



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



# The Voice

The newspaper of Neighborhood House

*Remembering the past,  
celebrating the present*



PHOTO BY AMY HUANG

Young hip-hop dancers of Seattle's Kuttin Up Dance group perform during last month's Festival Sundiata.

BY AMY HUANG  
*Voice reporter*

Curious eyes followed the sounds of congas last month as they circled the Seattle Center Pavillion. A line of performers wearing traditional African garb welcomed the crowd as they stomped their bare feet with pride to the pounding drums.

This was just the beginning of Festival Sundiata.

The festival, which is part of Festal, the Seattle Center's year-long series of cultural events, brings the flavor of African traditions and connects it with contemporary African-American art and urban culture.

Though Festival Sundiata focuses on African and African-American art and culture, the event is not for a limited audience, but rather it is meant to highlight the importance of

teaching and transcending cultural diversity.

A fashion show one afternoon represented that effort.

"This is what the fashion show is going to be about. It's actually going to be a cultural presentation, a celebration of blackness. And that is the celebration for all Americans to be proud of," said Afua N'Diaye, representing the Sundiata African American Cultural Association which puts on the festival.

Showcasing the variety of African culture, art and history, Festival Sundiata unites local artists, volunteers and youth.

The hype and energy sparked during the three-day festival is meant to carry on.

"One of the things we do with the youth is to promote pride, N'Diaye said. "If we just hold onto our pride we have hope for the future."

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**"I plan to go into business. I have worked in a hotel, and I'd like to own one one day."**  
—Jessica Fernandez, a Seattle Housing Authority resident, scholarship recipient and Seattle University student on her plans for the future.

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Nonprofit org.  
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*Articles translated  
into six languages*

## Federal budget boosts funds for affordable housing

BY VIRGINIA FELTON & LAUREN VANE  
*Special to The Voice*

Good news for low-income people came from the nation's Capitol last month, as Congress passed a budget that increases funding for public housing.

Thanks to the leadership of Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and a successful lobbying campaign by national housing organizations, the Department of Housing and Urban Development budget provides a \$300 million boost to the public housing fund.

According to local housing authority officials, the \$3.8 billion budget means that elderly, disabled and low-income families will gain a reprieve.

Families living in public housing won't see a reduction in services. Rent burdens on households in the Section 8 program won't increase, and regional efforts to end homelessness will move forward.

"We are thrilled that, despite a challenging budget situation, Sen. Murray was able to ensure that low-income families will not

lose their housing," said King County Housing Authority Executive Director Stephen Norman. "While the bill doesn't solve all of our problems, it is a substantial improvement over what was proposed....To successfully deliver critically needed funding on behalf of the most vulnerable people in our communities in the current budget climate takes real commitment and leadership."

The joint resolution marks a significant turnaround from the HUD budget proposed by last year's Congress. It provides \$3.8 billion for FY 2007, addressing utility cost shortfalls that have resulted from higher energy costs.

It also provides an additional \$502 million for the Housing Choice (Section 8) Voucher program, which will prevent the loss of current vouchers.

The bill also adopts a voucher funding distribution system that more accurately and efficiently captures the needs of public housing agencies, puts money into a number of programs to address homelessness and extends the

authorization for the HOPE VI program.

"The Congressional committees that make spending recommendations have said repeatedly that they would not make any changes in funding within the continuing resolution unless failure to do so caused irreparable harm to a program in some way," said Seattle Housing Authority Executive Director Tom Tierney. "In light of this, the additions to the appropriations for low-income housing are even more significant. It means that SHA will receive about the same amount of funding for public housing this year as last year."

Yet, even with the addition of the \$300 million, the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities has stressed that the public housing operating fund is still \$672 million short of the total estimated need of \$4.5 billion.

According to the council, with the additional \$300 million, housing authorities across the country will receive about 83 percent of what HUD says they need to operate public housing.

## Telephone tax refund offered

BY VOICE STAFF

With tax day nearing, residents of public housing should consider attending one of the free tax preparation clinics underway throughout King County.

Trained volunteers at these clinics can help individuals and families file their taxes, claim the Earned Income Tax Credit and file for the telephone tax refund.

The telephone tax refund is a \$30 to \$60 refund available to any person who paid for long-distance or bundled telephone service between March 2003 and the end of July 2006.

Several court decisions have held that federal excise taxes added

to this service should have not been collected. The government stopped collecting the tax last August and authorized a one-time tax refund.

Over 160 million people are eligible to receive this refund.

Taxpayers can base their refund requests on the actual amount of tax paid. To do this, they must fill out Form 8913, Credit for Federal Telephone Excise Tax Paid.

This form is then attached to their regular 2006 income tax returns.

But many people don't want to dig through up to 41 months of old phone bills or lack the records they need to figure the actual amount of tax paid.

For that reason, the government created a standard amount, which is based on actual telephone usage data and is determined by the number of exemptions an individual taxpayer can claim.

In King County, help is available to ensure that individuals and families receive the telephone tax refund.

In addition to their Earned Income Tax Credit work, the United Way of King County is helping people claim the credit by providing free tax preparation services at sites across the county until April 15.

For no cost, trained, multilingual  
**Please see "EITC" on page 2**

# Workshop encourages students to “Dream Big”

BY ELLEN ZIONTZ  
Seattle Housing Authority

“You can go to college,” was the message at the Seattle Housing Authority Higher Education Workshop held in late January at the Yesler Terrace Community Center.

About 50 high school students, their parents and tutors attended the event, which featured representatives from several local colleges and universities and current SHA residents studying at Seattle University and the University of Washington.

“Being from another country my family didn’t know much about going to college in the U.S.,” said Selamawit Misgano, a freshman at the University of Washington. But, Misgano says, they were supportive.

And since she has an interest in becoming a doctor she made sure to take the right courses and always work really hard.

Jessica Fernandez saw friends and classmates make bad choices as they were growing up and decided she would not make those mistakes.

She immersed herself in school, church and supporting herself and her family.

“I plan to go into business,” she said. “I have worked in a hotel, and I’d like to own one one day.”

Fernandez and Misgano are both winners of the SHA-sponsored Dream Big scholarship, which provided \$1,000 each to support their tuition.

Panelists at the workshop emphasized the availability of a variety of scholarships, some especially intended for public housing residents, such as the Neighborhood House Heart of Oak scholarship and the Pacific Northwest Regional NAHRO scholarships and encouraged residents to apply.

This year, funds donated in memory of Judi McBride, former Rainier Vista Leadership Team President, will be used for a special scholarship designated for a Rainier Vista resident.

McBride was instrumental in bringing residents together to work on public safety,



PHOTO COURTESY OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT

*Students talk with college representatives at the 2007 Seattle Housing Authority Higher Education Workshop.*

traffic, and redevelopment issues in the Rainier Vista community.

Applicants should use the regular Dream Big scholarship application and indicate that they live in Rainier Vista.

The workshop also provided information about the wide array of options open to students, from community college, with open enrollment, to state universities, to private institutions including those out of state that are considered “historically black colleges.”

Students had the opportunity to talk one-on-one with college representatives and to take home materials to help them decide about their future.

“You don’t have to have a lot of money. You don’t have to have perfect grades or test scores,” said Eileen Robison, from the University of Washington Office of Financial Aid.

Filling out the financial aid forms that are used by all area colleges and universities, known as the FAFSA, is the first step.

Robison and other college representatives underscored their schools’ commitment to make education possible for low-income students and urged them to get started filling out the forms and applications right away, the sooner the better.

Most students fill out the FAFSA online. To do that, go to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

For more information about the Higher Education Project contact Ellen Zontz at [ezontz@seattlehousing.org](mailto:ezontz@seattlehousing.org)

## Community notes

### Tutors needed

St. James English as a Second Language Program is looking for volunteers who are fluent in English and at least 18 years of age to tutor adult refugees in Tukwila and Kent.

Our students are eager to speak with neighbors, understand the radio, read papers from their children’s teachers, and write letters.

For more information call 206-382-4511 or visit the Web site at <http://www.stjames-cathedral.org/esl>.

### City's language services expanded

Last month, Mayor Greg Nickels adopted a new citywide translation and interpretation policy that will help immigrants, refugees and others with limited-English access city services.

The policy calls for translating vital documents such as consent and complaint forms, notices of rights and notices of free language assistance into Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese,

Somali, Tagalog and Korean.

These are the primary languages spoken by a substantial number of Seattle residents.

The new policy will strengthen the city’s delivery of services to people with limited English proficiency.

