

HILLTOP ACTION JOURNAL

Dec 2020 - Jan 2021 | Hilltop Action Coalition | Volunteer Organized | www.hilltopactioncoalition.org

Happy New Year Hilltop May You Thrive & Grow In Your Community



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Hilltop Stories: Visual & Audio Reflections

Art by Dionne Bonner; Audio by Whitney Brady. On exhibit now at the Tacoma Public Libraries Handforth Virtual Gallery through February 6th.

By Jane Trancho

HILLTOP STORIES, visual and audio reflections, is currently on exhibit through the Tacoma Public Libraries Handforth Virtual Gallery through February 6, 2021. With Art by Dionne Bonner and Audio by Whitney Brady, these artists celebrate the history and culture of the Hilltop Neighborhood in a show that focuses on the people and places that have made this such a special place to its residents. This duo of exceptional artists has joined forces to use their talent and creativity to continue a long history of people working together to make this community better.

The audio reflections are the work of the Hilltop Listening Project. In

2017 Whitney Brady recorded oral histories of 20 Hilltop residents, with memories from the 1930s through 2000. Each person was asked the same list of questions, and audio is edited to group responses by topics. They reflect the joy and passion for this community with multiple voices and perspectives.

The visuals in this exhibit are the work of Dionne Bonner. Dionne's family has deep roots in the Hilltop, and her family is the inspiration for this exhibit. "Through this exhibit, I'm celebrating togetherness and remembering times when my family and the community were the closest." Her nine oil paintings of family are executed with bold colors and brushstrokes. The remaining graphic

images are visual representations of quotes from one-on-one interviews Dionne had with another set of people with roots in the Hilltop. While the interviews are with different people than the Listening Project and conducted later, they reinforce the continuity of feeling for this place.

The combination of these media provides a potent sense of what it means to be a part of this community. Whether you are a long-time resident of the Hilltop or a new addition, you will find joy and commonality in this exhibit. The Hilltop Spirit is alive in these images and voices. It is a show not to be missed.

Visit the virtual exhibit by clicking on this link or visiting <https://www.tacomalibrary.org/handforth-gallery/>.



Find out how to participate in the Hilltop Holiday Crawl on Page 3.

Hilltop Action Journal
Award-Winning Publication!
Journals are viewable online at
www.hilltopactioncoalition.org!

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Community Priorities

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



Advertise with us
Email hacoffice15@gmail.com

Hilltop Action Coalition

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

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Hilltop Action Coalition is
recruiting Board Members!
Email hacoffice15@gmail.com

Article Correction

Sep/Oct Journal, p. 112
Black Mindfulness Club Little Library Hilltop at Fern and Foster

Please note the article was not written by Nicole Reed. The byline should have read: Information provided by Nicole Reed and the Black History Mindfulness Club website which was created by Tesa Morse. Tesa is the Black leader of Black History Mindfulness Club and creator of the website content. Photographs and video link were shared by Nicole Reed.

If you would like more information about the Black History Mindfulness Club, please visit their website at <https://www.blackhistorymindfulnesscommunity.com/> or Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/BlackHistoryMindfulnessClub>. If you have questions or donation inquiries, please email Tesa Morse at blackhistorymindfulnessclub@gmail.com.



Meet Brendan Nelson, Alyssa Torrez, and Michealea Lemons, HAC Board Members and your Hosts for HAC Virtual Weekly Updates! Join us each Monday at 6:00 PM via Facebook Live during the COVID-19 pandemic. HAC Monthly Community Meetings will return once we can meet in person again.

Your Hosts will share community updates and local events for the Hilltop Neighborhood. They also have Special Guests each week that will provide you with empowering information that

we hope will improve your quality of life.

Miss a meeting? No worries! All virtual meetings are recorded and available to view when you are ready to watch them - visit the HAC Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition> and click on the Videos tab. On November 30th, we had Special Guest Klair Ethridge, Executive Director for Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center - find out more about T.U.P.A.C on page 6!

HAC Virtual Meetings

*Community Updates
& Special Guests!
A casual, fun, community
centered meeting space.*

Join Us

Hilltop Action Coalition Virtual Weekly Updates Mondays @ 6PM

Meet your neighbors and become part of the Hilltop Community.

Each week, we have presentations and information about community events, activities, policy, and important news.

Light refreshments and kid's activities provided!



President's Message

By Brendan Nelson

Hilltop Family,

The holidays are a festive time of year when we share special moments with our family, friends and loved ones, and look ahead to a new year filled with promise and opportunity. We reflect upon our many blessings, and are grateful for the sacrifices being made by our first responders, medical professionals and those fighting to keep us safe and healthy during this time.

During this season of hope and joy, I offer my sincere thanks to all of our neighbors for your continued collaboration, cooperation, and support. You are the foundation of

HAC and your active engagement contributes significantly to the progress and advancement of the Hilltop.

I also express my appreciation to our Board of Directors for their dedication, commitment, and service to our community. The outstanding work you perform each and every day meeting the needs of our neighbors enhances quality of life and exemplifies what building community is all about.

In the spirit of the season, I commend all those neighbors, community members, organizations and stakeholders who have made a special effort to give back to the community. You are spreading

goodwill throughout our community with open and generous hearts and I am truly grateful to each of you.

As we look forward to new and exciting opportunities that lie ahead, we remain committed and passionate about working cooperatively with all of you to make Hilltop the best place to live, work, play, visit and raise a family. My warmest wishes to you and your loved ones for a Merry Christmas, a joyous holiday season, and a happy, healthy, and successful New Year.

In service,

Brendan Nelson
President, Hilltop Action Coalition

Virtual Hilltop Holiday Crawl: Dec 14th - 20th

Support Local Businesses this Holiday Season and help your community THRIVE! Brought to you by HAC and Tacoma Housing Authority!



Brought to you by:



Hilltop Holiday Crawl

...is going VIRTUAL!

ONE WEEK! December 14th-20th
In stores and ONLINE

VISIT HILLTOPCRAWL.COM FOR BUSINESS INFORMATION AND MAP

- Explore local businesses and vendors to purchase holiday treats while observing state COVID-19 guidelines.
- Order ahead! Call-in, shop online or pick up goods from local businesses.
- Mark your virtual passports, win prizes and vote for best holiday decorations.
- Appropriate social distancing and wearing of facial masks will be required in all Crawl locations.

SHOP PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES AND FILL OUT YOUR VIRTUAL PASSPORT AT HILLTOPCRAWL.COM

Virtual Marketplace & Crawl Passport

Providing Safe Ways to Participate!

Originally, HAC and Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) intended to replicate the Business Crawl for a weekend holiday experience. Gov. Inslee's COVID-19 safety guidelines called for improvements that can guarantee a germ free shopping experience. THA developed a Virtual Marketplace and Passport that will help us shop at our local businesses and restaurants for gifts that will show you double care - for your gift receiver and the community. Keeping your spending dollars in the neighborhood keeps Hilltop thriving! AHUGE Thank You to Crawl Sponsors for supporting community outreach: Sound Transit, The Community Marketplace, Downtown on the Go, and Safestreeets!

Virtual Marketplace

Shop at Hilltop retail shops and restaurants between December 14th and 20th at the Virtual Marketplace. You may also shop in person - please wear a face mask and maintain social distancing guidelines.

Visit www.hilltopcrawl.com/ to easily find holiday gifts! You can also order food from your favorite spot for pick up or delivery. You'll also find micro-vendors at the Virtual Marketplace for locally made products and specialty items.

Here is a list of Hilltop Virtual Marketplace shops and restaurants (please note this list is not complete - new businesses are being added daily):

- Ascent Fitness
- Bob's Bar-B-Q Pit
- Clarkcomm Wireless
- Eleven Eleven
- Fish House Cafe
- Fulcrum Gallery
- Grit City Ciderworks
- Hilltop Action Coalition
- Hill-Top Loans Pawn Shop
- Johnson's Candy Company
- Lavonne's Room
- Love by the Slice
- Mr. Mac Ltd
- Red Elm Cafe
- Sam & Terry's Barbershop
- SPUN
- Tacoma's #1 Fried Rice
- TSM Shop
- 1120 Hilltop
- Micro-Businesses
- Cocoa Loves Grey
- FUKU Activism Apparel
- Grit City Co-op
- Litha Vintage
- Sage & Onyx Soapery
- Strong Family Bonds LLC
- SWASH
- Urban Business Support
- YBMW1080

Virtual Passport

Complete a Virtual Passport at www.hilltopcrawl.com; or, come by HAC at 1116 Earnest S. Brazill ST. Dec 14-20, 10am to 4pm, to pick up a Passport. Collect 5 Stamps to enter a fantastic Business Raffle and vote for the People's Choice Award for the best decorated storefront! Tune in Dec 21 HAC Virtual Weekly Update for the Raffle Drawing & People's Choice Award Announcement!



