The magnetic partnership between the Hilltop Action Coalition and Tacoma Housing Authority was able to bring together the Hilltop Neighborhood Alliance, Stanley PTA, and Bates Technical College for a collaborative Hilltop cleanup.

On Saturday, October 22nd, all of the organizations came together to do a neighborhood cleanup from 9 AM and 12 PM. Hilltop Action Coalition, Bates Technical College, and Stanley PTA worked to clean the streets from 9th through 15th on Martin Luther King Jr. Way and beyond to Stanley Elementary.

Hilltop Action Coalition supplied litter grabbers and collaborated with the City of Tacoma Environmental Services to provide volunteers with gloves and garbage bags. The organizations decided to focus on Martin Luther King Jr. Way because it is a vital part of our Hilltop community as a hub of business, housing, and transit. As a bonus Hilltop was cleaner for all the Halloween events and activities like Halloween on the Hill the following weekend. Together the volunteers removed 18 bags of garbage from the streets.

To top off the Hilltop neighborhood cleanup also had representation from the Vice President of the Tacoma Tree Foundation Luke Vannice. Hunter Henderson, Secretary and Environmental Advocate of the Hilltop Action Coalition was also there to assist.

Luke Vannice from the Tacoma Tree Foundation played a vital role in selecting resilient plants that will have seasonal blooms. The volunteers prepared the pots for life by removing trash along with dead soil and plants. Afterwards volunteers put in fresh soil and plants. These plants were selected because they will create beautiful flowers, provide services for bees and birds, and are adapted for tricky climates. Together the volunteers from the cleanup revitalized 13 planters in the Hilltop Neighborhood. The event was successful and a great reminder that it truly takes a village.

On behalf of the Hilltop Action Coalition, I would like to thank everyone who took part in supporting the planning process. And I also extend my thanks to the 20+ individuals who came out to make this event successful. Please stay connected with us on our social media platforms or connect with our team to get signed up on our Listserv so you can participate in upcoming HAC activities.
Hilltop Action Coalition

Community Priorities
- Good Jobs and Local Hires
- Affordable & Obtainable Housing
- Pathways to Home Ownership
- Programs for Youth and Seniors
- Create a Hilltop Neighborhood Library

Message from the Board of Directors

By HAC Board of Directors

If you have been following the Hilltop Action Coalition for any length of time, you know that we are an active bunch. You also may have noticed that we haven’t been as active the past few months. But we have been hard at work! We have been doing a lot of behind-the-scenes preparations to bring the best programming, events, information, and team that we possibly can to the Hilltop community.

There have been several transitions in the organization, and we are excited to have you meet the new members of the team. We are all looking forward to spending the holidays with you with several in-person and virtual events and activities. It is always a great time of year to connect with and support our beautiful community.

The new year has even more exciting things in store! We will be bringing new programs and updates to current ones and building a Hilltop Action Coalition that serves all of our neighbors. Be sure to follow us on social media and sign up for our weekly newsletter to stay up to date on everything from the Hilltop Action Coalition. We look forward to seeing you and we are always so thankful for the love and support that the Hilltop community shows us year after year.

Happy Holidays from the Hilltop Action Coalition staff and board!

Hilltop Action Coalition
Hilltop Action Coalition is a community-based coalition and 501(c)3 nonprofit that is working to mobilize and empower diverse individuals, families, businesses and other public and community organizations to build a safe, clean, healthy resilient and united community.

President
Michealea Lemons

Treasurer
Tiffani Reyes

Secretary
Kenji Stoll

Executive Director
Alyssa Torrez

Program Manager
Selena Choy

Advertise with us
Email hacoffice15@gmail.com

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.

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.

Each meeting will have special guests and topics that bring community resources closer to our Hilltop community. November HAC weekly updates have some exciting topics that will be discussed such as Hilltop housing, home ownership and downpayment assistance, and naloxone education.

Special Guests from Hilltop Housing spoke during the November 7th HAC weekly update to discuss affordable housing project being built in the Hilltop. The project has 231 units that are at or below 60% of area median income.

You can watch the November 7th HAC virtual meeting here: https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition/videos/?ref=page_internal along with the entire library of Virtual Weekly Updates.

JOIN US
Amy Wigstrom can do anything she sets her mind to. Sit down with her for 15 minutes, and you will learn how she came to music and follows her passion for helping others.