“Seattle is a place of inclusion that welcomes residents from around the world,” Nickels said in a statement. “I’m committed to providing quality customer service to all of Seattle’s residents. By bridging language differences, we can dismantle many of the barriers to building a better life for thousands of people.”

Translation and interpretation services the city provides will be free of charge for Seattle residents.

### The Voice needs you

Consider joining the monthly Voice resident advisory committee. Call 206-461-8430, ext 227 for more information.

# Report from Olympia: Housing Advocacy Day

BY LYNN SEREDA  
Voice reporter

Housing Advocacy Day kicked off the lobbying season for housing advocates last month, with those interested in increased tenant rights and expanded funding for affordable housing meeting with lawmakers in Olympia.

On this high-energy day, dozens of housing advocates, service providers and tenant activists carpool or take buses to the State Capitol, not only to get training in how to lobby legislators, but also to talk to their elected officials in small group appointments.

Numerous Seattle groups attended, including representatives from the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, Tenants Union, Committee to End Homelessness, Seattle Displacement Coalition, Seattle Housing Authority and the King County Housing Authority.

Key issues on the advocate’s agendas included a bill to triple the state housing trust fund, which helps leverage public and private dollars to build and repair housing for low-income people, a bill that would provide greater protections for mobile home residents, many of whom are seniors on fixed incomes, and a bill that would prohibit discrimination based on source of income.

Already a law in Seattle, the source of income discrimination bill would require that landlords evaluate prospective tenants on the basis of their ability to pay rent and abide by a lease, rather than on whether they receive a government subsidy. If passed, the new law would cover all of Washington.

Section 8 voucher residents from SHA and KCHA were among a group of advocates working with the Tenants Union who have been urging the legislature to pass this bill.

Advocates produced rental advertisements placed by landlords who stated that they did not accept Section 8 vouchers.

Chris Jussero, a KCHA voucher holder, said that her housing search was a “10-week nightmare” as she tried to find a rental near her family, church and support system in north King County. Ultimately, she had to move south to Tukwila due to the difficulties in finding landlords willing to rent to voucher holders.

Michele Thomas, an organizer with the Tenants Union, noted that “prejudices based on stereotypes are unfair and unjustifiable. They weaken other civil rights



PHOTO BY LYNN SEREDA

Sheldon Cooper of the Homestead Community Land Trust joins Tenants Union members Stephanie Sherrell, Jackie Sherrell and TU Executive Director Siobhan Ring at the Capitol for Housing Advocacy Day.

protections by giving landlords a loophole to discriminate.”

Other legislation on the Housing Advocacy Day agenda included House Bill 2014, which would increase regulation of condominium conversions.

The current boom in conversions of rentals to condos puts tenants who cannot afford to buy the units at risk of not finding affordable housing, advocates said.

This bill would require landlords to give renters 120-day notices of their intent to convert their units to condos and allow local and county governments to increase the amount of relocation assistance for tenants, which is now capped at \$500.

Construction would not be allowed to begin until after the last renter had moved out, and the bill would allow local municipalities to adopt laws restricting the number of condo conversions approved.

Seattle Senior Housing Program resident Bette Reed has been traveling to Olympia with the Seattle Displacement Coalition to advocate for this bill.

She said she is “encouraged by the attitude of the housing committee.”

“This might be indicative of a climate change in the legislature towards the desperate need for affordable housing in the state,” she added.

To find out more about housing bills as they move through the legislature, contact the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance at 206-442-9455 or <http://www.wliha.org>.

To voice your opinions on the issues, call the toll free State Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000. Have your district number or the name of one of your representatives ready to facilitate the process.

## EITC

**Continued from front page**

gual volunteers will help individuals prepare their taxes and file them electronically for a rapid refund.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is a tax benefit for working people who earn low to moderate incomes. Working families can get as much as \$4,500 added to their tax refund, depending on their income and family size.

Congress originally approved the tax credit in 1975 as a way to offset the burden of Social Security taxes on low-income people.

When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes a person owes, it results in a refund to those who claim and qualify for the tax credit.

You may be eligible for the EITC if you earned income in 2006, if you have a valid

Social Security number, if you’ve lived in the United States for more than half the year, if you made less than \$2,800 from investment income, if you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien and if you are between the ages of 25 and 65 or have a qualified dependent.

In addition, your earned income and adjusted gross income must each be less than \$36,348 if you have two or more qualifying children (\$38,648 if you’re married filing jointly), \$32,001 with one qualifying child (\$34,001 if married filing jointly) or \$12,120 with no qualifying children (\$14,120 if married filing jointly).

Remember to bring all of your tax-related documents and identification for you and all of your dependents to the tax preparation site.

For more information on the EITC or the free tax preparation services and sites, please call 2-1-1 or 1-800-621-4636.



# Health Notes

*A column devoted to your well-being*

## Start your own walking group

BY MARI BECKER  
*Special to The Voice*

If a daily fitness walk could be put in a pill, it would be one of the most popular prescriptions in the world. It has so many health benefits. Walking can reduce the risk of many diseases — from heart attack and stroke to hip fracture and glaucoma.

Walking requires no prescription, the risk of side effects is very low and the benefits are numerous. If you're wondering how to begin, consider starting your own walking group.

### Identify

Do you have a group of friends, a church, a senior center, or a lunch group, that already meets? Start a walking group based around that.

### Organize

Plan a group meeting. Include a healthy snack to motivate people to come. Explain the health benefits of walking, and help your group plan your destination and time.

### Plan

Decide on a good starting point, walking route and ending point. Think about scenery, fun destinations, good sidewalks and minimal traffic.

Pick a time, day and place for your first walk. Is there anyone else you can include? More friends to ask? Other groups in the area that might want to join?

### Advertise

Create posters or flyers about your walk, including the important details about time, date, place and contact information. Put

up the posters wherever you see people congregating (coffee shops, libraries, etc). Spread the word. Have each person bring someone they know on the first day.

### Get started

You're the team captain, the group motivator. Show up on time and greet the walkers. Let people stretch if they want to. At the start of the walk, set an ending time so you can meet up afterward if you get separated.

During the walk, be aware of different abilities and allow time for resting if needed. You may end up dividing into a faster group and slower group.

Make sure each person has at least one buddy to walk with. Encourage, and remind people what a good thing they are doing for themselves!

*Mari Becker is a program coordinator with Sound Steps.*

*Sound Steps is a volunteer-supported walking program with Seattle Parks and Recreation. Participants in this free, year-round program are connected to other walkers on their level and given tools to measure progress.*

*Encouragement comes from the support of volunteer walk leaders and regular check-ins.*

*This project is funded by a federal grant, administered through the Steps Project with Public Health – Seattle & King County.*

*Sound Steps can help you start a walking group in your neighborhood. Contact Mari Becker at 206-684-4664 or by e-mail at sound.steps@seattle.gov.*

## Worker retraining helps turn a minus into a plus

### SEATTLE CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

After 31 years in the airlines reservation industry and just a year and a half from his retirement, Chris Siapicas' job at United Airlines was outsourced and his pension forfeited.

So instead of planning his retirement, Siapicas was left looking for a new career. That led him to Seattle Central Community College's Worker Retraining Program, which helped him turn a minus into a plus.

Siapicas entered the web development program in summer 2005 and will be graduating this spring with honors.

"Being laid off, going back to school, collecting unemployment — the whole process can be complicated and stressful," Siapicas said. "But they found ways to lessen the financial impact. For example, (they) helped in the process of extending unemployment benefits, something that I wouldn't have known about on my own."

Most WRP clients are adults undergoing major, life-altering career changes.

"These are not 18-year-olds trying the world on," explained Pegi Hurd, WRP program coordinator. "These are people who, in the midst of their lives, are suddenly, unexpectedly faced with a crossroads."

Worker retraining provides a funding, academic and advising source that essentially retools students, through workforce education programs, to return to the job market as soon as possible.

The program is offered at all Washington state community and technical colleges and serves recent dislocated workers, displaced homemakers and even small business owners and consultants who don't have the competitive skills to meet market

demands.

Eligible students may receive financial assistance that could include tuition, books, bus passes and fees.

Seattle Central's WRP office also provides resume services for all students, job search and placement assistance and even post-grad job counseling.

And it's all done on an individualized, personalized basis. More than 50 potential students are interviewed each week in the WRP office or attend an orientation session. Students find a staff sensitive to their circumstances, ready to offer advice, counsel and even a Kleenex.

"These students have been interrupted in their careers by a layoff or lack of skills," said Program Manager Mary Lockman. "Often they don't want to be here, but they want to pay their rent or mortgage, utilities and car and feed their children."