HILLTOP ACTION COALITION

Holiday Gathering

LET'S HAVE FUN AND BE MERRY

Monday, December 14th

Wear your ugly sweater

Bring your favorite holiday beverage

FUN STARTS AT 6 PM

Join your HAC hosts to share holiday greetings at the HAC Holiday Gathering!

Wear your Ugly Holiday Sweater, drink your favorite beverage, and sit back and have some holiday fun.

Please RSVP at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84461212121> today to reserve your spot.

Visit with Santa and our HAC roving reporter to watch the Hilltop Tree light up the night.

Share Seasons Greetings with your HAC friends!



Let's Show Hilltop Businesses Some Love THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

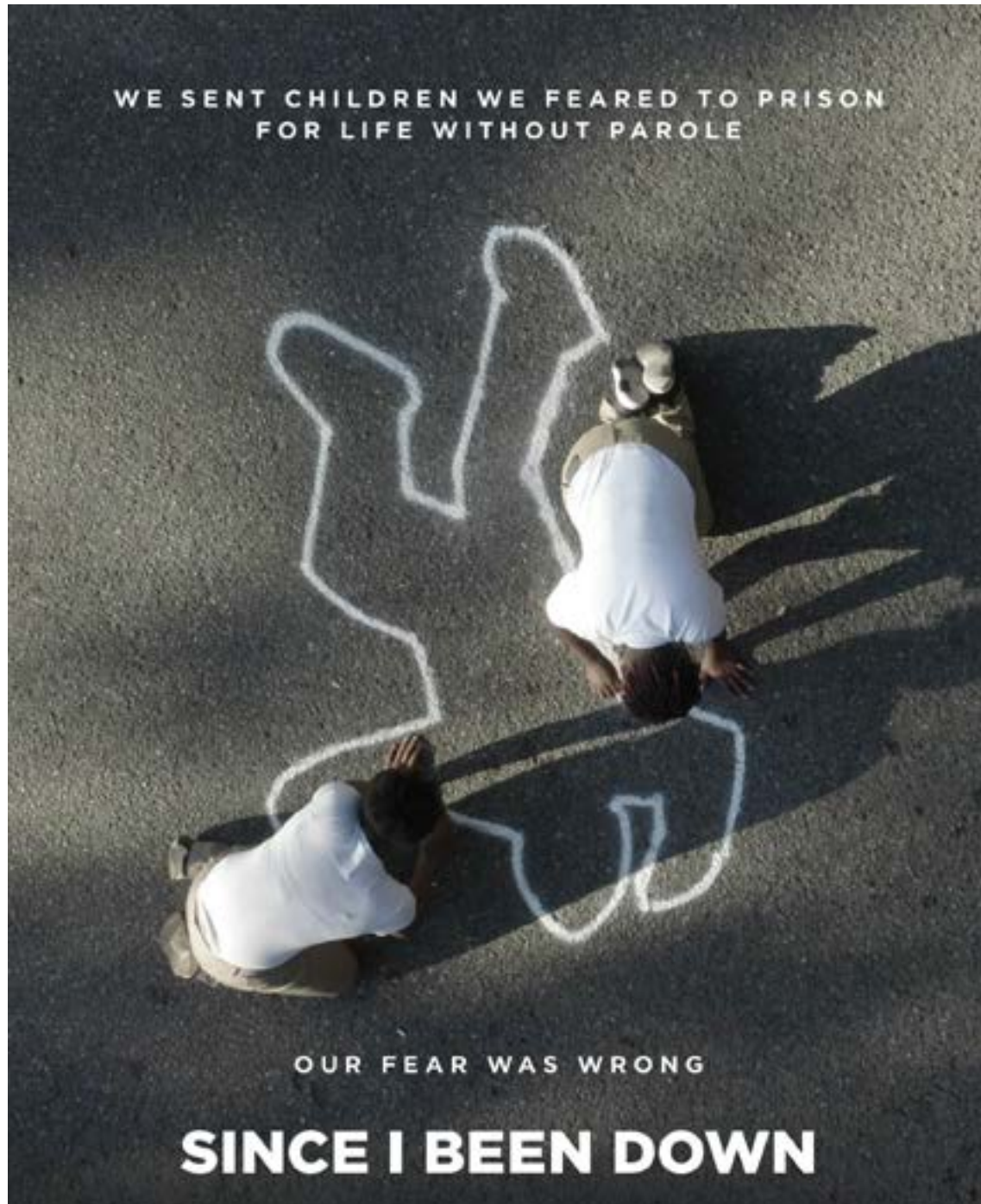
SAFE ST

SOUNDTRANSIT

Thank You Sound Transit for your \$2500 Sponsorship!

Since I Been Down, WINS the 2020 Social Justice Film Festival's Feature Documentary Gold Prize!

A social justice documentary by award-winning filmmaker Gilda Sheppard, a Professor at Evergreen State College Tacoma.



By Jennifer Schaal

Since I Been Down is a social justice documentary by award-winning filmmaker Gilda Sheppard. The film takes Tacoma, WA—with a particular focus on the Hilltop—as subject, chronicling how gangs, fear, racism, and power arrested the development of one American community.

Gilda Sheppard's excellent documentary film Since I Been Down was a stellar choice for this year's Tacoma Film Festival. The film, based on interviews with imprisoned men and women from the Hilltop area, looks at the prison system as a general failure of society to do anything with those who are locked up other than let them waste away year after year. The strength of the film is its ability to show how systemic racism and fear leave so many young people of color so powerless to have choices in life that lead anywhere other than to be locked up.

Currently over two million men and women are warehoused in institutions throughout the United States. Unlike European models, which are located close to urban centers and allow prisoners to work and support themselves while serving their sentences, prisons in the U.S. are mostly rural and offer inmates little to nothing in the way of employment, education or other rehabilitation services that might provide a path to re-integration into society.

The Tacoma Film Festival, now in its fifteenth year, chose Since I Been Down as a key documentary feature film for the 2020 screenings. The Festival, in conjunction with its host The Grand Cinema, arranged a free outdoor showing of the film November 8th at the Patio at Alma Mater and included a panel discussion following the film. For those who couldn't brave the evening cold or the socially-distanced and masked gathering, a free virtual showing of the film and the panel was arranged for the same time slot.

The panel discussion following the film was located indoors at Alma Mater's theater and "televised" to the audience outside. Discussions were moderated by the City of Tacoma's Tanisha Jumper and included a Q&A segment by telephone with one of the imprisoned men interviewed in the film.

Dr. Sheppard, a professor at the Evergreen University Tacoma campus, was inspired to make Since I Been Down when she began teaching at the local prison and hearing the inmate stories. Another inspiration was seeing the powerful effects of the Black Prisoners Caucus, an organization that provides a medium for Black prisoners to work collectively to improve family relationships, the facilities they live in, and the communities they are absent from but still very much belong to. "We're socialized to believe prison and death are a normality," says Dr. Sheppard, "we don't believe that prisoners have answers." The Black Prisoners Caucus offers prisoners the possibilities of finding their answers, and the solutions that can lead to restorative justice.

The message of Since I Been Down is especially poignant right now, as gentrification threatens to erase the presence and culture of the families and businesses that built the Hilltop. We have a responsibility to the communities we move to, Dr. Sheppard believes. We need the political will to change our system of institutionalization and move toward true justice, a transformative justice.

Read more film reviews at:

Tacoma News Tribune
<https://www.thenewstribune.com/entertainment/movies-news-reviews/article246848527.html?fbclid=IwAR26FYHilRc5f8GDt0tkgJf-spc8FkWFCCA9hK0A2Exo0keH56QJbs4Ml3U>

Panel With Angela Davis
https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=768847013696714&ref=watch_permalink

Seattle Times article
<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/new-film-explores-the-true-cost-of-keeping-brilliant-minds-behind-bars/?fbclid=IwAR0rc2OgAE45ly3tggTwrVDR0jlv8erH6GzGsoGpmRqckZpDV6r2i-3rzl>

Redefine Magazine
https://redefinemag.net/2020/since-i-been-down-documentary-interview-director-gilda-sheppard/?fbclid=IwAR2UUDUx9u7cPRoyotW_

SE-THROUGH FILMS
Film | Strategies | Publicity

SINCE I BEEN DOWN debut feature from **Gilda Sheppard**
Expands to festivals world wide

12 years in the making, the SINCE I BEEN DOWN spotlights Kimonti Carter, education Activist imprisoned for life without parole, as it chronicles the consequences of one Community's decision to discard at-risk youth behind bars.

