



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



# The Voice

September  
2005  
Articles translated  
into six languages

The newspaper of Neighborhood House

## Boat race roars at Asian American water festival



PHOTO BY STEVE HURD

Cambodian dance groups took the stage at the second annual Asian Water Festival.

By **WARYA POTHAN AND SOKUNTHEA OK**  
*Special to the Voice*

Fifteen Dragon Boat teams convened at Thea Park in Tacoma last month to race in the second annual Asian American Water Festival, or Bon Om Tuk.

More than 1,000 spectators watched the race and enjoyed the event's international food and community resources booths.

The festival was sponsored by the Cambodian American Support Network, and aimed to unite Asian-American communities and Washingtonians to promote diversity and tolerance and to share culture, tradition and resources.

The water festival is an ancient community event that took place annually in Cambodia, Thailand and Laos.

Tacoma's modern version started with a march of the 15 Dragon Boat teams, welcoming speeches by the President of the Cambodian American Support Network and the Mayor of Tacoma and a ribbon cutting ceremony. The festival continued throughout the day with cultural dances, youth performances and live music.

Neighborhood House's Project HANDLE (HIV/AIDS Network Development and Life-skills Experience) has been involved in activities to promote the awareness and prevention of HIV infection and

substance abuse at the event since its first year.

Project HANDLE is funded by two grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse Mental Health Service, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and the Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy.

As part of the project, more than 20 youth were trained at the University of Washington to be HIV and substance abuse prevention peer educators. The youth wrote a skit for the water festival, working hard entertain both youth and adults while sending out a clear message about the relationship between risky behaviors, substance abuse, HIV infection and the spread of AIDS.

For the next three to four years, the youth will continue to work with their peers, family members and other community members.

The Asian Water Festival was a community event that united Asian-Americans and other community members and promoted tolerance and acceptance. Resources such as HIV and substance abuse prevention materials were also shared.

*Warya Pothan is the Project HANDLE Director and Sokunthea Ok is a community health project manager for the initiative.*

## Edwards visits Seattle, speaks on poverty

By **JAMES OWENBY**  
*Seattle Housing Authority*

Complex issues like affordable housing and poverty are not solved overnight by one person with one strategy or tactic.

Former Sen. John Edwards was in Seattle last month and spoke on the issues of poverty in America at the NewHolly Gathering Hall.

The event, hosted by the Seattle based nonprofit Housing Development Consortium, was the first of three talks designed to inspire the development of new strategies for addressing poverty and the challenges of building and funding affordable housing projects.

"We have to make a commitment in the United States to end poverty," Edwards said, reminding the audience of former President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

Edwards recently formed a Political Action Committee that contends there are two different Americas in our country today—one for those at the top who get everything they want and another for everybody else who struggles just to get by.

Edwards spoke for about 20 minutes and veered from a prepared speech in order to talk about the morality of poverty in the United States, challenging the audience to think about the country's budget as a moral document.

"What does it say about America" when the budget fails to address the needs of the 36 million people who live in poverty, he asked. "If America wants to lead we have to do it with more than muscle, we need to

do it with moral clarity."

Edwards serves as the Director of the Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity, an academic think tank at the University of North Carolina, School of Law.

The Housing Development Consortium will host two more public forums on the topic of the rising need for affordable housing, the decline in such housing's availability and the shrinking resources for sustaining it.

The next discussion is scheduled to take place in the fall and the final discussion will take place in February 2006.

For more information on these upcoming events visit the consortium's Web site at <http://www.housingconsortium.org>.



PHOTO BY JAMES OWENBY

Former Sen. John Edwards speaks at NewHolly.

## Tenants Union rallies against gentrification

By **LORA CROPPER**  
*Voice reporter*

Seattle resident Jeri Gates has watched new businesses move into two of the neighborhoods she once called home.

"I wanted to go into the new stores, but I couldn't afford it," she said.

Instead, she found herself shopping at more affordable stores farther away, and

she eventually moved away from both neighborhoods.

Gates joined about 70 others at a rally at the Rainier Valley Community Center last month, expressing concern that such gentrification could be the future of the Rainier Valley.

Those who spoke at the rally, organized by the Tenants Union of Washington,

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**"The more low-income voices that are heard, the more they take our views into consideration."**

*Tiffany Owens, daughter of SHA resident Regina Owens, on the importance of low-income organizing.*

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## Health Notes

*A column devoted to your well-being*

### Teens speak out about school-based clinics

A school-based health center is a health clinic *in* the school. It is a place where students can go for physical and mental health services and to learn how to lead healthy lives.

**"When we walk into the clinic, people smile at us. That doesn't always happen in middle school."**

**Sang, a middle school student**

There are 14 school-based health centers in the Seattle School District. They are open to all students and provide acute, preventative and reproductive health care and mental health counseling services.

**"I like the mental health counseling. Otherwise, where would we find it?"**

**Cindi, a high school student**

Mental health problems have surpassed injuries as the single most common reason for child hospitalizations among Washington children aged 5 to 19 years old.

Mental health counseling is available for concerns such as depression, stress, sexual and physical abuse, sexuality, drug and alcohol abuse.

**"Our family doesn't have enough money for all of us to go to the doctor for even one sports physical, let alone three of them!"**

**Zhivon, a high school student**

In addition to sports physicals, school-based health centers provide treatment for illnesses such as flu and colds, injuries, stomach pains, acne and headaches.

