



A community-based newspaper serving the Puget Sound area since 1981



# The Voice

July  
2006  
Articles translated  
into six languages

The newspaper of Neighborhood House

## Former mayor to chair citizen committee on Yesler redevelopment

### SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Former Seattle Mayor Norman B. Rice has agreed to assist the Seattle Housing Authority by serving as chairman of a new citizen review committee being assembled this summer to provide advice on possible redevelopment of Yesler Terrace.

Rice will begin meeting in September with a committee of stakeholders and residents whose immediate task will be to consider the breadth of possibilities for the future of Yesler Terrace and develop consensus on a set of principles to guide redevelopment efforts.

Committee members will be recruited by the Seattle Housing Authority in the next few months.

"We are very grateful that Norman Rice has accepted our invitation to chair this committee," said SHA's Executive Director Tom Tierney. "With his experience in building consensus and his understanding of what makes a great neighborhood, I know that he will be an effective facilitator for the community conversations that we

**Please see "Rice" on page 7**



PHOTO COURTESY OF SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

*Former Seattle Mayor Norman B. Rice will chair a Seattle Housing Authority citizen committee to discuss the future of the Yesler Terrace public housing community. Committee and community conversations will form the basis for guiding principles for redevelopment.*

## Federal budget debate is on

BY SCOTT FREUTEL  
Seattle Housing Authority

The annual budget debate in Washington, D.C. has begun. At press time, committees of both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate were holding hearings on the fiscal year 2007 budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which underwrites most of the Seattle Housing Authority's programs.

As submitted by President Bush in February, the budget would cut HUD programs by more than \$1 billion. The proposed level of public housing funding, for example, represents a cut of about 8 percent or \$459 million from the 2006 appropriation.

The Administration has also proposed a 10 percent cut in the capital fund, which pays for the maintenance and renovations necessary to keep public housing buildings running.

Despite a backlog of over \$20 billion in needed projects nationwide, the budget only requests just over \$2 billion.

Seattle Housing Authority officials estimate that this cut could result in a \$1 million loss to the Housing Authority, though it is not expected to impact homeWorks, the Housing Authority's high-rise renovation program.

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program fares a little better. The budget

proposes a \$502 million increase in funding for the program, which has grown to replace public housing programs and serves more than two million households.

According to HUD, this increase, together with a \$639 million increase in Section 8 project-based rental assistance, will permit the renewal of all existing rental housing assistance contracts.

The nonprofit Center on Budget and Policy Priorities questions that fact.

A recent report by the center estimates that, if the President's voucher renewal proposals were enacted, "a large minority of public housing agencies would face funding shortfalls in 2007 and be forced to reduce voucher assistance in their communities."

Additional proposed cuts in the President's fiscal year 2007 budget include:

- \$118 million cut for Section 811 disabled housing, a 50 percent cut which would reinstate a proposal Congress rejected last year to eliminate funding for construction of affordable rental units for the disabled.
- \$190 million cut for Section 202 elderly housing, a 26 percent cut.
- \$736 million cut for Community Development Block Grants, a 20 percent cut. These grants support community development and housing across the country.
- \$35 million cut for lead paint prevention and remediation, a 23 percent cut.

## Countywide efforts to end homelessness gaining ground

BY VIRGINIA FELTON  
Seattle Housing Authority

Homelessness is one of the top three issues facing the residents of King County but it can be resolved, an overwhelming majority of individuals said in a recent public opinion poll.

The poll results coincided with the release of the first progress report on King County's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Entitled "The First Bold Steps," the report announces that current levels of funding, services and housing development far exceed early goals outlined in the plan.

"Governments and businesses, faith communities and philanthropists, human services and housing providers and advocates for homeless people are figuring out the smartest ways to get the best results, and

are already making a difference," said Bill Block, project director of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County.

"The Ten-Year Plan saves lives," said Sheila Sebron, who now has a stable home thanks to the help of several local agencies and her own determination. "We have taken the first steps but we have a lot more work to do. I know I won't stop until housing is available to all those who need it."

The public opinion poll was conducted to determine current public attitudes and perceptions about homelessness. Research firm Lopez and Cheung contacted nearly 900 adults by phone in March. Poll highlights include the following:

- Homelessness is the third most important issue in this region, behind transportation and education.
- More than 80 percent of respondents do

not believe the problem is too big to be solved and nearly 60 percent believe that with appropriate resources we can end homelessness.

• A significant number of respondents question whether the right actions are being taken by the right people to end homelessness. Many say government agencies are not doing enough to address the issue, and 52 percent are concerned that the problem will increase in their lifetime.

• While respondents are highly sympathetic to the issue of homelessness, the number of respondents who report taking action are very low.

"The poll tells us that King County's residents care about homelessness and believe a solution is possible," said Jon Fine, president and CEO of United Way of King County. "To end homelessness, we need to build both the public and political

will, and tools like this survey inform our efforts by giving us the data and information we need to establish benchmarks and identify the best opportunities and invest-

**Please see "Homeless" on page 2**

### Where is the rest of The Voice?

You may notice that this month's edition of The Voice looks a little different. We've put together a shorter version of the publication to accommodate staff vacations.

But don't worry, we'll be back to normal next month, and there are still plenty of great news stories inside.

Thank you for your patience.

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### Quotable

**"That day I felt like I was born again. I went and saw that everyone was OK. They were all alive."**

—Refugee Tsege Berhe on returning to her family in Ethiopia many years after she escaped to the United States.

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## Basketry helps Ethiopian refugee weave past to present

By KELSEY JONES-CASEY  
Special to *The Voice*

Tsege Berhe was 13 years old when her mother decided it was time to prepare her for marriage by teaching her the traditional Ethiopian craft of basket weaving.

Berhe practiced for an entire summer to perfect her baskets. She knew that when she was married she would be expected to have a range of skills, including basket weaving, baking and caring for children.

At that time Berhe was still a young girl living in a small town in Ethiopia's Tigray region. She was going to school and helping her mother with her many younger siblings. She had no idea that her life would soon change.

Berhe is now a resident of South King County. She fled from Ethiopia's communist dictatorship more than 17 years ago.

Over the years, Berhe has learned to balance her American and Ethiopian identities by teaching her children about their heritage and sharing her basketry skills with friends and family.

Her colorful work was on display at Refugee ARTvocabulary, an event celebrating refugee culture in Seattle that was held last month.

Berhe is one of an estimated 7,000 Seattle-area residents of Ethiopian descent.