Amy is the newest member of the Dementia Services team at Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW) joining us as the new Music and Memories Instructor. With a father pastor for a father and a mother who played the piano and organ and conducted the church choir, it was natural that Amy would have music as part of her life including playing the trumpet and French horn. Amy attended Pacific Lutheran University to study music and vocal performance, spent a year in Vienna, and earned a degree in Music Education.

Amy taught music and drama in public schools and has worked with the Seattle opera, the Sun Valley Center of the Arts, and the Tacoma Symphony. When her father survived a heart attack, Amy was drawn to the mission of the American Heart Association. As the Executive Director there, her family perspective gave her focus, empathy and a desire to improve people’s lives.

In 2009, her mother began to have tremors. Eventually, she was diagnosed with Parkinson’s and later dementia and moved into memory care. There were many activities provided but the singing along sessions were particularly treasured by Amy and her mom. Amy quickly realized the impact the music had on her mother’s demeanor, her anxiety, and her overall well being.

“When the music would help her find her way back,” Amy says, “When we would play music and sing together, it was as if she was more like herself again.” Music sessions together became their memories. In her room, at her bedside, they would listen to their favorite songs and talk about the first time they heard them or the meaning they had in their lives. They would sing together, laugh, and just be together. Then, as her mother began to decline, her last words during one such visit were “I don’t know how to tell you how much I love you.” Such profound moments are the treasured memories that Amy has carried with her since her mother passed away. The moments of lucid expression of love and sharing the joy of music.

When Amy saw the job posting for the Music and Memories program with LCSNW, she thought to herself, “This is me. I can use my experience to help people.” And LCSNW couldn’t agree more. Amy immediately went about educating herself for the challenge. She read, she researched, and she attended similar music classes held for people living with dementia. Even though she doesn’t have a medical or music therapy background, Amy’s family perspective gave her an insight, a drive, a passion where participants share about an experience they had with music or show-and-tell a special item like an album cover or program from a musical. “We’re creating moments of joy,” Amy says.

The Music and Memories program for residents of Pierce County is currently virtual and will involve take-home music kits with hand percussion instruments. Amy is excited for in-person sessions in the future because there is a large collection of drums and instruments that can be utilized. And if you or a loved one is living with dementia you can be excited too. Amy Wigstrom is pouring her heart into the Music and Memories program, and helping your loved ones is exactly what she wants to be doing.

Meet Amy Wigstrom with Music and Memories

By Wendy Morris

Amy Wigstrom’s mother Linda

To learn more, contact us at dementia@lcsw.org, visit our website at www.dementiafriendlypc.org or call us at 253-272-8433.
Dr. Dexter Gordon of Evergreen State College

Executive Vice President Dr. Dexter Gordon participates in Evergreen State College’s first in person commencement since 2019

By Kelly Van Holts

OLYMPIA - Dr. Dexter Gordon began his tenure as executive vice president for The Evergreen State College in August 2021 and has just taken part in the college’s first in-person commencement since 2019 due to the pandemic. In addition, this year commemorates the college’s 50th anniversary since its creation in 1971.

Prior to coming to Evergreen, Dr. Gordon served as the founding director of the Race and Pedagogy Institute as well as director of the African American Studies program at the University of Puget Sound where he was a distinguished professor teaching rhetoric, media, culture and African American Studies.

Gordon often explains that he was first introduced to The Evergreen State College, not on either of its two campuses, but in the community where he was working as a change agent to remove barriers to education for underserved populations.

That is where he came across Dr. Maxine Mims and Dr. Joy Hardiman, founders of Evergreen’s Tacoma campus, nestled right in the heart of Tacoma’s Hilltop Neighborhood. Both of Evergreen’s two campuses offer freedom to students and their friends, family and community members there to celebrate the momentous occasion of graduation. He reflected on the past 50 years that brought the college to this point. Evergreen’s graduation is notoriously without the pomp and circumstance of other college commencement ceremonies. Students do not necessarily all don caps and gowns and instead choose to wear garb that reflects who they have found themselves to be. The diversity, individualism and spirit of the graduates resonated with Gordon, who was seen smiling and clapping for the many speakers and students walking across the stage to receive their diplomas.

Gordon, a first-generation high school and college graduate, looked it all in with a smile. His work over the years has led him to this pivotal role as an executive in higher education where his experience as a distinguished faculty member and proponent for access and equity to education gives him a great understanding of what students today are facing.

