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# The Voice

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Articles translated  
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## Providing a voice for immigrants and refugees

*Magdaleno Rose-Avila is the new director of Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs*

BY TYLER ROUSH  
The Voice editor

Immigrants and refugees have a new supporter in their corner.

Meet Magdaleno Rose-Avila, the director of the City of Seattle's newly formed Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. A lifelong advocate for immigrant rights, Rose-Avila, who goes by Leno, approaches his work with empathy, sincerity, and just the right amount of humor.

The new office will advise city government on immigrant and refugee policy and advocate for immigrant rights in Seattle. The intention is to create a voice for the



Magdaleno Rose-Avila

large but disparate communities of immigrants and refugees who call Seattle home.

"You have to advocate a lot for people who don't have enough of a voice," he explains.

As the son of Mexican immigrants himself, Rose-Avila is personally familiar with the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees.

"Issues that affect immigrants were always foremost in our home and in our community," he says.

Growing up in a farming community in Colorado, Rose-Avila was one of 12 children; he had nine sisters.

"It's hard to compete when you have women who were much smarter than you who you grew up around," he says.

Humor comes naturally for Rose-Avila; he quips about his memory and is prone to saying "fudge" in mock frustration.

Early in his life, as the first male in his family to attend college, his family had a plan — become a lawyer, make some money.

"I was interested in it, too—to sue everyone who took advantage of my parents and other Mexican immigrant farm worker

families," he says.

But after the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, Rose-Avila says the course of his life changed. There were few students of color at the University of Colorado, and he set out to affect change in his world.

"I couldn't be silent about issues on immigrants and refugees," he says.

His work has taken him across the country, from California to Washington, D.C. to Florida. His new position at the head of Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs is a culmination of his life's work.

Created by the mayor and city council, the intent of the office is "to make this city one that's great for immigrants and refugees — just like everybody else, it should be great for them."

Federal assistance programs for refugees have waned, putting more stress on refugee

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## In the backdrop of a presidential election, a series of state initiatives could usher in a new era in Washington

*Voters will decide on charter schools, taxation, marijuana legalization and same-sex marriage*

BY TYLER ROUSH  
The Voice editor

In the November 2012 general election, voters in Washington state will elect a new governor, a U.S. senator, 10 U.S. representatives, and cast a vote for president.

But the most significant and perhaps even era-defining decisions could come in a series of ballot measures and a referendum put before voters. Those ballot issues include initiatives concerning the legalization of marijuana, the creation of charter schools and restrictions on the legislature's ability to raise taxes, and a referendum that would affirm or reject the state's newly adopted same-sex marriage law.

**Referendum 74: Washington's same-sex marriage law**

In February of 2012, the Washington state legislature voted into law a bill that

would extend the right to marriage to same-sex couples in Washington state. Gov. Christine Gregoire signed the bill into law on Feb. 13, setting the stage for another showdown in the national debate over same-sex marriage.

This November, voters in Maryland and Maine will also vote on whether to legalize same-sex marriage; Minnesota voters will choose whether to approve adding a ban on same-sex marriage to the state constitution.

A vote to approve Referendum 74 would preserve Washington's same-sex marriage law as established by the state legislature and signed into law by Gov. Gregoire. A vote to reject the referendum would overturn the state's same-sex marriage law.

If approved, same-sex couples in Washington would have the same right to marry as couples of the opposite sex. However, clergy would reserve the right to refuse to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies.

With approval of Referendum 74, Washington would join six other states — Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont — and the District of Columbia in providing marriage equality to same-sex couples.

**Initiative 502: Marijuana legalization**

Medical marijuana is currently legal in Washington state; users who are prescribed marijuana from a doctor are entitled to purchase the drug from licensed marijuana dispensaries in the state, and are allowed to grow marijuana for their own use.

Approval of Initiative 502 would make it legal for persons over the age of 21 to grow, possess, buy and sell marijuana, with certain restrictions. Growers and sellers, including retailers, would be required to apply for a license from the state. It would be illegal for persons under 21 to grow, possess, sell or buy marijuana; public consumption of marijuana would also remain illegal.

An excise tax of 25 percent would apply

Please see "Election" on Page 3

### Register to vote

Important voter registration deadlines are coming up this month.

The deadline to register to vote by mail or to make address changes in time for the Nov. 6 general election is Saturday, Oct. 6. The online registration and update deadline is two days later, on Monday, Oct. 8.

To register to vote online, visit [www.kingcounty.gov/elections/registration.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/elections/registration.aspx). You can also call 206-296-8683.

If you are not currently registered to vote in Washington and miss the Oct. 6 or Oct. 8 deadlines, you can register to vote in person by Monday, Oct. 29. You can register in person at the King County Elections Office (919 SW Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057) or at the King County Voter Registration Annex (500 Fourth Ave., Room 311, Seattle, WA 98104).

Neighborhood House  
Jesse Epstein Building  
905 Spruce Street  
Seattle, WA 98104

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## Health Notes

*A column devoted to your well-being*

### Medicare open enrollment is Oct. 15 to Dec. 7

BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Medicare Open Enrollment period is from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7. During that time period, people with Medicare can make changes to their Medicare health plan and prescription drug coverage. People with Medicare can call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) for plan information.

Expanded Medicare benefits under the health care law (the Affordable Care Act) continue to be available — including certain free preventive benefits, cancer screenings and an annual wellness visit. Whether you choose Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan - take advantage of Open Enrollment to review cost, coverage, or both for next year (2013).

- **More Benefits:** Certain preventive benefits — including cancer screenings — are available with no cost to patients when furnished by qualified and participating health professionals. The annual wellness visit allows people to sit down and discuss with their doctor their health care needs and the best ways to stay healthy.

- **Better Choices:** Medicare will notify beneficiaries about plan performance and use its online Plan Finder to encourage enrollment in quality plans.

- **Lower Costs:** Average premiums for 2013 for prescription drug coverage and Medicare health plans will remain stable. People who are in the “donut hole” in Medicare’s prescription drug benefit will enjoy approximately 53 percent discounts on covered brand name drugs and see increased savings on generic drugs.

Your health needs change from year to year. And, your health plan may change the benefits and costs each year, too. That’s why it’s important to evaluate your Medicare choices regularly. Open Enrollment is the one time of year when all people with Medicare can see what new benefits Medicare has to offer and make changes to their coverage.

