House Approves $4.5 Million in Federal Funding for Two Projects

By Jo Davies

On Thursday, March 24th, community members and dignitaries gathered at Forterra to celebrate some good news for the Hilltop: the awarding of new federal funding championed by U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer (WA-06) to support two projects that aim to provide more affordable housing and job opportunities in the Hilltop.

The funding will help ensure the residential and business spaces will be attainable to community residents and BIPOC-owned businesses.

The House passed $3 million for the Tacoma Housing Authority’s Hilltop Housing and Commercial project. The Tacoma Housing Authority owns three parcels within two blocks in the Hilltop neighborhood of Tacoma. They aim to redevelop these sites as part of public private partnership to bring approximately 200 units of affordable housing to households earning up to 60% of the Average Minimum Income (AMI) and approximately 20,000 sq ft of commercial space. The $3 million included in the spending bill will be used to acquire the commercial spaces and provide financial assistance to business owners to do the tenant improvements needed for their spaces. Commercial tenants are expected to include a performing arts center and other BIPOC businesses. The Tacoma Housing Authority has a goal to occupy 80% of the commercial space with BIPOC businesses to reflect the local neighborhood and honor its culture.

Additionally, the House passed $1.5 million for the Hilltop Attainable Housing and Businesses Development project, which aims to provide community ownership of a mixed-use hub for culture, community, homes, and businesses on the Hilltop. For nearly two years, Forterra has been working with Hilltop community residents and businesses on a real estate development project – the Hilltop Attainable Housing and Businesses project – which aims to address the community’s need for a central cultural hub for the Black community and that will provide a home for small businesses, community ownership, community gathering space, and attainably-priced homes. Forterra aims to develop four buildings to include 150-175 rental units and 150-175 limited equity cooperative ownership model units. At least 50% of the total rental and home ownership units will be affordable. According to Forterra, their limited equity cooperative home ownership model aims to significantly lower down payments and mortgage payments for prospective homeowners next to Sound Transit’s light rail extension. In addition to the attainable housing, the project will include approximately 50,000 square feet of commercial space for community-owned businesses and local non-profits. The buildings will be designed with community input, providing space for local, small businesses and community organizations, and helping build wealth for families priced out by gentrification and housing scarcity.

Hilltop Action Coalition

Hilltop Action Journal

HAC Virtual Weekly Updates

Hey Hilltop! What’s happening? Find out each Mondays at 6:00 PM.

Join in on Mondays at 6:00 PM via HAC Facebook Live where you’ll receive community updates and information about local events and resources in the Hilltop. If you are not on Facebook, simply Google HAC Virtual Weekly Update at 6PM and click on the Live Video link. You may not have access to the chat log, but you can still watch the video.

Check out the March 21st HAC Virtual Weekly Update to hear from Gerrit Nyland with The Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness. Gerrit shared the 2021 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness. Read more about the Plan on Page 6 in this issue.

Special Guests Sherrilla Bivens and Rosemary Powers spoke about the Coalition’s Race and Equity Committee and how you can join to make a difference in your community.

You can watch the March 21st HAC virtual meeting here https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition/videos/?ref=page_internal along with the entire library of Virtual Weekly Updates.

Join Us

Hilltop Action Coalition Virtual Weekly Updates
Mondays @ 6PM

Meet your neighbors and become part of the Hilltop Community. Each week, we have presentations and information about community events, activities, policy, and important news.

Message from the Executive Director

By Brendan Nelson

Hilltop family,

The transition from winter to spring is always a positive and welcomed change. It is incredible how the time passes so quickly, especially when life is progressing well. Back in the middle of these challenging times, everything and everyone felt so slow, but as our situations are improving, everything moves at such a faster pace. The past month has been a demanding time, but one filled with a sense of progress and excitement.

Now, perhaps more than ever, it’s really important that we think about how our actions affect others and the world around us. I am inspired daily by stories of our people continuing to care for loved ones, to help those in need and to strive to do the right thing in their communities and beyond in the face of this better… but continuing global pandemic.

As an organization, we have given great thought to how we can retain that proactive force for good on a far wider scale in our everyday business and strengthen our commitment to the Hilltop community and make sure we are thorough with what is right, not just what is needed.

We still are continuing to adjust to this new normal. We still need to manage new and sometimes conflicting priorities – family, safety, children, work, finances, and social distancing, just to name a few.

While we are seeing a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we all still need to continue to keep up with the latest news reports on the pandemic. No matter what position you find yourself in right now, we are still still navigating challenging and unprecedented times.

I continue to be so thankful for your support of the Hilltop Action Coalition.

We have some wonderful events and community engagement opportunities planned this year and look forward to continuing on this journey with you. God bless you all, and as always, stay safe!

Brendan Nelson
Executive Director
Meet HAC Board Member: Alyssa Torrez

By Jo Davies

Alyssa Torrez is one of those women whose life leaves you breathless. Her eyes sparkle when she talks about her passions of which there are many: housing, youth, animals, and most of all community with a capital “C.”

She is employed by Tacoma Housing Authority as a Program Manager in Real Estate Development. In that capacity, she works with the community and various stakeholders on planning, design, and development of the Hilltop area, her task on the outreach effort “housing and community go hand in hand.” This interest in community and housing is also at play in her three-year term on the Tacoma Planning Commission, a position to which she hopes to be reappointed. “It was a steep learning curve,” she said, “and I’m eager to get started on Phase 2 of the Home-in-Tacoma project. It’s complicated, but people are beginning to understand it better.”

Concerns for providing affordable housing also plays out in Alyssa’s personal life. For several years, she has been a Shared Housing Host Provider for youth 18 – 24. “It’s a wonderful experience,” she enthuses. “One of housemates was a gardener and kept us in veggies all summer and I don’t worry about home security because there’s always someone home. It’s a micro-community.” In addition, three cats, three dogs, three chickens and some fish are also part of Alyssa’s community.

Her first job in Tacoma was as Outreach Director for KBTC Public Television, and through her contacts in that position she became a volunteer with Write 253. It was her first board experience. After that, she now has been a board member for six years and board president for the last two years. Write 253 is a unique organization that encourages youth to explore writing and printmaking and creates community for youth.

Alyssa came to HAC in 2018, when a former board member met her at a KBTC outreach event. Impressed by her experience with youth outreach and communications, he invited her to explore HAC Board membership and a role working with the Hilltop Action Journal.

Alyssa feels that HAC’s achievements are related to its ability to meet changing needs in the community. “HAC is flexible, we have a “roll with it” response and are committed to find solutions and ways to make something work. The response to COVID is a case in point. Less than a month into the pandemic shut-down, HAC moved from monthly in-person business meetings to the virtual weekly Update on FB https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition. That was in March of 2020 and with few exceptions, the Weekly Update continues. We’re looking forward to resuming monthly in-person meetings, but we are more connected to the Hilltop community now than we were before the pandemic.” HAC recognized that Hilltop community were struggling, there was no one on the street so in cooperation with THA we developed the concept of a socially - distanced cooperative business crawl with elements of pop-up vendors, contests, and swag. This expanded into the Summer Splash last summer “it brought tears to my eyes to see so many folks out exploring and enjoying MLK Jr. Way. It’s an event we plan to repeat this year – watch for it!” That HAC can be creative and flexible in our approaches to community issues is due to the commitment of the Board members and limited staff (1 unpaid director and 1 PT program manager) – they are all workers, no shirkers.

She admits that owning a truck increases her popularity/usefulness to community events, “it’s the key to my success: there’s always stuff to haul.”

It’s Alyssa’s vision that HAC will be the “go to” place for information and action about all things Hilltop, whether you are looking for information about a resource or event, have a concern or problem, or have an idea to share. HAC can be the entity that connects and shares the various aspects of community.”

Alyssa sees the development and retention of affordable/attainable housing for displaced and those at risk of being displaced as the primary challenge facing Hilltop today. She hopes that folks who have had to leave the Hilltop for less expensive housing and who would like to return are able to do just that. She sees the Hilltop as a community with space for everyone: a place of diversity, heritage, art, color and light, bustling and lively – sort of a 21st century version of the mural on Johnson’s Candy building facing People’s Park: a tram, thriving and varied businesses, and pedestrians of all kinds.

**BUILD, By Matanofo Porter**

Located At Second Cycle’s Storefront - 1205 MLK Jr. Way

By Matanofo Porter, Local Artist

Every leader starts from somewhere. They push through what seems like inexhaustible resistance, but it has to be done responsibly. It’s a subtle but powerful move to give what you can when you can, and not take what you can. This “BUILD” mural is here to honor you, where you come from, and where you’re going. It is a thank you for all the gifts you’re leaving behind to guide and fuel others who follow. You don’t need to save the world, you don’t have to lead. Just know that building blocks are beautiful and valuable things. Use them when you can find them, create them when you can’t.” ~ Matanofo Porter.