“Evergreen’s focus on bringing learning to typically excluded communities is what I found so attractive when asked to help lead the college in this unique role as Executive Vice President,” explains Gordon. “Watching Dylan Kuehl walk across the stage to get this bachelor’s degree as the first student with Down Syndrome in our state to achieve this amazing accomplishment gives insight into exactly how, with perseverance and a thirst to learn, everyone can find their way here at Evergreen.”

Gordon came to Evergreen with the challenge of working alongside the college’s leadership, faculty, and staff to reverse the recent trend of falling enrollment numbers. The new Executive Vice President explains that in his first year, he is encouraged that despite the enrollment and Covid challenges, the faculty and staff remain committed to public education, public good and creating access and opportunities for those who have for too long been long excluded and long denied a pathway to social mobility and full engagement in making a rich and robust democracy.

“That’s where I see my life commitment,” explains Gordon. “Evergreen is on the right side of the education spectrum. I see the college as a full partner with the rest of the state in providing the kind of quality education that we can all be proud of. I look around the country and am hard-pressed to see another public, liberal arts institution that is dedicated to removing barriers to education while making sure that diversity is central to what we do.”

The Evergreen State College has a rich history of being diverse- with people of color making up more than 30 percent of the college’s student body, over 60 percent are female, and the over 50 percent of the students who identify as LGBTQIA+ all finding their place at Evergreen, learning how to succeed as over 90 percent of its graduates who apply are accepted for admission into graduate school.

When asked about what the future of Evergreen holds, Gordon does not hesitate to respond by saying, “Our future as a college is being proven with the number of strong leaders who have and will graduate from both the Olympia and Tacoma campuses. We not only reach those typically excluded, but we provide our students with an excellent education that sets them up for success.

We are looking for the leadership of tomorrow in today’s classrooms and it is no secret who will serve in the legislature, on city council, start a business or run one of our state agencies, especially since 36 percent of Evergreen graduates enter public service. A remarkable achievement.”
Welcoming REACH the Neighbor

REACH launches at Tacoma Community House with a Pride day celebration

By Chad Tibyan

The REACH Center has launched a drop-in location at Tacoma Community House during Tacoma Pride Week, in recognition of the LGBTQ Youth/Community we serve. There are a high number of LGBTQ Youth facing homelessness/housing instability in the Pierce County area. The ACT Program’s goal is to help recognize barriers and offer a safe place to go for assistance. We offer a non-judgmental space where ALL ARE WELCOME!

Tacoma Community House and The REACH Center wanted to thank everyone who came and supported our PRIDE event on July 8th. This was a great way to welcome the REACH Center to the Hilltop Neighborhood. We are excited to be able to expand our services via the REACH Center to serve youth and young adults in the Hilltop neighborhood.

We would also like to thank our MC’s for the event Daniel Pena and Wayne-Bill as Lavinda Lyfe. As well as special guests Klarissa Monteros (City of Tacoma), DJ Lady V, and food donation provided by Love by the Slice.

Lastly, but not least thank you to all of our generous donors:

Jankuland
Tinker-Topia
Artist Craftsman Supply
Puget Sound Pizza
Destiny City Comics
Stargazer Comics
Elegant Octopus
Teaching Toys and Books
SuperNova Salon/Haircuts
T-Town Apparel
The Pacific Northwest Gift Shop

Sound Transit Free Youth Passes

An ORCA card or other fare media will be not required for youth 18 and younger.

By Sound Transit

Youth 18 and younger get free transit passes for all Sound Transit services Program starts Sept. 1
By Sound Transit
Publish Date
September 1, 2022
The Free Youth Transit Pass is live!

The new policy was prompted by the Move Ahead Washington transportation packaged passed by the State Legislature last March, which incentivized all Washington state transit agencies to adopt a free fare policy for riders under 19 years old. Under the agency’s previous policy, youth pay a reduced fare of $1.50.

What’s new?
Youth with an ORCA Youth Card are encouraged to continue using an ORCA card when riding. These cards will automatically transition to become a Free Youth Transit Pass.

ORCA Youth cards issued by schools during the 2021-2022 academic school year will continue to work through June 30, 2023.

Regional ORCA partners are currently analyzing the best methods to distribute additional ORCA cards to youth.

Go here for more information about getting your Free Youth Transit Pass.

Use of the Free Youth Transit Pass to access transit helps educate the next generation of riders on how to use ORCA and simplifies fare compliance for bus drivers.

