spokane to build.

During Habitat ground breaking and key dedication ceremonies,

area pastors share inspiration from scripture and lead the celebration in prayer and thanksgiving to God.

“The ecumenical tradition continues full circle as families from all faith backgrounds turn to Habitat to help build decent, affordable homes for all God’s people in need,” said Michone.

For information, call 534-2552.

Calendar of Events

- May 1

- **National Day of Prayer** for national, church and community leaders, The Service Station, 9315 N. Nevada, 7:15 a.m. - 487-7429
 - **Yom Hashoah, “Preventing Genocide: How Do Ordinary People Become Evil?”** Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 747-3304
- May 2

- **Women’s Hearth** participates in **Spokane First Fridays Art Walk**, 920 W. Second, 5 to 8 p.m. - 328-6702 x 107
- May 3

- **Farm Prep/Work Day**, preparing Riverfront Farm gardens, Farm Eco-House, 2605 W. Boone, 8 a.m. - 434-8160
- May 6

- **“Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity,”** Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media Film Series, Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main, 7:30 p.m. - 323-3578
 - **Groundbreaking for Christ Clinic** at Christ Kitchen, 2410 N. Monroe, 11 a.m. - 325-4343
 - **Greening Our Neighborhood Film Series**, “Developing Local Food Systems, Farm Eco-House, 2605 W. Boone - 434-8160
- May 8

- **Green Collar Jobs Service Corps**, summer youth employment, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 5 - 7 p.m. - 280-1702
- May 8-10

- **“Discover Your Personal Wisdom,”** Barbara Jean Glodowski, OSB, St. Joseph Family Center, 1016 N. Superior - 483-6495
- May 9

- **Farm Eco-House Dedication and Re-Naming**, 2605 W. Boone, 5:15 p.m. - 280-1702
 - **Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane Auction**, Mountain Gear, 6012 E. Mansfield, Spokane Valley, 6-9 p.m. - 838-7870
 - **Birth Mothers’ Mass**, St. Joseph’s Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, noon - 358-4258
- May 11

- **I Remember Mama Luncheon**, Red Lion Inn at the Park, donations sought to support low-income guests - 624-2378
- May 12

- **“Hope for Humanity,”** United Nations Association, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr., membership meeting, 6:30 p.m., readers theater, 7 p.m. - 456-2382
- May 12, 14

- **Coming to the Table: Healing for Hurting Congregations,”** Institute for Congregational Leadership, St. Joseph’s Family Center, 1016 N. Superior, 5-8:30 p.m. - www.corhome.org
- May 16-19

- **Experience AIDS Exhibit**, First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar - 747-1058
- May 17

- **West Central Neighborhood Garden Celebration**, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 1832 W. Dean, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., 363-1826
 - **Raised Bed Party**, 2605 W. Boone, 9 a.m. to noon - 434-8160
 - **Spokane Town Hall Meeting**, Equal Voices, East Central Community Center, 500 S. Stone - 326-4135
- May 28

- **BIOAg Tour**, Colfax and Bengie, 387-6290
- May 30

- **“A Little Bit of So Much Truth,”** Film Night for KYRS Thin Air Radio, 35 W. Main, 8 p.m. - 747-3012
 - **Annual Leadership Prayer Breakfast**, “Faith at Work: It Works!” Os Hillman of Marketplace Leaders Ministries, Doubletree Hotel, 7 to 8:45 a.m. - 953-8003
- May 30-June 17

- **Habitat-Spokane Blitz Build** - 534-2552
- May 30-31

- **Master of Arts in Theology Orientation**, Whitworth University - 777-3275
- May 31

- **Spaghetti Dinner Fund Raiser**, Shalom Ministries, Central United Methodist Church, 518 W 3rd - 838-1431
- June 3

- **Fig Tree distribution**, St. Mark’s Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m.
 - **Green Our Neighborhoods Film Series**, “The Greening of Cuba and Local Living Economies,” 2605 W. Boone, 7 p.m.
- June 4

- **Fig Tree Board**, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.
- June 6-8

- **“In the Footsteps of Jesus,”** Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd - 448-1224
- Wed-Sat

- **Habitat-Spokane** work days - call 534-2552
- Thurs

- **PJALS street vigils** on Iraq War, Riverside & Monroe 4:30 p.m.-838-7870.
- Fridays

- **Colville Peace Vigil** - 675-4554
- 1st Sats

- **Ministers’ Fellowship Union and Minister’s Wives/Widows Fellowship**, 806 W. Indiana - 624-0522
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- **NAACP** - 467-9793

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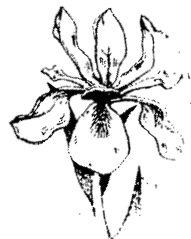
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School children fill halls of aging, near-century-old church

By Virginia de Leon
In a near-century-old church where the congregation's average age is about 70, children from the East Central neighborhood gather in the basement to play.

Twice a week in the school year and a dozen times each month in the summer, school-age children come to Grace Lutheran Church to share a meal, spend time with other youth and talk to adults who want to make a difference in the children's lives.

"When everything else goes wrong in your life, you can come to Project SPEAR," said William Shelton, a 16-year-old who lives next door to the church.

Project SPEAR—Spiritual Program for Education, Arts and Recreation—is an after-school and summer program for youth ages four to 17. Since it was established in 1969 by a college student, Sharon Rector, and the Rev. Al Ingebritsen, the pastor then, Project SPEAR has reached thousands of low-income youth.