This art display is organized in part by Spaceworks Tacoma, and paid for by Sound Transit through their “Loyal to the Local” program. Special thanks to 2nd Cycle for hosting the mural on their storefront.

Find out more about the Artist, Matanofo Porter, online at: IG @itsjust_nofo

HAC Board Member Alyssa Torrez

sees the Hilltop as a community with space for everyone: a place of diversity, heritage, art, color and light, bustling and lively – sort of a 21st century version of the mural on Johnson’s Candy building facing People’s Park: a tram, thriving and varied businesses, and pedestrians of all kinds.

“In honor of where you come from, where you’re going, and the gifts you’re leaving behind to guide and fuel others. You don’t need to save the world, you don’t even have to lead. Just know that building blocks are beautiful and valuable things. Use them when you can find them, create them when you can’t.” ~ Matanofo Porter.
TAM Presents
GATHER: 27 Years of Hilltop Artists

Featuring primarily artists of color, GATHER highlights the outcomes and reach of the Hilltop Artists program.

By Phyllis McElroy and Jackie Zils, on behalf of the Tacoma Art Museum

TACOMA, WA (March 14, 2022) — Opening March 26, GATHER: 27 Years of Hilltop Artists presents the works of 21 alumni whose work challenges the status quo in questioning who is an authentic artist and who has value in museum spaces. Featuring primarily artists of color, GATHER highlights the outcomes and reach of the Hilltop Artists program while shining a light on opportunity gaps faced by these artists, many of whom have not yet been included in exhibitions on this scale.

The exhibition includes over 30 pieces in a variety of mediums ranging from blown glass and neon to paintings and mixed media. GATHER: 27 Years of Hilltop Artists was curated by Trenton Quiocho, Hilltop Artists Alumn (2008) and current Teaching Artist and Hot Shop Manager, with contributions by Dr. Kimberly Keith, Hilltop Artists Executive Director. The works on view in GATHER represent only a fraction of the diverse artists who have emerged from the Hilltop Artists Program. Co-founded by Dale Chihuly and Kathy Kaperick in 1994, Hilltop Artists was developed as a community organization that provided a creative space for “at risk” youth from the Hilltop neighborhood to assist well-known artists in producing their works. Over time the program evolved from Hilltop Artists in Residence, where professional artists were in residence on the Hilltop, to Hilltop Artists, where young people from the Hilltop learn to become artists in their own right. Today, students ages 12 to 26 learn the art of glassmaking in daytime elective classes, after school enrichment programs, and Arts Connectcohorts for court-involved young people.

“This show is about representation,” said Dr. Kimberly Keith, Executive Director, Hilltop Artists. “Glass is expensive and exclusive, yet local BIPOC artists are having a breakthrough moment where they get to show what they can do and finally have a say in the narrative that has too often left them out.”

“One of the guiding principles of our mission, and the reason why it is such a thrill to be a part of TAM, is the museum’s commitment to the Tacoma community,” said David Setford, Executive Director, Tacoma Art Museum. “By ushering in artists whose roots are just up the hill from TAM, we help encourage today’s youth to create art and appreciate that art is everywhere and for everyone.”

GATHER: 27 Years of Hilltop Artists is presented in collaboration with Tacoma Art Museum. The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of Leadership Sponsors including ArtsFund and Tacoma Creates. We give special thanks to additional supporters of Hilltop Artists including the Dale & Leslie Chihuly Foundation, Marie Lamfrom Foundation, and Tacoma Public Schools.

To find out more about the GATHER exhibit, contact Phyllis McElroy at pmcelroy@jayray.com, or visit https://www.tacomaartmuseum.org. You can visit the exhibit until September 4, 2022, Wednesday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm; Thursday through Saturday from 11am till 8pm. Admission is $18 for an Adult and $15 for a Senior (65+). TAM Members, children 18 and under, active duty military, reservists, veterans, and their families are always free. TAM is also free on the third Thursday of each month from 5pm to 8pm for everyone.

GATHER Curator, Trenton Quiocho, and Hilltop Artists Executive Director Dr. Kimberly Keith, stand in front of Trapped, a piece by Trenton that represents Filipino traditional fishing baskets.

Local Artists Represented At TAM

GATHER WOWS attendees at the Press Release held on March 24, 2022. A Must See Exhibit!

By Jo Davies. Photographs courtesy of the Tacoma Art Museum.

To prepare to be amazed as you walk through TAM’s GATHER exhibition which displays the work of the 21 artists, all alumni of the Hilltop Artists program at Heritage Middle School. The works are variously spiritual, whimsical, threatening, and thought-provoking. Working with glass is technically, and often physically, demanding. The virtuosity and creativity of these young artists (all of them under 40) demonstrates both talent and skill. I was able to attend a Press Release of the exhibit which began with words from TAM’s Executive Director, David Setford, Dr. Kimberly Keith, Executive Director of Hilltop Artists, and Trenton Quiocho, Curator of GATHER and alum of Hilltop Artists. This was truly a special opportunity. As I walked around the exhibit I was able to meet many of the Artists and hear about the direct impacts art programs have for our youth.

Hilltop Artists have done as proud and TAM has provided a first, but let’s hope not the last, exhibition of up-and-coming artists of Hilltop and Tacoma. I urge you to GATHER up your family and friends and go see for yourself what these Hilltop Artists have to show you. You can meet Dr. Kimberly Keith and some of the Hilltop Artists at the Mon, April 11th HAC Virtual Weekly Update at 6 PM on Facebook Live. Find out more about the Hilltop Artists Program at https://hilltopartists.org/Programs.

Douglas Jan Burgess II

Douglas Jan Burgess II (born Ketchikan, Alaska, 1997)
Nancy Burgess (born Seattle, Washington, 1965)
Mindfulness Totem Pole Park II, 2022, Blown, enameled and engraved glass, redwood plank, woven cedar, Woven spruce root, abalone shell, fur, and dentalia shell

Mindfulness Totem Pole

Douglas Jan Burgess II calls this recent piece “Mindfulness Totem Pole.” A Ketchikan native, this work represents aspects of the Native culture. Facial expressions are what you show to the world, while true feelings are expressed (repressed) in the belly. The figures are blown, enameled, and engraved glass and the ornaments were fashioned by Doug’s mother.

Shayne Nutter


“Learning Curves” is one of the more classical pieces in the show, drawing on the tradition of Italian glass artists such as Lino Tagliapietra. The vase is blown glass and the hatching is accomplished with glass rods.
GATHER Local Artists Have The Spotlight

Local Alum Artists share the stories behind their art and the positive impacts the Hilltop Artists Program had in their lives.

Trapped

A Tacoma original, Trenton Quiocho produced this assemblage of 5 related blown glass pieces titled “Trapped” in 2021. Trenton was a program participant from 2006 – 2010 and joined the staff in 2013 where he is currently a teaching artist and hot shop manager. Trenton curated this show, his first, but it probably won’t be his last.

Lola’s Rosary

Emily Martin’s “Lola’s Rosary” pays homage to her grandmother. Flameworked and blown glass beads, sea shells, dentaila shells (used as currency by indigenous peoples), and fused glass photographs, depict a spiritual life that includes aspects of nature and Catholicism.

Hilltop Street Fair

Saturday, August 27th

Let’s get together to plan the Hilltop Street Fair which is scheduled for August 27th, the last Saturday in August. On April 12th at the Recovery Café, (813 MLK Jr Way) we will have a planning meeting for those that are available for leading or supporting committee development for the festival. The intention is to have 2 meetings in April, the second one being April 26, and then on May 10th.

Let’s get together to plan the Hilltop Street Fair which is scheduled for August 27th, the last Saturday in August. On April 12th at the Recovery Café, (813 MLK Jr Way) we will have a planning meeting for those that are available for leading or supporting committee development for the festival. The intention is to have 2 meetings in April, the second one being April 26, and then on May 10th.

Hilltop Artists staffer Jessica Hogan was inspired by the snack wrappers that she finds herself picking up after students have left the studio. The blown sculpted glass pieces were fabricated a few at a time over the course of a year or so.