Many of these refugees began arriving in the 1980s during the Ethiopian-Eritrean War and the simultaneous Ethiopian Civil War. After a communist dictator seized power in 1974, numerous insurgencies rose up in Ethiopia.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front formed in 1975, with its members demanding social justice and self-determination for all Ethiopians. The TPLF was against the communist dictatorship, and the government spent much energy attempting to quell the swelling Tigray movement.

Berhe recalls the danger of every day life for the Tigray people, especially for the school-aged youth, who were seen by the government as the next generation of Tigray rebels.

"Young people could not live in the country because they were always doing demonstrations. The government killed people everywhere," she said. "When you went to school they killed you. And when you went from school to your house they killed you."

Berhe's soon-to-be husband was a Tigray high school teacher. During the years of the insurgency he was imprisoned more than four times — so often they lost count. Berhe's voice tightens as she explains the injustice.

"They decided to put him in prison because of his Tigray. He was not involved in politics, but he was a part of the tribe," she said.

With each imprisonment, the odds of a safe return diminished. So he and Berhe fled for neighboring Sudan.

"It was terrible. It was very sad when we escaped. We didn't have food. We had to walk," she said. "A guy showed us the way. We paid him money. We traveled, walking five days without food. It was very hard... We saw dangerous wild animals on our way."

Here Berhe's voice cracked. She hesitated to go on in front of her young children.

"They know the story," she said. "It was very hard, but finally we escaped."

The pair arrived at a UN-sponsored refugee camp on the border of Sudan and Ethiopia, where they were married and began



PHOTO COURTESY OF KELSEY JONES-CASEY  
Tsege Berhe learned to weave baskets as a girl.

the lengthy process of becoming refugees. After several years they were sponsored and relocated to Dallas, Texas.

They found jobs and made a life for themselves in Dallas, but the pair eventually moved to Tukwila where more of their family members lived.

In Tukwila, Berhe spent 10 to 12 hours a day skinning pigs at a meat-processing plant. The Ethiopian economy had been destroyed during the war, and her younger siblings didn't have enough money to go to school. So Berhe and her husband, like many refugee families in America, took on the extra burden of caring for their families at home.

Berhe returned to Ethiopia in 1996 during a time of peace and stability in her country.

"That day I felt like I was born again," she said. "I went and saw that everyone was OK. They were all alive."

Berhe fondly recalls weaving baskets alongside her mother during her visit. When she returned home after three months, she and her husband soon began a family of their own.

They now live in Auburn, where Berhe works as a nursing assistant. Her dream is to introduce her three children to their grandmother in Ethiopia. She also dreams of teaching her daughter the traditional crafts of the Tigray people.

"When I was growing up I saw women (weaving baskets) in the house. My aunts were weaving all the time," she said. "It is a little hard to keep traditions alive because our kids don't have a good Ethiopian community. Sometimes at school there are only one or two other Ethiopian kids in their classes. They do speak Tigray, but it is hard for them."

In bright blues, reds and yellows, Berhe's baskets represent Ethiopian culture and harmonies. She uses them for decoration, but her mother in Ethiopia uses them to hold fruit, popcorn and Ethiopian flatbread.

For Berhe, the baskets represent a part of her past that cannot be recreated. She has been unable to find the proper materials for her weaving here in Washington, so she cannot perfect her craft.

Instead, she will have to go back to her home country to continue weaving. But Berhe has a deeper motivation to return to Ethiopia — she wants to help her people rebuild, perhaps using her skills as a nursing assistant.

"There are a lot of people who need help there. I have big plans to go back," she said. "If I cannot make it, my kids have to make it."

## Annual plan and budget presented to community

SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Seattle Housing Authority residents and community members attended a public hearing last month to address the Housing Authority's budget and fiscal year 2007 Moving To new Ways annual plan.

Ellen Kissman, SHA asset management coordinator, presented highlights from the plan.

Private home builders will continue to build new homes in High Point and Rainier Vista, including some affordable to households with incomes below 80 percent of Seattle's median income, she said. Low income and workforce housing will be under construction in the second phases of High Point and Rainier Vista with completion expected in 2008.

SHA will continue to partner with other housing providers to offer diverse housing options. Holiday, one of the largest providers of senior housing in the country, will build a 160-unit market-rate senior housing community at High Point.

In fiscal year 2007 the replacement housing for NewHolly will be completed. Replacement housing efforts for Rainier Vista and High Point will continue throughout the year and beyond.

Kissman added that homeWorks, SHA's five-year capital program to renovate building systems and common areas in 22 public housing high-rises, will enter its second phase in fiscal year 2007.

Other activities in the plan include continuing to sell a selection of SHA's Scattered-Sites units. The units will be

replaced with other units that will help the Scattered-Sites program run more cost effectively and provide housing better suited to residents' needs.

Residents will also benefit from the continuation or expansion of a variety of successful community services programs.

Andrew Lofton, SHA's deputy executive director, presented an overview of the budget. He noted that the proposed combined operating and capital budget totals \$302 million and exceeds last year's adopted budget by \$68 million.

A \$6.8 million proposed increase in operating expenses is due primarily to an expected boost in Housing Choice Voucher use, inflation adjustments for the cost of general Housing Authority operations and short-term development and staff expenses associated with the homeWorks projects.

The proposed capital and non-routine expense increase of \$61 million is due primarily to beginning the second phase of homeWorks and redevelopment efforts in the Lake City Village, Rainier Vista and High Point communities.

Questions, suggestions and comments made by residents and community members at the hearing will be taken into consideration when moving forward with the plans. The plan and budget will be brought before SHA's Board of Commissioners for approval this month.

If you would like to view the complete MTW plan and agency budget summaries, please download them from SHA's Web site at <http://www.seattlehousing.org>.



## One to grow on

Garden tips for community gardeners

By ANZA MUENCHOW  
Special to *The Voice*

Organic gardening is based on good compost, and lots of it. This time of year I am searching for some really good stuff to use as mulch and to incorporate into new beds. Many gardens have a pile of yard waste (weeds, leaves, grass clippings, tomato vines, etc.), but how does this yard waste become crumbly, rich compost that can improve your garden soil? Here is the quick scoop on compost.

Compost just happens. Any pile of garden clippings and weeds will decompose eventually. There are a million little soil microorganisms growing and excreting in a compost pile, and they are the key to growing healthy plants.

To make a good compost, however, keep these guidelines in mind: Add equal parts of dried "brown" materials and fresh "green" materials, usually by layering six inches of

one and six inches of the other.