It’s worth it to take the time to review and compare, but you don’t have to do it alone. Medicare is available to help.

- Visit [www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan](http://www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan) to compare your current coverage with all of the options that are available in your area, and enroll in a new plan if you decide to make a change.

- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24-hours a day/seven days a week to find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

- Review the Medicare & You 2013 handbook. It is mailed to people with Medicare in September.

- If you have limited income and resources, you may be able to get Extra Help paying your prescription drug coverage costs. For more information, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020) or call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.

- Get one-on-one help from your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). Visit [www.medicare.gov/contacts](http://www.medicare.gov/contacts) or call 1-800-MEDICARE to get the phone number.

*This message is brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services*

### Neighborhood Matching Fund now accepting applications for neighborhood projects

#### Deadline for Small and Simple Projects Fund is October 8

BY SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods is now accepting applications for the fall round of the Neighborhood Matching Fund’s Small and Simple Projects Fund. The deadline for receipt of applications is 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 8.

The Small and Simple Projects Fund provides matching funds of up to \$20,000 to support community members as they work together to build a stronger and healthier neighborhood through civic participation.

Activities may be physical projects, as well as less tangible but equally significant educational, cultural, and relationship-strengthening activities.

To learn about the guidelines and application process, visit <http://seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/smallandsimple.htm>.

To apply, groups need to register at [webgrants.seattle.gov](http://webgrants.seattle.gov), a web-based application and fund management system.

This is the final opportunity to apply to the Neighborhood Matching Fund in 2012. Programs and deadline dates for 2013 will be announced at the end of this year.

Since the program was created 24 years ago, the Neighborhood Matching Fund has awarded more than \$49 million to neighborhood groups with a community match of more than \$71 million.

Projects have involved more than 85,600 volunteers who have donated over 573,000 work hours. To learn more about the Fund, visit [www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf](http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf).

## Be safe

### Hate and crime, Part 2

BY KELLY MCKINNEY  
Seattle Neighborhood Group

Last month the Be Safe column covered the issue of hate crime. October’s article will follow up on that subject.

While Western Washington has a reputation as being a rather tolerant place to live, there are still instances of hate crime. Here are some examples of hate crimes in Washington that have occurred in the last six years:

On July 28, 2006, Naveed Afzal Haq walked into the Jewish Federation woman center and shot six women, one of whom dies of her wounds.

In the summer of 2007, there were several assaults directed against gay men on Capitol Hill in Seattle.

On January 7, 2010, Zachary Beck, a former member of Aryan Nations, saw an African American man (name unknown) with some white friends in a Vancouver, Wash., bar. Beck did not approve. After being joined by two friends, Beck decided to confront the gentleman and threw a punch at him, only to miss and end up in a headlock himself. As Beck and his friends left the bar, the not-so-helpless victim called the police.

On October 16, 2010, Jennifer Leigh Jennings assaulted Imaan and Maryan (last name unknown) at an Arco AM/PM in Tukwila. Imaan and Maryan were trying to fill their vehicle with gas, but the pump didn’t seem to work. While they were struggling with the pump, Jennings started making comments about the women’s religion and questioning if they were terrorists. Imaan

went in to speak to the clerk about the problems with the gas pump. When Imaan returned, she saw Jennings slam the car door on Maryan’s leg and then kick her. When Imaan told Jennings to stop, Jennings pushed her down.

In August 2010, Brock Stainbrook walked into a Queen Anne convenience store and punched the clerk, who was wearing a turban. He accused the man of being a terrorist and a member of Al Qaeda. When another clerk attempted to escort Stainbrook out of the store, Stainbrook tried to kick the other clerk, and broke the stores barcode scanners.

In each of these cases the victims were targeted because of some quality, real or perceived, such as race, sexual orientation or religion. The top reason someone is targeted for a hate crime in the city of Seattle is because of his or her perceived racial identity, followed by perceived sexual identity.

So what can we do as a community to reduce and even eliminate hate crimes? There are several answers to this. First, get to know your neighbors as people. Most people want to live in safe communities. Support each other in that common desire.

Second, talk to each other about cultural differences and similarities. Communicate about ongoing safety problems in the community that you share.

And third, if you see you neighbor being targeted for a hate crime, call the police.

*Kelly McKinney (206-323-7084) and Alan Davis (206-323-7094) are Community Education Coordinators for Seattle Neighborhood Group.*

### How to eat healthy fruits and veggies into the cold months; and a great peach cobbler recipe

BY ADRIANE VETTER  
Special to The Voice

Every year this time, when the days are getting shorter and there’s that little bit of a chill in the air, I start to remember days growing up in Houston, Texas, and the taste of my grandmother’s fig and watermelon rind preserves.

This got me to thinking about making a peach cobbler (one of our favorite desserts as kids) for my partner’s family this year for the Thanksgiving feast, and how I could use fresh peaches this year instead of canned. So, I asked the vendor I buy peaches and nectarines (and now Bartlett pears) from at the Ballard farmer’s market how to freeze peaches so I’d have them for November, and she advised simply cutting the peaches in half, removing the pit and freezing them on a cookie sheet.

“Then you can put them in the freezer. I recommend using two freezer bags, as it’ll keep them fresher, longer,” she said. She said you could also cut them into slices (which you’ll need for the peach cobbler) and freeze them that way. You can keep them in the freezer for a couple of months, and add the appropriate spices and sugar (or sugar substitute, if that’s needed for health reasons) when you need to make the cobbler, or peach pies, or just have them with granola, ice cream or yogurt (you can get great, fresh Greek and cow milk yogurt at the farmer’s market, too).

You can also cook the peaches if you like. You can cook and freeze beets and blueberries (you don’t have to cook the blueberries first). The vendor who sells my favorite salad mix (complete with a generous helping of edible flowers) says the salad and stir-fry mix will be available all winter, too. A good way to get the necessary

vitamin D and many other minerals in the cold, dark months, when we, who live in the Northwest, really need Vitamin D.

Now, for the peach cobbler you’ll need an oiled pan. We used butter to grease the pan, but you can use Pam or some other low-fat margarine, though butter is really much healthier. Dust it with flour and set aside.