Some WRP students are able to simply upgrade their skills within the same industry, rather than starting over.

"Instructors here are extremely helpful and want you to succeed. You need only ask and they will go the extra mile to help you learn," Siapicas said.

Spring quarter classes begin April 2.

If you think you might be eligible for Worker Retraining, call 206-587-6310.

Free orientations are held every Thursday at 2 p.m. in Room 4180 on the Seattle Central campus, 1701 Broadway.

Training is available in 30 programs including information technology, health care, carpentry and design & communications.

Find out more at <http://www.seattlecentral.edu/wrp>.

## Hundreds travel to Olympia for first ever Refugee and Immigrant Legislative Day



PHOTO BY NATALIE MICHAEL

Over 800 refugees and immigrants from the Seattle area rally on the steps of the capitol in Olympia last month during the first ever Refugee and Immigrant Legislative Day. The event, organized by Refugee Women's Alliance, included the demonstration and meetings with individual legislators.



## One to grow on

*Garden tips for community gardeners*

BY ANZA MUENCHOW  
*Special to The Voice*

During March, the day length increases quite dramatically and plants really respond to the extra light. Take a walk and notice our native trees and shrubs. They are going crazy with the added light.

I like to divide our garden crops into two categories: cool season and warm season.

Let's plan now for the cool season crops since these can be planted in the early spring, starting in March.

We can learn about the warm season crops next month as we get ready for planting in May.

The earliest cool season crop to plant is peas which I wrote about last month. It is also time to plant onions. Onions are a special case, because they are day-length sensitive and need to put in most of their growth before the days get shorter (which happens at the solstice on June 20).

However, onion seeds won't sprout in cold weather, so gardeners need to start them indoors in February or use onion sets (a bag of small onion bulbs) or start to plant them outside in March.

There are many cool season crops that local gardeners enjoy. For lettuce, arugula, spinach, kohlrabi, carrots, parsnips, beets, turnips, broccoli, you can start planting in mid-March and continue until June.

Consider planting your crops in raised beds by either mounding the beds or building a frame to fill with soil.

These raised beds will allow the soil to warm sooner and drain better, which generally allows planting one or two weeks sooner than conventional flat beds. Put the beds in a sunny spot, with good south and east exposure.

I recommend planting cool season crops

again in mid-August if they are somewhat shaded and you can water them well until the end of our dry summer season. If so, they will provide a lovely harvest in September and October.

Some, like carrots, parsnips and kale, will winter over to give you a delicious early spring harvest, too. This stretches your gardening to the year-round harvest which we are fortunate to have in the Pacific Northwest.

For late spring crops, like beans, corn, squash, cucumbers and pumpkin, the soil needs to be much warmer. I think of these as ready to plant after Mother's Day (which is May 13 this year). We can learn about these crops in next month's article.

Tomatoes, peppers and eggplant are warm season crops that need to be started indoors. The soil isn't warm enough to sprout tomato or pepper seeds until about June, which doesn't leave enough time to get the plants to produce their delicious fruits before fall.

So, plant the seeds indoors in March under a grow light or on a warm, south facing window sill where the temperature stays above 65 degrees.

The potting mix should be for seed starting, usually with extra peat and well-drained. Transplant these little "starts" outdoors in May.

Squash and cucumbers are more delicate to transplant, but with care you can start these indoors in April and transplant in May.

With all this spring work, be sure to take some time to do some warm-up exercises before gardening, and stop to stretch your stiff and tired muscles regularly.

*Anza Muenchow is a farmer and a volunteer with P-Patch. You can reach her by e-mail at [mahafarm@whidbey.net](mailto:mahafarm@whidbey.net) or on the Internet at <http://www.mahafarm.com>.*

### The Voice

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The Voice, the newspaper of Neighborhood House, is published monthly with the support of Seattle Housing Authority resident participation funds and the King County Housing Authority. Neighborhood House helps diverse communities of people with limited resources attain their goals for self-sufficiency, financial independence and community building. The Voice contributes to that mission by providing low-income people, immigrants, refugees and other concerned parties with timely, relevant news. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, Neighborhood House, SHA or KCHA. We welcome articles and tips from the community and reserve the right to edit all submissions.



**The mission of the Seattle Housing Authority is to enhance the Seattle community by creating and sustaining decent, safe and affordable living environments that foster stability and self-sufficiency for people with low incomes.**



# SHA NEWS

March  
2007

**Students learn calligraphy**  
**LUNAR NEW YEAR HONORED WITH ART**  
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News and information about Seattle's neighborhoods

## High Point a finalist for national award

**Achievement comes with \$10,000 that will be spent on playground equipment; a win would mean more**



PHOTO COURTESY OF SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Thousands visit High Point last summer during the Green Living Expo.

**BY CLAIRE McDANIEL & VIRGINIA FELTON**  
*Seattle Housing Authority*

The Seattle Housing Authority received notification in late January that the High Point redevelopment project has been selected as one of the six finalists for the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence.

The Rudy Bruner Award is a national award for urban places which was established in 1987 by architect Simeon Bruner.

The award is dedicated to discovering and celebrating urban places that are distinguished by quality design and by their social, economic and contextual contributions to the urban environment.

High Point's selection means that the community will receive at least a Silver Medal and \$10,000, which will be used for playground equipment.

George Nemeth, a housing developer for

SHA, was overjoyed at the news.

"The Rudy Bruner Award is a high-profile award and this selection represents great recognition for the project and SHA," he said.

The selection committee visited High Point for several days last month. In addition to touring the site, they met with planners, architects, service providers and residents. After visiting the other finalists, the committee will announce the Gold Medal winner in May. The winner will receive \$50,000 to spend in their community.

Nemeth expressed his sincere thanks to the "many people who contributed to the award application and also to the hundreds of people who designed and built this extraordinary new community."

To apply for the award, the High Point team filled out a 35-page application.

The application included questions such as, "Describe the underlying values of the project."

The Housing Authority's answer: "1. Engage the community; 2. Respect nature at every stage of the development process and 3. Create a healthy living environment for many generations of residents."

High Point is also in contention for several other national awards that may be announced in the next few months, including an important national award from the American Institute of Architects.

The development has already received a variety of prestigious awards and is proud to add the Rudy Bruner Award to the list. For a complete list, please visit the awards page of the Housing Authority Web site at <http://www.seattlehousing.org/Newspage>. For more information about the Rudy Bruner Award visit <http://brunerfoundation.org>.

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## SHA changes fiscal year, amends annual MTW Plan

### SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Seattle Housing Authority is planning to change its fiscal year dates to be more efficient by better aligning its fiscal year with that of many of our primary funders.

Our current fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. The new fiscal year dates will be consistent with the calendar year, Jan. 1 through Dec. 31.

In order to accomplish this change, SHA plans to extend the current fiscal year 2007 for an additional three months, ending on December 31, 2007.

In order to do this, SHA will amend the FY 2007 budget and Moving to new Ways

### Annual Plan.

The Housing Authority will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment on Monday, March 26 at 3 p.m. in the SHA Board Room, 120 Sixth Ave. N., Seattle.

Residents of SHA housing and the public are encouraged to attend and share their ideas. The proposed amendment will be available in residents' community management offices and on <http://www.seattlehousing.org> at least one week prior to the hearing.

For more information, disability accommodations or to arrange an interpreter for the public hearing, call Andria Lazaga at 206-615-3546 by March 19.

## Grant received for Yesler Terrace Learning Center

### SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Yesler Terrace Learning Center has provided computer access and technology classes to 300 public housing residents of all ages since 2003.

Thanks to an almost \$250,000 Neighborhood Networks grant award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Seattle Housing Authority, with its partners, will be able to expand offerings at the center.

"This grant award will assist us in offering essential programs at the Yesler Terrace Learning Center that focus on fostering self-sufficiency in residents, including economic self-sufficiency," said John Forsyth, SHA's community services administrator.

Workshops that residents expressed interest in through a survey will be offered at the center and funded with the grant award. Some of these workshops include tax preparation, citizenship, financial literacy and assistance in obtaining a driver's license.

Computers in the center will also be available for residents to access the Internal Revenue Service Web site where they can file their tax returns.

The center, which is at 917 E. Yesler Way, offers a facilitated open lab time two hours a day, five days a week.

During this time, residents can work on developing resumes, researching potential employers, working on homework projects, getting translation assistance, gathering news and information from their home country and accessing information about government programs and benefits available to low-income people.

A basic computer and software course for adults is also offered. It targets those with little or no computer experience and includes an introduction to Windows software, the Internet, word processing

and typing.