Emily Martin


Trenton Quiocho


Jessica Hogan


GATHER Artists

Douglas Jan Burgess II
Nancy Burgess
Candida Delgadillo
Edemiria Jimenez Gallegos
Daria Hembree
Jessica Hogan
Dani Kaes
Cassandra Kuring
Emily Martin
Jason McDonald
Shayne Nutter
Trenton Quiocho
David Rios
Luis Sanchez
Samantha Scalise
Evan Schaus
Zane Scott
Elye Sevier
Jesse Sorgenfrei
Tony Sorgenfrei
Jack Spitzen
Edgar Valentine
Keiko Wesley
Jacob Willcox

Artist Emily Martin shares the story behind Lola’s Rosary with Jo Davies, Hilltop Action Journalist and former HAC Board Member.
Pierce County Adopts A Comprehensive Plan To End Homelessness

By Gerrit Nyland, with the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

This month, Pierce County officially adopted a Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness. Over the years, county government, local jurisdictions, services providers, and community advocates have developed other plans to address this problem, but this new plan goes further by documenting the scale of the need and designing a system to end homelessness in Pierce County.

So how do we end homelessness? We know that increased funding for services and more affordable housing units are needed to drive real sustainable solutions. Pierce County doesn’t have enough housing for all its residents, and much of its housing is not accessible to our lowest earners, but we are on the way to making significant change through historic funding investments in housing and homelessness.

We are on the way to making significant change through historic funding investments in housing and homelessness.

1. Create a unified homeless response system, including a unified regional approach with central decision-making authority of funding and services.
2. Ensure programs are truly effective for all populations.
3. Prevent homelessness.
4. Ensure adjacent systems address needs of people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.
5. Meet immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness, where they are becoming homeless – not requiring them to leave the support networks in their communities to access services.
6. Expand the permanent housing system to meet the need.

“Targeted universalism” is a methodology underlying much of this work. Targeted universalism sets a single target for everyone – in this case, housing. However, different groups need different supports to reach that goal. For example, a young person will have a different pathway to permanent housing than a seventy-seven-year-old. Similarly, an African American family may have a different pathway than a single adult with mental health challenges. Programs must be designed to meet the unique needs of everyone experiencing homelessness.

Pierce County Human Services is currently developing the plan with the local jurisdictions, a work and finding partners to align strategies and make a big impact in the community. We’ve already begun efforts to improve the homeless response system, including creating over 300 new shelter beds, funding additional case management services and developing a bus pass pilot program to begin later this year. Transparency and accountability are an important part of this new plan. While we plan to post and share data and regularly updated metrics over the coming months, the core of the plan has just one statistic that matters – how many people are homeless in Pierce County right now. With this plan, we are hopeful we can bring that number to zero.


Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness information can be found at https://pchomeless.org/. The Coalition is a network of individuals, non-profit agencies, government agencies, and community businesses working together to serve people experiencing homelessness. Their end goal is to help folks establish safe housing as quickly as possible and help them to retain that housing so their homeless episode is short and never repeated. They also work to address many of the factors that drive homelessness.

Their website has upcoming meetings listed, committees you can join to get involved, as well as information and resources to share with those experiencing homelessness (overnight shelters, showers and day centers, coordinated entry locations, etc.).

Reach out to Gerrit Nyland at gnyland@pchomeless.org. Watch Gerrit share the 2021 Comprehensive Plan at End Homelessness on the March 21st HAC Virtual Weekly Update on the Action Coalition’s Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/116095381279716/videos/337124985109880.

Preventing Eviction

“I just got a 14-day notice to pay or vacate from my landlord, what does that mean and what should I do?”

What to do if you receive an eviction notice from your landlord, and how to get help.

By Laurie Davenport, Director of Development & Outreach, with Tacomaprobono Community Lawyers

Tacomaprobono Community Lawyers’ Housing Justice Project (HJP) has heard that question hundreds of times in the past few months. It can be frightening and confusing to receive a legal notice from your landlord, especially if you are behind on rent.

If you’ve received this notice, here are some very important things HJP wants you to know.

1. The notice DOES NOT mean you must leave your home in 14 days. Stay in your home. If you can pay the amount owing, pay it within 14 days.
2. It DOES mean that you have 14 days to respond – you have options, choices and legal rights, but if you do not respond and communicate with your landlord, you can be evicted. You don’t need to accept the proposed payment plan in order to respond.
3. There are a few legal requirements for the 14-day notice. It must include a statement of the amount owing, a proposed reasonable payment plan and contact information for the Center for Dialog & Reconciliation (CDR) and the Housing Justice Project (HJP).
4. If the 14-day notice doesn’t include all these things, if you receive some other type of notice for a different number of days, or if your landlord is pressuring or threatening you – contact HJP through the online intake form at www.tacomaprobono.org.

If you can’t pay the full amount owing and the landlord’s proposed plan is not reasonable for you, you can contact the CDR to start the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP). The ERPP is free and provides an opportunity to engage in mediation with your landlord and a neutral party to arrive at a payment plan. It is a good idea to apply for rental assistance at the same time you contact CDR.

Engaging in the ERPP is mandatory before your landlord can evict you for the amount you owe.

If you and your landlord can’t agree on a payment plan through the ERPP the CDR will issue a certificate to let the court know and the landlord can proceed with an eviction if they decide to do so.

“I just got an Eviction Summons & Complaint from my landlord, what does that mean and what should I do?”

Contact HJP’s Right to Counsel program as soon as possible. Low-income people facing eviction have a right to an attorney.

Fill out the online intake at https://tacomaprobono.org and be sure to indicate that you have received an Eviction Summons.

If your Eviction Summons was filed with the court and it was served with an ‘Order to Show Cause’ which has a hearing date, be sure to show up to your hearing on that date so HJP attorneys will have an opportunity to represent you; if you are eligible your hearing will be continued so you can work with your attorney to reach an agreement.

REMEMBER – respond to an Eviction Summons by the date listed on the summons, whether an attorney has been appointed for you or not. If you do not respond your landlord could evict you with no further notice or hearing. If you need help to respond, fill out the HJP online intake and be sure to include the response deadline.

Contact Information

Center for Dialog & Resolution
Online Intake
https://centerforresolution.org/

Phone (253) 572-3657
Email solvelit@centerforresolution.org

Pierce County Rental Assistance
Online Application
https://www.piercecountywa.gov/27875/Tenant-Information

Phone call 211 to apply
Email hsp@piercecounty.org

Housing Justice Project
Online Intake
https://tacomaprobono.org

Phone (253) 572-5134
Email hjp@tacomaprobono.org

“My landlord just notified me of an outrageous rent increase, there’s no way I can afford to stay in my place – I don’t want to leave – what can I do?”

Housing Justice Project wants to hear from you. Although there is theoretically no set limit on the amount a landlord can raise your rent, this is a big issue in our community (and throughout the country) which will only become more serious. HJP would like to have an opportunity to plan to End Homelessness on the March 21st HAC Virtual Weekly Update on the Action Coalition’s Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/116095381279716/videos/337124985109880.
Shiloh Men’s Retreat: Where Love Is!

The people of Shiloh know the true meaning of LOVE, and have invested both time and money to make the Hilltop a better place.

By Harlan Shoop, Faith Columnist

One of the things the Tacoma community has struggled with is the unsheltered living among us. In working to solve the ongoing problem, we seem to take two steps forward and one step back, never really tackling the problem, but rather just throwing money at it with the hope it will go away. As such, the problem never goes away, it just moves around. In looking for a more sustainable solution, Associated Ministries of Pierce County, in partnership with Shiloh Baptist Church, has been pulling stakeholders together and mulling over the challenges, and has come up with a partial solution.

There is a New Testament scripture in Matthew’s Gospel that spells out very specifically what love looks like.

Love is an action, such as feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, inviting a stranger or refugee to your home, giving clothing to the unclothed, caring for someone who is sick, or visiting someone in prison or jail.

Many of the unsheltered living on the street need one or all of the above. So, what does love look like in Tacoma? The deep, unrelenting love that never gives up. Not the feel-good surface kind. The kind that hopes all things, endures all things. The kind of love that never gives up. Not the feel-good love that never gives up. Not the feel-good love that never gives up.

So, what does love look like in Tacoma? What does LOVE look like in Tacoma? Shiloh Baptist Church, in partnership with Shiloh Baptist Church, has decided to do something about homelessness. Using the personnel and resources provided by Valeo Vocation of Tacoma, Shiloh was able to staff the Shiloh Men’s Retreat Center. Ms. Marsha Hopkins, the Retreat Center Director, and about 20 people are working to make a difference in Tacoma. Using the lower level of Shiloh’s educational/fellowship building they set up banks for sleeping while the main level provides food, clothing, and resources for all their guests.