Then, in a large bowl, mix your peaches, about a cup of brown sugar, (follow the directions for a sugar substitute that’ll match half a cup of real sugar), 1/4 cup of honey, a half teaspoon of cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon of nutmeg, and 1/4 cup of butter. (You can leave this out and substitute about a quarter tea spoon of salt; sea salt is best!)

Mix into the peach mixture half a cup of wheat or white baking flour and a half teaspoon of cornstarch (this is to give thickness to the peaches, and absorb some of the liquid that’ll have accumulated with freezing). Pour all of this into the pan, which you’ll have lined to the edges with either a homemade or pre-made crust (you can buy pre-made pie crusts in most local stores, in the freezer section).

Cover the cobbler with more crust and cut slits in the crust with a knife, or poke holes with a fork, so the cobbler will vent while cooking. Bake for about an hour at 350 degrees, until the crust is brown and flaky. Let cool on a cooling rack, then enjoy either with whipped cream or ice cream, or if you’re watching your calories, just by itself.

It makes a great breakfast on a cold morning, with some tea or coffee, and lasts in the refrigerator for at least a week (though it’s so yummy, it might not really last that long). Next month, I’ll give you my favorite pickled beets and borscht recipe, as well as a couple of easy soup recipes.

#### The Voice

##### Editor

Tyler Roush  
206-461-8430, ext. 227  
[tylerr@nhwa.org](mailto:tylerr@nhwa.org)

##### Reporters

Samuel Andrews  
Cynthia Clouser  
Susan Irwin  
Adriane Vetter

The Voice, the newspaper of Neighborhood House, is published monthly with the support of Seattle Housing Authority 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 Voice is published online at [www.nhwa.org](http://www.nhwa.org) and at [www.seattlehousing.org](http://www.seattlehousing.org).

## Pointing the lens at Yesler Terrace



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASSAYE ABUNIE

Young filmmakers with the Yesler Youth Media project created a documentary about the redevelopment of the Seattle Housing Authority neighborhood. The project was a collaboration between the Multimedia Resource and Training Institute, Youth in Focus, the Yesler Terrace Computer Lab and Seattle University. The results of their work, including still photos and video clips, are on display in the Vachon Room of Seattle University's Fine Arts Building, open 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday through Nov. 30. A reception will be held from 5 – 8 p.m. Nov. 1.

## Affairs

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families to make ends meet— even more so in a city like Seattle, which has a high cost of living.

It's critical that refugees also be included

“When we talk about immigration reform, we have to make sure that the refugee community is included,” he says.

That means creating a system that is equitable for those who come to this country seeking refuge from oppression. He notes that the United States contributes to the flow of refugees, citing the influx of refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan in the wake of wars waged by the United States in both countries.

Politics can play a role in what groups are protected.

“A Cuban can come to Miami, puts one foot on dry land and he or she becomes eligible for citizenship,” Rose-Avila says. “At the same time, we are there watching

Haitians being deported on a regular basis, into worse conditions.”

And while immigrants and refugees are at times subject to strict anti-immigration laws, particularly in border states like Arizona and Texas, Rose-Avila reminds one that nearly all of us share their humble origin.

“After X number of generations, especially if you're Anglo-Saxon, you almost forget that you were a refugee,” he says.

While the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs doesn't offer direct services, Rose-Avila says his department wants to hear from members of the immigrant and refugee community and other interested people.

To contact the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, call 206-233-3886 or email [oir@seattle.gov](mailto:oir@seattle.gov). You can also visit the department's website, [www.seattle.gov/iandrafairs](http://www.seattle.gov/iandrafairs).

“For us to be successful, we're going to have to involve the community,” he says.

## Pros and cons of marijuana legalization

BY SEATTLE UNIVERSITY NURSING STUDENTS

Initiative 502 would make it legal in Washington state to grow and sell marijuana. (However, it would still be against federal law.) People age 21 and over would be allowed to use marijuana for recreational use. Marijuana would be sold and taxed in licensed stores regulated by the Washington State Liquor Control Board. Money raised would go to substance-abuse prevention, research, education and healthcare. The initiative adds a new Driving Under the Influence (DUI) level similar to alcohol that would allow people to drive after about three hours of using marijuana.

### Why some people are voting for it:

- Taxing marijuana would raise an estimated \$500 million per year for substance abuse prevention, research, education and health care.

- Many believe marijuana's effects are less harmful (both to self and society) than alcohol or other drugs, and that there are few negative consequences of using marijuana.

- About 10,000 people in Washington are charged with marijuana possession each year. Many people of color are in jail because of marijuana-related crimes. Legalization will prevent new convictions for marijuana crimes. People who have marijuana-related charges on their records are unable to receive loans, and employers may not hire them.

- Marijuana advertising will not be allowed outside of stores or near parks or schools.

- It may take the money away from drug cartels and gangs that currently sell marijuana.

- Legalization takes the stigma away from marijuana use.

- Criminalizing marijuana use does not stop many people from using it.

- The new Driving Under the Influence

(DUI) standard will prevent people from driving after using marijuana.

Source: [www.newapproachwa.org](http://www.newapproachwa.org).

### Why some people are voting against it:

- Any taxes collected could be seized by the federal government, because they would be the proceeds of what the federal government determines to be illegal drug trafficking. Taxes would not cover the increased social and health cost caused by increased marijuana use.

- Marijuana has never been approved as a medication for any disease. Nine percent of those who use marijuana become addicted. The majority of people who use marijuana do so by smoking it. A person who smokes five marijuana joints per week may take in as much tar and cancer-causing chemicals as someone who smokes a pack a day of cigarettes. Youth who are regular marijuana smokers show a decrease in IQ and grade-point average.

- It will still be illegal for youth under 21 years old, who make up a large portion of marijuana users. Very few people are arrested just for marijuana possession — usually they are charged with something more serious as well. From 2000-2011, no one in Washington was sent to jail solely for marijuana possession or personal use.

- Marijuana advertising would be allowed on TV, newspapers, internet and billboards, and would make marijuana use appear cool and appealing to youth.

- Gangs will still sell marijuana to those under 21 years old, and may decrease their prices to compete with legal marijuana. Marijuana will become cheaper and put more pressure on youth to buy it.

- If legalized, more people will believe it is socially acceptable and safe to use marijuana. And, legalization will increase youth and adult access to, and use of, marijuana.