November 30, 2020, Tacoma/Seattle, WA – Award-winning Filmmaker ^{SEP}Gilda Sheppard's critical documentary, **SINCE I BEEN DOWN**, which has just finished screening at DOC NYC, America's largest documentary festival, will now expand to festivals around the world. The film, covering a turning point in Tacoma, WA history, most recently was the centerpiece film at the Tacoma Film Festival.

In 1993, Washington State voters passed the three-strikes law and sent children considered irredeemable super-predators to prison for life without parole.^{SEP}Influenced by the national drug war frenzy, escalating crime, and gang activity, the small community of Tacoma, Washington sacrificed their most-vulnerable children during these fear-based political policies of the 1980's and '90's. Spotlighting education activist and prisoner-for-life, Kimonti Carter, **SINCE I BEEN DOWN** follows storytellers from Hilltop and Eastside neighborhoods in Tacoma and a group adults many who were once children now adults with long prison sentences as they create a model of education that is transforming communities, prisons, and humanity.

"As Billy Griffin, a subject and one of the narrators of the film says, "We sent children we feared to prison for life without parole." Sheppard, a Professor of Sociology and Cultural Studies at Evergreen State College (Tacoma) also volunteer teaches in the Washington State prison system. Kimonti Carter member of the Black Prisoners' Caucus and a main subject of **SINCE I BEEN DOWN** says, "We can never become someone different, but we can be a better version of who we are."

"It is important to me as a visual storyteller that my films offer healing, inspire hope, showcase what dis-investment in communities can do to all of us especially our children. **SINCE I BEEN DOWN** spotlights the triumph of the human spirit from people most vulnerable to the tests of time -- and in these uncertain times, it becomes paramount to remember we are connected in both terrifying and beautiful ways," added Sheppard.

Quoting another subject in the film, prisoner Touré Zimbabwe, activist and educator serving life without parole, Sheppard said: "We dare say that a lot of the answers that society is searching for, will be found in prison."

To follow **SINCE I BEEN DOWN**, you can find it on social media here: website at <http://www.jimmielewisproductions.com/>, <https://www.facebook.com/sinceibeendown/>, Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/sinceibeendown/>
To watch a the **SINCE I BEEN DOWN** DocNYC Film Festival panel with Filmmaker Gilda Sheppard, Angela Davis, Robert Saleem Holbrook and Dan Satterberg: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=768847013696714&ref=watch_permalink

HILLTOP ACTION COALITION

HAC VIRTUAL WEEKLY UPDATE
Mondays at 6:00 PM
on Facebook Live

HAC will be holding Virtual Weekly Updates each Monday at 6PM until COVID-19 precautions are lifted.

HAC Monthly Community Meetings will return when in person meetings are available.

Welcome To Hilltop Core Of The City

A new temporary mural, by artist Katie Dean, is currently on the fence next to SPUN Clay Arts Studio, located at 1307 MLK Jr. Way.



By Michael Liang

Since As part of Sound Transit's Loyal to the Local program, Spaceworks invited seven artists to paint tempo-

rary murals to enliven the streetscape and offer a creative response to construction barricades and signage.

You may recall a HAC Monthly Meeting last year where we were able

to provide feedback to the artists. With two more murals to install, you can find them scattered along the new link extension route, through downtown, Stadium, and Hilltop.

For "Welcome to Hilltop, Core of the City", artist Katie Dean included the facades of fourteen iconic Hilltop businesses and wove branches of apple blossoms between the letters.

This temporary mural is currently on the fence next to SPUN Clay Arts Studio, located at 1307 MLK Jr. Way. Stay tuned for more murals coming soon!



Hilltop is Beautiful

Designed to serve Tacomans as a 'One Stop Shop'.

By Alyssa Torrez

For those of us who live, work or play here, we know this to be true. As part of the Tacoma First 311 mobilization grant, the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma Housing Authority know this and want everyone who visits here to know this, too.

Part of this includes letting people know how they can be a part of making and keeping the Hilltop beautiful. One of the ways that residents and community members can do that is by calling Tacoma First 311. This is a free city service that community members can use to get answers to questions, make requests and get support from additional city services. By calling in, going online or using the mobile app, you can access more than 700 answers to commonly asked city related questions and services.

THA has worked to help let people know how they can utilize this service through a series of posters that highlight the things you can address through 311, like calling to notify the city of illegal dumping, unsafe overgrowth or fading sidewalk paint. You have likely seen these posted throughout the Hilltop in business windows or other

community spaces.

This summer, they expanded this campaign to include another way that we are sharing the message about Tacoma First 311 and Hilltop is Beautiful. And what better way to show people that the Hilltop is beautiful than showcasing the people that live here? The mural features face cutouts for community members to pop their faces in and become part of the artwork. You can also spot Hilltop landmarks and well-known businesses that we know and love. Sean Alexander, a Hilltop resident, artist and designer, created the mural for the Tacoma Housing Authority and it made its debut at the Hilltop Business Crawl. You can now see it in the window of Grit City Ciderworks on MLK (and snap a photo if you're picking up a growler of cider). This mural will continue to pop up in different spaces in the Hilltop, so you have a chance to experience the beauty for yourself. Fun fact about the mural and posters, Sean hands draws all the art! Take a look at the posters and art at ActivateHilltop.org and learn more about the Tacoma First 311 services and remember that Hilltop is Beautiful!

What's My Name?

mercy HOUSING
Northwest



Address: 802 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Tacoma, WA 98405

Construction is well underway on Mercy Housing Northwest's newest development in Tacoma, WA and we want your help to come up with a new name! The project, known currently as MLK Senior Housing, will bring 60 new affordable apartments for seniors to the Hilltop neighborhood along the route of the Tacoma Link Light rail, which is currently being expanded along Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

You may suggest more than one name - **please submit your ideas by December 23rd**. Suggestions will be reviewed following the criteria below:

1. Shall be consistent with Mercy's mission and values. Any person, place or organization to be honored through naming must not be or have been engaged in or be associated with activities that are at odds with Mercy's mission and values.
2. Shall reflect the context of the project by referencing or reflecting:
 - The geography or other natural features relevant to the site
 - Cultural, civic, economic or natural history of the site
 - The vision for and/or purpose of the project
 - The identity of an individual, living or deceased, who has made a significant contribution to the project, who has contributed outstanding civic service, or who has been an integral and significant part of the history of the site
3. Shall avoid undue commercialization of the development.
4. Shall avoid confusion with the names of other buildings, businesses or features of the community at large.

You can submit name suggestions anonymously by following this link (https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=el6v5mubXUODXkWRsu_n8mx3iH6oO71OjSyQNBkAg39U-MEpWRVBPOVpGWkRPOTFSNkU2Vkk5MzQxNS4u), or you can email your name suggestions to: mlkseniorname@gmail.com.

T.U.P.A.C on the Hilltop

Klair Ethridge, Executive Director for Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center, was a Special Guest on the Nov 30th HAC Virtual Weekly Update - watch the recorded conversation at <https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition/>.



This dancer points to the importance youth involvement in the performing arts. Photographs courtesy of T.U.P.A.C website.

By Kristine Coman

Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center is located on the Hilltop at 1301 Martin Luther King Jr. Way and is a place "where classical ballet legends are trained!" With a mission to provide our most deserving racially and socioeconomically diverse youth with world class opportunities to achieve Artistic Excellence in the performing arts, T.U.P.A.C. offers classical ballet and multicultural dance instruction for children and teens ages 4-18 that aims to provide the discipline, the creativity and the confidence to reach their highest potential. Classes in ballet, liturgical, West African, hip-hop and Pilates concentrate on proper placement and gradual advancement of motion. T.U.P.A.C. also offers Adult Ballet and Ballet for Seniors! Check out the health benefits for seniors who take ballet in this article at <http://www.healthgoesup.com/articles/10254/1/ballet-for-seniors-1.html>.

Winter/Spring session classes begin Sunday, January 17th - visit

their website to register at <https://tacomaupac.org/home>. Scholarships are available and are awarded on the basis of financial need and class performance. These scholarships come from a general fund for students attending the Young Dancers Program - to apply visit <https://tacomaupac.org/scholarships>. To make a donation for the scholarship fund, visit <https://tacomaupac.org/store/ols/categories/donations>. Once Tacoma Museum of Art reopens (closed for covid-19 restrictions), you can stop by on the second Thursday of each month for a Community Contemporary Dance Class taught by Master Teacher, Erricka Turner. Join the Free class, or observe T.U.P.A.C. students from 6:30pm to 7:30pm. This experience will reveal how *Dance is a Living Breathing Art Form*.