Along with Valeo, Shiloh partners with Associated Ministries, SeaMar, Pierce County and the City of Tacoma to help cover the costs of running a 24/7 facility.

Due to theft, many of the guests have lost their social security cards, birth certificates or IDs. As a result, they cannot apply for housing, or perform a myriad of other daily tasks that require an ID. Approximately 32 guests are sheltered at the retreat center each day, with the goal to help them one transition to something more permanent. Many of them are working – but do not earn enough to cover the rent of an apartment. With the help of Shiloh and its partners, one guest, a veteran, was able to transition to the Soldiers Home in Orting.

At the Shiloh Retreat “Everybody is Somebody.” As such, everyone is treated with kindness and respect, regardless of their situation or appearance. This is a place where the guests have time and space to reflect on their lives and circumstances while receiving some guidance and counseling to move forward.

Shiloh has applied for grant funding from County, the city and state to build a $23-25 million low income housing facility on its properties. This would provide several individual units, common rooms, comfortable apartments, and rooftop gardens. The hope is to have this facility constructed in the next year and the Men’s Retreat Center can be used for other purposes as the needs arise.

As you can see, Shiloh has deep roots in the community around them. The people of Shiloh know the true meaning of LOVE, and have invested both time and money to make the Hilltop a better place.

Shiloh Baptist Church is located at 1211 S 1st Street, Tacoma, WA 98405. Give them a call at (253) 272-4949 Tuesday through Friday from 10 am to 1 pm. Visit their website at https://shilohoftacoma.org/

Dr. Christopher and Ms. Hopkins

Addressing The Humanitarian Crisis

The success of the Plan to End Homelessness clearly depends on county-wide support.

By Rosemary Powers, on the Race & Equity Committee with the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness.

Homelessness has been at the top of almost everyone’s list of social problems for some time. The city of Tacoma declared a “state of emergency for health” in 2017. On March 15 of this year, The Pierce County Council formally approved an ambitious Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness. The plan commits to significant and ongoing financial investments by the county to address this humanitarian crisis. The success of this plan clearly depends on county-wide support.

For nearly 40 years, the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness has focused on reducing the inhuman effects of homelessness. The Coalition has continued to advocate for attainable housing options for low-income residents. Early organizing efforts waned over the years, but service providers and others continued meeting, sharing resources, and collaborating on mutual efforts.

Since the City of Tacoma emergency declaration in 2017, the Coalition has brought a stronger voice to the conversation. We held two public Summits in 2020 to build commitment by local agencies, businesses, faith communities, civic organizations and government entities. We called for an end to street homelessness by Nov. 1, 2021 (We didn’t meet this goal, but we believe our challenge helped the County prioritize work on its just-approved comprehensive plan).

The Coalition provides current information about shelter availability and a variety of homelessness/housing resources on our webpage at http://www.pchomeless.org. We maintain a listserv with over 700 subscribers, where people share resources they have to offer and seek resources they need. We are currently an all-volunteer network, so responses to requests reflect that reality. We gather at an open meeting every Friday from 9am -11am, drawing 50-80 participants (currently on Zoom, with link available at our homepage upon registration).

We welcome everyone committed to ending homelessness and to respectful dialogue about differing strategies. We especially welcome those with lived experience of homelessness or unstable housing, and seek opportunities for collaboration with other groups offering supportive services for those living homeless. For more information, contact Rosemary Powers at rpowers@ uow.edu or Sherrilla Bivens at s bhillsbivens45@gmail.com.

By Ananya Roy, PH.D.

Emergency Urbanism

University of Washington Tacoma’s Debra Friedman Memorial Lecture Series

Dr. Roy shares her research about Emergency Urbanism and the connection between rent, the unhoused and the “dispossession of personahood”. She explains how, “Emergency Urbanism requires of all of us an abolitionist framework of critical thinking and practice....and it requires us all to think critically about our relationship to property.”

Watch the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBgnl5w4zOM. Courtesy of University of Washington Tacoma.
Applications Open for the Spaceworks Summer Launch Cohort!
Now is the time to apply to become part of the large network of Spaceworks alumni and support that help make Tacoma culturally vibrant and economically strong.

By Jennifer English, Business Training Coordinator for Spaceworks Tacoma

The Launch Cohort focuses on those businesses that have tested their product or service and have a clear understanding of what they are providing to the customer. At the end of this 12-week cohort, you will have gained the knowledge to successfully run your business, a completed business plan that has been reviewed by business professionals, and will have presented your business at Graduation.

As a Spaceworks participant, you will have access to a $500 microgrant to use towards a professional service, 6-month trial membership with the Chamber of Commerce, continued support for the life of your business, and opportunities to stay connected with our large network of small business alumni and community partners. Spaceworks’ Incubator offers a variety of services to help creative entrepreneurs and business owners gain training and knowledge in business basics, strategy, and skills.

Our two core programs are the Business Launch Cohort, a 36-hour course over 12 weeks; and, the Business Foundations Cohort, a 12-hour course over 4 weeks. We work with a fantastic roster of business owners, experts, and professionals, from our coaches and resource providers to our alumni.

For more information about the Incubator, like start date, meeting times, and application link: https://www.spaceworks Tacoma.com/new-spaceworks/

Volunteer With Spaceworks
Spaceworks Values Entrepreneurial Spirit, Innovation and Creativity, Diversity and Equity, and Collaboration

By Michele Cotton, Development Coordinator with AM Associated Ministries

Volunteer With Spaceworks
Spaceworks could use your input and hands-on support. Here are a few upcoming volunteer opportunities.

• Join a stakeholder meeting to inform our new 3-year strategic plan.

Save The Date

Friday, June 10th, 2022
Tickets Coming Soon

CATCH is a vibrant dinner fundraiser, 21+ Cocktail attire (especially gold, black, and white) is always encouraged.

For 12 years, Spaceworks has been a pillar of support for artists and creative entrepreneurs in Tacoma. What began as a downtown window filled with art has turned into a suite of programs that empower creatives to grow as professionals. This summer, join the Spaceworks community and reaffirm that creativity is indeed a shared value that defines our city.

Find out more about the event at https://www.spaceworkstacoma.com/volunteer.

Thank you tremendously for supporting Spaceworks!

Homeless Connect Event Provides Access to Essential Services

Around 80 community volunteers are recruited for this event.

By Michele Cotton, Development Coordinator with AM Associated Ministries

The purpose of Project Homeless Connect (PHC) is to provide easy access to essential resources for those who are unhoused, with the ultimate goal of helping participants move beyond homelessness. Associated Ministries works to organize three one-day events each year where dozens of providers come together to offer services and respect to those living in vehicles, encampments or shelters.

The next PHC will take place here in the Hilltop on Wednesday, April 6, St. Leo’s Parish (710 S. 13th St.) in the Bix hall and will host the event between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm that day. Future events are being planned around Pierce County in the months of June and October.

Resources available-on-site include medical and wellness exams and vaccines, career and job information, income tax preparation, enrollment in health insurance and the homeless response system (Coordinated Entry) as well as many other resources. We will also have giveaways.

Around 80 community volunteers are recruited for each PHC event. This opportunity to serve our neighbors in need provides a meaningful personal experience and can translate into a deeper understanding of the issue of homelessness and compassion towards those impacted; find out how you can help on the AM website: https://associatedministries.org/event/project-homeless-connect.

Associated Ministries has managed key aspects of Pierce County’s homeless response system for many years, including Coordinated Entry, Rapid Relocation, Rental Assistance, Eviction Prevention, Homeless Mail and Payee Services, and more. The PHC events, which bring our community together to meet a wide variety of essential needs, enables AM to continue living out our longtime role of convening and deploying people of faith and good will to serve the vulnerable.

We are looking forward to serving those who are experiencing homelessness during this event and will continue to post updates on our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/homelessconnect and website https://associatedministries.org/event/project-homeless-connect.
Goodwill Connect: Digital Literacy Help

Let's Get Digital - Free help is just a quick phone call away at 1844-492-6663.

By Kelly Blucher, Manager of Community Engagement & Outreach for Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region

Goodwill is excited to announce our launch of Goodwill Connect. This program is a statewide collaboration with all Goodwill locations to promote the new Connect Hotline. Anyone can call 1-844-3WCONNECT (1-844-492-6663) to access free assistance with all digital technology needs.

A Digital Navigator is standing by to assist our communities in:
- Getting personal help using a computer or digital device
- Finding affordable and quality internet service
- Get tech support for devices
- Find a computer or device
- Building your computer skills

This service is available in multiple languages: English, Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Amharic.