The center also offers a basic computer course designed specifically for seniors.

The center works to empower youth in public housing with the technological and academic skills that can break the cycle of poverty.

One of the center's main goals is to increase the potential for SHA youth to become self sufficient and successful adults.

With an extremely high cost of living and a competitive job market, residents have numerous barriers to overcome before they can compete for jobs, access opportunities for higher education and training and navigate a new culture.

Access to technology and training can help cross these barriers.

The Housing Authority provides employment services at Yesler Terrace through The Job Connection. Staff may refer residents to the center to develop resumes, research possible jobs and apply online for jobs. English as a Second Language training is also offered through the center to help prepare for entering the job market.

For more information about the Learning Center, call 206-386-1245 or visit <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/Yesler/lab.htm>.

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based program created by HUD in 1995.

The purpose was to establish multi-service community technology centers that bring digital opportunity and lifelong learning to low- and moderate-income residents living in HUD housing.

The program started off as a grassroots initiative, but has risen to incorporate more than 700 computer-learning centers in multi-family assisted housing developments throughout the country.

## Poster announces translation, interpretation services

Eighty copies of this large, colorful poster announcing Seattle Housing Authority's free translation and interpretation services were posted throughout Housing Authority communities last month.

The text reminds readers about the free translation and interpretation services that are available to clients who are conducting business with the Housing Authority.

The information is repeated in 17 languages — Amharic, Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, English, Farsi, Hmong, Korean, Laotian, Oromo, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrigna and Vietnamese.

At the lower right of the poster are instructions for using the Washington Relay System and arranging for American Sign Language interpreters. Services are also available to those with speech impediments.



GRAPHIC BY SCOTT FREUTEL

## Residents invited to comment on new lead paint policy

### SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

In compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations, the Seattle Housing Authority performs comprehensive testing for the presence of lead-based paint in all pre-1978 built properties in which children less than 6 years old are residing.

The Housing Authority performs the necessary activities and procedures to maintain compliance related to the monitoring and management of lead-based paint. The intent of this policy is to reduce risks to residents living in SHA housing units that contain lead-based paint.

Residents are invited to review and

submit written comments regarding the draft policy.

Residents may pick up a copy of the revised policy in any public housing management office.

Comments on the policy must be in writing and may be either returned to the building's management office, e-mailed to [dfoss@seattlehousing.org](mailto:dfoss@seattlehousing.org) or mailed to Policy Comments — Donna Foss, Seattle Housing Authority, Housing Operations Department, P.O. Box 19028, Seattle, WA 98109.

All comments must be received in writing by 5 p.m. on March 31.

## Tenants eligible for cable discount

### BY VOICE STAFF

We all know that cable TV can be expensive, but did you know that Seattle Housing Authority residents can receive a discount on the service?

The City of Seattle Office of Cable Communication has an agreement in place with Millennium Digital Media and Comcast that allows residents of subsidized housing to get a discount on cable if they live within the city limits.

Since all SHA residents live within the city limits, those who subscribe to Mil-

lennium Digital Media and Comcast are eligible for the discounts depending on the service package to which they subscribe.

The discount amounts to about \$4 a month for both Millennium Digital Media and Comcast customers.

If you are a customer with Millennium Digital Media or Comcast and haven't been getting the discount, call Brenda Tate at the Office of Cable Communication at 206-386-1989 to request a form.

Residents will be asked to provide documentation of their income level.

## Giving campaign volunteers recognized

### SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Seattle Housing Authority staff members donated more than \$35,000 to charities through their 2006 workplace giving campaign.

Last month, the campaign's team received an award for the "Outstanding Team" in the medium-sized agency category for King County.

The team worked hard to organize events

and projects that gave their co-workers a variety of ways to give to charities. The Housing Authority also received an award for increasing its pledges by almost \$1,000 over the previous year.

The campaign is organized through the state's Combined Fund Drive and gives employees the opportunity to make donations to thousands of charities in our communities and around the world.

## Residents attend community building conference

### BY VOICE STAFF

A group from the Seattle Housing Authority learned about community organizing at a late January conference called "Community Building for Seattle's Neighbors."

The event, which took place at City Hall, brought out about 100 community activists for a day of information sharing about ways to strengthen Seattle's neighborhoods.

Residents of NewHolly, Denny Terrace and Ballard House attended the meeting along with two SHA community builders.

After submitting an application at the start of the meeting, Denny Terrace resident Dave Norris won a Small Sparks grant from the City of Seattle for a neighborhood clean-up project.

Seattle City Councilmember Sally Clark gave the day's keynote speech and afterwards a panel of community volunteers gave presentations on topics including



PHOTO COURTESY OF SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

*Seattle Housing Authority community residents and employees learned about community organizing at an event sponsored by the city's district councils.*

recruiting volunteers and fundraising.

"There are going to be some great ideas that come up today," Clark said. "I think one of the things I would encourage you to do is to steal from each other. Mercilessly. Be random thieves. Take great ideas back to

Please see "Conference" on page 3

## Letter to the Editor Readers of The Voice speak out

### TO THE EDITOR,

Re: "Mayor likely to appoint commissioner in March"

As Vice President of the Resident Action Council and the person who drafted the resolution requesting that a representative from RAC and the Seattle Senior Housing Program's Advocates II sit on the interviewing panel for the next Seattle Housing Authority Board of Commissioners appointee, I must clarify that our request was not heard and implemented by the Mayor's office when they decided to have Christine Anderson sit on the panel.

Ms. Anderson is neither a member of RAC nor the Advocates, nor is she a Seattle

Housing Authority tenant. While she was an SHA tenant for many years, Ms. Anderson moved out of SHA housing during the HOPE VI redevelopment and is now a resident of a Housing Resource Group building in Rainier Vista.

The bottom line is that this board appointment process once again seems to be moving forward without the kind of input both the RAC and the SSHP Advocates II have sought.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Sereda

*Editor's note: In an article in last month's edition of The Voice, Christine Anderson's last name was misspelled.*

## Yesler planning process involves residents

### BY VIRGINIA FELTON Seattle Housing Authority

So far, there have been four meetings of the Yesler Terrace Citizen Review Committee, which is discussing possible plans to redevelop Yesler Terrace. Each meeting has seen an increase in the number of residents attending and interested in the process.

The monthly meetings bring together a group of Seattle residents interested in helping to plan for Yesler Terrace's future. On March 24 there will be a day-long meeting

and retreat for the CRC and others interested in the planning process.

It will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Yesler Terrace Community Center, 917 Yesler Way.

The CRC meetings are just one way that residents can become involved in the process. "Our goal is to have a very transparent process," said Project Manager Judith Kilgore. "We especially want residents of Yesler Terrace to be able to ask their questions and voice their opinions about

Please see "Planning" on page 7

### About The Voice

The Voice is a monthly newspaper published by Neighborhood House with financial support from Seattle Housing Authority resident participation funds.

The Voice is developed and edited by Neighborhood House with help from SHA residents and staff. It strives to provide a forum for objective news and information of interest to low-income people and those living in SHA communities.

The Voice welcomes articles, letters to the editor and columns from readers. If you'd like to submit an article, or if you have a question about anything you've read in this publication, feel free to contact Editor Stacy Schwandt at 206-461-8430, ext. 227 or by e-mail at [stacys@nhwa.org](mailto:stacys@nhwa.org).

If you have questions about SHA-related stories, you may also contact SHA Communications Director Virginia Felton at 206-615-3506 or by e-mail at [vfelton@seattlehousing.org](mailto:vfelton@seattlehousing.org). Submissions can be mailed to: The Voice, Neighborhood House, 905 Spruce St. #200, Seattle, WA 98104. Please include your name and contact information on your submission.

All submissions are subject to editing for accuracy, style and length.

# POINT OF VIEW

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

## Residents concerned about higher electric bills *SHA researching utility allowance and ventilation systems*

BY KARI SHERROD  
Seattle Housing Authority

Some residents in Seattle Housing Authority high-rise buildings, like others throughout our region, may be noticing a slight increase in their electrical bills.

Record-breaking storms and unusually cold weather may be causing some utility bills to increase, Seattle City Light officials have said.

When the weather is cooler and especially during winter, people tend to stay indoors more, turn up the heat and even use more hot water.

"SHA utility allowances have always been inflated by 15 percent above actual consumption estimates for situations like these," said Bob Wyda, SHA housing operations support manager. "While some months may have higher bills, we expect that bills should average out over time."

Some residents have mentioned that the new ventilation systems installed in buildings undergoing renovations may be contributing to increased heating bills. The systems have been installed in only four buildings so far, and SHA officials say they are working to analyze electrical usage data before and after installing them.