It also enables agencies to track ridership by agency and identify trips taken by youth travelling on more than one agency.

An ORCA card or other fare media will be not required for youth to ride free.

In 2023 and beyond, youth will be directed to get a Free Youth Transit Pass that allows them to tap a card—or eventually their smartphone—to access transit across the region for free.

Youth without a Free Youth Transit Pass may be asked to show a student ID or proof of age and will be provided with information about how to get a Free Youth Transit Pass.

However, no youth will be turned away or penalized if they do not have an ORCA card, and no personal information will be collected.

The ORCA transit agencies are working closely together to make it easy for youth to obtain ORCA cards. ORCA agencies are also working to provide school districts with additional ORCA cards for students in the fall.

And the ORCA virtual card is expected to be available for all riders, including youth, sometime in 2023.
Harvest Fest 2022

Local business organizes Harvest Fest to bring family friendly fun to the Hilltop

By Christina West

The Hilltop Community really knows how to come together and have fun! We had several local businesses and churches decorate trunks and handing out candy, along with information to serve community.

We had Bright Now Dental, Korsmo, Multi-Cultural Child and Family, Big Homies, as well as several departments from Metro Parks like Fitness, Arts, and even our Customer Service folks got in on the fun!

Inside we had Kitsap Credit Union, Impact Schools, Rainier Scholars, and Birds of Flight, all serving community on All Hallows Eve! We also had several Arts & Crafts for the smallest members of our community, along with 2 bouncy houses, and of course the exotic birds entertained many of our families.

Our Teen Program staff helped out during the family fun, and were ready to start hosting teens promptly at 8pm! They danced to DJ Justin, had catered goodies, and a digital photo booth! As you can see from the pictures, it looks like everyone had a great time.

In total, we served over 1.272 folks on the Hilltop for our Harvest Fest 2022!
Bates Technical College partners with MultiCare’s Pulse Heart Institute to offer opportunities to Certified Medical Assistant program students

By Chelsea Lindquist

Bates Technical College partners with MultiCare to provide CMA opportunities to students

If you are interested in a high-wage, high-demand career opportunity, consider becoming a certified medical assistant. The healthcare industry is one of the largest employment sectors nationwide, and medical assisting is one of the fastest growing occupations. Certified medical assistants (CMA) earn high wages and are in high demand, especially in our local community.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows employment is expected to grow 18 percent from 2020 to 2030. Now is the perfect time to enter the healthcare field as a certified medical assistant.

Consider Bates Technical College’s CMA program, which now has new funding and employment opportunities specifically for CMA students!

Bates Technical College’s CMA instructor, Mary Ann Keith, notes, “Students who enroll in our CMA program experience hands-on clinical training, online learning options, and have the opportunity for a 180-hour clinical Practicum at the end of their program.”

Recently approved partnership with Pulse Heart Institute of MultiCare Health System allows CMA students to qualify for an exceptional new sponsorship program that will reimburse students up to $3,000 with a three-year employment commitment.

It’s important to note that awarded funds do not have to go specifically towards tuition. Prospective sponsorship students can begin to explore this option in the beginning of their CMA program to make sure it’s the right fit. To qualify for this sponsorship program, a student must graduate and pass their medical assisting exam.

This unique sponsorship program is an avenue to encourage prospective students to consider this highly in-demand career path.

The Bates Technical College CMA program is accredited through the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), a prestigious and unique accreditation for a technical college to hold. This specific accreditation allows Bates students the opportunity to prepare for the American Association of Medical Assistants CMA, (AAMA) national exam.

“We currently have a 100 percent national exam passage rate,” adds Instructor Keith. “Posting this statistic is one of the items we’re required to do in order to maintain accreditation–and we are proud to currently have a 100 percent success rate. This statistic speaks to the high-quality educational preparation CMA students receive at Bates Technical College.”

To learn more about the CMA program at Bates Technical College, check out our website at BatesTech.edu or call 253.680.7000.

Late Night is a FREE event for teens! Join us at your Community Center for late night fun with your friends! We’ll have open gym, sports, activities, and much more.

**People’s Community Center**
Effective Nov. 4
Grades 6-8, 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month, 8-11 pm
Grades 9-12, 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month, 8-11 pm

**Upcoming Teen Late Night Events:**
- December 2
- December 9
- December 16
- December 23
Kenji Hamai Stoll, a Japanese-American artist based in Tacoma, grew up visiting extended family in Maui once or twice a year. Going back and forth between the urban and rural environments and surrounded by different cultures in each place influenced his artistic style that blends graffiti, traditional Japanese motifs, and floral designs.