Goodwill Connect is a statewide collaboration of all the independent Goodwills in Washington to increase digital equity to individuals furthest from opportunity by offering free digital skills training, devices, and broadband connectivity, in partnership with the Washington State Broadband Office. Across the state we have many locations with free access to computer skills classes to help our communities thrive in this digital world. We can assist those struggling to fill out job applications, basic internet navigation, creating an email and so much more.

Goodwill offers other resources you may need to thrive in all aspects of your life, such as basic food employment and training, career bridge, free learning platform, legal assistance, NorthStar digital literacy, volunteer tax assistance, Washington 2-1-1, Washington Connection, Washington State Library and Worksource. Find out more by calling (206) 492-6663, or visit our website at https://goodwillconnect.com/.

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Small Business Development Center Webinars

Visit Make It Tacoma https://makeittacoma.com for more resources.

Check out all the Small Business Development Center Webinars at https://wsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/

Tax Readiness Workshops

April 13, 2022: 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
https://wsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/
events/99271787

Are You Ready to Start a Business

April 7, 2022: 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.
https://wsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/
events/99271780

Trademark Protection

April 19, 2022: 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
https://communities-rise.org/event/ trademarks-what-you-need-to-know-for-your-small-business

Ecommerce 101

April 28, 2022: 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
https://wsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/
events/99271810

Contact the Small Business Development Center at (253) 591-2012 or email makeittacoma@cityoftacoma.org.

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Keep up to Date with Hilltop Tacoma Link Construction

Get the latest Hilltop Link construction updates by visiting Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/groups/58586695459406/ and follow @paepage linked group activity and @R Köln.

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Home in Tacoma

Keep up to date on what’s going on so you can let the City know your opinions.

By City of Tacoma

Planning Commission Public Hearing

Tacoma’s Planning Commission is inviting community input on the proposed process, targets, and engagement strategies for Home In Tacoma – Phase 2. The effort will implement the City’s new housing growth strategy through zoning, standards, affordability actions, and actions to support housing growth. Everyone has a stake in housing and neighborhoods, and there is high interest in participating in Home In Tacoma – Phase 2. In recognition of the significance of the effort, the Planning Commission is requesting your ideas about how to make the project successful.

Review the draft Home In Tacoma – Phase 2 Scoping and Assessment Report at https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?pageId=180033 (scroll down the page till you see the link Home In Tacoma Scoping and Assessment - March 16, 2022). The report summarizes the project background, schedule, outcomes and engagement strategies.

To provide your input, write to homeintacoma@cityoftacoma.org through April 31, 2022.

You can also provide oral comments to the Commission at the Public Hearing on April 20, 2022. To attend the virtual Planning Commission meeting on April 20, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. including a public hearing on the Home In Tacoma Phase 2 Scope of Work at approximately 5:30 p.m. please use the following link or dial-in information:

Link: https://zoom.us/j/81358095104
Dial: +1 253 215 8782

After gathering this early input, the Planning Commission will finalize the project scope of work and we will get to work on community engagement and analysis.

Home In Tacoma – Phase 1

On December 7, 2021 the City Council adopted Ordinance 28793 approving the Home In Tacoma Project – Phase 1 package.

The Council’s action establishes a new housing growth vision for Tacoma supporting Missing Middle Housing options, designates Low-scale and Mid-scale Residential areas, and strengthens policies on infill design, affordability, anti-displacement and other goals. The complete package is available at https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?pagaid=180033.
By Jennifer Schaal

On a sunny Saturday at the beginning of April, with spring flowers in bloom, the Hilltop community was treated to a very special event. The Tacoma Colored Women’s Club sponsored “Reclaiming the Legacy of Nettie J. Asberry” hosted by the Tacoma Community House.

Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center (T.U.P.A.C.) dancers in beautiful colorful costumes opened the joyful celebration and were kept in rhythm by Nettie Asberry’s Sing to give the audience a taste of the African American spirituals of her era.

Nettie Asberry was the child of a slave, was an educated woman in a community without libraries, and Tacoma Community House provided support.

Coleridge Taylor, a mixed-race classical composer, conductor, and violinist known nationally for incorporating African American music into his compositions, died young but in his brief time set twenty-four different African American spirituals to classical treatment, known as the "24 Negro Melodies." Many people came together for the Tacoma concert in honor of his passing.

Panelists discussed the need to invest in our communities, looking at what has changed and what hasn’t changed about Black wealth, policing, and what we need in order to perpetuate our history and culture. One thing that has changed in Tacoma, said McLemore, is that every City of Tacoma program now requires a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) plan in order to receive funding. "We’re allowed in the room now" noted McLemore, "but we still have so much work to do to be included in decisions that affect us." Linda Isham added that Black history needing reclamation doesn’t just represent a separate history; "it’s U.S. history, it’s local history, it’s history that belongs to all of us.

For more information on how to reclaim the stories of those who have been silenced, or are missing, hidden, or absent, the Community Archives Center at Tacoma Public Library can help.

By Kristine Coman

This event provided an opportunity to fully realize the importance of Hilltop’s Black Heritage. T.U.P.A.C. used dance to interact with the audience and it worked - everyone was fully engaged and expressing themselves through body movement creating an experience shared by all - bonding in community, which is sorely needed.

Hearing about the many positive impacts Nettie Asberry had on her neighbor-hood, city and region, made you realize that one person can make a mighty difference. Folks came away from this event with a new determination to support Black culture and History on the Hilltop.

Dr. Maxine Mimms

Celebrate Evergreen-Tacoma founder Dr. Maxine Mimms by donating to the endowment scholarship in her name.

Mimms had a goal of making education accessible to everyone – especially those who are traditionally underserved. Her kitchens-table teachings became what is now known as the Tacoma campus for The Evergreen State College.

The Evergreen State College’s Tacoma Campus offers a curriculum that is focused on community, flexibility and convenience. Adult learners are offered rich, interdisciplinary programs that emphasize on the whole student, focusing on change-making and transformative leadership.

Those who would like to help honor Dr. Mimms and her legacy may consider contributing to the Dr. Maxine Mimms Scholarship Endowment with The Evergreen State College Foundation (https://www.evergreen.edu/donate
drmmms). This endowment goes to ensure that future generations can make a mighty difference.

Visit the campus online at https://www.evergreen.edu/tacoma or stop by at 1210 6th Ave, Tacoma. Reach out to hear more about the Tacoma campus at 253-680-5000.

By Evergreen State College Tacoma

Fifty years ago, Dr. Maxine Mimms opened her home and began teaching college-level courses from her kitchen table to her neighbors living in Tacoma’s historic Hilltop Neighborhood.

Dr. Maxine Mimms made a positive impact on the Hilltop Community.
The Negro Motorist Green Book was created by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in collaboration with Garden Taylor and made possible through the generous support of Exxon Mobil Corporation, Exxon Mobil's predecessor Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. Distributed “The Green Book” through its U.S. network of fuel stations, helping to provide motorists and their families opportunities for safer and more comfortable travel.

This exhibition has been locally supported by ArtsFund, Humanities Washington and KXLY Public Radio.


On view through June 12 at the Washington State History Museum

From 1936 to 1967, Harlem postman Victor Green’s “Green Book” made travel safer for African Americans, and supported a growing network of Black-owned businesses and communities. Find out more—see this world-class traveling exhibition right here in Tacoma.

Hilltop Tacoma Link Construction Update

Liz Ellis keeps you up to date with information and fantastic photographs so you know what to expect when driving through the Hilltop.

This is a great photograph showing the construction crews adding the crosswalk installation at S. 10th Street and MLK Jr. Way.

Here is photograph showing crews inspecting overhead wires near Tacoma General Hospital.

Here is a view of MLK Jr. Way and Earnest S. Brazill St. The building in construction is owned by Tacoma Housing Authority and will have commercial businesses on the first floor and affordable housing above. Mr. MAC and Sam & Terry’s Barbershop will be back at this location once the building is complete.

This is a photograph showing the crosswalk installation on MLK Jr. Way at S. 10th Street, Earnest S. Brazill Street and S. 13th Street. Another photograph shows crews inspecting overhead wires near Tacoma General Hospital.

Tacoma Awarded $2.5M Grant To Construct The J Street Bike Blvd

Jon Kulju keeps you informed about Hilltop’s Links To Opportunity Projects which kick in once Sound Transit’s construction ends.