The Housing Authority considered changing utility allowances late in 2006 and even notified residents that this would be happening. However, the proposed changes have not been implemented because SHA

staff wants to collect more information.

Seattle City Light and SHA are currently analyzing electrical consumption patterns in all of SHA's high-rise buildings. Utility allowances for residents of these buildings will be revised once those analyses are completed. However, all residents will continue to pay the combined rent and utilities sum they paid before any adjustment — 30 percent of their total monthly income.

More information about consumption patterns and any changes to utility allowances will be distributed to residents as soon as possible.

Residents who use considerably more electricity than average may be eligible for utility relief. To qualify, a resident must demonstrate that his or her high consumption is caused by something not reasonably within their control, such as special health-related equipment prescribed by a physician.

Residents who wish to apply for utility relief should contact their property manager.

If you are having trouble paying your bill, you may qualify for one of Seattle City Light's payment assistance programs, which offer as much as \$200 of energy assistance or 50 percent off your electric bill. For more information, call Seattle City Light at 206-684-3000.

For more energy and dollar saving tips, call Seattle City Light's Energy Conservation Help Line at 206-684-3800.

## Senior Housing committee seeks new members

### SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

In 2003, a new Seattle Senior Housing Program rent policy was adopted to maintain the program's long-term financial viability and guarantee continued access for extremely low-income households.

At that time, the Seattle Housing Authority also established the SSHP Review Committee to monitor implementation of the rent policy.

The committee meets at least twice each year to review the annual budget and financial performance and make recommendations to ensure that the program is bringing in enough revenue to meet its expenses, as well as continuing to serve households with the desired mix of incomes.

Membership is made up of 11 people representing various constituencies that have an interest in SSHP.

If you are interested in serving a three-year term as a member of the SSHP Review Committee, please submit a letter describing why you are interested and your related skills and qualifications to Andria Lazaga, Seattle Housing Authority, P.O. Box 19028, Seattle, WA 98109.

Letters of interest will be accepted at any time, although SHA's executive director plans to appoint at least one new member by the end of April.

For more information, contact Lazaga at 206-615-3546 or by e-mail at [alazaga@seattlehousing.org](mailto:alazaga@seattlehousing.org).

## Conference *Continued from page 2*

your community councils, to your business groups, to your district councils and ask, 'Is this something we want to do?'"

After the event, NewHolly residents Daphne Schneider and Rolita Ezeonu said they were pleased to learn more about funds available through the City of Seattle and other organizations for neighborhood development efforts. They also found

information on community benefit agreements useful. The agreements have been used successfully in California to give residents a voice in development efforts in their neighborhood.

Most importantly, they were energized to continue their work in NewHolly.

"The basis of building a great community is in building relationships with one another," they wrote in a follow-up e-mail to their neighbors. "Volunteers form the core for creating a vibrant neighborhood."

## Class offers healthy cooking ideas



PHOTO BY KARI SHERROD

Residents celebrate healthful cooking during the "Come Taste" demonstration.

BY KARI SHERROD  
Seattle Housing Authority

Bright green pieces of chopped celery, whole wheat noodles and low sodium mushroom soup were just a few of the ingredients that Valerie Baldisserotto, nutritionist with Public Health – Seattle & King County, put into the tuna noodle casserole she demonstrated at the "Come Taste" cooking event at Columbia Place last month.

"Healthy meals are easy to make, taste great and can be very affordable," said Baldisserotto, who offered suggestions as she demonstrated how to make the casserole and a fruit yogurt parfait.

This was the final class in a series of four that Baldisserotto taught to residents. More than eight people attended three or more classes where she offered tips on shopping for groceries and techniques for healthy cooking.

During this last class, residents reminisced on what they learned and how they are eating differently now. One resident celebrated that she lost almost five pounds over the course of the series just by applying some of the new techniques to her cooking and shopping.

"Knowing your portion sizes is key to healthy eating," Baldisserotto commented. "Following the rule of filling your plate half full with vegetables, a quarter full with carbohydrates or grains and another quarter full with your protein is helpful. A small helping of fruit and dairy can also go on the side of the plate."

Planning ahead and taking a few short cuts save both time and money, she added.

Prepare a shopping list before going

grocery shopping. A list will help you avoid impulse purchases and will also help prevent extra trips to the store. A good idea is to keep a note pad near the cupboard or refrigerator to write down out-of-stock items to buy on your next trip to the store.

Check the store ads and be on the lookout for store specials. Buy foods such as fruits, vegetables and fish when they are on sale. Foods are often on sale when they are in-season and at their freshest, an extra benefit.

Baldisserotto suggested buying these items in bulk when they are on sale and then portioning them into one- or two-serving size packages and freezing them for later use. She also suggested using frozen fruits when they are on sale, like the cherries and peaches she used for making a fruit parfait.

She also encouraged residents to incorporate less meat and more dried beans into their meals. Canned beans, such as kidney or garbanzo, may be easier to use than dried beans. Make sure to use low-sodium canned beans when possible, or rinse regular canned beans to remove excess salt.

"Don't forget the flavor," said Baldisserotto. "Spices, herbs and condiments, such as soy sauce and salsa, can also make simple foods taste special."

Try using bay leaf, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage or thyme when cooking beef; or ginger, marjoram, oregano, paprika, rosemary, sage or tarragon when cooking chicken.

More information about eating healthy can be found on the Public Health's Web site at <http://www.metrokc.gov/health/portal/nutrition.htm>.

### Community notes

#### Advocates meet

The board of the Seattle Senior Housing Program Advocates II meets on the second Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. Meetings are held at alternate buildings and are open to any interested resident. Call 206-282-2229 for the latest location.

#### Ross Manor plans big event

Residents of Ross Manor will be holding a 24th anniversary celebration and silent auction at their building, 1420 Western Ave., on Thursday, March 8 from 3 to 6 p.m.

Seattle City Councilmembers Peter Steinbrueck and Tom Rasmussen are

scheduled to speak at 3:30 p.m. The event will include refreshments. A saxophone player has been invited to perform. The auction will raise money for new furniture for the lobby.

#### Coming next month: Residents leery of losing garbage chutes

Health and safety issues have led the Seattle Housing Authority to close garbage chutes in high-rises undergoing homeWorks renovations.

Some residents are unhappy with the decision and worry about the accessibility of dumpsters, while others are happy to say goodbye to the noise and odor.

# HIGH POINT HERALD

NEWS ABOUT THE HIGH POINT COMMUNITY

## High Point gathers for neighborhood appreciation day

BY UNIQUE SAUNDERS  
*Voice reporter*

Wendy Diamond slid herself from one end of the picnic-style bench to another.

In one hand was a hot pink paper with the heading "Get to know your Neighbors..." and in the other, a pen.

Diamond, a High Point resident, attended Neighbor Appreciation Day with about 20 others at High Point Elementary School last month.

The event was one of the first opportunities for residents to gather to celebrate their new neighborhood.

Neighbor Appreciation Day was sponsored by a coalition of service providers who work in the High Point community. Initially, the event was supposed to be about emergency preparedness but providers said they decided neighbors should have an opportunity to get to know each other and find out about the services available in their community.

Neighborhood House, the Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Housing Authority, Cultivating Youth, SafeFutures, the High Point Homeowners Association and Open Space Association, Camp Long, and Friends of Longfellow Creek all contributed to the event.

The new High Point development is now in phase two of three phases. So far, there are about 330 low-income tax credit residents and about 60 homeowners.

"What street do you live on?" Diamond asked Safia Artan. Artan turned to her right and translated the question into Somali for Asha Nur.

"Graham Street," Artan told Diamond.

Diamond peered at Artan and Nur through her glasses before announcing excitedly, "Oh, I live on Graham too!"

Artan smiled and translated to Nur, who then smiled also.

Diamond began to tell her newfound neighbor that she volunteers at High Point Elementary School and is a crossing guard after school. No sooner did she mention her volunteer work in the neighborhood, than she ran off to fill her pink paper with other



*High Point residents enjoy conversation at last month's neighborhood appreciation event.*

names and street locations.

On the other side of the room, Donna Daun and Jean Campbell, residents of the Providence Elizabeth House in High Point sat eating and talking with Tom Phillips, who oversees the High Point redevelopment for the Seattle Housing Authority. On their minds was the new park and neighborhood center that will soon be built.

Daun lightheartedly gave Phillips a piece of her mind about a misleading sign that lists the center's soon-to-be contents.