“Being in Tacoma, I was really inspired by graffiti art and murals that my friends were doing and stuff that I would see going on around the city. I don’t know if my family would think of themselves as artists, but there’s a very rich culture and history of craftsmanship. It was really common that people would make their own clothes, blankets, quilts, and decorate or adorn things like washi paper.”

Stoll’s mother made floral arrangements and his grandmother and great-grandmother had a greenhouse where they grew anthuriums and orchids. While Stoll is one of the youngest artists currently working with the Sound Transit Art Program, this isn’t his first public art commission. He’s completed several large-scale murals throughout the region that feature his distinctive vibrant flowers including one at Mt. Baker and Family Housing and another along the SODO Track.

“On the surface, it may seem like something that’s just pretty or decorative. But beneath the surface, there’s a lot of symbolism about life and death, the trajectories of all things changing ultimately all the time.”

Stoll’s art practice also includes community development. Aware of how the Link crosses demographic and historical boundaries, he met with organizers, community service providers, artists, historians, and Stadium High School students to gain a better understanding of what the stations meant for specific neighborhoods.

“I think when you can start to be intentional around issues like who has power and who doesn’t, who has who has a voice that’s being valued and who doesn’t, you start to intentionally shift those perspectives and strategies around how you do public art work. That’s I think that’s where some of the best work and public art happens. And it’s really, really hard.”

From his conversations, Stoll developed three themes to guide the development of each of the designs for the seven different low-relief sculptures that crown the tops of the new Hilltop Link stations:

Connection: The Light Rail connects Tacoma residents in new ways.

Reflection: Necessary during this time of increasing polarization.

Impermanence: The city is ever-changing and embracing new ways of being, especially in terms of social consciousness.

“The way I thought about them as a whole is that it’s kind of like when you look at a map overhead of the bus stations on a city map, it kind of creates a constellation. Each of these pieces is kind of like its own expanded star. The imagery and the motifs and the different things that each one pulls from is connected to landmarks or history or stories from each of those neighborhoods, both past and present.”
Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital is building a new stand-alone facility – slated for 2024. The first step in this significant endeavor is to connect and engage the community. Mary Bridge Children’s entrusted Coleman and Associates to assist in a community engagement process. Coleman and Associates proposed to engage neighborhood residents to amplify the voice of those who may be affected by the project; hear from a diverse, cross-section of people in the neighborhood; educate residents to amplify the voice of those who may be affected by the project; hear from a diverse, cross-section of people in the neighborhood; educate residents about the project and were able to respond to specific questions from attendees.

The leadership of Mary Bridge Children’s understands that the current and new hospital is part of a larger community-based ecosystem. This engagement process was designed to ensure equity by tapping into the available historical and cultural resources of the community. Equity suggests that these resources should be identified and called forth prior to decision making to actualize the full potential of the project.

Between March and October of 2021, Coleman and Associates connected with 30+ organized groups that represent thousands who live, work and play in Pierce County. The team intentionally recruited from historically underrepresented communities to include BIPOC and LGBTQ communities. Connections were made via online convenings, social media, phone calls and in-person interviews. Coleman and Associates’ team of six activated dialogue along with those who represent the hospital and project developer which is CBRE. These representatives provided a detailed overview of the project and were able to respond to specific questions from attendees. This report reflects the aggregated responses of all attendees.

**Project Vision and Goals**

**LEGACY FACILITY**

The Replacement Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital is a once in a generation opportunity to create one of the best and safest children’s hospital in the nation.

**INNOVATIVE OPERATING MODEL**

The facility desires to distinguish itself by successfully integrating LEAN led design to gain operational improvement in the facility planning, design and construction process. Safety is our number one priority and we will design workflows around human factor engineering principles so that safe practice is the easy choice for all.

**COMMUNITY PREFERENCE**

The Replacement Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital will be a beacon for children’s health for the community it serves to create an effective model for care, healing, and population health. The new facility will promote a healthy environment and uniquely deploy technologies that enhance experience of patients and their families and simplifies the work of employees.