For the green layer, use materials like grass clippings, fresh manure or fresh weeds. For the brown layer, use dried leaves, straw, corn stalks, shredded paper, etc. Sprinkle with lots of water as you add these materials, especially in the summer months. The pile should always be as damp as a wrung-out sponge.

You may also want to cover the pile with a sheet of black plastic because this keeps the moisture in during the summer and keeps it from getting soggy wet in the winter months.

Smaller pieces of plant material will compost faster, so chop up the larger weeds. Think of adding pieces smaller than the size of your finger.

Lastly, keep aerating the pile by turning it. When you turn the whole pile over onto a new spot you may find that the bottom is already good garden mulch. A compost

**Please see "Gardening" on page 6**

## Homelessness

Continued from front page

ments for the future."

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels said that "The First Bold Steps" report documents political and community will in action.

"We are already working aggressively to end homelessness," he said. "We're on a roll, but more needs to be done. I believe that we can put a roof over every head in Seattle and King County."

According to the report, in 2005 and 2006 the Committee to End Homelessness in King County put in place a strong governance structure and launched a data information system to help guide program

development and investments.

Approximately 1,300 new housing units to house formerly homeless individuals and families were opened or funded, and hundreds of additional units are planned.

Millions of new dollars were also dedicated to the issue thanks to substantial increases in the state Housing Trust Fund, passage of the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act by the state Legislature, passage of the Veterans and Human Services Levy by King County voters and commitments of new resources by many governmental, urban and suburban organizations.

Virginia Felton volunteers with communications efforts on the Committee to End Homelessness.

# POINT OF VIEW

NEWS ABOUT THE SEATTLE SENIOR HOUSING PROGRAM AND SEATTLE'S HIGH-RISE COMMUNITIES

## homeWorks projects ahead of schedule



PHOTO BY LORI STEHLIK

Residents of Beacon Tower toast the start of construction at their building with a round of sparkling cider at the kick-off meeting last month.

By **SVEN KOEHLER**  
Seattle Housing Authority

Anyone who has worked in construction can tell you how unusual it is to hear the words "construction project" and "ahead of schedule" in the same sentence.

But that's exactly the good news that Stephanie Van Dyke, Seattle Housing Authority senior development program manager, received from the homeWorks general contractor, W.G. Clark Construction, in June.

Of the 22 SHA Low-Income Public Housing high-rises that will be renovated between now and 2009, the first two are nearing completion between two and three months faster than originally planned.

The internal plumbing work at Green Lake Plaza and Lictonwood is now complete, and the work is almost done at International Terrace.

The most visible change that the homeWorks project has brought to Green Lake Plaza is to the exterior.

At a recent community meeting at the building, resident Steve Fireman noted, "When we first saw the poster with the proposed colors, many people were quite disappointed because it looked like 'institutional green,' but once the paint was on

the building, it looked pretty nice." A comment from a neighbor echoed this sentiment, saying the new paint job is "a real gem...a gift to the neighborhood."

Lictonwood's new exterior will be unveiled later in July, instead of in the fall as first expected.

Being ahead of schedule means that contractors will begin work at other buildings sooner. Beacon Tower residents just welcomed homeWorks to their building a few weeks earlier than projected.

"We're very pleased that this means the time that residents will be impacted is shorter than we first thought," Van Dyke said.

Work will start at Ballard House in late July rather than in October.

Community meetings at Ballard House are underway now to introduce the project to residents. Property managers and the homeWorks team are working with Ballard House residents to prepare for the project, gathering information about any special needs residents may have and working with them to address those needs during construction.

There will most likely be changes to the original proposed schedule at other buildings, most notably Harvard Court and Capitol Park.

### Community notes

#### Home buyer education class planned

The International District Housing Alliance is offering home buyer education classes in English on Saturday, July 15 from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the NewHolly branch of the Seattle Public Library, 7058 32nd Ave. S.

These classes are free and open to the public, but space is limited and registration is required.

In the class, basic information about the home buying process will be presented. Instructors will also talk about the role of housing counseling, explain the dangers of predatory lending and introduce several down payment assistance options.

For more information or to register, call 206-957-1316.

#### Free legal help offered

Seattle University School of Law is offering topic-based free legal advice to community members.

On July 10, a qualified attorney will conduct a "Know-Your-Rights" educational presentation on the basics of small claims court.

Following the presentation, low-income clients who would like to speak with an attorney are invited to go through an intake interview and will be given an appointment to meet with an attorney on July 17.

The events will take place at the Starbucks Support Center, 2401 Utah Ave. S., on the third floor from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Coffee and light refreshments will be provided.

The services are provided as part of the Community Justice Centers, a project of Starbucks Law & Corporate Affairs Department in conjunction with the Access to Justice Institute at Seattle University School of Law. If you have questions or need interpretation services, call 206-398-4051.



## Jean's viewpoint

Letter from SSHP Advocates II president

By **JEAN ANDERSON**  
President, SSHP Advocates II

In serving on the Board of The Advocates II, I've realized more than ever that we in the Seattle Senior Housing Program represent a microcosm of our society.

Recently at our Pleasant Valley Plaza monthly potluck, I looked around the room and marveled at the amazing diversity we represent.

We are Honduran, Korean, Russian, Chinese, Indian, South African, Pacific Islander and a large mix of North American.

We hail from north, south, east, west and from myriad backgrounds. We have been young, have married, divorced, remained single. We have worked either in a workplace or at home. Some of us have children and grandchildren.

Each of us no doubt has been in love, known joy, disappointment, sorrow, loss of loved ones and some now are challenged by the effects of aging and/or illness.

As our evening progressed, I realized that we also have an opportunity to enjoy

the things that can make for a peaceful existence. We are living here together, managing to get along with each other, though not without occasional disagreements, which we usually manage to resolve. We have a few rules, but they allow us to live with dignity in an orderly building that is safe and where we may enjoy privacy, yet also assemble when we wish.

As residents began leaving, I couldn't help thinking that our lives at Pleasant Valley essentially embrace what all people want: to be treated with respect; to live in a safe, comfortable place; privacy; freedom to be ourselves and freedom to express ourselves; freedom to choose our friends; freedom to pursue happiness by whatever path is fulfilling.

Our potluck reminded me that life can be less complicated when the focus is on mutual respect, concentrating on what we have in common.

It's true that we are individuals with varying likes and dislikes, different points of view and experiences; but in ways that really count, we are essentially the same.