Source: <http://wasavp.org/marijuana-education-toolkit>

## Positive changes made to school meals

BY PUBLIC HEALTH – SEATTLE & KING COUNTY

Schools have been busier than ever this summer preparing for the exciting changes in school meals that will go into effect when children come back to school. School meals will be even healthier with more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods.

All school districts in King County are implementing the new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements that include offering more variety and servings of fruits and vegetables. Students will need to take a half of a cup of fruit or vegetable for a complete meal. Meals will vary in size

to meet calorie needs based on grade levels.

With the first major changes in school meals in over 30 years, schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs will now offer:

- A greater variety of fresh fruits and vegetables every day

- More whole grain rich foods, such as bread and pasta

- Low-fat milk, water and 100% fruit and vegetable juices

- Lower salt (sodium) options

A new local “New Face of School Food” video and fact sheet are available at: [www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/nutrition/schools.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/nutrition/schools.aspx).

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL MAGGS / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## Election

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to the sale of marijuana at each level of production. For instance, the sale of marijuana from a producer to a processor, from a processor to a retailer, and from a retailer to a consumer would each be taxed separately at 25 percent. State and local sales taxes would also apply to retail sales of marijuana.

The law would also specifically prohibit driving under the influence of marijuana.

### Initiative 1185: Restrictions on tax increases

Initiative 1185 would reaffirm existing limitations imposed on the state to increase taxes. Approval of the initiative would restate a current law that requires a two-thirds legislative majority or voter approval to raise taxes.

Opponents of the measure point out that

the initiative is backed by corporate special interest groups, including big oil companies and beer distributors. The initiative makes it nearly impossible to close tax loopholes that special interest groups, such as BP and Conoco Phillips, currently benefit from. The law is also unconstitutional — the state constitution dictates that legislation passes on a majority vote, not a two-thirds majority vote. Initiative 1185 is backed by conservative activist Tim Eyman.

Approval of Initiative 1185 would reaffirm the two-thirds majority or voter approval requirement; rejecting the initiative would overturn the law.

### Initiative 1240: Charter schools

If approved, Initiative 1240 would create up to 40 privately-operated, publicly-funded charter schools in Washington state. The charter schools would be operated by nonprofit corporations; a maximum of eight

new charter schools could be established each year over the next five years.

Charter schools would receive funding allocations from the state based on their student enrollments — up to \$100 million over five years.

Critics say that's too great a blow for public schools that are already beleaguered financially. Teachers, parents and community organizations have spoken out against the initiative; opponents include the Washington State PTA, the League of Women Voters of Washington and the regional branch of the NAACP.

### Presidential debates begin this month

President Barack Obama, a Democrat, and Republican challenger Mitt Romney will square off in a series of nationally-televised debates leading up to the Nov. 6 general election.

Debates are scheduled for 6 p.m. Oct. 3 at

the University of Denver (the subject will be domestic policy); 6 p.m. Oct. 16 at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y. (town hall-style, domestic and foreign policy); and 6 p.m. Oct. 22 at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Fla. (foreign policy).

In addition, Vice President Joe Biden and Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan will debate domestic and foreign policy at 6 p.m. Oct. 11 at Centre College in Danville, Ky.

Voters in Washington state can tune in to a debate between gubernatorial candidates Jay Inslee (D) and Rob McKenna (R) following the Oct. 16 presidential debate. The debate between Washington's two candidates for governor will be broadcast live on KING-5 from 8 – 9 p.m. Oct. 16. It will also be streamed live on [www.king5.com](http://www.king5.com).

For more information about the 2012 general election, including an online voter's guide, visit [www.sos.wa.gov/elections](http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections).



## High Point gets its exercise at outdoor fitness park

### *Bataan Park Fitness Zone moves the gym outside*

BY TYLER ROUSH  
The Voice editor

**HP** Whether it's a lack of time, money or energy, many people can't make it to the gym for exercise.

Lucky for High Point residents, the gym has come to them. The Bataan Park Outdoor Fitness Zone opened with much fanfare during a community celebration Wednesday, Sept. 5.

The fitness zone, which is located next to the Bataan Park playground, features a variety of exercise stations that cater to people of all fitness and ability levels.

"If you think you can't do this, that's when you really need to come out here and try," said Willie Austin, a fitness guru and instructor who teaches a free fitness class at the nearby High Point Center. "I don't know of any other park in the city that has this feature," Austin added.

Indeed, High Point's fitness zone — one-of-a-kind in West Seattle, if not the entire city — captures an international trend toward outdoor fitness parks.

"Paris has it, Istanbul has it, Mexico City has it, Beijing has it — now High Point has it," said Denise Sharify, director of Neighborhood House's Be Active Together program.

The novel approach makes exercise convenient for people who might otherwise neglect to stay active.

"People want their place of fitness to be close to home," Sharify said.

Location is one key to accessibility; ease of use is another. The machines in the Bataan Park Outdoor Fitness Zone are user-friendly, with options for beginner, intermediate and advanced workouts. Each device works a different muscle group, and instructions for safe and effective use

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PHOTO BY TYLER ROUSH

Yolanda Zaragoza tries one of the arm press machines, recently installed at the Bataan Park Outdoor Fitness Zone. The outdoor exercise park offers a unique way for High Point residents to improve their fitness.

## Seattle City Council approves Yesler Terrace redevelopment

BY TYLER ROUSH  
The Voice editor

The Seattle City Council on Sept. 4 unanimously approved a package of legislation that will pave the way for the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace to proceed.

The package includes guarantees for current residents, most notably the right to return to a redeveloped Yesler Terrace, and assurances that the existing low-income housing will be replaced 1-for-1.

The legislation also provides current residents with relocation counseling and moving costs. The first phase of redevelopment and relocation will begin in approximately 18 months, when some residents may move into new housing at 1105 East Fir and the Baldwin Apartments.

Members of the Council acknowledged the magnitude of the project and its impact on the existing community, and said the guarantees provided in the legislation ensure that the interests of residents will be

protected throughout the process.

"This is big — this is the redevelopment of a neighborhood," Councilmember Sally Clark said.

Clark and other councilmembers affirmed the efforts of Seattle Housing Authority and the work of the Yesler Terrace Citizen Review Committee to incorporate public and resident input in the process. Clark noted that Seattle Housing will provide annual progress reports to the city, ensuring that the goals of the redevelopment legislation are met.