Hilltop Action Coalition had the pleasure of introducing Klair Ethridge and T.U.P.A.C. to the community at the November 30, 2020, HAC Virtual Weekly Update. Klair shared

the importance of artistic discipline for students and how it can lead to higher education opportunities and leadership skills. After the virtual meeting, Klair said,

"It was fantastic to connect with our Hilltop Community, and it is an honor to be in a position to help children seek to attain the positive self-esteem that helps elevate people from a life of poverty, undereducation, and stymied imagination of a better future. The more we invest our time in leading our youth to lives of creative leadership positions, the better the payoff for the future of our communities. There is so much work to be done to assure our children have a fair chance in the near and distant future. I look forward to continued relationships with other organizations, professionals and youth seeking to even the score for our community."

Feel free to reach out to Klair at contact@tacomaupac.org.

What Is Poetry?

*"Power 2 The Poetry" By Bethany 'B.Lyte' Montgomery
[Instagram @b.lyte222](https://www.instagram.com/b.lyte222) - More poems at [power2thepoetry](https://www.power2thepoetry.com).*

Poetry is what you think quietly out loud
Or written down
Emotions within screamed out

Questions
Solutions
Conclusions
Revolution

The release of energy
Whether negative or positive
Whatever you digest
Will be what you emit
Poetry is the truth
You are willing to admit
Facing your fears
Creating something so beautiful
You will never forget

Feelings being expressed through words
Poetry is not only said
But also heard
Poetry is not just nouns
Adjectives and verbs
Poetry are more than letters
Put together to form metaphors

It is witnessed through vision
Poetry is feeling
All revealing
A transparent art form
Exposing insecurities
Poetry is intimacy
Vulnerability

Letting your guard down
To open up
To be judged
Poetry is soft
Poetry is rough

Poetry is a platform
For sharing your perspectives
Voicing your aggression
Revealing your confessions

Poetry is activism
Poetry is purpose
Poetry is passion
Poetry is encouragement
Poetry can be typed on a phone
Or written down
On a piece of paper in cursive
Poetry is more
Than what meets the surface

Poetry is motion
The movement
And vibrations of the tongue
Poetry is the air
That fills up your lungs

Poetry is spoken
Poetry is sung
Poetry is light
Poetry is love

Poetry is anything
Poetry is everything
The internalization of being
Poetry is what gives life meaning
The reason for believing
Poetry is what stops all the bleeding
Poetry is healing

It is more than just art
Poetry is your heart
Literally who you are
We are all poetry
Poetry is God
Poetry is going above and beyond

Poetry is calm
Poetry is forever
Poetry is experiences all put together
Poetry is pleasure
It cannot be measured

Poetry is Heaven
Poetry is infinity
Poetry is power
That is why we must give
Power 2 The Poetry

A New Hilltop Holiday Tradition: THE URBAN NUTCRACKER!

Viewing Schedule



Drive-In Movie style viewing or social distancing viewing on sidewalk.

Thursday's December 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th from 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Watch the 2018 Production of, T.U.P.A.C.'s THE URBAN NUTCRACKER projected on façade of T.U.P.A.C. 1301 Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

Friday's December 4th, 11th, 18th - 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

See the 2019 Production of, T.U.P.A.C.'s THE URBAN NUTCRACKER projected on façade of T.U.P.A.C. 1301 Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

A FREE Community Event made possible by The Bamford Foundation, Tacoma Creates, and Our Generous Donors.

Crawl T-Shirts On Sale at HAC

Get your limited edition Hilltop Business Crawl 2020 T-Shirt for \$10 at HAC during the Holiday Crawl! This quality T-Shirt will make a great Hilltop holiday gift! All proceeds go toward community outreach and events like the Crawl that make Hilltop thrive. Happy Holidays!



glow around the Sound

— ♥ —

ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 21 @ 5:30 PM
ILLUMINATE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
WITH PAPER LANTERNS!

VISIT

SAFE ST

Safe Streets has partnered with HAC to provide Free Luminary Kits to the first 100 people who visit HAC during the Hilltop Holiday Crawl! Come by for a set of ten luminaries from 10 am to 4 pm, Dec 14th thru 20th, at 1116 Earnest S. Brazill Street.

Neighbor's Park Lights Up the Season

The goal is simply to have them all up in time for the annual Carol Sing event on Monday, December 21st, at 5:30 pm. This year, for covid-19 safety reasons, neighbors will gather at a safe social distance in the park and sing together. All are welcome!

By Jenni Prange Boran

If you've never visited Neighbors' Park at South 8th and I streets, 'tis the season to do just that. Every November for the past five years, one man climbs a ladder to hang some 4,000 holiday lights throughout the park's decorative walkway, through the branches of its trees, and along its garden fences.

That man is Joe Cooper. When he's not hanging strands of lights, he works full time in HVAC control, runs a small family business with his wife Amy and is the father of four children. In other words, he's not decorating the park out of boredom. With every moment Joe spends out in the cold meticulously counting and measuring strands, he's underscoring the spirit of Neighbors' Park, a place that came into being through the spirit of community and volunteerism just under thirty years ago.

According to Metro Parks Tacoma's website, the site of the park was formerly a single vacant lot with 'significant issues of blight and crime'. Surrounding neighbors, some who still live in the area today, came together in 1992 to lease the land from an attorney for \$1 a year, then approached the Metro Parks Board to ask that the park be placed under Metro Parks Tacoma's liability insurance. It was. The playground was installed a year later by a group of volunteers. In 2000, the park further expanded across South 8th to create the very walkway that Joe lights up today.

During a monthly neighborhood council meeting in 2016, one that Joe wasn't able to attend due to work travel, he was tagged as the man to do the job.

"We bought our house about 12 years ago and I started putting up Christmas lights just because I like putting up Christmas lights, and every year I would just put up more and more. Then at our monthly meeting, Emily Roeben (8th and I neighbor) actually said 'hey, there's this money available, an up to \$200 grant to do holiday stuff', so they thought we should put lights up in the park. Everyone said 'I'm sure Joe will do it since he always puts up lights anyway'. I said sure, of course."

The money came from Innovative Grants from the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council, the annual micro-grants ranging from \$150-\$200. "Each year the neighborhood just buys more lights, which is how we've gotten to where we are. It's a pretty huge display. They just keep buying them and I just keep putting them up."

So far, there has not been any park lighting ceremony or big reveal, but Joe's got ideas.

"My dream is to hook them all up, start in early November and have a day, maybe the Saturday after Thanksgiving or something, when we let everyone know we're going to turn on the lights - I think that would be fun. I do like to have them plugged in while I'm doing it to test them, though. It's tough, sometimes strands go out or whatever. You'd hate to have everyone gathered and say 'here's the big moment' and then, Clark Griswold style, nothing happens."

For now, the goal is simply to have them all up in time for the annual Carol Sing event during which neighbors walk surrounding streets and sing Christmas carols. This year, for safety reasons due to Covid-19, neighbors will instead gather at a safe social distance in the park and sing together. This season's event takes place on Monday, December 21st, at 5:30 pm. All are welcome.

So, who foots the electric bill for all these lights? You can thank the city for that. There are outlets in the park that are turned on seasonally for the lights. A few years ago, Joe purchased some locking outlet boxes to keep folks from tampering with them or unplugging them to plug in their own devices or to, say, run an extension cord to their RV, which is something that happened one year.

"Yeah, I walked out one morning and I was like, umm, why are all the lights off?"

As it turns out, standing on a ladder in a park hanging lights is a great way to meet people.

"Because I often end up putting them up in the middle of the night, I've had a lot of interesting conversations with homeless people. I get a lot of people just coming through the park, walking their dog or whatever, and then they see me out there and they're like 'You're the one who puts up these lights? This is so amazing!'"

"I've had a number of people over the years stop and tell me how thankful they were for the lights. One year, one lady left a note on our door that said she was going through a rough time and every time she walked by the lights it brought her joy."

Joe and his wife Amy have also been brightening people's days through the magic of homemade ice cream.

"I've been making homemade ice cream about six or seven years now, just for fun. But when the pandemic started, a lot of people were shut in. So I started taking orders from a bunch of our friends and just drove it around and gave it to them. Amy took some pictures, and people saw it on Instagram (@thescoopertroop) and said 'Where can I buy mine?'" So we thought, should we just try and sell this and see what happens?

We've really got no long term goals with our ice cream business, we'll see where it goes. But people seem to be enjoying it."

The business name, The Scooper Troop, is a play on the family's nickname, The Cooper Troop.

"We bought our house in May 2008, and got a dog. We knew we wanted to adopt but we decided we were going to wait to start having kids."

Of course, life doesn't always adhere to plans.

"We met Aaron that next year."