By Jon Kulju, PMP, Project Manager for City of Tacoma, Public Works Engineering

The City of Tacoma was awarded $2.5M Grant from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to construct the J Street Bike Boulevard project. This project will construct a two-mile bicycle boulevard on J Street from N 3rd Street to S 27th Street, along with improved east/west bicycle connections via 6th Avenue, S 11th Street, Earnest S Brazill Street, S 17th Street, and S 18th Street, to facilitate access to Sound Transit’s Tacoma Link light rail (Link) and the Hilltop Business District. The Links To Opportunity Side Street Project - J Street Bicycle Boulevard Improvement Map is on the following page.

This project reflects community desires to decrease spending, improve safety, increase bicycle connectivity through Hilltop, and will fill a critical gap in Tacoma’s bike network. Associated traffic calming elements will help slow speeds and reduce cut-through traffic by including traffic dividers that will limit through traffic at key intersections while maintaining access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and emergency vehicles (J Street is a key emergency access route: the corridor links Tacoma’s two hospitals and there are three fire stations within a half-mile).

A mix of concrete and painted/low-profile curb bulbouts and center medians, along with improved pedestrian crossings, ADA-accessible signals, bicycle detection at signals, and ADA ramps, will further increase active transportation access and accessibility, while calming traffic. Five east/west connections ranging from one to three blocks in length will provide access to Link stops and key neighborhood destinations including the Hilltop Business District and People’s Community Center. The selected treatment type varies based on each roadway’s characteristics and range from shared lane markings to protected bike lanes. These connections will incorporate intersection improvements to facilitate crossings. The J Street Bicycle Boulevard will integrate art into project elements to reflect and celebrate the Hilltop community. Wayfinding will also be incorporated to help facilitate connectivity. This project will help increase active transportation access to transit and key community destinations, address critical safety concerns, and create a more equitable transportation system.

For more information on this project contact Jon Kulju, PMP, Project Manager, City of Tacoma, Public Works Engineering by emailing jkulju@cityoftacoma.org; or call 253-591-5204.
By Rosemary Ponekantei, Co-Manager, Metro Parks Tacoma Administrator and Photographer for Metro Parks Tacoma

Kitted out in safety glasses and rubber gloves, Jess Moore watched attentively as Kathy Moorehead demonstrated how to use a circular saw. “So this is a speed square, that’s the pencil mark,” Moorehead explained. “And now, hold the wood in place, but stay out of the way of the blade.” As Moore made her first successful cut, she grinned with delight in the bitter wind whipping along Tacoma’s Martin Luther King Jr. Way. It was work party day at Metro Parks Tacoma’s People’s Community Center. A group of young people gathered north of the People’s Center and volunteers from veterans to foster teens were helping build furniture for the center’s brand-new Teen Space – just in time for Teen Late Night in February. “Teens were not well served in our community,” explains Christina West, assistant supervisor for the community center. “More than any group, maybe, they need a space to gather, to be safe and to be themselves.”

Several volunteers had pre-ordered their trees, choosing from nine different species, by signing up via the Tacoma Tree Foundation’s website, or filling out a form at other outdoor community events. “We focus on projects that can impact the success of future op- portunities,” says Thai Thien, the Tacoma Tree Foundation’s operations manager for TMC and a former Army captain. “Often that means small, building lots in a way that the community told us would prove their physical spaces and work.” That’s why it’s important that volunteers, as leaders, are well-verested in as-built community development.”

Practically, for People’s Community Center, that meant a Saturday morning of painting the new Teen Space. “It’s now bright and clean, with a big screen in each room and two floor-to-ceiling murals handpicked by the center’s teen group: a teen in a hoodie from a former combat nurse in Iraq and Afghanistan, the TMC Tacoma chapter leader sparkled with energy, a lucky pig, and two farmhouse tables,” explained Brian Lacelle, loading 2x4s onto sawhorses at a second work station out on the chilly sidewalk. A community volunteer, Lacelle isn’t with TMC, but came along with his friend Jamie Suderman when he heard about the opportunity. “I’m a big fan of helping out in the community,” says Lacelle, who also volunteers at the Coffee Oasis.

All it needed was some furniture. “We’re making some sawhorses and tables from the TMC,” says Moorehead, 2x4s and two farmhouse tables, explained Brian Lacelle, loading 2x4s onto sawhorses at a second work station out on the chilly sidewalk. A community volunteer, Lacelle isn’t with TMC, but came along with his friend Jamie Suderman when he heard about the opportunity. “I’m a big fan of helping out in the community,” says Lacelle, who also volunteers at the Coffee Oasis. “I’ve said to help build the benches and tables, they will help rebuild the raised garden beds in Rogers Playfield, increasing their accessibility and food security for the community. As a single mom and veteran, I often don’t have the access to community resources, so when volunteer with TMC I get to access those things myself. I’m helping create more spaces for everyone’s kids, to keep community systems healthy. I love that to much.”

The Coffee Oasis will also keep partnering with Metro Parks, working to provide programming and mentoring for teens. “This Teen Space is going to make a big difference in the lives of local teens, and to be able to partner with so many community groups to do that is fantastic.”

DOES THE Mission Continue

By Jennifer Schaal

Hilltop neighborhoods got a little greener in February when the Tacoma Tree Foundation held its first “Branch Out” event, an opportunity for teens to receive free trees and help with planting them. Increasing tree canopy is important for many reasons, especially in neighborhoods like Hilltop, one of Tacoma’s least treed communities. Tacoma Tree Foundation has been working to improve this tree equity issue.

On Saturday, February 19th, forty volunteers showed up to the yard of the Homewonership Center Tacoma Northwest to watch a tree planting demonstration and then load up trees, shovels, TAGRO planting soil, wood chip mulch, stakes and ties into their vehicles. Eight volunteer teams headed out to deliver and plant ninety-nine out of the 266 trees provided free to the community.

“Branch Out” was Tacoma Tree Foundation’s first event that offered tree planting in addition to the free trees. Some neighbors participated in the digging and planting while others were happy to have their new trees installed for them. Many residents had pre-ordered their trees, choosing from nine different species, by signing up via the Tacoma Tree Foundation website, or filling out a form at other outdoor community events where Tacoma Tree Foundation had a booth.

Meanwhile, Moore and Moorhead were making good progress on their own 2x4s. For Moorhead, a veteran who likes to build things, today and the second furniture session on Saturday were the ideal volunteer opportunities. But for Jess Moore, there was a whole other layer. An intern at The Coffee Oasis, a nonprofit serving foster and homeless teens, Moore had brought a few of her changes with her to help build the benches and tables that would allow them and other local teenagers to socialize, do homework and connect to Metro Parks resources. “I like to support kids in shelters,” Moore said. “If houseless teens are interacting with their community, that can bring good futures and a sense of connection. I think this teen space will be good for a lot of our kids. It’s really cool.”

Inside the space, West and Thai were stacking up the remaining 2x4s while Tiffany Cavin chatted to a couple of the Coffee Oasis teens. A former combat nurse in Iraq and Afghanistan, the TMC Tacoma chapter leader sparkled with energy, a lucky pig, and two farmhouse tables, explains Moorehead, 2x4s and two farmhouse tables, explained Brian Lacelle, loading 2x4s onto sawhorses at a second work station out on the chilly sidewalk. A community volunteer, Lacelle isn’t with TMC, but came along with his friend Jamie Suderman when he heard about the opportunity. “I’m a big fan of helping out in the community,” says Lacelle, who also volunteers at the Coffee Oasis.

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VOLUNTEER: Looking to volun-
teer? Interested volunteers can learn more about The Mission Continues at https://www.missioncontinues.org/ get-involved/. Find out how to volun-
teer with Metro Parks at https://www. metroparkstacoma.org/volunteer/.

TEEN LATE NIGHT: Teen Late Night happens at People’s Community Center, 1602 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Tacoma from 8-11pm on the fourth Friday of every month. It’s free, and includes open gym, sports and pool activities. Learn more at https://www.metroparkstacoma.org/ events/teen-late-night-peoples-center-2/.
Co-Create to Recreate at People’s Center: Making Changes Together

By Kristine Coman

In case you haven’t heard, Metro Parks Tacoma and People’s Community Center have both launched a roll-out campaign to re-imagine how they engage with the community. They realize that they can no longer offer services to the community without the intentional efforts of co-creating with the community. They understand that relationships have to be centerpieces to healing, restoration, and building hope for the future.