Councilmember Richard Conlin praised Seattle Housing's commitment to create more low-income and workforce units — at least 1,100 in total, including a minimum 1-for-1 replacement of the 561 extremely low-income units currently on site.

Offering comment before the historic decision, some urged the council to reconsider the plan, which will reshape

Please see "Yesler" on Page 2

### *Hear from the manager's boss at the RAC's Oct. 10 Forum*

The housing authority's Housing Operations Director Rod Brandon and Property Management Administrator Jake LeBlanc will answer the Resident Action Council's questions about Public Housing rules and practices.

RAC will meet from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 10 in the Center Park Community Room, upper level of 2121 26th Avenue South. The nearest transit stop (buses 4 and 8) is on MLK at S. Hill Streets. Buses 7, 9, 42 and 48 stop

on Rainier Ave. S. and S. Walker St., 2½ blocks west of Center Park.

Questions about the forum or RAC? Phone 206-322-1297 or email talk2rac@gmail.com.

### **Great news on transportation to RAC**

Bus or Access fare now will be reimbursed when you attend our meetings. Carpool drivers will get mileage paid — contact us if you are willing to pick up others, or if you need a ride.

## Residents offer comment on 2013 budget, MTW plan

BY TYLER ROUSH  
The Voice editor

Scores of residents and Seattle Housing employees turned out for a hearing on the agency's proposed 2013 MTW plan and budget Sept. 17 at the housing authority's central office in Lower Queen Anne.

Two hot topics for public comment included enforcement of the agency's non-smoking policy and the status of janitorial services in the housing authority's buildings.

Seattle Housing Authority faces the probable reduction of 29 full-time staffing positions in 2013, and residents have raised concern that the cuts will impact the cleanliness of the agency's communities.

"Buildings are dirty, and I think that sanitation and cleanliness need to be a top priority," said Jefferson Terrace resident Dennis Bejin.

Susan Irwin expressed frustration with neighbors who are ignoring the housing authority's nonsmoking policy, and also raised concerns about the cleanliness of her building's basement.

"Our basement smells putrid ... and no one is cleaning it up," she said.

Jake LeBlanc, Seattle Housing property management administrator, explained that staff continue to educate residents about the nonsmoking policy. Though smoking in one's unit is a lease violation, he said that the agency prefers not to proceed with lease enforcement yet.

"We're hoping not to do so at this point," said LeBlanc, explaining that the agency

prefers to educate residents, then to issue verbal or written warnings, before proceeding to an option that could end in eviction.

Mike Young, a Seattle Housing employee who works in the agency's Housing Choice Voucher program, says he fears that proposed staffing cuts will interfere with the agency's ability to execute the goals laid out in its strategic plan.

"What I see in this budget is that you have a lot of ambitious plans, (but) you don't have the bodies in the field to make that happen," he said.

He added that workers in the voucher program are already overwhelmed with running a program that has a massive waiting list.

Jean Couchman, a senior living in SSHP

Please see "Budget" on Page 3

### Content guide

Don't see your neighborhood section? Consult the guide below to find the logos that correspond to your community.

-  **High Point Herald**
-  **NewHolly Notes**
-  **Rainier Vista News**
-  **Yesler Happenings**

## A shiny new face for Blakeley Manor



PHOTO BY BRAIN PALMASON

Construction workers wrap up work at Blakeley Manor this October, concluding the installation of new windows, new insulation and a new facade. Readers have seen the progress of exterior renovation at three other Seattle Senior Housing Program buildings over the last year: Nelson Manor, Olmsted Manor and Bitter Lake Manor. Of the four, perhaps Blakeley Manor has the most dramatic change. The façade has contrasting siding elements in the shape of inverted L's. Each element is painted in one of five different gradations of orange as highlights on the warm gray background of the rest of the building. The effect is a dynamic progression of color that might be best experienced while strolling or biking along the Burke-Gilman trail that passes directly in front of the building.

## Full steam ahead at Jefferson Terrace

BY SVEN KOEHLER  
Seattle Housing Authority

Hissing steam, oppressive heat, sputtering sprays of water from drippy pipes: the basement utility rooms of Jefferson Terrace Apartments could be mistaken for the engine room of a 19th century steamship or the set of a scary movie. But recent maintenance work there aims to clean things up and make the building's steam-based heating system more reliable.

The building is unique among the Low Income Public Housing high rises because its heat is generated from steam supplied by the Seattle Steam Company. Steam is delivered to the building through large underground pipes.

Contrary to what some believe, the steam never gets anywhere near the individual apartments at Jefferson Terrace. Instead, the steam enters heat exchangers hidden in the basement, transferring the steam's energy to water circulating through completely separate pipes. This hot water is then pumped to each apartment in the 17-story building. The hot water fills wall radiators in each apartment, providing heat to each resident's home. The hot water that comes out of the tap is also heated the same way.

The steam comes from the company's biofuels generator by the Seattle Waterfront. Almost 200 buildings in Seattle's Downtown and First Hill areas utilize steam, which is considered a green energy source because it utilizes renewable waste wood that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

If all goes well with this type of hydronic heat system, residents just turn the knob on their radiators and the warmth flows without a hitch. Most residents never get an inkling of the way the steam is routed through a maze of pipes, valves and safety devices.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Seattle Housing Authority's maintenance staff has had to wrangle with the challenge of leaks and faltering equipment for years. They have ensured that the 50-year-old system is safe and functional at all times. But over time, parts simply need replacing.

This summer, the time was ripe for the system to be updated. A contractor was brought aboard to complete the upgrades, which should be complete by the end of October.

While residents have noticed a few inevitable impacts of the work when pipes had to be drained or cooled off enough to be worked on, the work is largely undetectable. The idea was to minimize the downtime of the heating system before the weather turns cold, explained project manager Brent Palmason. The prospects are good that this will be no problem given the persistently pleasant Indian Summer that has graced Seattle this year.

The modernized system will offer some efficiency gains through a computerized monitoring system that can detect leaks automatically, without relying on the telltale hiss of escaping steam or dripping pipes. The boost to the reliability and lifespan of the system will help save money, and will free the agency's plumbers from sweaty trips to Jefferson Terrace's underbelly.