"I'm gonna protest. The sign says amphitheater and a café. You'd better build a café. That's false advertisement," she said, turning to Campbell. "No café...that's bad news. I guess you can't have everything in life."

While a café was originally on the Neighborhood Center wish list, the idea had to be dropped as building costs have become more of a reality, Phillips said.

The event wrapped up with some entertainment.

Henry Lee, a hip hop MC, wrote and performed a song for children growing up in High Point. Residents smiled and nodded their heads to the beat, heavy with bass, as Lee chanted, "We're destined to be kings like Martin...I was destined to be just like you were destined to be."

Miranda Taylor introduced another type of music by playing the erhu, a two-stringed musical instrument also known as a Chinese violin. Residents listened intently as Taylor played a soft medley on her instrument.

The different types of music served as a connection between the residents of High Point, and many of those present said they enjoyed the event.

## Temporary basketball court created for teens

BY KARI SHERROD  
*Seattle Housing Authority*

Neighborhood teens quickly discovered the new full-sized basketball court that was installed at 29th Avenue Southwest, one block south of Southwest Graham Street, last month. This new court was designed specifically for those over 12 years old.

It is only temporary and will be replaced with a permanent full-sized court that is planned as part of a new Neighborhood Cen-

ter, which is expected to open in 2009.

A shorter court and basketball hoop, designed for children ages 5 to 12 years old, is in North Park. The old basketball hoop that was originally there will be replaced with a new "Fun Hoop" that is geared toward younger age groups.

If you have any questions regarding the basketball courts or other parks at High Point, please contact Rachel Garrett with the Open Space Association at 206-913-0080.

## Community discusses neighborhood association

*Elections to be held in upcoming months*

BY STACY SCHWANDT  
*Voice editor*

Neighbors had their chance to talk about a vision for the High Point Neighborhood Association last month, at a community meeting which attracted over 25 residents.

High Point resident Joyce Williams was the first to speak up when participants were asked for ideas about possible roles for the association.

"The first thing we should do is get a regular traffic light at Raymond," she said, touching on a top neighborhood concern and setting off a flurry of related comments about pedestrian and traffic safety in High Point.

Participants agreed that the association should be a forum where residents can voice concerns like Williams' and work toward solutions.

One neighbor said that the association could serve as a unified voice for High Point within the greater Delridge Neighborhood District Council.

Others suggested that the association could develop a scholarship for kids at High Point or take on a long-term project.

"I'd like to see us put up solar panels on some building, somewhere in this community," one resident said.

The High Point Neighborhood Association was established by the Seattle Housing Authority at the beginning of the neighborhood's redevelopment. The idea was to create an organization, including both homeowners and renters that would have a budget to work on neighborhood projects, said Seattle Housing Authority Project Manager Tom Phillips.

The budget comes from annual fees collected from all property owners (including the Housing Authority and Providence Health Systems, the owner of Elizabeth House) and fees collected on the sale of

homes. Housing Authority officials estimate that by 2010 the association will collect about \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year.

The association is governed by a Board of Trustees who will be elected by High Point residents in eight voting wards.

Whether one trustee will be elected from each block or two (one homeowner and one renter) is still under consideration.

To get the association started, three trustees were appointed by the Housing Authority.

They are: Miranda Taylor, Kari-lynn Frank and Elizabeth Stubblefield, all of whom were present at the meeting. Taylor lives near High Point, Frank is a former SHA community builder and Stubblefield grew up in High Point and now works in the neighborhood's clinic.

According to the association's bylaws, elections are to take place as 120 people move into a particular ward, with the current trustees resigning as the neighborhood fills up. One seat on the board will be reserved for an at-large member appointed by the Housing Authority.

Currently, two voting wards have already reached the 120-person threshold, and elections will likely take place later this spring.

Community Builder Samantha Gotkin took names of residents interested in running in or working on the elections.

Trustee Stubblefield made a point of stressing that the association would only be a success if there is broad community participation.

"We need to work on inclusiveness," she said. "Whether you're an owner or a renter, a senior, a Cambodian, an African — everyone needs to be involved in the association."

If you are interested in volunteering to work on elections for the neighborhood association or running for a post, contact Gotkin at 206-937-3292, ext. 306.

## Delicious food enjoyed at potluck lunch



*PHOTO BY KRISTI FISCHER*

*The Elizabeth House community room fills up with High Point neighbors for the February community potluck. The potlucks, which began in January, are a way for High Point residents to get to know one another and share useful information.*

*Last month's potluck included a group exercise, raffle, announcements from service providers and time for community members to talk. The next potluck will take place on March 8 at Elizabeth House, 3201 S.W. Graham St. All are welcome.*

# RAINIER VISTA NEWS

NEWS ABOUT THE RAINIER VISTA COMMUNITY

## Lentil lessons

*Neighbors gather for East African cooking class*

BY ALYSSA MARTIN  
*Voice reporter*

Tsegaye Gebru held up a glass jar full of rust-colored Anaheim chili powder and bantered back and forth in Oromo with his cooking partner, Jemila Abdi.

Abdi turned to address the diverse crowd of her Rainier Vista neighbors who were packed into the small kitchen at the Neighborhood House Rainier Vista Center.

She pointed to the lentils steaming in a large pot and advised, "add just the chili pepper you want."

Naomi Chang, a community builder for Seattle Housing Authority, translated Abdi's instructions to the Cambodian- and Vietnamese-speaking students hovering over bowls of chopped red onions, garlic cloves and ginger.

When Abdi sprinkled a dash of chili powder into the pot, Keng Kem Chen's head shook wearily. Nearby, Lang Co nodded with approval.

The free East African cooking class, sponsored by Neighborhood House and SHA was held in late January. It filled up quickly with over a dozen participants of Asian and African descent, just as December's Southeast Asian cooking class gathered a crowd.

"Many years ago there were many Asians here but now there are many Africans too," Chang said. "It is important that we are all social."

Abdi volunteered to share her expertise in cooking traditional dishes from the regions of Somalia and Ethiopia, where

she lived before moving to Seattle. She said she knew that, in a multi-cultural and multi-generational class, her spicy lamb stew and lentils were bound to receive mixed reviews.

Chen took one bite of Abdi's lentils and immediately lurched for the nearest glass of water, giving the impression that this typical East African dish would earn five spicy stars in mainland China.

Co, sitting across the table, said the dish tasted tame by Vietnamese standards.

After an intense gym class of push-up and pull-up testing, both 13-year-old Tocossa Hassan and his 16-year-old friend, Dika Jateny, were undoubtedly hungry.

When asked, Jateny admitted his cooking skills were limited to peanut butter and jelly. Hassan claimed, "I can cook eggs and rice, but not by myself."

If boys like Hassan were born in East Africa they probably would not learn to cook at all, pointed out Gebru, who works as the computer lab coordinator for Neighborhood House. "But," he joked with the class, "this is America. Everybody cooks."

At home, their mothers prepare traditional East African food at least twice a week. For now, Hassan thinks this arrangement works out fine, but he said he came to this class with the future in mind.

"In college it is going to cost lots of money driving around to buy food all the time."

If you are interested in getting to know your neighbors through food and cooking, please contact Chang at 206-722-4010, ext. 3 or Gebru at 206-461-4568, ext. 200.

## Nursing students bring health focus to Rainier Vista

BY CLAIRE McDANIEL  
*Seattle Housing Authority*

Health information is available to Rainier Vista residents thanks to a special partnership with Seattle University.

For years, SU nursing students have volunteered in Seattle Housing Authority communities like Rainier Vista and Yesler Terrace as part of their degree program.

They've organized health fairs geared toward adolescent girls and reached out with health information to the diverse public housing communities.

This year, the students are spending part of their time doing health-related teaching at Refugee Women's Alliance, an organization across the street from Rainier Vista that serves immigrant and refugee women.

They are also staffing a health desk at Gamelin House and participating in Senior Gatherings, which serve as a social outlet for older adults in Southeast Seattle.

The students, who will be graduating in June, are generally in the neighborhood on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon.

At ReWA, the nursing students have set up a health desk where women can stop by to ask questions and get their blood pressure checked.

At Gamelin House, where a similar health desk has been open for over a year, the students have extended hours due to



Nursing students Laurie Canaan and Alexia Bankowski wait at the health desk at Refugee Women's Alliance for their first patients to arrive.

high turnout.

They are also providing health assessments to residents in their homes.

Although communicating with the many non-English speakers who live in the Rainier Vista can sometimes be a challenge, the nursing students said they have found ways to reach out.