## Letters to the editor

Readers of The Voice speak out

TO THE EDITOR OF THE VOICE,

Unlike Seattle Housing Authority General Counsel James Fearn, as a former property and apartment manager, arbitrator (a form of a judge) and law school alumnus, I applaud and agree with the sound legal reasoning behind Judge Suzanne Barnett's ruling that SHA can't prohibit tenants from posting signs on the outside of their apartment doors. ["Judge rules against sign ban on doors," The Voice, June 2006]

The reasoning was because the outside of the doors belong to the tenant and are not part of the common areas (which SHA may have some rights to restrict), that tenants have certain free speech and freedom of expression rights and that SHA neglected to address the issue of who owned the outside of the door as the tenant's leases were silent on this issue.

I also note that unlike private sector tenants, if I don't like how I am being treated by my public sector landlord, I can't very easily find another (affordable) place to live.

When I managed an apartment building, it was the industry trade standard that the outside of the apartment door belonged to the tenant.

I didn't care what they put up, no one ever damaged the paint or finish of their door by using tape and other adhesives, and I don't recall ever feeling that any of the tenants' doors were "cluttered."

I also disagree with SHA wasting public resources (money and employee time) that could be used instead to maintain and manage our buildings by appealing this ruling.

I note that in other SHA buildings like the SSHP building I live in, many tenants exercise their rights of free speech and free expression by posting a variety of items on the outside of their doors. These postings include notices telling SHA employees that they do not have permission to enter the apartment without the tenant being present, a three-page list of the U.S. war dead in Iraq, wreaths, religious sayings and devo-

tions, cultural icons and other items.

Why should high-rise tenants be treated any differently? Aren't they entitled to equal protection under the law?

Finally, I object to the sexist and potential contempt of court remarks by SHA Attorney James Fearn, who said that he thought that Judge Barnett based her decision only on sentiment.

"I don't think we really got a decision on the law," he said in the article.

Saying that a female judge failed to make an unemotional decision based on the law is implicitly saying that women aren't qualified to be judges.

It would be just as insulting as someone saying that Mr. Fearn couldn't be a judge and make a decision involving slavery reparations or have African-American criminal defendants appear before him because as an African-American "he would be sentimental." Mr. Fearn owes Judge Barnett and the rest of us an apology for his thoughtless remarks.

—Keith Gormezano, Phinney Terrace

#### James Fearn responds:

My comment about Judge Barnett's decision being based upon emotion came from the fact that there was no legal analysis or reasoning in her finding that apartment entry doors belong to tenants.

Judge Barnett prefaced her decision with the statement that, although it may not be the law, and the Court of Appeals may disagree with her, it was her personal belief that doorways are "sacred places." The decision, based upon her personal belief, and lacking any legal analysis, was not a decision based upon the law.

In my legal career I have observed, and have said, that many judges, male and female, have made decisions based upon emotion, not the law.

In fact, I should observe that, at least from what I read here, Mr. Gormezano's comments on this issue are also based upon emotion, not the law.

# HIGH POINT HERALD

NEWS ABOUT THE HIGH POINT COMMUNITY

## Superintendent recommends elementary schools merge

*Final decision to be made July 26*

By CJ KLOCOW  
Voice reporter

Last month, Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Raj Manhas issued a preliminary report to the school board recommending the closure of nine Seattle schools.

In his report was a recommendation to close Fairmont Park Elementary School and merge its students into High Point Elementary School.

"For far too many years, this district has invested scarce funds in maintaining excess building capacity, rather than directing those funds to learning activities," he said in a press release.

The school board had announced earlier this year that it intended to close 11 schools by fall 2007 to help reduce budget shortfalls and improve the quality of education around the district, news reports said.

The board created a committee in July 2005 to develop recommendations for the superintendent. The committee held 10 town hall meetings to obtain input and testimony from the public. An estimated 3,000 people attended the meetings.

The committee presented its final recommendation to the superintendent on May 30. Its original list included a proposal to close High Point Elementary School, causing school leaders to rally and suggest the merger.

After considering the redevelopment tak-

ing place in the High Point community, and the idea that the school could accommodate both schools, the superintendent modified the committee's recommendation in his preliminary report.

According to Gayle Everly, principal of High Point Elementary, the merger would be a positive step.

"There are a lot of unknowns right now and it is a hugely complex issue," she said. "I think that the Seattle School District has a strong focus on equity. The merger decision was a demonstration of that. As stewards of a diverse, multicultural community, our school just wants to focus on the students' well-being."

The superintendent will release a final recommendation to the school board on July 5. From there, the school board will make a final decision on July 26.

A town hall meeting for members of the public to share their opinions on the proposals is scheduled for July 19. For information on the location and time of this meeting, or if you are interested in speaking, call the school board office at 206-252-0040.

For more information about the closures and mergers, visit the Seattle Public Schools Web site at <http://www.seattleschools.org>. You can also write to the school board at: Seattle Public Schools, Board of Directors, MS 11-010, P.O. Box 34165, Seattle, WA 98124.

## Initiative helps immigrants and refugees become citizens

By TERRY LIGHT  
Seattle Human Services Department

Cam-Van Nguyen came to the United States in 1989 from Vietnam with her three children and became a U.S. citizen in 2005 after studying for more than a year.

Tien Duong-Le, an outreach worker for the International District Housing Alliance, encouraged Nguyen to apply and helped her through the long application process, which included gaining a waiver for a disability.

Nguyen is now living independently and happily at High Point. She is proud to serve as a role model for her adult children, who also live here but have not yet applied for U.S. citizenship.

The International District Housing Alliance provides citizenship assistance and individual services to vulnerable elders in the International District and Seattle Housing Authority sites.

Its citizenship assistance program is one of many programs that receive funding through the Seattle Human Services Department's New Citizen Initiative.

The New Citizen Initiative, in operation since 1997, is run by the Human Services Department and funded by the City of Seattle, the State Department of Social and Health Services and the Seattle Housing Authority.

The initiative supports more than 20 community agencies doing citizenship work, and more than 3,000 immigrants and

refugees have become U.S. citizens through the program.

Obtaining U.S. citizenship allows individuals access to certain public benefits and facilitates family unity and involvement in civic activities.

In 1996, federal immigration and welfare reform dramatically changed the rights and benefits of legal residents. As a result of that federal legislation, non-citizens can no longer access some public benefits or the duration of time they can access those benefits is limited.

Gaining U.S. citizenship can be a difficult process. It includes speaking, reading and writing English, passing a test on U.S. history and civics and successfully negotiating paperwork and appointments at the Homeland Security Department.