## Viewpoint: Let's talk about the good things today

BY SAMUEL ANDREWS  
Special to The Voice

Who says because we live in public housing that we have to listen to those who say that we have less worth than others who don't live in public housing? Quite frankly, I'm tired of all of the negative comments and stigma being recycled by the people who don't live in our communities and don't even know us at all.

Negative labels hurt. If they only knew how hard and tirelessly some of us work in our communities to make them better, perhaps they wouldn't use such hurtful language while describing fellow human beings.

Some public housing residents battle endless medical problems. Others have overcome countless personal struggles and come out with their dignity intact. For the most part, our communities have very low crime rates and may even be much safer than other communities in our dear city.

So why do people who know so little about us find it so necessary to classify us or put us in some sort of negative light? It's a part of human nature I suppose.

I also believe that it's not what they call you, but what you answer to that is important. I would like to encourage us to start using more positive words to describe

ourselves and our community. We have to stop thinking of ourselves as victims. I can't count how many times one of my good neighbors has asked "Hey Samuel, you look so normal; what's wrong with you? Why did you end up here?"

Public housing is not the place unlucky people end up. If you don't agree, walk down to the local homeless shelter and take a good look around. A lot of us were able to get stable in Seattle Housing, which led us to receive the further support we needed.

Truth is, people are struggling in many different ways, everywhere in our state. There is nothing going on in public housing that is not going on in other Seattle neighborhoods. We need to build each other up with positive words, starting now. Let's stop tearing each other down with negative language and self-bashing.

It's not difficult to notice the good things going right with our communities, even if something goes wrong every once in a while. When was the last time you just said hello to your housing manager without following your hello with a complaint?

I for one have much to be grateful for today. We can't expect outsiders to stop making negative comments about people who live in public housing if we don't stop doing so ourselves.

## Seattle couple convicted of defrauding HUD to do 18 months in prison, pay penalties

BY VOICE STAFF

A Seattle couple who defrauded the government out of thousands of dollars in housing and low-income assistance while living in a waterfront home on Lake Washington now face nearly \$500,000 in penalties and 18 months in prison.

David Silverstein, 60, and Lyudmila Shimonova, 53, fraudulently collected Housing Choice Voucher payments from Seattle Housing Authority over a span of eight years, as well as assistance payments from Social Security and Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) dating as far back as 1999.

The couple has already paid a civil penalty of \$216,441, and will also pay more than \$261,000 in restitution. On Sept. 21, a U.S. District Judge sentenced Silverstein and Shimonova to 18 months in prison without possibility of parole.

Altogether, they will pay two and a half times the amount they collected in HCV benefits. In addition, they will reimburse DSHS and Social Security for fraudulent payments collected by Shimonova totaling \$144,124.

The case drew significant local and national media coverage at the time the fraud was discovered in 2011.

Seattle Housing Authority worked closely with HUD and the U.S. Attorney's Office to investigate this fraud.

"We have very limited resources to serve many people who are truly in need. When those with ample income fraudulently claim benefits meant for low-income people struggling to make ends meet, the people who we want to assist suffer," Seattle Housing Executive Director Andrew Lofton said. "We will continue to pursue claims or indications of fraud aggressively and thoroughly."

## Yesler

Continued from Page 1

Yesler Terrace into an urban neighborhood containing some 5,000 housing units and more than one million square feet of office and retail space.

"I'm going to miss the old neighborhood," said longtime Yesler Terrace resident Kristin O'Donnell, then added, "The uncertainty of this plan is really, really scary."

Robby Stern, president of the Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans, said the group's members — particularly those in Seattle Housing and the Asian community — felt "grave concern" over

the proposed redevelopment.

"You are embarking on something that has never been done in this country before," Stern said.

Councilmembers expressed sympathy with the concerns of the public, but agreed with Seattle Housing's assessment that the redevelopment is the best option to fund badly-needed housing improvements. Existing apartments at Yesler Terrace are more than 70 years old.

About half of the \$290 million needed to fund the project is expected to come from private developers, who will purchase or lease the land on site. The rest will come from city and federal funds, tax credits and mortgage debt.

## About The Voice

The Voice is a monthly newspaper published by Neighborhood House with financial support from Seattle Housing Authority and King County Housing Authority. 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.

If you'd like to submit an article, or if you have a question about anything you've read in this publication, please contact Editor Tyler Roush at 206-461-8430, ext. 227 or by e-mail at tyler@nhwa.org.

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

## Conversation with Troy Smith: A resident leader stresses the importance of inclusion and acceptance

BY SAMUEL ANDREWS  
Special to *The Voice*

Harvard Court Resident Council President and RAC treasurer Troy Smith has witnessed and survived many hardships during his 50 years of life. “I moved into Seattle Housing after falling and breaking my neck and shoulder in 2010,” he told a reporter for *The Voice* last week. “It was tough, because I was in a wheelchair before I started physical therapy.

“It was the lowest point of my life” he said.

Undeterred by his health issues, Smith soldiers on. He currently lives happily with his partner and their two dachshunds, Copper and Ryan.

“I’m all for marriage equality,” he said, adding, “I believe that everyone should have the right to get married.”

He continued, “My partner is very loving, hardworking and caring. He has to do most of the cleaning around the place; and he is very cute too.

“Hearing me say that should be a large ego boost for him,” he said with a laugh.



Troy Smith

Smith recalled the verbal abuse he endured because of his sexual orientation while living in Missouri in the 1980’s.

“I was pulled out of class by the campus police and repeatedly harassed,” he said.

When asked about his past experiences with poverty, Smith acknowledged, “Sometimes I would think that I would never get out of it, but almost everyone has been there at some point,” he said, adding, “I had a lot of help from my good friends during that time.”

Although Smith has had to cope with his own past and present challenges, he remains dedicated to working within his diverse housing community in every positive way possible.

“I feel like I am doing something useful by serving in RAC,” he said. The council treasurer, he said that he honed his accounting skills while working in shipping and receiving for 10 years. As current Harvard Court Resident Council President he has a passion for stepping in to provide leadership, says Seattle Housing Authority Community Builder, Marcia Johnson.

“He is also good at paying attention to detail and following through with his commitments,” she said.

What does Smith believe makes a good community? A good atmosphere, a feeling of being safe and respected, he said. It’s an effort he contributes to with his work each day.

Voice reporter Samuel Andrews sat down with Harvard Court Resident Council President and Resident Action Council Treasurer Troy Smith.