Aaron is now the oldest of four adopted children who hold reign over Neighbors' Park along with a handful of other lively neighborhood regulars. Before Covid, these kids would also often stop in to the Cooper house, filling its rooms alongside five years worth of college students the Coopers have hosted as part of Inner Varsity, a Christian campus ministry. So the Cooper house is no stranger to activity. Joe is grateful to have a nearby open space to accommodate everyone.

"I knew I wanted to have kids, so I always wanted a house with a big backyard. Well, we have a tiny backyard. We actually live on the smallest lot in our area. So we are happy to live next to the park. The park is our backyard. It's like a lawn we don't have to mow."

That's the spirit of Neighbors' Park. It's everyone's backyard. Neighbors come together to exchange produce, they come to garden in the shared plots, they watch each other's kids as well as their own, and gather several times a year as a community in the form of rummage sales, sing-alongs and seasonal activities like pumpkin decorating. Many of those events have been either curbed or cancelled during this era. But not the lights.

In 2019, the Estrada family moved into a new home near the park. Araceli Estrada commented on how it made her feel to see the park lit up for the first time.

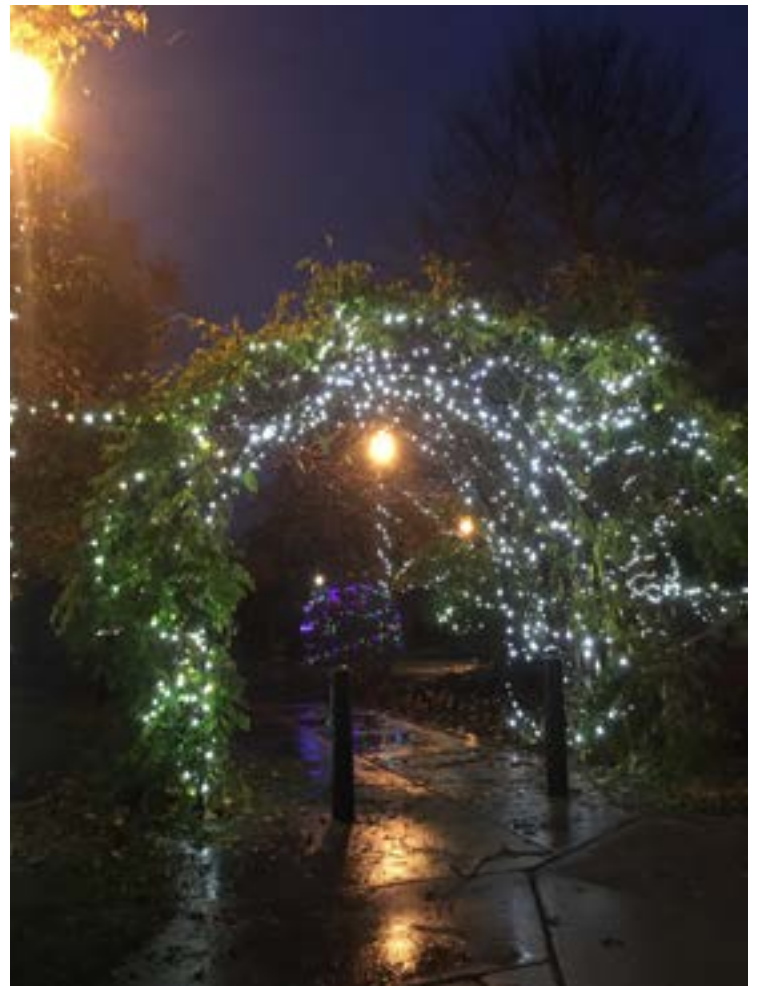
"The park didn't just look awesome, it made the neighborhood feel friendly and welcoming. I couldn't help but think of the people who made it possible. From the bottom of my heart, I say thank you for bringing the lights to us, especially during these hard times."

Each night, the strands spread a little further across the park, connecting surrounding homes, and the neighbors who live in them, with light.

"Really, I just put them up because I love putting up Christmas lights," Joe says. "But realizing how much people enjoy it, and seeing it come together...plugging it all in and seeing the park light up, it's all very cool."



Jo Cooper has been hanging lights for 5 years at Neighbor's Park.



Jo Cooper hangs 4,000 lights for community enjoyment, and because it's fun! Photographs courtesy of Jenni Boran Prange.

The Community Market



Alicia Pugh Mathurin & Krista Perez, Co-founders

Mission, Values and Bio's

Mission:

We empower BIPOC communities by cultivating platforms to showcase entrepreneurs, multicultural businesses, art, music and food.

Empoderamos a las Comunidades de Color mediante el cultivo de plataformas para mostrar emprendedores, negocios multiculturales, arte, música y comida.

Vision:

The purpose

of The Community Market is to foster entrepreneurial growth and sustainability, diversity and equity within our businesses and community building within our Communities of Color.

El propósito del Mercado Comunitario es fomentar el crecimiento empresarial y la sostenibilidad, la diversidad y la equidad dentro de nuestras empresas, el multiculturalismo y la construcción comunitaria dentro de nuestras Comunidades de Color.

The Community Market values/ Los valores del Mercado Comunitario:

Diversity + Equity/ Diversidad y equidad

Multiculturalism / Multiculturalismo

Economic + Small Business sustainability/Sostenibilidad económica + sostenibilidad de las pequeñas empresas

Community Cultivation/Cultivar la comunidad

Alicia Pugh Mathurin, cofounder of the Community Market, is a Tacoma native. Alicia identifies as Afro-Indigenous, a descendant of Yakama Nation. She is also Director of Community Engagement at Annie Wright Schools and has spent her career uplifting, providing resources and mentorship for underserved youth and their families. Alicia strives for economic wealth for BIPOC communities.

Krista Perez, cofounder of the Community Market and founder and president of the Tacoma Women of Color Collective, is a native of the PNW. Krista comes from a family of migrant workers and immigrants which has influenced her personal commitment to highlighting BIPOC communities and creating space for our cultures and families to flourish. Krista believes that all work that focuses on BIPOC communities should prioritize cultivating sustainability, uprooting racism and establishing and promoting economic growth.

Visit The Community Market Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityBuiltByUs>.

Access Fish House Cafe During Hilltop Tacoma Link Construction

Martin Luther King Jr. Way from South 17 Street to South 19th Street – street closure and intersection closures thru mid-December.

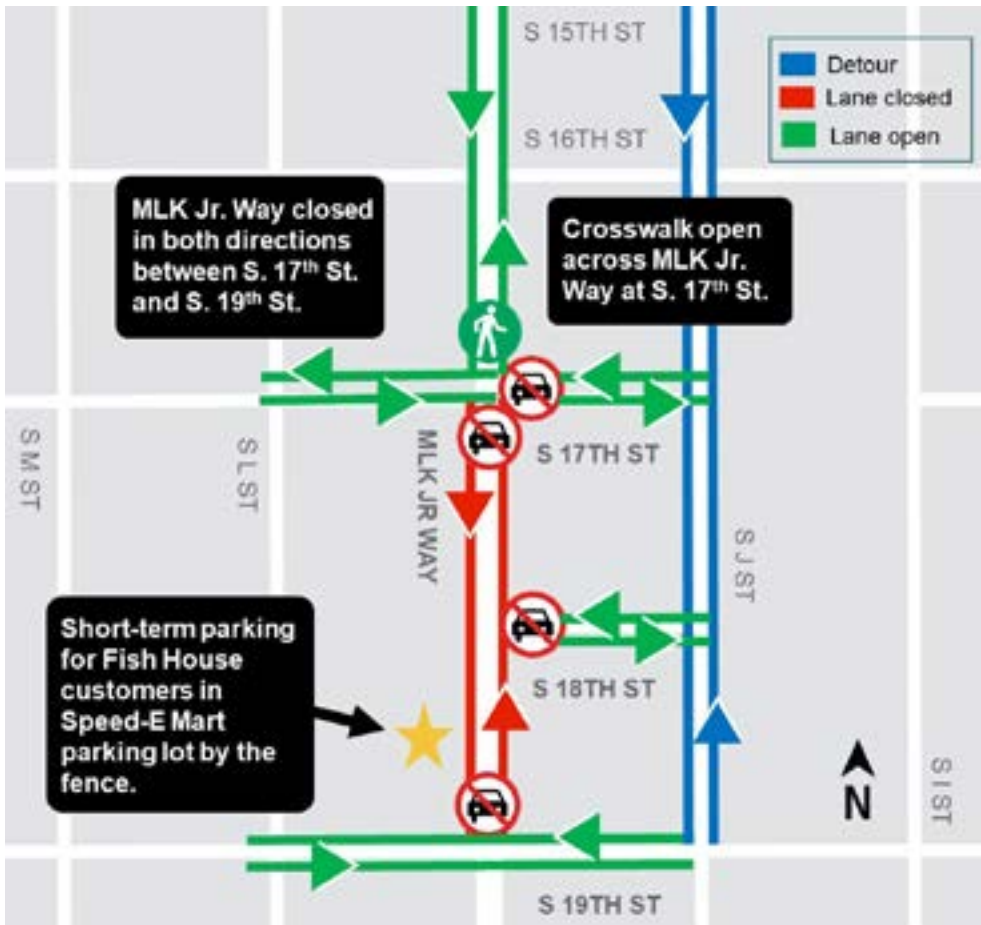
Hilltop Tacoma Link construction crews are installing track on the east side of MLK Jr. Way from S. 17th Street to S. 19th Street. Crews will excavate, bring rail into place, pour concrete around the rail, and pave. MLK Jr. Way is closed to traffic from S. 19th Street to

S. 17th Street through mid-December.

To access The Fish House Cafe and enjoy their fabulous food, please park at the Speedy Mart parking lot along the fence. (see map below). Thank you for being Loyal to the Local during construction!