Since the majority of New Citizen Initiative participants are not English-proficient, and more than half are elders, access to U.S. citizenship would not be possible for many without the program.

Immigrants are an increasingly important part of Seattle, contributing to the culture, economy and vitality of our city. The New Citizen Initiative helps them connect in a meaningful way to this country.

For more information about the program, call 206-233-7084 or 206-684-0544.

*A version of this story originally appeared in the spring edition of Investing in People, an e-newsletter published by the Seattle Human Services Department.*

## Introducing Neighborhood House case managers

By VOICE STAFF

Neighborhood House offers case management services to residents of High Point and the surrounding area.

Family support workers work one-on-one with families, offering guidance, encouragement and resources. They can help you read and understand housing-related materials and serve as your advocate in housing-related meetings.

They also help immigrants enroll in citizenship classes and fill out applications, fee waivers and other documents related to naturalization.

Neighborhood House family support workers provide seniors with access to services to ensure independent living for as long as possible. This includes help with enrollment in Senior Services, homecare services or Medicaid. They can also connect you to social activities and purchase certain medical supplies for you.

To find out more about the services available, call 206-461-4522. To learn more about the individuals providing these services read the biographies below.

### Pheakkdei Neak

Pheakkdei Neak works with very diverse clientele across multiple programs that include case management, elderly services, citizenship and Project HANDLE (HIV/AIDS Network Development and Life-skills Experience).

As a 15-year veteran of NH's staff, Neak offers a wealth of knowledge on refugee immigration rights, INS issues, job placement, motivation interviewing, depression, crisis and suicide prevention, case review, family development, and domestic violence.

Neak is bilingual in Khmer and has organized an ESL class for local Cambodian residents. He volunteers his time on weekends to teach.

### Long Luu

Long Luu's experience with Neighborhood House began in 1994 when he was hired as a family support worker to assist seniors and families living in public housing.

He continues that work today through case management, needs assessment, service referrals, crisis intervention, health advocacy, document translation and parent-

ing education.

Prior to his work at Neighborhood House, Luu was a resettlement caseworker for refugees and immigrants from Southeast Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

Luu is fluent in Vietnamese and has certificates in philosophy and theology from St. John XXII Seminary in Tien

Giang, Vietnam. He also has taken courses in sociology from Seattle Central Community College.

### Hinda Abdi

Hinda Abdi came to Neighborhood House as a temporary employee more than a year ago, but her manager quickly scrambled to find a regular position for her. She has vast experience working with the local Somali community as an interpreter, translator and outreach worker.

Prior to her work at Neighborhood House, Abdi worked as a homecare provider for Aging and Disability Services and volunteered her time at Neighborhood House's NewHolly Head Start program.

Abdi received her education at the Marine and Fishery School in Mogadishu, Somalia. She also has an Associate's Degree in phlebotomy from North Seattle Community College.

### Aregawi Abiraha

Aregawi Abiraha joined the Neighborhood House team in January.

He speaks Amharic and Tigrinya and has skills in outreach, education, marketing and accounting.

Abiraha worked most recently as a translator and interpreter for the Seattle Housing Authority.

He has also served as a board member for the High Point Community Council.

Abiraha has 23 years of teaching experience, with degrees in mathematics and marketing management.



Long Luu



Hinda Abdi



Pheakkdei Neak



Aregawi Abiraha

### Community notes

#### Beat the heat with block parties

Block parties are a great way to enjoy the summer heat with friends and family.

In July, residents of High Point Drive North will get together on the 14th after work, around 5 p.m. Residents of McArthur Court will be gathering on July 28 at the same time.

The south end of High Point Drive will be gathering on Aug. 11, and those living on 29th and 30th streets will get together on Aug. 24.

Come and enjoy!

#### Community chat with the police

Join the Seattle Police Department and your neighbors for a discussion about public safety in the High Point

neighborhood.

The event will take place on July 13 at 6 p.m. in the High Point Library. Light refreshments will be served. Come with your questions, comments and concerns.

#### Improve your recycling IQ

Learn more about how to recycle in Seattle by attending a presentation by Jeanne Johnson of the Environmental Coalition of South Seattle.

The presentation takes place at the High Point branch of the Seattle Public Library, 3411 S.W. Raymond St. from 1 to 2 p.m.

Refreshments will be served.

For more information, call Rose Long at 206-923-3266.

# RAINIER VISTA NEWS

NEWS ABOUT THE RAINIER VISTA COMMUNITY

## Students graduate from technology class Classes for Ethiopian students ongoing in Rainier Vista computer lab



PHOTO BY KATIE TYBERG

After receiving certificates of graduation upon their completion of classes at Ethio Techno Mobile Multimedia Project, students stood for a picture with (sitting, from left) Assaye Abunie, Kalkidan Shimelese and David Keyes.

**KATIE TYBERG**  
Voice Intern

Red, yellow and green posters entitled "Sports and Recreation," "Food and Coffee," "Famous Ethiopians" and "Thirteen Months of Sunshine" were displayed by many proud Ethiopian students in late May.

Families and friends trickled into the Yesler Terrace Community Center to honor their hard work in the Ethio Techno Mobile Multimedia Project, a class that pairs instruction in cultural heritage with multimedia technology.

The communities' sense of creativity, distinctiveness and rich culture were not only exemplified in the posters, but in participants' traditional Ethiopian dress and the gentle and familiar way they greeted each other with a kiss on each cheek.

The event was a graduation program for students who had completed the project,

which is organized by the Ethiopian Community Mutual Association and made possible by the Ethio-Digital and IT Services, an independent, professional organization serving immigrant communities, and the City of Seattle.

The project is designed to help low-income Ethiopian youth learn about their heritage and connect to their community. Using multimedia technology, programs and software, students develop skills in both English and their native language of Amharic and are empowered to communicate with their families in the U.S. and friends back home.

Though the project is ongoing, classes are completed every three months. Currently, classes meet at North Seattle Community College, the ECMA Computer Lab, Rainier Vista Technology Center and the Yesler Learning Center.

Project Director Assaye Abunie joined

Mayor Representative David Keyes and ECMA President Kalkidan Shimelese in giving certificates to more than 20 graduating students ranging in age from 11 to 19.

Keyes thanked the parents for their support, saying that "young people are the voice of what should happen in the community" and that "you (students) are our future mayors."

Solome Wubishet, an associate of Abunie's, said that he believes media is an important, vital and productive way of "mobilizing the whole community so that we can connect kids to (their) culture and language."