"I think the residents really enjoy having us," said nursing student Courtney Hurst. "They love to talk to us even though the language barrier is often there. They might make a gesture like squeezing their arm for having their blood pressure taken even if they don't need it."

## Rainier Vista whirligig set a-spinning

BY SCOTT FREUTEL  
*Seattle Housing Authority*

A dozen Asa Mercer Middle School students saw the results of their imagination, hard work and months-long collaboration last month when Seattle City Light volunteers and Flag Factory NW workers crowned a 17-foot pole in Rainier Vista Park with the student-designed community whirligig.

The whirligig is a colorful rotating sculpture that tells a story, in metal cutouts that catch the wind, that the students wrote about the perils of a young girl and her brother who were left alone on a dark and stormy night, called "Trouble in the Air."

Beginning last September, storyteller Anna Balint and artists Carl Smool and Mary Coss helped the students write the story and then, bit by bit, transform it into metal.

Students chose the images that captured the story, prepared preliminary and finished sketches, built a model, helped prepare metal-cutting patterns, oversaw the rolling and cutting of the sheet-metal parts of the whirligig at Pratt Fine Arts Center and painted it.

Atop the whirligig are three blades welded onto a rotating shaft that move independently.

One blade depicts the girl at the heart of the story, another shows the family's house with lights out on one side and fire coming out windows and doors on the other.

The third is an imaginative composite of a tree the girl's little brother is peeking out of and a fire truck coming to the rescue.

On the same day the community whirligig was installed, seven similar whirligigs created by Smool were erected along Columbian Way just a block south of the park.



PHOTO BY SCOTT FREUTEL

Irene Chen, one of the students who imagined and helped create the community whirligig, starts to paint the sculpture.

Intended to celebrate the diversity represented by residents of Rainier Vista, each is based upon a story drawn from a different cultural tradition.

The students who stayed with the community whirligig project from beginning to end are Claudette Bongato, Brian Chin, Irene Chin, Gizelle Gando, Evelyn Guimaran, Darius Hooks, Lizbeth Pascual, Brianna Marie Peeler and Kevin Van.

In her evaluation of the program, Abbey Norris, public art manager at SouthEast Effective Development, who oversaw the project, praised all the student participants for doing "an incredible job."

In the works is a "gossip bench" that will surround the base of the whirligig's 17-foot pole. Ignition Northwest, a nonprofit arts group has been sounding out Rainier Vista residents, including children, about what form the bench might take.

Rainier Vista children will be invited to help finish and personalize the bench, which is scheduled for completion by late summer.

The whirligig project was sponsored and managed by SEED's Public Art Program and cosponsored by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, Seattle Parks & Recreation's ASAP Program, Fusionpartners and the Seattle Housing Authority.

### Community notes

#### Senior Gathering planned

Rainier Vista seniors are invited to the monthly Senior Gathering, which is an opportunity for senior citizens to get together for lunch, camaraderie, blood pressure checks and other community resource information.

This month's event will take place on Wednesday, March 28 from 10:30 to 1 p.m. at a nearby community center. Call Annie Edwards at 206-461-4568, ext. 215 for information on the location.

The Senior Gathering is organized by a coalition of service providers, including Neighborhood House, Seattle Parks and Recreation and the Seattle Housing Authority.

# NEWHOLLY NOTES

NEWS ABOUT THE NEWHOLLY COMMUNITY

## Hundreds gather for community center opening



*Mayor Greg Nickels joins a number of neighborhood children for the ribbon cutting marking the opening of the renovated Van Assett Community Center.*

**BY UNIQUE SAUNDERS**  
*Voice reporter*

Parents danced with their children and neighbors snapped their fingers to the music of the Shumba Youth Marimba Ensemble at the grand opening of the renovated Van Assett Community Center last month.

Starbucks baristas gladly mixed warm beverages for a long line of NewHolly residents. Mayor Greg Nickels led a ribbon cutting ceremony, greeting the crowd by saying, "Howdy, welcome to your new community center!"

The \$3.9 million renovation expanded the community center by 8,000 square feet, nearly doubling its size. In addition to the new building, the center is now home to a playground and picnic area funded by Starbucks and an outdoor basketball court built with a grant from the Seattle Supersonics.

During the grand opening, the community center grounds were filled with bustling children excited to test the new playground. Adults mingled with one another holding their steaming coffee as their children waited in line to see a clown.

Becca McCoy, a park neighbor, said she came out to the opening to support her husband, an artist for the center. She said she is pleased with the outcome and that she and her 5-year-old child will come to the community center more often.

The newly-renovated center will soon begin offering an abundance of programs. Cynthia Etelamaki, the community center's senior program coordinator, anticipates between 150 and 300 more participants each quarter. Although programs are not completely set in stone, Etelamaki says spring programs will likely include girls' softball, a teen council and senior aerobics.

According to Etelamaki, the original cen-



*The new playground sits behind the renovated community center.*

ter had a cooking area that hardly qualified as a kitchen, a gym and a small multi-purpose room. Now the center has a spacious kitchen and a new reception area.

The gym was remodeled, and there is a new childcare room, a game room and a multi-purpose room with built-in mirrors for dance and martial arts classes.

Flo Cook, 10, and Michelle Pham, 11, said they came out to the community center

to "see how it looks." Cook said she's excited about the new dance floor while Pham said she's anxious to use the game room.

The community center renovation was funded by the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund which was approved by voters in 1999. Contributions from the levy are going towards building new parks, keeping cleaner facilities and creating more programs. Van Assett is one of the last parks to be renovated with levy dollars.

Louise Wong, a NewHolly resident, said she's excited about the center's re-opening because she was traveling farther with her three children to go to a different park, crossing a construction site on their way.

"It felt daunting to cross that," she said, adding that she expects to come to the new center often.

### Community notes

#### Road closure likely to continue

Sound Transit will be continuing its construction work along Martin Luther King Jr. Way South until early this summer. Significant traffic changes begun in February are already causing difficulties for drivers and pedestrians.

Last month, the west side of the intersection at Othello Street and MLK was closed for demolition and paving. Eastbound and westbound traf-

fic was detoured to the nearest arterial — South Cloverdale Street to the south and South Graham Street to the north.

These closures have caused considerable inconvenience to NewHolly residents as traffic within the neighborhood increases as drivers seek out additional detours and shortcuts.

Please be careful driving and walking during this time.

## Committee addresses conduct on campus

**BY SCOTT FREUTEL**  
*Seattle Housing Authority*

About a dozen young people, parents and service providers met last month to discuss the behavior expected of youth on the NewHolly campus and the consequences kids face when they fail to meet expectations.

At the beginning of the meeting, facilitated by VISTA volunteer Selam Mehanzel, NewHolly Community Builder Joy Bryngelson read the community's code of conduct, described how it came about and talked about steps for revising it if needed.

Providers talked about their individual agency's rules, and the group discussed ways to improve communication with youth and parents regarding behavior policy and violations.

A discussion took place among library representatives and the young people in attendance, many of whom were concerned about the large number of youth asked to leave the library for inappropriate behavior.

A student who misbehaves in any of the campus programs and is asked to leave is also excluded from participating in every other campus program for the duration of their punishment. Parents are invited to contact the campus management office to schedule a conference to discuss which programs the youth may return to.

Many of the young people argued that they were arbitrarily being asked to leave for behavior that didn't violate the code of conduct or library's rules. Librarian Catherine Lord listened to their concerns and asked that complaints be presented to her by the individual who felt unfairly treated. She promised to look into the allegations.

Brandon Knutson, Seattle Public Library's chief security officer, said that all libraries' rules are designed to promote safety and respect and to create a welcoming environment for all.

He explained the kinds and degrees of



*Many young NewHolly residents met with service providers to talk about the behavior of youth on campus.*

exclusion, which may range from half an hour to a year, depending on the severity of the rule violation.

Knutson said that the rules apply to all patrons, young and old, and must be applied in an even-handed manner.

He explained the appeals process, available to patrons who have been excluded for more than seven days. Through this process, patrons may ask for the exclusion to be shortened or ended.

Jarman Hauser, assistant program coordinator at the NewHolly Teen Center, said that he and other adults who work with youth on the NewHolly campus consider themselves advocates for kids and their families and try above all to teach kids "to be self-managing."

He said that at the Teen Center the policy is "no cursing, no horseplay and no fighting," and that excluding participants for these and other reasons is an effective tool he rarely needs to use.

The February meeting was the first step toward the formation of a Youth & Parent Committee, one of several committees being formed at NewHolly as a way for neighbors to work together to address issues in the community.