Do you have questions or comments for Sound Transit? Contact Liz Ellis, Community Engagement Specialist at: liz.ellis@soundtransit.org or by calling 253-208-0586.

*After-hours construction hotline: 888-298-2395



Get involved in the housing conversation!

The City of Tacoma has launched the Home In Tacoma Project.

The City of Tacoma has launched the Home In Tacoma Project to gain community and industry insight in updating Tacoma's housing growth policies and zoning. It is becoming more difficult to find housing people can afford, particularly for people with fixed or lower incomes. Growth in our region is driving prices up faster than incomes. The economic impacts of the pandemic mean more people are facing financial instability.

Housing meets our need for shelter and also connects us with family, friends, community, transportation, employment and more. For all those reasons, housing matters deeply to our wellbeing, health and prosperity.

As part of the response to Tacoma's housing crisis, the City is revisiting the rules governing housing development. We need to hear from you about how Tacoma can make our City a place that everyone can call home. The effort will:

- Focus on how Tacoma can build in more housing types like duplexes, small multi-family dwellings, accessory dwellings and cottage style homes.
- Promote affordability and reduce displacement risk in more rapidly growing areas.

The intent is to increase housing supply, create affordable housing options, and increase the choice of housing types throughout our neighborhoods. Watch this quick video on Affordable Housing - Infill Development at <https://youtu.be/AtAEacOg9f8> to gain insight on why the City needs to adjust zoning.

Before Tacoma's Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council for Comprehensive Plan, Zoning and other actions in 2021 we need your participation.

How to Participate

Share your views on housing—complete our Housing Choice Survey through the end of January 2021 by visiting <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/homeintacoma>.

Join us for three virtual events:

Tacoma's Housing Crisis on Dec 18, 2020
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83794810566?pwd=dWdFVj0FoQVZKNU9XT0o0SHZOK2hidz09>
 Passcode: 363213 (253) 215-8782
 Webinar ID: 837 9481 0566

The City's Role in Creating Housing on Jan 8, 2020
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84343358570?pwd=V0FiN0tZKY9Z2Z0crSVAzRlIPVnRR0T09>
 Passcode: 685053 (253) 215-8782
 Webinar ID: 843 4335 8570

Getting Housing Growth Right for Tacoma on January 29, 2021
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87517557098?pwd=V21PW-W10MkhHVzVzZmZmakZjSVdoZz09>
 Passcode: 398323 (253) 215-8782

Find out more about other opportunities to comment, information about the project and view our interactive storymap at https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/planning_and_development_services/planning_services/current_initiatives_and_projects/home_in_tacoma_project_ahas_planning_actions.

Celebrate Tacoma's NEW Interactive Database is Live!

A great way to support local businesses and help your community thrive!

With the Governor's recent order that limits business activity due to pandemic-related concerns, it is critical that we support our local businesses more than ever which provide needed products and services, create and sustain jobs, and add vitality to our community.

The City of Tacoma just launched Celebrate Tacoma, an interactive database of businesses that sell directly to consumers and are licensed and located within Tacoma's city limits, including micro enterprises that sell online. The database is designed to encourage support of local businesses and can be accessed from any internet-connected device. Approximately 250 retail, restaurant/cafes and service firms are featured, and the list continues to grow. Check out MakeItTacoma.com at <https://makeittacoma.com/> or visit <https://tacoma.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b-1646489c6b4aeb8d6b1beceb9a3796> for direct access to the database.

Celebrate Tacoma has many filters that enable residents and visitors to discover the unique array of offerings by type of product/service, geography, ownership and other information. Businesses that have already signed up can refine their entries by emailing gisteam@cityoftacoma.org to request updates.

Enterprises that want to participate can still do so throughout and December 2020 by signing up at <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/474c2ad-f969144b082196339b6722562>.

Together, let's leverage our community spirit and purchasing power to invest in each other by spending locally. Let's demonstrate how special our businesses are by supporting them.

Celebrate Tacoma!

Please share this opportunity with your families, friends and others to help make this a happy holiday season.

Microsoft, LinkedIn and GitHub Skills

Discover new career paths, learn relevant skills, find jobs that are in-demand and get the job that is right for you!

Microsoft, LinkedIn and GitHub collectively have committed \$25 million to offer free skills training for the top 10 jobs in the technology sector. Become part of the digital economy. From now through March 2021, access free resources to achieve certification in some of Microsoft's most marketable skills, coaching and support to build a resume, connections to valuable networks and interview practice.

This training is aimed at high-paying growth positions that do not require a four-year degree. If you have been impacted by COVID-19 through a layoff or other circumstances, you may be eligible for discounted Microsoft certification for a limited time. Learn more at https://opportunity.linkedin.com/en-us?WT.mc_id=gsi-web-nonprofit.



Free Software Certification Testing with Exams from Home

Free certification in these Microsoft Office and other products is currently available from Tacoma Public Library.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Access | PowerPoint |
| Excel and/or Excel Expert | QuickBooks |
| Word and/or Word Expert | IC3 Literacy skills |
| Outlook | Adobe (various exams) |
| MTA - Microsoft Technology Associate (various exams) | |

- Candidate may certify for the 2016 or 2019 versions for most Microsoft software listed
- Candidates qualify for free test voucher by passing a practice exam with score of 8% or better
- Tacoma Public Library provides free access to exam preparation materials

Contact the library for more information on how to get started, 253-292-2001 ext. 1754; rkristoff@tacomalibrary.org

tacoma public library

Tacoma Public Library
 1102 Tacoma Avenue South
 Tacoma, Washington 98402
 253-292-2001
www.tacomalibrary.org

Foster Adoption Clinic Now Open at Community Health Care!

Desirée White, ARNP, the primary care provider at the Community Health Care Foster Adoption Clinic, knows that foster/adoption parenting can be a beautiful experience when the right supportive resources are in place.

At least one-third of children enter foster care with a chronic health issue, such as asthma, and up to 80 percent enter in need of services for significant mental health issues, according to "Health Care Issues for Children and Adolescents in Foster Care and Kinship Care," an October 2015 policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Health care for children in the foster/adoption system often slips through the cracks due to changes in host families or locations. Community Health Care is changing that by providing a permanent health care home for these children and their families.

Most children in foster care or the adoption system have histories rooted in trauma. Whether that trauma is parental substance abuse, spousal/child abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or homelessness, the effects can remain with that child forever. Untreated health and mental health conditions in children can lead to long-term consequences such as failure to finish school, underemployment, unemployment, and risky behaviors such as substance use. Community Health Care's new Foster Adoption Clinic wants to give all children a fighting chance by offering a full-service, full-spectrum health care home, approaching treatment from a trauma-based perspective.

ma-based perspective.

Desirée White, ARNP, the primary care provider at the Community Health Care Foster Adoption Clinic is herself an adoptive mom. During and after the adoption process, she found herself running into barriers when trying to get care and answers for her children. She realized that if an experienced nurse-practitioner had this kind of difficulty navigating the system, she could not imagine how difficult it must be for foster parents or adoptive parents not in the health care field. From there came the seed of an idea for a clinic specifically for children in the foster/adoption system.

Community Health Care provides a "one-stop shopping" health care home for an entire family. The Foster Adoption Clinic is located inside the Hilltop Regional Health Center along with medical, dental, behavioral health and other specialty clinics. The Hilltop location is also home to Community Health Care's inter-disciplinary resident program. Ms. White is already teaching the residents how to care for their patients from a trauma-based perspective, adding to their skills, to either remain at Community Health Care or take to their next endeavor.