Wubishet added that he hopes that this effort will not only connect teens to their families and communities in the U.S. but also back home in Ethiopia.

In addition to learning about their culture and history, students are given technical support for projects and presentations. Through a youth TV program called EthioYouth Media, which is also part of the project, students express what they have learned to the greater Seattle community. This program airs on SCAN TV channel 77/29 on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6 p.m.

Fifth grade graduate Eyerusalem Kebebew said that the classes "remind us what the country and generation has gone through and that it is important for kids to know where they came from."

For more information on the Ethio Techno Mobile Multimedia Project, on being a mentor or attending classes, contact Assaye Abunie at 206-696-1381, leave a message at 206-325-0304 or visit <http://www.ethioEDITS.com>.

## Introducing NH case managers

BY VOICE STAFF

Neighborhood House offers case management services to residents of Rainier Vista and the surrounding area.

Family support workers work one-on-one with families, offering guidance, encouragement and resources. They can help you read and understand housing-related materials and serve as your advocate in housing-related meetings.

They also help immigrants enroll in citizenship classes and fill out applications, fee waivers and other documents related to naturalization.

Neighborhood house family support workers provide seniors with access to services to ensure independent living for as long as possible. This includes help with enrollment in Senior Services, homecare services or Medicaid. They can also connect you to social activities and purchase medical supplies for you.

To find out more about available services, call 206-461-4522. To learn more about the individuals providing these services, read the biographies below.

### Annie Edwards

With more than 30 years of experience working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, Annie Edwards is one of Neighborhood House's most skilled staff members.

Edwards joined Neighborhood House in 1985 to provide advocacy, outreach, referral and other services to clients at Holly Park. Today she continues that work at Rainier Vista.



Annie Edwards

Edwards graduated from Garfield High School and received her Associate's Degree from Seattle Central Community College in early childhood education and human services.

### Efrem Seyoum

As a six-year veteran of Neighborhood House's family support staff, Efrem Seyoum provides a wealth of services to our diverse clientele.



Efrem Seyoum

Proficient in Arabic, Amharic and Tigrinya, Seyoum offers translation and interpretation assistance for emergency needs, interview preparation and naturalization procedures.

Before joining Neighborhood House, Efrem was a case manager for the Refugee Assistance Program, where he provided outreach and advocacy services. He also worked with youth at Atlantic Street Center.

### Gurey Faarah

Gurey Faarah is the newest member of our case management team. Faarah has extensive case management experience, most recently working at the Center for Career Alternatives where he focused on job development, job search training, retention, outreach and community relations.



Gurey Faarah

Farah is bilingual in Somali and has a Bachelor's degree in operations management.

## Genesee apartments open

BY SCOTT FREUTEL  
Seattle Housing Authority

If you stand in front of the new Genesee apartments in Rainier Vista, you see a handsome new building not unlike many others in the community. Fifty apartments make up the top two floors; on the ground floor are spaces for retail businesses.

What you cannot see is the creativity that went into the design, construction and especially the financing of the \$9.8 million building on Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

In 2003, Housing Resources Group and AIDS Housing of Washington were selected by Seattle Housing Authority to build the Genesee as part of the Rainier Vista redevelopment.

The building was designed to house individuals living with HIV-AIDS, some workforce households, adults with special needs and families transitioning from homelessness, who would receive support services from the Seattle YWCA and Northwest Families Center.

With the project, HRG made financing history: The Genesee is the first project in the U.S. to combine two previously incompatible funding sources. The building was funded in part by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 811 program for people with disabilities and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program. HRG's staff spent four years working



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOUSING RESOURCE GROUP

Residents are now living in the Genesee building.

with HUD and the Treasury Department to iron out the many details that made this project possible. The result is a trailblazing funding package that may be used to create multifamily homes for people in need throughout the United States.

"The project was successful because of a tremendous partnership between HRG, SHA (and) multiple funding sources that all showed true dedication to making the project work," said Trent Larson, HRG's director of property management. "The result is a beautiful building with incredible and spacious units housing an extremely diverse and culturally rich population."

Of the building's 50 units, 31 are occupied. Applications are pending for all but one of the remaining units. Housing Resource Group expects to be at 100 percent occupancy this month.

The building has 36 one-bedroom apartments that rent for \$685 per month, and 14

two-bedroom apartments that rent for \$811 per month. Forty-two of the 50 units receive project-based subsidies from SHA. In these apartments, rent is fixed as a percentage of the household's income. Eight units are reserved for households earning no more than 50 percent of Area Median Income.

Well before construction got underway, architects, managers and members of the Rainier Vista community formed an advisory council to consider the needs of the residents the building would serve.

Long before construction began they decided not to assign different parts of the building to different populations. Families and single people, disabled and otherwise, will be blended throughout the building.

A community room in the building is outfitted with two computer workstations, and residents have free high-speed Internet access in their apartments.

To arrange a tour of the Genesee, call Resident Manager Jennifer Bowington at 206-725-1708.

### Barbecue in the park

Join your neighbors to celebrate the opening of Central Park in Rainier Vista and held us recognize the more than 100 volunteers who helped build the park.

Please save the date and join Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, community members and partner organizations for the grand opening celebration and barbecue on July 20 at 2:30 p.m. in Central Park, 29th Avenue and South Genesee Street.

# NEWHOLLY NOTES

NEWS ABOUT THE NEWHOLLY COMMUNITY

## Bike Works makes dreams real for NewHolly youth



PHOTO BY CECILIA MATTA

*Bike Works students consider repair options for a Huffy bike with Program Coordinator Joe Parietti.*

By CECILIA MATTA  
Voice reporter

The love affair with the bicycle starts early for many children and often endures their whole lives. A first set of wheels gives kids exhilarating freedom and mobility, but owning a bike is an unattainable luxury for many.

Since 1996, Bike Works, a Seattle non-profit organization, has helped hundreds of young people gain bike ownership through a unique combination of training time and volunteer service.

Two NewHolly youth recently earned their own bikes after completing an eight-week bike repair class at Bike Works, which is located off Rainier Avenue South in the Columbia City neighborhood.

"It was more fun than I thought it would be. I learned a lot," said Rasha Shaibi, who rides her bike every day—as long as it's not raining.

Both Shaibi and her brother Kassim said they would recommend the class to other kids.

"I would tell them to take the class, because I think it's fun," Rasha said. "They will be excited and they will learn. And after they learn, they will get a bike!"