The goal of these Co Create to Recreate Quarterly events will be to create intentional space to build community with those who call the People’s Center home…. or Eastside, Northpoint or STAR. The plan is to provide dinner to those who come. Food representation from local food trucks, offer a space to meet Center Staff, and provide an opportunity for everyone to provide input about what is working well, what needs to be fixed or changed, and possible solutions. The first Co Create to Recreate was held on Wed, March 23rd at People’s Community Center. There will be 3 more quarterly Co Create to Recreate events: June 22nd, Sept 20th and Nov 30th. All of these events are scheduled for a Wed evening from 6-30 to 8:00 PM at the People’s Community Center (1602 MLK Jr. Way). It was exciting to attend and had a fantastic turnout! Ralph Thomas, Recreation Manager who oversees the community centers and aquatics, took a moment to truly thank everyone for attending.

We really want to make a difference with face-to-face interactions. We are hoping COVID goes away. We have an amazing team at Metro Parks Tacoma and People’s Community Center, and we are trying to build strong communities. It’s been a struggle to find out what people want – it’s like throwing darts at a dart board. Let’s put the darts in community members’ hands.”

Antonio shared how People’s Center cares about our youth. That’s how free youth membership came about. Since that policy began, they’ve had a 312% increase in youth membership. Antonio emphasized that, “This is our work to do. Gang membership is the highest since the 1990’s. Youth need alternatives. 4, 522 youth are visiting the center. When I see a youth at the center, I always try to connect with them.” He wanted to create intentional space at the event where we could hear wins, challenges and solutions. As problems and barriers are identified, Metro Parks Tacoma is trying to find solutions.

I walked out of the event feeling energized, and full. Did I mention the meal was huge? I made new connections and shared a lot of smiles. The folks at my table frequented People’s Center often and called it their home away from home. This is Hilltop space. It’s refreshing to be actively taking part in what happens in that space.

Join HAC’s mailing list and keep on top of the HACtion!
Email hacoffice15@gmail.com today and start receiving HAC eNewsletters along with the digital Hilltop Action Journal.
Leaders in Women’s Health Invitation

Fighting Health Disparities for Black/African American Women

By Michelea Lemons, Secretary for the Leaders in Women’s Health

Leaders in Women’s Health (LIWH) is an organization that exists to fight health disparities, particularly those affecting Black/African American women. The work of LIWH is embedded in the Black/African American community by partnering with churches and Black-serving organizations as anchor institutions. We envision a world where all people have access to all institutions. We envision a world where all people have access to all institutions.

Join the Leaders in Women’s Health (LIWH) general monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of each month from 9-10:30AM. Every month we review the work of our various committees, share announcements and community updates as well as invite guests to educate our members about resources or opportunities available in the community. You are most welcome to attend!

Monthly Meeting Zoom Link: https://web.zoom.us/j/89415884987?pwd=8mP3jtTaQy02dThaM2LmlmM2FvZm09
Meeting ID: 894 1588 4987
Passcode: 276858

TPCHD Vaccine Information

Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) continues to lead the way for a safe Hilltop.

Vaccines are the most effective tools to limit the spread of COVID-19. Everyone in Washington 5 years or older is eligible to get a free COVID-19 vaccine or booster. It’s too simple - you do not need health insurance or an identification card. People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised should get a third dose of Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. If you’re not sure if you’re eligible, talk to your healthcare provider. You can get a third dose from a healthcare provider, pharmacy or at one of TPCHD clinics. Everyone 12 years or older should get a booster shot too. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone 12 years or older get a booster dose:

- 5 months after their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.
- 2 months after their single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

To find a vaccine near you, call 1800-525-0127, then press 0, or visit https://washingtonstate.gov/covid-vaccine.

If you can’t easily leave home and need help getting vaccinated, TPCHD can help! Call them at (253) 649-1412 from 8 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. Monday through Friday. TPCHD is also happy to answer and questions you may have.

QR CODE Vaccine Record

Keep your vaccine card safe at home.

Gingo to a public gathering and need proof of COVID vaccination? Get your Digital COVID-19 Verification Record and QR code to use for entry when required at https://vaccines.gov. Find out more by visiting our website at https://washingtonstate.gov/covid-vaccine. For walk-in appointments, call 1800-525-0127, then press 1; or visit https://washingtonstate.gov/covid-vaccine.

COVID-19 Vaccine Access In Your Neighborhood

If you need help getting vaccinated, TPCHD is continuing to lead the way for a safe Hilltop.

Hilltop Regional Health Center - 1202 MLK Jr. Way - Appointments are recommended. Call (253) 722-1855 or register here https://tinyurl.com/k554j4

Sea Mar Community Health Center - 1112 S Cushman - Appointments are recommended. Call (360) 299-4903 to register. Walk in appointments may be available. More information is available at https://tinyurl.com/k554j4

To find a vaccine near you, call 1800-525-0127, then press 0, or visit https://washingtonstate.gov/covid-vaccine.

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TPCHD Vaccine Information

Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) continues to lead the way for a safe Hilltop.

Vaccines are the most effective tools to limit the spread of COVID-19. Everyone in Washington 5 years or older is eligible to get a free COVID-19 vaccine or booster. It’s too simple - you do not need health insurance or an identification card. People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised should get a third dose of Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. If you’re not sure if you’re eligible, talk to your healthcare provider. You can get a third dose from a healthcare provider, pharmacy or at one of TPCHD clinics. Everyone 12 years or older should get a booster shot too. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone 12 years or older get a booster dose:

- 5 months after their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.
- 2 months after their single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

To find a vaccine near you, call 1800-525-0127, then press 0, or visit https://washingtonstate.gov/covid-vaccine.

If you can’t easily leave home and need help getting vaccinated, TPCHD can help! Call them at (253) 649-1412 from 8 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. Monday through Friday. TPCHD is also happy to answer and questions you may have.

QR CODE Vaccine Record

Keep your vaccine card safe at home.

Gingo to a public gathering and need proof of COVID vaccination? Get your Digital COVID-19 Verification Record and QR code to use for entry when required at https://vaccines.gov. Find out more by visiting our website at https://washingtonstate.gov/covid-vaccine. For walk-in appointments, call 1800-525-0127, then press 1; or visit https://washingtonstate.gov/covid-vaccine.

COVID-19 Vaccine Access In Your Neighborhood

If you need help getting vaccinated, TPCHD is continuing to lead the way for a safe Hilltop.

Hilltop Regional Health Center - 1202 MLK Jr. Way - Appointments are recommended. Call (253) 722-1855 or register here https://tinyurl.com/k554j4

Sea Mar Community Health Center - 1112 S Cushman - Appointments are recommended. Call (360) 299-4903 to register. Walk in appointments may be available. More information is available at https://tinyurl.com/k554j4

To find a vaccine near you, call 1800-525-0127, then press 0, or visit https://washingtonstate.gov/covid-vaccine.
Eastside Remembers: A Memorial Mural for Fallen Youth by Dionne Bonner

Art expressing community sorrow and celebration was dedicated Feb. 26 at Eastside Community Center.

By Rosemary Ponnekanti, Communications Media Administrator and Photographer for Metro Parks Tacoma

It’s one of the hardest things to do: to lose someone special yet celebrate their life even through the grief. And if it’s a child, that’s especially difficult. But when Dionne Bonner’s new mural “In Loving Memory” was dedicated at Eastside Community Center that intertwining of mourning and celebration for Eastside youth lost to gun violence is what the Tacoma artist hopes her art will express—especially for the community folks who helped shape that art.

“This mural is about joy and sorrow,” said Bonner. “It’s about how we grieve, but also how you celebrate a life. I tried to combine the two, respectfully, and in a way that helps people heal.”

Bonner came to the project through a public art training she took with the City of Tacoma’s Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality. As a studio artist known for portraiture, she wanted to expand her expertise in fabrication, bidding and other aspects of the public art process, while bringing her personal calling of representing youth and marginalized communities to change public awareness.

As part of Metro Parks Tacoma’s 1% for public art budget set aside from all capital construction projects, the mural was commissioned following recommendations from the Eastside Community Center Art Brief (an art strategy developed by artists from community and City feedback). During 2019, Bonner held many conversations with community members who had lost a young person to gun violence. Mothers, fathers, family friends – Bonner sat quietly with them all, asking open questions about what they wanted to share. She also asked them what they found special about the Eastside neighborhood, gleaming more information from community surveys and meetings.

“Their faces were so vibrant, very representative of the东侧,” said Silong Chhun, a local photographer and videographer. “Other than the Boys & Girls Club, there was no other outlet for youth, like sports or music. That led to a lot of the violence, I think. Now it’s so much better, with the Eastside Community Center.”

Finally, Bonner collaborated on a culture event including Boys & Girls Club, Salishan Association and the Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center, watching and photographing their young dancers.

“I tried to capture their joy, their natural way of expressing themselves, which inspired me to create this piece,” said Bonner. “As I talked and watched and thought, the content of the piece just bubbled up.”