Facilities prioritizing health care



Desirée White, ARNP, the primary care provider at the Community Health Care Foster Adoption Clinic is herself an adoptive mom.

specifically for foster and adoptive children are rare. Facilities offering a health care home to an entire family are rarer still. Ms. White wants the Community Health Care Foster Adoption Clinic to be the first thought when an ER technician or other medical provider needs a resource for a child in trouble, needing that specialized care that Community Health Care can provide.

Being a foster parent or an adoptive parent can be a challenge. Ms. White wants to remove any roadblocks that might prevent a prospective parent from fostering or adopting a child. She knows, from personal experi-

COMMUNITY
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The Community Health Care Adoption Clinic is located at the Hilltop Regional Health Center on the First Floor, across from the Pharmacy at 1202 Martin Luther King Jr. Way Tacoma, WA 98405

ence, that foster/adoption parenting can be a beautiful experience when the right supportive resources are in place. At Community Health Care no one is denied care due to inability to pay. The staff provides more than medical or dental care, additionally, they act as a connection to other

safety net services for those that need them. To learn more about this or other Community Health Care programs go to www.commhealth.org, click on the Services tab, then click on Foster Adoption Clinic. You may also reach out for more information or to make an appointment at (253) 722-1771.

Coping with COVID: Coloring Outside the Box

Partnering with Tacoma Public Schools, Metro Parks keeps kids active and engaged.

By Jo Davies

In October, several Hilltop neighborhoods participated in Safe Streets' alternative National Night Out which was postponed from the usual August event. I subsequently asked Connor Schultz, for some general observations. We agreed that if there's anything the enthusiastic participants for Hilltop Business Crawl, National Night Out and the Halloween events demonstrated, it's that people really want a reason to be out, socialize, and really do something again. Having a reason to celebrate is something we all desperately need.

Connor elaborated "in coming up

with ideas for safe activities and seeing how different groups came up with their own ideas, showed us that we can still enjoy ourselves and still celebrate if we are willing to adapt and keep each other in mind."

Canceling thanksgiving get-togethers has been a difficult decision for many. There won't be much traveling to grandma's house but there will be lots of Zoom and Facetime gatherings and scaled down meals. One mother I know usually bakes a variety of pies for the feast, this year she is leaving them on the doorsteps of her adult children. Lucky kids! Another family has arranged with family near and far to play Bingo virtually,

I think that could be a hoot! Another group of local single friends who usually celebrate with family have arranged a Thanksgiving pick-up potluck. Each will provide individual portions of an essential element of the traditional dinner, bring their offering to a central location at the appointed time, and carry off their Thanksgiving dinner to eat in the comfort and warmth of their own home.

And thinking ahead to the holidays, wouldn't it be great to see lights twinkling everywhere and in every home on the Hilltop? I notice that many folks have already strung their lights and I hope many of the rest of us will get to it soon. it's a treat to stroll

around the neighborhood at dusk and realize that your neighbors are sharing their light. In my neighborhood the Sure House church has lit their tree on the corner of 10th and J Street, a neighbor at Matsusaska Townhomes has had her lights up since early November, and Neighbors' Park gets twinklier every day, thanks to the efforts of neighbor Joe Cooper.

For several years the 8th & I Neighbors have gone caroling around the neighborhood. Organized by Emily Becker and sometime accompanied on the tuba by Pat Van Haren, this year's CarolSing will take a different approach. On the Solstice, Monday, December 21, at 5:30, neighbors

will gather in Neighbors' Park and in physically distanced household groups, light luminarias and carol together. The luminarias are sponsored by Safe Streets "Glow Around the Sound" event which is open to everyone. <https://mailchi.mp/safest.org/glow> You could gather a few of your neighbors (appropriately distanced, of course), light luminaria, and sing a few carols - you'll be glad you did. I'm sure there are many other ingenious ways of celebrating...why not let me know about yours, we can share them on the HAC Facebook page for the December holidays.

Warming Bags Make & Take: Thank You Volunteers & Donors!

An outpouring of love from the community is shared with those experiencing homelessness.



HAC Volunteers filled every time slot available! Thank You All! Unfortunately, we had to cancel the volunteer time due to COVID safety precautions. Board Members Michealea Lemons, Alyssa Torrez and Brenden Nelson, along with Office Manager Kristine Coman, had a blast putting the Warming Bags together! The Warming Bags contained a hat, scarf, gloves, water bottle, Emergen-C, Cough Drops, 2 Pierce Transit Free Bus Daily Bus Passes, energy bar, tissues, Chapstick, wipes, face masks, hand sanitizer, Community Health Care flyer, 2 pairs of Bombas socks, a few hand/foot warmers, hot cocoa...and some received rain ponchos, and other food items

HAC received 100 times the amount of donated items this year! Thank you so much for your outpouring of love! HAC received more than enough items to fill 150+ Warming Bags!



Kristine took a car load of Warming Bags to Comprehensive Life Resources for their Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). They told her they were running low on items to hand out and were so very appreciative for the Warming Bags.

50 Warming Bags were also provided to Tacoma Community College Black Student Union for their monthly Personal Item Drives. While loading up Von-Na's vehicle, a passing gentleman connected with her for a donation. HAC loves facilitating community connections that help Hilltop thrive!





By Jessica Curry

Six years ago, Tacoma-raised Cecily Croskey founded Girls Hearts on Fire with the goal of helping young girls learn more about themselves on their own terms. As a dedicated community member of Tacoma, her name may ring a bell for you. She has been involved in multiple community programs and serves as a board member for Impact Schools and Under His Cover.

If you are a woman from the Tacoma area, you are aware of the lack of programs geared towards us, and there's even more of a gap as a BI-POC woman. Most youth programs are either geared towards younger boys or athletics- Cecily is closing that gap. Girls Hearts on Fire allows girls increased access to: leadership skills, mentorship, vision, scholarships, sisterhood, entrepreneurship skills, and more. At this moment the program focus is in life skills, entrepreneur skills, community leadership; and are virtual at this moment in time.

On November 14, 2020; Stephon Graves and I (both HAC interns) visited the Girls on Fire office on A-street in Downtown Tacoma to interview Cecily. As soon as we arrived, we were immediately greeted with warmth and a tour of the space. I felt a sense of community speaking with her. For me, this felt like more of a heart-to-heart rather than an interview. Please read on to learn more:

Read the interview below (condensed for clarity):

Tell us about yourself and why you started Girls Hearts on Fire.

"[In my early twenties,] I knew I was wanting to be able to do something for this community like I would just see, you know, there's tons of community centers right but guys can go to basketball, they have that camaraderie that they're building and the

girls are there hanging out, watching the guys play basketball. There were other programs that I wanted to really catch that group, and who maybe weren't utilizing those other opportunities and so this was a place for them to kind of come into and be a part of. And so, and then also just looking at the disparities too...If we can do anything to be able to prepare a space for them to be able to talk and share about their feelings. Maybe someone else has experienced that thing, how can we overcome that together, how did you overcome it, give someone else a nugget. And that was really important, that was really important to me."

"The hope was to just kind of create a space for young women to learn more about themselves, about others, and to figure out ways to support our community through, and some community projects that we've been doing. And that was important for me, because growing up, there weren't a whole lot of options I felt comfortable with, so I wanted to create something that- I wanted us to have another option for young women."

Your website talks about creating an equitable world, how do you hope to achieve that with Girls Hearts on Fire?:

"We're really just looking at what some roadblocks that have come up with young people, specifically young women and young women of color from [opportunities]. [We want to] tear down some of those barriers by filling in some of those gaps, [ensuring] they know the different organizations throughout the community they have access to. [We] talk to them about what's outside of high school; I feel that there's a huge push for students to continue their education, but I wanted to broaden that a little bit. I want them to start thinking about what that looks like and then create

a plan [addressing,] what are [they] passionate about, what makes [them] wake up in the morning, and get excited? I'm not one to put anybody in a box and so if that [college] isn't what you're moving towards, how can we support you on that. And how can we [connect them to] others who might have gone that direction or have experience in that field, I want to make sure they have access to people and opportunities that are going to help push them forward."

How do you do outreach?

"[Before COVID-19] we would have lunchtime tables or work with counselors/principals to have a small group of students come, bring doughnuts, a sign-up sheet, and have a chat about what we do. Right now, we utilize social media for outreach, and engage with students that we've already engaged with in the past. I'm super grassroots, that's just what I'm comfortable with; I honestly think that relationship is everything. So if you can build a foundation with relationships first sky's the limit after that for me. I try to keep it as personal as possible when I'm reaching out to students and getting to know families throughout the neighborhood. I've been in Tacoma my entire life- I graduated from Jason Lee and went to Stadium, it's just my neck of the woods. It's kind of cool because sometimes it could even be colleagues of mine, or friends of mine in the past that I'm working with their daughters now. And so that's been kind of cool so it's really just building those networks."