During the eight-week class, bike experts like Bike Works Program Coordinator Joe Parietti patiently guide small groups of 9- to 17-year-olds through twice-a-week sessions. At a recent class, kids fidgeted excitedly in their chairs as Parietti and Tina Bechler, Bike Works program director, drilled them on bicycle terms, safety requirements and repair techniques.

Some of the students readily shouted out answers to questions about bike head sets,

handle bars or brake types; others needed friendly encouragement as they identified the bike parts and listed maintenance steps.

Parietti, Bechler and volunteers who help with the sessions are firm but kind as they keep their students focused on using the right tools and successfully completing their repairs during class.

After finishing the repair classes and passing both a written test and a street test on their bikes, students start to accumulate "Earn-A-Bike" hours by repairing used bikes for others.

Bike Works teaches about 120 students a year, and roughly half of those go on to complete 24 Earn-A-Bike hours, making them eligible "to ride off into the sunset with a fresh, safe (recycled) bike, new helmet and lock," said Parietti.

Besides making youthful dreams come true, the Bike Works program delivers subtle lessons on self-sufficiency, learning outside the classroom, recycling and bicycling for transportation.

The Bike Works Web site says that its "Bicycle Passports" incentive program "gets kids out of the mini-van and onto their bike to get around town."

Bike Works offers scholarships for their classes and bike camps at their Ferdinand Street shop.

Bike Works' Bechler urges NewHolly youth and families to check out their program. "We want to reach out to NewHolly and other diverse communities, to bring more at-risk youth and kids of color to the program," she said.

Bike Works will host a variety of summer bike camps in July and August. For more information, call 206-725-9408 or visit <http://www.bikeworks.org>.

### Community notes

#### Summer program underway

The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation's summer program at John C. Little Park is underway with basketball tournaments, arts and crafts, jewelry making, journal keeping and other exciting activities.

The program runs from Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Free sack lunches are served from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. and a snack is served from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the Gathering Hall.

For more information about the pro-

gram, contact Recreation Leader Joy Williams at 206-669-7105.

#### NewHolly Neighborhood Night

A community gathering is scheduled for Friday, July 28 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the NewHolly Campus Gathering Hall. Interpreters and food will be provided.

Hot topics include forming a community association for NewHolly, traffic safety, Family Fun Fest and block party resources. To add agenda items or to volunteer, call Joy Bryngelson at 206-723-1725.

## Lee House renovation: "A link to the past"

By CLAIRE MCDANIEL  
Seattle Housing Authority

As Holly Park was transforming into NewHolly, the first new neighborhood in Seattle in 50 years, a stately but battered old house remained standing.

Now that the redevelopment is nearly complete, the old Lee House is also being transformed.

In the early 1900s, the house was home to Seattle police officer Charles Lee and his family for more than 20 years. During WWII, the City took it over for defense worker housing, and it was later used for meetings and office space for community organizations.

During the renovation of Holly Park, several Seattle Housing Authority staff members, including Carter Hart, development project coordinator, and Sibyl Glasby, housing developer, were reluctant to tear it down. Instead, they went about the task of figuring out how to preserve it.

Hart and Glasby attempted to interest others in the restoration. The idea of presenting it for homeownership or rental was also pursued. Finally, SHA decided to keep the building intact and integrate it into the community. It was moved from its unstable foundation and is now undergoing renovation with the generous help of Polygon Northwest, a builder of homes for sale in NewHolly.

By preserving this building, the Housing Authority hopes to save a small part of the old Holly Park community. The preservation will return Lee House to its former elegance and usefulness and will recognize Harry Thomas, a former Holly Park resident who served as executive director of SHA for 14 years before retiring in 2004.

The upper floor of the Harry Thomas Community Center at Lee House will have four offices that will be rented at market rates. Revenues from these rentals will allow the first floor event space to be leased on a sliding scale to community groups.

Steady progress toward completion of the restoration is being made. New siding, contributed by James Hardie Siding Products, will be applied this summer.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

*Lee House circa 1960s (above) and Harry Thomas Community Center at Lee House renovation progress as of May 2006 (below).*



A new porch has been added to replace the original one, which was removed during several modernization efforts over the years. Hart said porches in community housing have once again become popular because of the way they "encourage conversations and relationships with neighbors."

Funds for this renovation were not included in the original budget for the NewHolly redevelopment and SHA is now in the beginning stages of fundraising. So far, in-kind donations have been made by many companies to facilitate the rehabilitation.

The Housing Authority is now soliciting financial contributions, and welcomes any financial assistance from the community and residents, no matter how much. There will be a donor wall in the foyer of the renovated Lee House honoring all contributors.

If you are able to contribute to this renovation effort, or would like more information about the center, contact SHA Communications Director Virginia Felton at 206-615-3506 or by e-mail at [vfelton@seattlehousing.org](mailto:vfelton@seattlehousing.org).

## Gardening

Continued from page 2

pile will decompose without turning, but the process is much slower.

For the best compost, be selective about the yard waste you use. Avoid adding weed seeds or roots of invasive plants like quack grass and morning glory.

I also avoid composting diseased plants like tomatoes with blight, club root on the broccoli and even powdery mildew on the squash and zinnias.

If you have yard waste pick-up at your home, give them these sick plants and weeds. Cedar Grove, Seattle's contracted city yard waste composter, does a good job of safely composting everything, killing weed seeds and diseases. A home composter can't always do that.

Last week I decided to turn over an old pile of yard waste that had been almost ignored. Lo and behold, the pile offered me beautiful dark, crumbly compost. I had remembered to water it during the summer

months and tried to layer green and brown when I could.

So, with little effort, I managed to produce a "free" cubic yard of a rich mulch to lay around my tomatoes and peppers to cool their roots and hold in some moisture as the summer days are getting hotter and dryer. With time and a little thought about the process, I felt well-rewarded with some good compost.

Seattle Tilth and Seattle Public Utilities sponsor a Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline. On weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., you can call 206-633-0224 for information from a compost professional.

Happy gardening this month. Can you believe the days are getting shorter already? But your gardens love the warm temperatures, and the plants will be producing full tilt. Check the moisture in your soils to see if you need to adjust your watering schedule.

Anza Muenchow is a local farmer. You can reach her with questions at [mahafarm@whidbey.net](mailto:mahafarm@whidbey.net).

# YESLER HAPPENINGS

NEWS ABOUT THE YESLER TERRACE COMMUNITY

## Yesler enjoys Juneteenth



PHOTO BY CJ KLOCOW

Juneteenth participants enjoy a clothing exchange — something new at this year's event.