Bonner painted the mural on the community center’s lower level just as Covid-19 hit. She spent hours painting alone in the center, which was closed to the public, juggling it in her full-time job as a graphic designer. Now, the mural stretches exuberantly around a corner near the entrance to the pool. A girl arches her back, eyes closed, surrounded by blue and green ribbons of color weave in and out of tree branches, porches and raindrops.

And between the joyful, living bodies are black silhouettes, stenciled white as if with bones, walking to school, home, to the graduation they never got to have.

“To have these names present was extremely important for the community,” said Bonner. “This mural is for the families and loved ones of these youth that have died. I hope that they see something in here that’s personal, that they can relate to. And I hope it helps them in some way to heal and get to a better place.”

Byg Rosemary Ponnekanti, Communications Media Administrator and Photographer for Metro Parks Tacoma

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For more details, call 253-301-3299 or email hacoffice15@gmail.com.
Gene joined the United States Air Force in 1949 and served a total of 23 years. One of his talents was for graphic design, which he made a career of, both in and out of uniform. In the military, Gene lettered aircraft, designed squadron patches and made posters used in briefings — long before PowerPoint was invented.

Gene, his wife Phyllis and their family moved several times in his career. While based in the Northwest, he left active duty for three years and served in the Hampton, Virginia area. There, he worked for a small sign shop that served several real estate agencies and developers. In 1972, he seized an opportunity to move back to the Northwest and work for The Bon. Gene lettered windows at the downtown store; he also designed and produced silk-screened signs used in all the company’s stores.

When Gene finally retired good, he didn’t stay idle. He continued to pursue graphic art on computers. In his 60s, he began to lose his vision and hearing and eventually his short-term memory — but that hardly slowed him down. Gene and Phyllis moved to an Adult Family Home near their son Joe in the Tacoma area. Phyllis died in March 2021, after 70 years of marriage. Before long, Joe saw a Facebook post about OMA and felt it would be a good activity for his dad. At first it was difficult for Gene to accept the concept of abstract art, but as time went on, he became more engaged. “Nudges were needed to get dad to participate fully,” Joe said, “but OMA challenges him to think.” Now Gene is able to make the association between his past artistic work and the different weekly OMA activities.

Joe enjoys participating in OMA with his dad and has noticed Gene is always in a better mood after a session. They have even painted together outside of the sessions. One of the many things Joe says his dad enjoys is the art show that happens after each six-week session. It showcases the work of all participants — people living with dementia or other cognitive challenges. Family and friends are invited to view the artwork.

When asked what he wants others to know about the value of OMA for a person living with dementia, Joe says: “If you can fit it in, do it.” For him, it’s an activity that bonds father and son without struggling to find talking points during their visit. The return to something familiar comforted. Conversations are much more comfortable. Gene and Joe are excited to continue participating in Opening Minds through Art. The six-week virtual sessions are free, and materials are provided. For more information, contact Dementia Services at Lutheran Community Services Northwest at 253-272-8433 or dementia-services@lcsw.org.

By Wendy Morris

Over months of participation in Opening Minds through Art (OMA), a program of Dementia Services Northwest, Gene Hochwalt has begun to work in a new style of art. Gene, who is 90 years old, was diagnosed with dementia about 10 years ago. His son Joe participates in the art sessions alongside his dad. He also helps fill in the colorful details of his father’s life journey.
The full HAC Calendar is available on our website at http://www.hilltopactioncoalition.org/.

Apr 6 – Wednesday, 10am – 3pm Project Homeless Connect. St. Leo’s Parish at 710 S 13th St. Provides services and resources such as housing assistance, medical services, vendor resources, give-a-ways, snacks, etc. https://associatedministries.org/event/project-homeless-connect

Apr 7, 14, 21, 28 – Thursday, 5-8pm Neighborhood Nights at TAM - free entry for GATHER Hilltop Artists Exhibit at 1701 Pacific Ave, Tacoma

Apr 7 – Thursday, 7pm Tacoma Central Neighborhood Council meets virtually on Facebook. Check their Facebook page for Zoom information. https://www.facebook.com/CNCtacoma

Apr 9 – Saturday, 10am-2pm Furniture Collection Event: Donate Your Worn Furniture at 3510 S. Mullen Ave – Saturday, 10am-2pm

Apr 9 – Saturday, 9 – 11am Litter Free 253 HAC Volunteer Event – Saturday, 9 – 11am

Apr 10 – Monday – 6-7pm HAC Virtual Weekly Update on HAC Facebook Live at https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition Special Guests include Dr. Keith, Executive Director with Hilltop Artists.

Apr 12 – Tuesday, 5-7pm Tacoma City Council Meeting at 747 Market St, ST, First Floor, City Council Chambers or attend via Zoom at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82373513090?pwd=RGMxNUtvbFJTYzJydXZudW1tYzAzdz09

Apr 12 – Tuesday, 6pm Hilltop Street Fair Information Meeting at Recovery Cafe, 813 MLK Jr. Way.

Apr 13 – Wednesday, 5:30 – 7pm. New Tacoma Neighborhood Council Meeting is on Facebook Live at https://www.facebook.com/newtacomaneighbors

Apr 13 – Wednesday, 9-10:30am Leaders in Women’s Health Meeting – 3rd Wed of every month at the African American Museum https://www.africanamericanmuseum.org/event/late-night-peoples-center-2/

Apr 13 – Wednesday, 2:30 – 5:30 pm. Tacoma Public Schools High School Job Fair. People’s Center, 1602 MLK Jr. Way https://www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/events/4748165281979466/

Apr 14 – Thursday, 5-8pm Neighborhood Nights at TAM - free entry for T.U.P.A.C Dance in the Museum free class at 6:30pm at 1701 Pacific Ave, Tacoma

Apr 16 – Saturday, 9 – 11am Litter Free 253 HAC Volunteer Event - Meet at People’s Park

Apr 16 – Saturday, 9 – 11am Litter Free 253, Litter Free 253 is a city-wide, litter clean-up initiative supported by Tacoma’s 8 Neighborhood Councils, the City of Tacoma, and you, volunteer Litter Picker Upper Participants? https://www.facebook.com/events/201654857725/

Apr 16 – Saturday, 10am – 3pm South Sound Sustainability Expo. Discover local resources to help make your life more sustainable https://southsoundaustrainhiltspec/urv

Apr 18 – Monday, 6-7pm HAC Virtual Weekly Update on HAC Facebook Live at https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition Special Guests Rep. Derek Kilmer will join us and share the good news about federal funding to support affordable housing and jobs on the Hilltop.

Apr 19 – Tuesday, 5-6:30pm People’s Steering Committee Meeting at People’s Community Center 1602 MLK Jr. Way. For more info, call (253) 592-5418

Apr 21 – Thursday, 8am Hilltop Business Association Meeting https://www.facebook.com/TCACtacoma

Apr 21 – Thursday, 6pm to 7:30pm Hilltop Library Planning Committee meets via Zoom at https://zoom.us/j/82373513090?pwd=RGMxNUtvbFJTYzJydXZudW1tYzAzdz09

Apr 21 – Thursday, 10 AM Don’t Judge Just Serve Virtual Fundraiser to support The House for their third annual fundraiser at https://www.facebook.com/events/474165781870866/

Apr 22 – Friday, 8-11pm Teen Late Nite at People’s Center. Free event for grades 9 – 12. Open gym, activities, sports, and more. https://www.tacoma.gov/events/late-night-peoples-center-2/

Apr 23 – Saturday, 1-3pm Home in Tacoma for All - Community Forum. Grassroots gathering to discuss real policy solutions to the housing affordability crisis, and to build a movement to win. Hear from housing justice organizers, people experiencing housing insecurity, community leaders, and your neighbors. https://www.tacoma.gov/TacomaForAll


Apr 25 – Monday, 6-7:00PM. HAC Monthly Community Meeting at Tacoma Community House (1314 South 1 Street, Tacoma, WA). HAC is excited to bring back community meetings IN-PERSON! Join us for community updates, networking, and more! COVID precautions in place. We hope to see you there!

Make a Donation to Hilltop FED thru Hilltop Action Coalition at 1116 Earnest S Brazill ST, Tacoma WA 98405 or via https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=2FP36QKYKY33Q

HAC Monthly Community Meeting & Celebration
Mon. April 25th, 6 – 7PM
Tacoma Community House
1314 S 1 Street
HAC is excited to bring back monthly in-person meetings! Join us for updates, resources and community time.
• Light Refreshments Include Cookies from Love by the Slice
• Kid Zone

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