**The Voice:** How long have you lived in public housing?

**Troy Smith:** Two and a half years. I moved in 2010 after a bad fall where I broke my neck and my shoulder, so I couldn’t work anymore.

**Voice:** Was that lowest point in your life?

**Smith:** Yes, I was in a wheelchair. It was tough for me to give up my job because I missed my friends from work.

**Voice:** How did you get through the rough times?

**Smith:** Well I had a lot of help from friends and some physical therapy because I had to learn how to use a cane. I spent a lot of time on the computer; that helped a lot.

**Voice:** What do you know about poverty?

**Smith:** I’ve been there; almost everybody has been there at one point. It was discouraging for me at that time I thought I would never get out of it.

**Voice:** What do you think are some of the major issues or challenges facing RAC?

**Smith:** Members need to learn how to get along better when pushing their own agendas. We need to get more people involved.



PHOTO BY TYLER ROUSH

Fitness guru Willie Austin leads a warm-up exercise during the grand opening of the Bataan Park Outdoor Fitness Zone.

## Fitness

Continued from Page 1

are included.

“It’s a great entry level for people who are not working out,” Jones said. “Hopefully people in this neighborhood will use it and show the benefits a little more.”

High Point resident Simsim Elmi walked over to the park from her nearby home. While her two children checked out the new equipment, Elmi looked to the neighboring playground.

“When the kids are playing there, you can get your exercise here,” she said.

Yolanda Zaragoza came out to the opening from her home in the neighboring Delridge community. After trying one of the chest press machines, she gave the fitness park an enthusiastic approval.

“We’ve been waiting for these for a long time—they’re fantastic,” said Zaragoza, whose daughter lives in High Point.

For Christine Eisen, a West Seattle resident who taught ESL classes at the High Point Center, the park is another positive addition to a unique and vibrant community.

“I love High Point,” Eisen said. “It’s the first time in 25 years that I’ve lived in the U.S.A. that I’ve felt a sense of community.”

The Bataan Park Outdoor Fitness Zone at High Point is located at the corner of High Point Drive SW and Bataan Place SW. It is for use by people ages 14 and older; children younger than 14 should not use the equipment due to the increased risk of injury.

Fitness classes with Austin were offered Wednesdays and Saturdays in September; to inquire about additional fitness classes, contact Neighborhood House at 206-588-4900.

## Budget

Continued from Page 1

housing, encouraged the agency to look to its senior population for a pool of ready and able volunteers.

“These are things that a lot of people in the (senior housing) program would like to do,” she said.

The housing authority’s budget and MTW process continues this month. The public comment period closed Oct. 1; the Board of Commissioners is expected to take up the issue at its October meeting.

### Inaction in Congress clouds 2013 budget forecast

Congress has yet to approve a 2013 budget, and there is growing concern that reductions to discretionary spending could cut into Seattle Housing’s share of the 2013 HUD budget. As a result, the agency has said it has taken “a moderate approach to the potential level of reductions we could face.”

The agency’s proposed 2013 operating budget is \$68.8 million, 3 percent below the 2012 operating budget. That reduction follows a 7.9 percent reduction in last year’s budget.

Staffing cuts will account for the majority of the reduction, including the elimination of 29 full-time staff. Of those, 15 employees will be laid off; the remaining 14 cuts will be made to positions that are currently vacant. Another two full-time employees will have their hours reduced, and four temporary

positions will be eliminated.

The staffing cuts mean that over the two years of 2012 and 2013, the housing authority’s staffing capacity will have been reduced by more than 14 percent.

To avoid deeper cuts, the agency will forego offering a cost-of-living adjustment to its employees in 2013.

The agency is frank in its assessment of the impact of cuts to staff.

“As hard as we try to maintain the high quality of work and service in which we take pride, it is simply not possible to absorb increasing reductions in our most valuable resource — the people who work here — without our residents and participants feeling the pinch,” the agency’s 2013 budget summary reads.

The priority, Chief Financial Officer Shelly Yapp, is to “maintain service to the same number of residents and voucher holders as we do today.”

In response to the budget reduction, the agency has refined the goals outlined in its 2011-2015 strategic plan. Those priorities include: proceeding with the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace; maintaining and improving existing housing stock; increasing access to housing in areas that have been less accessible to low-income people; and improving access to education and employment opportunities for its residents.

### Draft MTW plan proposed

The housing authority’s draft 2013 MTW plan requests the flexibility to explore five

possible policies:

**Simplified utility assistance payment for HOPE VI communities** — The proposal would streamline the process for determining a household’s utility allowance. The current system considers many factors, including the heat source, number of bedrooms, type of housing and the community. The new calculation could be based on an average utility consumption across HOPE VI properties and apportioned by number of bedrooms. On average, residents could receive \$4 more per month in utility assistance. Further discussions with the community are underway.

**Seattle Senior Housing Program waiting list policy** — SSHP currently leases its housing at 90 percent senior, 10 percent non-senior disabled. The housing authority has previously maintained that ratio across within both one-bedroom and two-bedroom units in SSHP. The overall 90-10 ratio will be maintained, but the housing authority will no longer necessarily maintain the ratio for each of the two bedroom types. This is expected to shorten the leasing time for two-bedroom units.

**Short-term rental assistance** — In support of its work with the Committee to End Homelessness, Seattle Housing may pilot a program to offer short-term rental assistance to families in danger of losing their housing. The program would include both one-time rental assistance and short-term assistance paired with support services, such as employment and childcare.

### Yesler Terrace Community Council nominations

Nominations for the Yesler Terrace Community Council Leadership Team are open until 5 p.m. Oct. 9. Mail nominations with the name and apartment number of the person nominated to YTCC, 102 Broadway Suite 616, Seattle WA 98104 or bring them to the Yesler Terrace management office, where the Council has a mailbox. Nominees must: 1. be 16 years or older; 2. be on a lease in Yesler Terrace; 3. have attended at least one Community Council meeting since Sept. 2011; and 4. have agreed to the nomination. You may nominate yourself.

**Limiting portability in high-cost areas** — Depending on federal funding levels, this proposal could restrict Housing Choice Voucher participants from moving to a higher-cost area outside of Seattle.