**Community Re-Engagement**

Why MBCH Re-envisioned the Project:

- Staying true to our Vision & Goals; listening to feedback from physicians, staff and community
- Changing trends in health care; consumer preferences related to value and pandemic ‘lessons learned’
- Macro-economic factors and global supply chain related constraints

What changes were made to the Project:

- Hospital is 80,000 SF smaller; focus on essential services
- Medical Office Building has been added to campus; addresses growth in out-patient based services and Urgent Care / Crisis Assessment
- Parking solutions will deliver 800 (+) new spaces versus original 1,100
- Schedule for Project completion is early 2026 versus late 2024

What we heard:

- Abundance of disabled parking
- Overhead vehicle drop-off areas
- Outdoor walkways and other areas for patients, visitors and employees
- Abundant use of natural light
- Cultural & Community art
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (Contracting)
- Gender equity and non-binary accommodations
- Family support
- Furniture & amenities

How we addressed:

- Garages will exceed zoning requirement for disabled parking
- Building has large covered drop-off area Main & ED Entry
- Walkways connect all buildings and major roadways; several outdoor public areas for all constituents
- Large areas of glass and windows for day-lighting
- Outdoor art-wall concept; interior art to be reflective of goal
- Project has hired a diversity manager to achieve DEI goals
- All toilets are identified as gender neutral; there are private lockers/changing rooms identified for non-binary staff
- Family lounges on every floor; every room has sleeper sofa
- Furniture will accommodate diverse demographics (children to bariatric); amenities include cafes with healthy local options and a culturally diverse menu, separate play areas for children and teens, and interactive experiences in multiple locations.

**Benefits to Surrounding Area/Community**

**Economic Development**

- $415M total Project spend; ~$250M/$300M local spend.
- 266 New jobs created (MBCH) projected through 2028
- Project Team incentivized to achieve Diversity, Inclusion and Local apprentice/mentor goals.

**Reduce Stress on neighborhoods**

- Parking – Add 2 garages
- 450 spaces – Staff
- 350 spaces – Family Visitor
- New Technology to monitor staff parking (license plate recognition) – used in neighborhoods to alleviate staff parking in residential areas
- Subcontractors will be prohibited from parking on local neighborhood/residential streets. Enforcement will be provided through the Project Team with contractual penalties enforced.

**Improved traffic flow in and around campus**

- Improved Safety
- Improved Circulation
- Improved Access
- More Open Spaces
- Opportunity for Public Benefits
Going Solar at the Oasis of Hope Center

New solar panel installation at the Oasis of Hope Center supplies more than just power
By Tacoma Power Staff

Nestled on G Street among homes, churches, and businesses, the Oasis of Hope Center overlooks downtown Tacoma and farther still to the Cascade Range and mighty Mt. Rainier. Situated there in the Hilltop neighborhood, the Oasis of Hope Center has been providing vital services to the community’s youth for 18 years. As a faith-based non-profit, the Center is “firmly dedicated to serving our community with integrity, while engaging our neighborhood families. We believe in education, mentoring, providing health services, counseling, and youth crisis prevention resources [to] building nurturing relationships...that will foster individual growth.”

It was in this spirit of providing education and inspiration to their community that the Oasis of Hope began the process to add solar panels to their building, demonstrating the feasibility of projects like this in the Hilltop neighborhood. Additionally, the renewable energy system would help offset the Oasis of Hope’s energy costs, freeing up more of the Center’s resources for their programs and services.

While the Oasis of Hope Center was ready and willing to begin work on the project, as a non-profit they needed financial and technical assistance to make their dream a reality. The Evergreen Options grant is funded by power customers who are Evergreen Options program participants and want to invest in renewable energy generation in our region. Funds are used to purchase and support renewable energy projects that will significantly reduce [The Oasis of Hope Center’s] operating costs so they can use the savings for the wonderful things they do here.”

Executive Director of the Oasis of Hope Center, Tim Thomas, explained the importance of the solar panel installation, “the community here [Hilltop] doesn’t have a lot of education or experience with renewable energy. This installation will spark conversations; people will ask, ‘what is that on your roof?’ and we will be able to talk about the importance of renewable energy, and the careers available to young people in renewable energy.” Edwin Wanji, founder and CEO of Sphere Solar Energy, echoed the importance of demonstrating the potential of renewable energy careers to youth, particularly in historically disadvantaged communities like Hilltop. “There are good paying jobs in renewable energy,” Wanji said, “The sector is going to continue to grow and provide young people with good, union jobs for years to come.”