"The program lets them know there are people who care about them," said Sheryl Kruger, volunteer coordinator and a longtime member of Grace Lutheran. "The children and youth make friends. They learn about boundaries and making choices, and they learn how to take care of themselves."

Most of the youth in Project SPEAR are children of the working poor families south of East Sprague Ave. between the "cat walk," the neighborhood name for the Hamilton St. overpass, and the Altamont exit of Interstate 90.

While their parents struggle to make ends meet by working two or more jobs, children often have little to do after school, said Marilee Campbell, a neighbor who has three jobs including being Project SPEAR administrator.

Because parents overwork, some children suffer from poor nutrition, delinquency and other problems, said Marilee. With no one home to help with homework, play and talk to them, the children also risk being influenced by gangs and other negative elements in the neighborhood, she said.

The goal is to provide youth a safe environment where they can



Carolee and Jim Nyborg of Grace Lutheran volunteer to cook meals for children at Project SPEAR.

Photo by Virginia de Leon

learn and play, said Marilee.

"Many families have tried to lift themselves up by their own bootstraps and have done okay," Marilee wrote in a brochure about Project SPEAR, "but, many other families don't even have boots with straps to pull up."

That's where Project SPEAR can help, Sheryl said.

For nearly four decades, children who have nowhere else to go have come to Grace Lutheran's basement—a large social hall filled with round dining tables and chairs. Its walls are decorated with colorful drawings, paintings and art projects children have created over the years.

In addition to giving them a place to spend time after school and summers, Project SPEAR ensures that some children receive extra food to take home for their families, as well as soap, shampoo and other sundries that can't be purchased with food stamps.

"It's a great place to hang out," said 15-year-old Kimberly Friddle. "They also feed us and help our families."

Up to 30 youth show up for two hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the school year. The littlest ones spend the afternoon playing with toys, coloring with crayons or making up games. Teens usually gather around a table, where they do homework or talk to each other about school, friendships and other events in their lives. Often, older youth

help supervise the younger ones with arts-and-crafts projects.

In the summers, they meet from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. In addition to activities at the church, youth also go on field trips to neighborhood parks, downtown Spokane and other places. They also spend the first two weeks of August at Camp Lutherhaven on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

For many children, Project SPEAR is their first introduction to faith, Sheryl said.

While some choose not to go to church, "seeds are planted," she said. "You never know how you touch their lives."

Every child is welcome, she said, as long as their parents or guardians fill out a registration form and provide emergency contact information.

Many youth who recently gathered at Grace Lutheran raved about camping trips and outings they've experienced through Project SPEAR.

For some, it's a good way to connect with other young people and make lasting friendships.

"We're really close here," said 17-year-old Allie Rauch. "Everyone gets along."

Allie, a Running Start student at Spokane Community College, has been coming to Project SPEAR since she was seven. Her two

younger sisters, 16-year-old Dani and 15-year-old Chuckie, also are longtime participants. Allie's nine-month-old son, Chandler, is the youngest participant. When he was born, Allie received support from her peers at the after-school program and from longtime members of Grace Lutheran.

The church prayed for Allie and her infant, Sheryl said, and provided diapers, blankets and other newborn necessities.

In addition to Sheryl, a member of Grace Lutheran for 33 years, others at the church volunteer.

Lenny Kruger, Sheryl's brother-in-law and a lifelong member, helps prepare and clean up the basement. Rose Carpino, who joined Grace Lutheran 14 years ago, often helps with programs.

Jim and Carolee Nyborg, who started worshipping at Grace 10 years ago, are cooks. They come every week with bags full of groceries. While youth play outside or in the basement, they spend the afternoon in the church's kitchen, preparing nutritious foods for the children. Most evenings, they serve meals of quesadillas, pizza or ham with mashed potatoes.

Besides helping the needy in their neighborhood, church members see Project SPEAR as a way to bring the youth and the older generation together.

"Many come and go. There's much transition in the neighborhood," said Jim, "but things are changing. We're seeing more children and youth at church."

Older members appreciate hearing children's laughter and voices in the basement, Sheryl said.

Although it's been around 39 years, finding the funds to keep Project SPEAR afloat is always a challenge, said organizers.

The program has received sup-

port from other churches, including those in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod.

Community organizations such as Miracle Bonus Mothers of Multiples Club have donated clothing, toys, books and food.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a national nonprofit organization that sponsors outreach programs, has provided grants.

In recent years, Project SPEAR has received money from the sale of chocolate "indulgences" at The Kaufer Company Religious Gifts and Supplies.

Members of St. Ann's Catholic Church, a few blocks away, have organized sales of these chocolates, first to feed people in the neighborhood and now to support Lutheran programs.

Fourteen years ago, Tom Westbrook, a longtime member of St. Ann's, came up with the idea of selling indulgences. He contracted with Spokandy to make and wrap chocolates, and asked Ed Sinclair, owner of the Kaufer Co., to sell them.

In recent years, the Rev. Martin Wells, bishop of ELCA's Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod, has directed the funds received from sales to Project SPEAR.

Sheryl, a preschool teacher who started volunteering for Project SPEAR five years ago, hopes to provide youth with more opportunities, bringing guest speakers and taking children on field trips to expand their horizons.

"Some children have lived in Spokane all their lives, but have never been to Riverfront Park," she said. "They're good kids just in rough situations. We're here to support them and let them know someone cares."

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