**Local nontraditional affordable housing** — Seattle Housing sometimes uses MTW block grant funds to support affordable housing outside of the public housing and voucher program, to include funding support for development, capital improvements and physical and financial maintenance. New guidance from HUD has compelled the agency to call out the use of those funds as an MTW activity.

# Gina Owens gives voice to Scattered Sites residents

BY SUSAN IRWIN  
*Special to The Voice*

Gina Owens is a nurturing activist who is dedicating her life for the benefit of humankind. She juggles her home life and three beautiful grandchildren with her work, both of which bring meaning to her life.

Owens, a Seattle Housing resident, has a long history with the Resident Action Council (RAC), where she previously served as Ombudsperson. She is an active member of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee (JPAC), and just recently completed her tenure as co-chair.

As a Scattered Sites resident, Owens stands up for an underrepresented group of Seattle Housing residents. She wants to be known as an advocate for these residents.

An avid volunteer, Owens' work gravitates around what she calls the "Four H's": Healthcare, Hunger, Housing and Homelessness. She said these four areas in her life are intricately related, and that she deals with each of them both separately and together.

She has volunteered at First Place School for homeless and formerly homeless families. She has also testified against funding cuts that would adversely affect low-income and homeless people.

Owens' current project is working with Washington Community Action Network (CAN). The group is a grassroots lobbying organization that stands up for consumers.

One example of Washington CAN's work is an action the group is planning against Money Tree stores, a lender that offers high-interest payday loans to low-income people. Owens said "Money Tree regularly exploits low-income people and people of color by strategically locating their stores where the poor and needy have the most

access." Money Tree stores capitalize on poor people with bad credit who can't get a checking account, and they know that customers can't pay the exorbitant fees for loans, check cashing and Western Union, according to Owens. They take full advantage of trusting people trying to make it in our society, she continued.

Owens is taking a leadership role in developing another action this October in Spokane. At the conference they will look at proposed legislation in the congress and senate that may affect people of low income. After discussing the bills, they will decide which issues to work on and the best ways to accomplish their goals.

Owens knows about tragedy in her life. Her only child, Tiffany, passed away in 2007 at the age of 27, leaving Owens with custody of three grandchildren.

Tiffany had a heart condition, which gradually left her unable to work. Her health insurance from her fast food job would not cover the costs of medical treatment during the last stages of her illness. Owens and her new family suffered through the grief of loss; the transition from one nuclear family to another was painful, confusing and heartbreaking.

Owens said that the staff at Seattle Housing was instrumental in helping her new family find housing, furnish it, get food and supplies, and offer the moral support she needed. Her Assistant Property Manager at the time, Frankie Johnson, was the primary supporter during this troubled time, and Owens said, "I will be eternally grateful for what she did."

Owens and her grandchildren are close and loving and their dining room table contains artifacts that reflect the spirit of the family. She keeps the memory of the children's mother alive with a snow globe



PHOTO BY SUSAN IRWIN

Gina Owens sits with her grandchildren (from left) Marcelas, Myanna and Monique.

angel on the table that all three call "Mom." During troubled or emotional times they turn on the light in the angel, which unifies the family with Tiffany.

Three nights a week Owens also lights a cinnamon candle, and each child tells how their life is going. The table includes a picture cube where each child's picture is changed each year as they grow.

During Seattle's Mother's Day March of 2009, Owens' grandson, Marcelas, told U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, "I don't want any more families to go through the pain me and my sisters are going through because of lack of health care."

Sen. Murray promised to share Marcelas' story with every politician she saw. His story

eventually caught the attention of President Barack Obama, who invited Marcelas to join him when the president signed the 2010 Health Care Reform Bill into law. The family has a picture depicting the moment proudly displayed in their living room, and Marcelas' story made national news.

Owens certainly has a lot going on in her life. She is meeting each challenge head on with dignity and graciousness of character. Her life work is based on compassion, and her family is full of love. She said, "My life has been truly blessed!"

Susan Irwin is a Seattle Housing resident and at-large member of the Resident Action Council.

## High Point: A happy, healthy, fit community

BY CYNTHIA CLOUSER  
*Special to The Voice*

**HP** Awesome! That's what I say when anyone asks me how I like living here in High Point in West Seattle.

I live in a wonderful mixed-income community, where there are renters as well as homeowners. Our lovely community is also very diverse — many great families and many great activities.

Since I have moved here in 2008, I have seen great progress in becoming one of the best low-income housing places I have ever seen or heard about. We have many great programs for youth and adults. We also have some neat parks and outdoor spaces, where children can play safely and events can be held.

Lately, we have seen the addition of outdoor exercise equipment. Yes, you read that correctly: Outdoor exercise equipment.

This is to go along with our exercise programs we already have in place (which by the way, are used by several groups of people, young and old). Not only do the children have a fun place to play, so do the parents on our own "playground." (See the related story on Page 1.)

Wait, there's more! Now we also have several new benches and a few picnic tables in the High Point Commons Park,

thanks to Neighborhood House volunteers from ARAMARK, City Year and the High Point community. The hardworking volunteers also built a couple of garden plots for the local Head Start program. Some of our programs are learning about getting and being healthy, eating right to maintain good health.

We are realizing that starting with children at any age is key. They are quick and avid learners. So, we are creating many gardens in our community.

I have not only enjoyed the privilege of living here, I have enjoyed being involved. I am sure most people have never really bragged about the low-income housing they live in, but I certainly will. The money invested in building this housing and creating these program is money well-spent!

So to all those who have donated their money or their time, I say "Thank you!"

To those who do not live here, come by and see what we have going on. I will gladly show you how to have your own happy, healthy and fit community.

Cynthia Clouser is a High Point resident, a High Point Neighborhood Association trustee and a member of the Community Action Team and Be Active Together.

**CITIZENSHIP DAY**  
October 8<sup>th</sup> 2012

**Neighborhood House**

**Address: NH High Point Center**  
**6400 Sylvan Way SW**  
**Seattle WA 98126**

**Time: 2:30 - 7pm**  
**Phone: 253.227.1667**  
**(questions/reservations)**

**ACTIVITIES**

- Enroll in free Citizenship classes\*
- Citizenship N-400 applications assistance 2:30-6pm
- Meet our successful naturalized clients 6-7pm
- Attend workshops US Citizenship process and Applicant's Rights 4-6pm

\*Neighborhood House Citizenship Programs are funded by USCIS, Washington State, and City of Seattle.

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