Chris Robinson, General Manager and Superintendent of Tacoma Power reflected on the project, “This is a substantial solar project that will significantly reduce [The Oasis of Hope Center’s] operating costs so they can use the savings for the wonderful things they do here.”

Tacoma Power believes in partnering with customers to reduce their energy usage, which helps ensure our region’s energy needs are met well into the future. Programs like Evergreen Options which are funded directly by customers of Tacoma Power present an important opportunity to keep development and renewable energy projects local, benefiting other Tacoma Power customers who provide services to the community.
It is that time of the year when we all start getting busier and busier with holiday plans. The Hilltop is no exception as the year ends our neighborhood is teeming with things to do.

We have all seen the major changes brought to our neighborhood this year and it seems that life is thriving in the Hilltop! From the Hilltop business district to the community centers of the Hill there are so many upcoming events, classes, and conversations happening.

The holidays season is well underway and our budgets are maxed out. Check out these awesome free events happening in our neighborhood this December:

**Dragon Parades & Satellites**
- Dec. 3 at Peace Community Center, 2106 S Cushman Ave
Follow a flaming dragon in a light parade through neighborhood streets! Hear live music, dance with light projections by Permaculture Lifestyle Institute, play with shadow puppet art by Mauricio Robalino, sip hot drinks and celebrate light with the Puget Sound Revels and Tacoma Light Trail. All free! Bring/wear lights, and look for the tents outside.

Parade from 6-45-7:15pm, then light, music and play throughs 8pm. More info: TacomaLightTrail.org/satellights

**Tacoma is a Union Town: Anti-racist Organizing in Grit City**
- Dec. 9 at First United Methodist Church of Tacoma, 621 Tacoma Ave S
Join April Sims and John Scearcy as they lead a discussion on Organizing labor unions in Tacoma. They will explore the conversation on anti-racist labor union organizing in Grit City. [https://fb.me/e/3djasAoQ6](https://fb.me/e/3djasAoQ6)

**Wintertime Prep for Spring Blooms**

**Winter of 2022 is expected to have a La Niña weather pattern. La Niña affects US weather through its impact on the Asia-North Pacific jet stream, which is retract ed to the west during a La Niña winter and often shifted northward of its average position.**

La Niña winters in the southern tier of the US tend to be warmer and drier, while the northern tier and Canada tend to be colder.

**The Farmers Almanac suggestions for winter gardening and prep**

In many areas ground may freeze and pipes can burst. If you feel your pipes may be at risk, keep water trickling through the night, it will prevent the pipes from freezing.

The cold season is the perfect time to plant winter vegetables such as spinach, beets, and garlic.

**What’s in the Stars?**

*Birth charts, retrogrades, star signs... What does any of it mean?*

**By Ashleah Yandell**

Most of us know what our star sign is when it comes to astrology, but did you know there is so much more to this pseudoscience than simply star signs? Over the last few years it seems like the growing interest in astrology has us all asking more questions in hopes to better understand this complicated topic.

Sometimes it seems that we as a collective community have “bad luck” and when we look to astrology for explanation the culprit is a planetary retrograde. We have all heard our quirky astrology loving friend talk about the dreaded Mercury retrograde, but what does that actually mean? Let’s explore what a retrograde is and how each planet impacts our world when it is in a retrograde period.

**Planetary Retrogrades**
- Mercury: Impacts communication
- Venus: Impacts love life
- Mars: Impacts motivation/actions
- Jupiter: Impacts traveling plans
- Saturn: Impacts social obligations
- Uranus: Impacts societal concerns
- Neptune: Impacts creative flow
- Pluto: Impacts growth and evolution

**Why each planet’s retrograde is significant.**

Over the last year there have been some even more rare instances of retrogrades as we saw Mercury retrograde four times while all the other planets had one retrograde period. This year’s retrogrades ultimately overlapped with six planets in a retrograde period at once!

So how does each planet impact us during these crazy retrograde periods? Let’s take a look at how each planet can both wreak havoc or amplify positive changes in our lives.
Are You Expecting?

Community Health Care has the full range of maternity services.

- FREE pregnancy tests! No appointment needed!
- Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Have your delivery at a local hospital.
- Specialized maternity program to help you prepare for your baby.
- You can choose your doctor from a staff of 12 physicians.

Hilltop Regional Health Center
1202 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Tacoma
(253) 441-4742
Learn more at www.commhealth.org