By CJ KLOCOW  
Voice reporter

The first Juneteenth took place in 1865 in Texas when slaves there found out that they had been freed. The festivities have evolved at Yesler Terrace into an annual celebration of neighborhood and community.

According to organizers and participants, the skies are traditionally clear for Juneteenth, and this year was no exception. The play field behind the Yesler Terrace Community Center last month was filled with Juneteenth celebrants enjoying the sun.

The 17th annual Juneteenth celebration featured a diverse selection of food that included Ethiopian favorites injera (flat bread) and misr wat (red lentils cooked with a red chili powder), a variety of Southeast Asian food and that American staple, hotdogs.

The entertainment featured music and dance, including Capoeira, a Brazilian style of martial arts performed to music, traditional African drumming and dance and local children showing off their musical talents.

According to Tita Begashaw, who is part of the Juneteenth organizing committee and cooked Ethiopian food at the event for the 11th straight year, "The best thing about

Juneteenth is the sense of community here. I love this community and I love the food and music that all of the different people bring."

Organizers also put together a clothing and book exchange and informational booths for participants interested in linking up with local organizations. Participants enjoyed the variety of clothing offered, and the children were ecstatic about all the books there were to read.

A large team of local volunteers worked efficiently to set up the grounds, serve the food and occupy the booths. Recognition was given to volunteers and groups as awards for their outstanding work.

Another organizer, Ellen Ziontz, a community builder at the Seattle Housing Authority, said that there aren't enough chances for the community to get together like this and so people took advantage of the opportunity. Looking around at the event she added, "Just look at how much fun people are having. This sense of togetherness is very important."

Sponsors of the Juneteenth event at Yesler Terrace included Horn of Africa Services, International District Housing Alliance, the Seattle Parks Department, Neighborhood House and Seattle Housing Authority.

## Rice

Continued from front page

need to initiate."

Rice said he is looking forward to the challenge of fostering civic engagement on this issue.

"Yesler Terrace holds both the legacy of serving low-income residents for nearly 70 years and the potential of serving them for another 70," he said. "Our challenge is to balance the significance of its distinguished history with the needs of future generations."

In January, Rice was named to a three-year appointment at the University of Washington's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs as a Distinguished Visiting Practitioner-in-Residence. Part of his charge at the Evans School is to create and lead a series of public seminars on Civic Engagement for the 21st Century.

"The opportunity to be a part of conversations around the future of Yesler Terrace fits perfectly into this assignment," he said.

"Yesler Terrace provides an opportunity for civic conversations that are both worthwhile and necessary."

Yesler Terrace currently provides 561 units of low-income housing on 30 acres just south of Harborview Hospital and east of downtown Seattle above the I-5 corridor.

Built in 1939, it contains mostly two-story buildings that house families and single adults. As these wood-frame buildings age, the Seattle Housing Authority is questioning whether the community as it now exists is sustainable into the future.

In considering any redevelopment projects on the site, the Housing Authority's goals are threefold: to create social equity, to create economic opportunity for Yesler Terrace residents and others and to pursue environmental stewardship.

Additionally, any redevelopment would need to house current Yesler Terrace residents, and the same number of low-income units or more (at least 561) would be replaced through redevelopment efforts.

## Introducing Neighborhood House case managers

By VOICE STAFF

Neighborhood House offers case management services to residents of Yesler Terrace and the surrounding area.

Family support workers work one-on-one with families, offering guidance, encouragement and resources. They can help you read and understand housing-related materials and serve as your advocate in housing-related meetings.

They also help immigrants enroll in citizenship classes and fill out applications, fee waivers and other documents related to naturalization.

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**Annie Edwards**

With more than 30 years of experience working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, Annie Edwards is one of Neighborhood House's most skilled staff members.



Annie Edwards

Edwards joined Neighborhood House in 1985 to provide advocacy, outreach, referral and other direct services to clients at Holly Park. Today she continues that work at in Yesler Terrace.

Edwards graduated from Garfield High School and received her Associate's Degree from Seattle Central Community College in early childhood education and human services.

**Long Luu**

Long Luu's experience with Neighborhood House began in 1994 when he was hired as a family support worker to assist seniors and families living in public housing.

He continues that work today through case management, needs assessment, ser-

vice referrals, crisis intervention, health advocacy, document translation and parenting education.

Prior to his work at Neighborhood House, Luu was a resettlement caseworker for refugees and immigrants from Southeast Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

Luu is fluent in Vietnamese and has certificates in philosophy and theology from St. John XXII Seminary in Tien Giang, Vietnam. He also took sociology courses at Seattle Central Community College.

**Efrem Seyoum**

As a six-year veteran of Neighborhood House's family support staff, Efrem Seyoum provides a wealth of services to our diverse clientele.

Proficient in Arabic, Amharic and Tigrinya, Seyoum offers translation and interpretation assistance for emergency needs, interview preparation, and naturalization procedures.



Efrem Seyoum

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Faarah has extensive case management experience, most recently working at the Center for Career Alternatives where he focused on job development, job search training, retention, outreach and community relations.



Gurey Faarah

Faarah is bilingual in Somali and holds a Bachelor's degree in operations management.

## Notes from the manager

By JUDI CARTER

Senior Property Manager

Juneteenth was great, wasn't it? The food was fabulous and plentiful, the entertainment exceptional and the weather, which early in the day looked bad, turned out to be sunny and very pleasant!

All in all, it was a fine day. We were very fortunate to have the terrific hard work of individuals from the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity and Zeta Phi Beta sorority. They set up chairs and tables, helped prepare and serve food, cleaned up and in general were the reason the event went so well.

In other news, all Yesler Terrace residents received a customer service survey with their May rent statement. Thank you to those who completed it. It was very helpful.

Of the 100 households who completed the survey, the majority rated the Yesler

management office as doing a good job.

In answer to the question: Are we courteous? Thirty-five respondents marked "excellent," 51 marked "good," 9 marked "fair" and 5 marked "poor."

When we asked: Do we help you in a timely manner? Thirty-one respondents marked "excellent," 51 marked "good," 14 marked "fair" and 3 marked "poor."

The question: Did we call you back in a timely manner? earned us 22 "excellent" marks, 50 "good," 12 "fair," 6 "poor" and 10 "not applicable."

Finally, to the question: Did we explain the forms to your understanding? Thirty-two marked "excellent," 54 marked "good," 11 marked "fair" and 3 marked "poor."

Thank you for your very valuable input. It is clear that we have some work to do to improve our ratings, and we will do our very best to improve over the coming year.