Other committees include a neighborhood clean-up committee, a committee investigating the formation of a neighborhood association and a committee of park supporters. For more information or to find out about meeting times, contact Bryngelson at 206-723-1725.

## Students celebrate Lunar New Year with art



*PHOTO COURTESY OF VIETNAMESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION*

*Students of Vietnamese Friendship Association, World Vision Kid Reach and Catholic Community Services Youth Tutoring Program learn Chinese calligraphy in celebration of the Lunar New Year.*

# YESLER HAPPENINGS

NEWS ABOUT THE YESLER TERRACE COMMUNITY

## Rumors about Yesler redevelopment dispelled

BY KRISTIN O'DONNELL  
*Special to The Voice*

At the late January meeting of the Yesler Terrace Community Council, Seattle Housing Authority planner Judith Kilgore responded to the council's question about a rumor that Yesler Terrace had been sold to a developer.

Kilgore said that Yesler Terrace has not been sold, is not for sale at this time and it is not possible for SHA to make a secret sale.

Before selling any of the property at Yesler Terrace, the Housing Authority must get approval from the SHA Board of Commissioners, the Seattle City Council and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, she said.

The process for getting approval is public, the request must be advertised and all Yesler Terrace residents must be notified.

She added that the Housing Authority does intend to make changes at Yesler Terrace. This year, in a series of "community conversation" meetings, a citizen advisory committee is developing a series of guidelines to be used in planning the future use of the Yesler Terrace property.

All of these meetings are open to the public and larger community meetings to review and comment on the plan will be scheduled throughout the process.

At the end of the community conversation process – probably in late 2007—the Housing Authority will begin meetings with

a design planning group. Design planning is expected to take a year and a half to two years.

Design planning meetings will also be open to the public and will have periodic review of plans at larger community gatherings.

Nothing is likely to happen that will require residents to be relocated before late 2009 or 2010, Kilgore said.

If residents must move for redevelopment, the Housing Authority plans to assist them in finding housing, will pay for moving costs and will have housing available before relocation takes place.

Households moved from Yesler Terrace will still have a subsidy if they remain eligible. The Housing Authority's redevelopment outreach team plans to keep people informed.

*Kristin O'Donnell is the president of the Yesler Terrace Community Council.*

*She encourages residents to attend community meetings to make sure their opinions are heard on whether there should continue to be housing for very poor families at Yesler Terrace and whether households moved from the community should be able to return.*

*The next community conversation is on Saturday, March 24 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Yesler Community Center, 917 Yesler Way. The next meeting of the Community Council is Tuesday, March 20 at 6 p.m. in the Jesse Epstein Building, 905 Spruce St.*

## Notes from the Manager

BY JUDI CARTER  
*Senior Property Manager*

For some reason there have been a number of calls to have drains unplugged recently. I was unhappy to learn that some residents have tried drain cleaning products before notifying the management office.

When you use one of these products and it doesn't work, Seattle Housing Authority maintenance staff still have to clear the drain, only now they are in danger of being burned by the very product you put down the drain to clear it.

Never use commercial drain cleaners!

If you notice that your kitchen sink is starting to drain a little slow, plug both sides and fill them both with hot water.

Then remove the plug using a pair of tongs so that you do not burn your hands, and let them drain. This way, any soap or grease that is in the drain will be melted away, which will help the sink to drain more effectively.

Of course, the very best way would be to make sure that no grease gets down the drain in the first place.

When you have grease left in a pan, first pour as much as you can into an empty can then wipe it out with a napkin and throw that away. If the grease is liquid, put the can in the freezer so that it is not messy when you take it out, and toss it in the garbage can on Monday.

### Parking passes available

If you have not come into the management office to get your Zone 7 guest parking pass for 2007-09, they are available in the office now.

Heads of household can come to the management office any time between 7:30 a.m. and 4:45 p.m. to sign for and receive their guest pass.

If you have a car, please be sure to bring in your proof of insurance, registration and license to get a sticker for your vehicle. The sticker allows you to park on the public street without getting a ticket, providing that your car is in working order.

### Residents' maintenance priorities

At the January meeting of the Yesler Terrace Community Council, residents were asked what improvements were needed to make Yesler Terrace a better place to live.

The following items were requested, in order of importance to the residents at the meeting: 1. More tree trimming, 2. More new refrigerators, 3. Training for what to do in a major disaster, 4. More security to reduce drug dealing, 5. More security lights, 6. A tie for more weather-stripping, getting rid of the mice and getting new stoves, 7. Repair downspouts, 8. A tie for resurfacing rubber on apartment stair treads, replacing range hoods and resurfacing the playground in the Y Sector.

Often things can be accomplished through the work order system. If the weather stripping around your apartment door is loose or you can see some daylight around the doors leading to the outside of your apartment, please phone the management office to have a work order put in to make repairs.

The work order phone number is 206-223-3758. We plan to continue to work on trees, downspouts and getting rid of mice.

I'll talk more about mice next month.

## Outreach

**Continued from page 2**

the future of their neighborhood."

To reach this goal, Ayan Musse has been hired as a communications liaison to assist in getting information out to residents and answering questions.

Musse and Kilgore have also worked together to hire communications aides who are fluent in the languages spoken at Yesler Terrace, where native English speakers are the minority.

Soon there will be a Web site where people can also get information and get facts about the latest rumors that are circulating about Yesler Terrace. (For example, no, SHA is NOT selling Yesler Terrace to Paul Allen).

Within the next month or so there will also be a specific place in the Yesler Terrace Community Center where information about the planning process will be displayed in multiple languages.

Musse and Kilgore are also planning to hold smaller meetings for residents where they can ask questions and discuss their thoughts about the future of Yesler Ter-



PHOTO COURTESY OF SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Ayan Musse is the communications liaison for the Yesler Terrace redevelopment.

race with people who share their native language.

If you have questions about the Yesler Terrace planning process please call Kilgore at 206-615-3480 or Musse at 206-239-1544.

## Residents begin discussions about art in new Yesler

BY STACY SCHWANDT  
*Voice editor*

About a dozen Yesler Terrace residents started to dream about artistic gateways, open amphitheaters and community-built murals in late January at a meeting to begin planning for art in the redeveloped community.

The meeting was led by Pomegranate Center, a nonprofit community design and development agency that has been hired by the Seattle Housing Authority.

The Housing Authority is considering redeveloping Yesler Terrace and is currently working with a Citizen's Review Committee to develop the guiding principles that will shape the future community.

"Since we're going through this year of community conversations, we wanted (Pomegranate Center) to be a part of it," said Judith Kilgore, who is the Yesler Terrace redevelopment project manager for the Seattle Housing Authority. "Their project will commemorate and honor the people who are living in Yesler Terrace now. This is a community that's been there for 70 years and we hope will be there for 70 more. We want to really honor where they are now."

At the meeting, Pomegranate Center's Executive Director Milenko Matanovic presented a series of about 30 slides of art projects the firm has built in other cities.

He passed out sheets of paper on which participants could evaluate the slides and offer their impressions of the artwork.

The projects included benches, gathering places, gateways made of carved wood, amphitheaters with stone seats and artwork made from children's finger prints.

Matanovic then led a conversation about what residents envisioned for their community.

Through an interpreter, members of Yesler's Chinese community said they'd like plenty of greenery and somewhere safe for elderly people to walk in the morning.

Another participant said she admired Pomegranate's previous projects, but felt

that more would have to be done to create something that captures the true character and history of Yesler Terrace.

Matanovic said he plans to work with the community to fold that character into their project, and that they can do more than just plan for physical art. The group could develop a performance celebrating Yesler Terrace's history by interviewing past and longtime residents.

Pomegranate's \$50,000 contract requires them to work with the community over the next year to devise a plan. If a plan is agreed upon, they will then develop a budget and work with architects, planners or whomever can help make the artwork a reality.

While those at the meeting were enthusiastic about the project, some questions have been raised about its timing.

Yesler Terrace Community Council president Kristin O'Donnell asked why the community is talking about art rather than the number of low-income apartments that will remain in the community.

"I like what the Pomegranate Center does, but this is very premature," she said. "I wonder if it is intended to distract residents from more important decisions that are being made."

Milenko said he expects to meet with small groups of residents to continue the work started in the first meeting. To get involved, call him at 425-447-6412 or e-mail at milenko@pomegranate.org.

### Community notes

#### Senior gathering planned

Yesler Terrace seniors are invited to their monthly senior gathering, which takes place every third Thursday in the Yesler Terrace Community Center, 917 Yesler Way, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event includes food, activities, and bingo.

For more information, contact Annie Edwards at 206-461-4522, ext. 224.