How do you receive grants/funding?

"It's from the state, and I have not gone to federal grant writing yet. That is something that we're looking into right now. Our newest grant came from Sawa. The [Puyallup] tribe, the Washington State Department of Commerce, the City of Tacoma, [etc.] have also been a huge help. So it's more of a local and statewide effort at this point, and there are private foundations that are now interested in supporting. [Additionally,] personal givers, so friends of hearts we would call and host, and invite our own networks out- those people would help us to push forward. Other than that, it was my business Queendom Thinking LLC (more below!). This year has been as hard as 2020 has been for many, but for our organization we've really been able to bloom, and I definitely appreciate the support that we've gotten from the community

around it."

How has COVID-19 affected your progress?

"We normally are housed in the schools. We would partner with the district to be at multiple schools, and after school, kids come down to jump into program. With all the schools closed, there's nowhere to do in-house programming, unless you have your own space, which is why we decided to bite the bullet and find it. Right now, and honestly, I think that push was needed because I never wanted to depend only on the school district. I think it was an amazing opportunity to be able to get the name out there and have close access to students. If we are only in a few schools, [it leaves out a large group of students], I really want this to be a community program and not a school-based program. While we will absolutely continue our relationship with the district, and I appreciate them, [we want to] expand the work we're doing and hopefully kind of create [a] pathway, where girls could just start in fifth grade and go all the way through high school. Then afterwards, an internship program, and mentor opportunities for our high schoolers down to our elementary schoolers. We want to look at that full circle of how we can invest our time and support each other to really create that sisterhood."

Followup: Weren't you at the Hilltop Crawl?

"Yeah, yeah, we were at myself and Lacey [HOA development director] who's not here right now, and we had some of the items that you see on the table over there. Mostly for Queendom thinking- I also have an LLC, a business for women that is really just to be able to help to sponsor some of the things we're doing here. Before I started doing more grant research, I used to do the Queendom Thinking side of the business to sponsor the work we were doing. So that's why you'll see both those things so if we're out and about. I don't sell things for Hearts on Fire, it is absolutely a service of the community."

The Fly Gala and Last Words:

"First love yourself. The Fly Gala is on Valentine's Day weekend because we all know, unfortunately, it can be a really overwhelming weekend for those who are either hoping that the boy that they love or like is going to



"We all have different gifts and each one is essential to our community's forward movement."

– Cecily Croskey

Photo Courtesy of Stephon Graves.

come shower them with these things. I want them to get away from hoping and waiting for someone to make you feel loved and special and begin that work on yourself and so that was the first love yourself Gala. It will be our fourth year, so fingers crossed we will be able to get through this winter, and things can pipe down. We've partnered with Ali's prom project, and they're able to supply dresses, shoes, and accessories for our girls at no cost. So if they receive free or reduced lunch they're able to go shopping at her boutique and family, all of those things. They get to walk the red carpet, we have a DJ, a catered dinner, and a dessert buffet that looks out of this world. The first year, we had Miss World come out and speak, the second, we had Aaron Jones who is an amazing woman and leader here in Washington State. Last year, we had a panel- we do a lot of fun stuff. I think that it's a cool way to allow them to think about themselves. I always say this is your time to be selfish right now, and there is such a negative connotation with that word. I don't necessarily think that certain spaces allow that; we deserve to do that, it's not selfish, it's called self care. I want to make sure that our girls know about that and you know take the time to invest in themselves."

Visit <http://girlsheartsonfire.org/>. Learn about the HOA Fundraiser on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/girlsheartsonfireorg>. For questions, email girlsheartsonfire@gmail.com. Contact Cecily Croskey at Cecily@girlsheartsonfire.org or Lacey Barker at Lacey@girlsheartsonfire.org.

Tacoma Public Library: Remote Resources

Jamie Gilmore, TPL Main Branch Librarian, loves to work with organizations that are looking for support with Remote Learning Resource Events. She was recently a guest at HAC Virtual Weekly Update...read on to find out more.

Jamie Gilmore, Tacoma Public Library Outreach Librarian, was a Special Guest at the October 19th, 2020 HAC Virtual Weekly Update. Go to https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1331518917187681&ref=watch_permalink to watch the Oct 19th Weekly Update. Jamie talked about TPL online resources and services. You can access Jamie's HAC Virtual Night Resources and Services Power Point presentation she shared with active links by visiting <http://nebula.wsimg.com/e4f0fb7bf28a6822b4e2c87b12b71b05?AccessKeyId=020C487B9A6046A543B-B&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>.

Jamie shared how HAL (Have Look at Coding) STEM technology training for kids and teens - visit <https://tacoma.bibliocommons.com/events/5f3c87ef28d72f2400e16db7> to find out more. TPL

also has Certifications you can complete at home, like Microsoft Office Specialist, a Microsoft Technology Associate, an Adobe Certified Associate, and more! Visit <https://www.tacomalibrary.org/certifications-at-tp/> for more information on certifications and workshops.

Tacoma Public Library also offers something fun to do with Creative Kits for kid and families (<https://www.tacomalibrary.org/kids/creative-kits/>). You can download the kits or pick them up under the TPL To Go Holds Pickup Service (<https://www.tacomalibrary.org/TPL-now/#holds>). Winter 2020-2021 Creative Kits include Welcome to Winter, Fun & Games, Black Women Heroes, and more! Don't forget, TPL also offers DVDs, video cassettes, and streaming videos to help keep you entertained on cold nights at home.

If you have general questions about borrowing, returns, fines, library cards, eResources, Student and Family Resources, TPL To Go, locations, or to Get Help, visit <https://www.tacomalibrary.org/TPL-now/#help>, or call (253) 280-2800.

Have questions for Jamie? Email her at jjgilmore@tacomalibrary.org, or give her a call at 253.292.2001 x1312. She would love to work with people or organizations that are looking for support. For example, Jamie has participated in Remote Learning Resource Events where she walks people through some of the resources more thoroughly. Tacoma Public Library has offered this program a few times and would be more than willing to offer it again if there's interest.

Keep Up-To-Date with Hilltop Tacoma Light Rail Link Construction



Get the latest Hilltop Link construction updates by visiting Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/505066506854906/>.

**After-hours construction hotline:
888-298-2395**

Community Partnerships Bring Halloween Fun on the Hilltop

HAC participated in Tacoma Community House Trunk or Treat Drive Thru and Hilltop Business Association's Halloween on the Hill to make sure Hilltop families can enjoy a delightfully Booriffic time!



HAC, Tacoma Housing Authority, Safe Streets and other community organizations came together to provide a safe, fun space for kids to enjoy Halloween. The need was great - vehicles lined up around the parking lot for entry into the Tacoma Community Houses parking lot. Candy was handed out

with social distancing techniques that were inventive using candy shoots and arm extender poles. Families who came by were told to head on over to Evergreen State College Tacoma for another Drive-Thru Trick or Treat! Thank you to everyone who helped put this event together!

Kristine, HAC's Office Manager, turned into a pumpkin and had Jack-O-Lanterns and candy to offer happy faces! Tacoma Housing Authority found 'Where's Waldo' to hand out candy and pencils to Trick-OR-Treaters driving by!

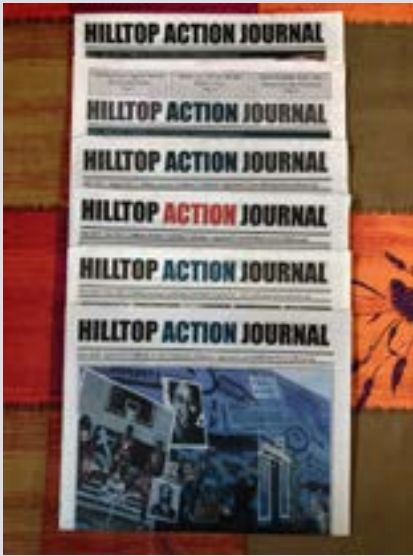


HAC and local businesses use social distancing guidelines to make sure kids (and parents!) could have a little fun outdoors for Halloween on the Hill! This offered a more traditional way to Trick or Treat and provided some exercise to work off candy calories. The TSM Shop handed out Halloween Totes for gathering candy. What a Special Treat to see families and friends out having a good time...smiling with their eyes!



Everyone was happy, laughing, and staying in their family groups for Halloween on the Hill! Transformers, comic heroes, dinosaurs, princesses and fireman took over MLK Jr. Way for a few hours on a sunny afternoon. For a brief moment, we forgot about COVID-19... our face masks reminded us about the pandemic, but the friendly faces underneath spread warmth and camaraderie!

This amazing group of women brought the Halloween Jams! We got to hear the new songs and the classics like, The Monster Mash. Thank you!



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