They also provide dental screening and referral along with confidential services, including sexuality and reproductive health services.

Best of all, the nurse practitioners at many high school clinics are available three weeks prior to school for sports physicals. If your son or daughter needs one, just call the school to find out the clinic hours.

Each health center is staffed with a nurse practitioner, one or two mental health counselors and a clinic coordinator who all work closely with the school nurse, guidance counselors and other staff.

All staff are available to talk with students, parents, and families about a variety of topics, including nutrition, smoking cessation, weight management, sexuality and reproductive health.

Registration forms for school-based health centers are available at each school. Students are encouraged to register for services at the start of the school year.

For more information, contact the school-based health center at your middle school or high school.

*Puget Sound Neighborhood Health Centers operates school-based health clinics at Roosevelt High School, West Seattle High School, Sealth High School, Denny Middle School and Madison Middle School.*

## Vocational English class helps students land jobs

BY KRISTA KENNER  
Seattle Jobs Initiative

For most, searching for a job is a nerve-wracking experience.

Scanning the classifieds, filling out intricate job applications, placing follow-up calls and managing face-to-face interviews can be overwhelming.

Imagine taking on this process in a new country with a different language. Every year thousands of immigrants to the Seattle region do just that.

"The single largest barrier to employment for the immigrant/refugee population is language," said Rhonda Simmons, executive director of Seattle Jobs Initiative.

To help lessen this barrier, Seattle Jobs Initiative and Neighborhood House began collaborating this year to offer vocational English as a Second Language training in White Center.

Funded by Making Connections and SJI, the pilot project focuses on preparing participants for janitorial jobs that offer wage progression and career advancement.

Nicholas Muñoz came to the United States from Mexico 10 years ago, but until recently was still struggling with his English skills. He needed to find a steady job to support his family, so when he found out about the SJI/Neighborhood House project, he immediately enrolled.

After completing the intensive, 10-week training, Muñoz was offered a job as a janitor at South Seattle Community College. He now makes \$9 per hour and is looking forward to receiving medical benefits for his family within six months.

"My teacher was very good and paid attention to each student," he said. "One student just came from Vietnam and didn't know any English, but after only two months, he could speak a lot."

Neighborhood House ESL Instructor Mary Turla said she teaches her students



PHOTO BY STACY SCHWANDT

Nicholas Muñoz draws his country's flag at an ESL class in March.

the words they'll need in the workplace, such as mop, broom and detergent, but she also answers their individual questions.

"In vocational ESL, you plan, but some days a student has a particular situation they need help communicating in," she said. "You have to be flexible."

Project staff are also building relationships with employers in the White Center area. The goal is to connect with employers that offer wage and career advancement as language skills improve.

Currently, 20 students are enrolled in the class, and four have been placed in jobs.

"This pilot is a great opportunity for us to learn exactly what works and doesn't work for this particular population," Simmons said. "We want to share our experience with other agencies to enhance and expand appropriate employment services and training in this region."

For more information about the project, please contact Gloria Hatcher-Mays at (206) 628-6967.

## Early Head Start families enjoy summer picnic

BY VOICE STAFF

Bubbles and balls, hula hoops and parachutes were just some of the diversions enjoyed by the many children who attended the Neighborhood House Early Head Start picnic.

They also shared food from around the world, including Salvadoran pupusas and Ethiopian injera. Parents involved in the program helped plan the late July event, which attracted more than 130 people.

"Everything's so great," said Tham Nguyen.

Her friend Hong Nguyen agreed.

"The staff has been friendly and a big help to kids," she said. "We feel really welcome."

The Early Head Start program serves low-income families in Seattle that have children from ages birth to 3.

The program offers home-based activities, including parenting education and child development information.

Early Head Start Supervisor Marcy Miller said the aim of the picnic is to give parents and children a chance to meet and



PHOTO BY STACY SCHWANDT

Kids enjoy playing with a parachute at the picnic.

socialize with other families.

Participant Hodan Mohamed said she enjoyed the opportunity.

"It gives us a chance to see how many people have home visitors," she said, adding that her home visitor has given her information and encouragement as her 2-year-old daughter recovers from an injury.

"We're happy to have her helping us," she said. "I really like the program."

For more information about the Neighborhood House Early Head Start program call Marcy Miller at (206) 760-9330.

### Rally

Continued from front page

also decried federal cuts to the Section 8 program, which provides vouchers to help low-income people pay their rent.

Many Rainier Valley residents depend on Section 8 vouchers, event organizers said, so this loss of funding, paired with redevelopment already underway, could displace current residents of the area.

Esther Little Dove John, a leader of the Tenants Union's Justice in Southeast Seattle Project and the event's emcee, projected that redevelopment would force a number of residents to move away from their jobs, families and homes.

"We live here, and we want to stay here," she said.

Instead, the Tenants Union is calling for "equitable development," where new resources can come into a neglected community, but policies, public agreements and laws regulate its effects and allow current residents to stay.

The rally was attended by United States Congressman Jim McDermott and Seattle City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen. Both said they supported the Rainier Valley's concerns over Section 8 cuts.

"I can't think of anything more basic than housing and health care, and these needs are not being met by this administration for low- and middle-income people,"

McDermott said, encouraging those gathered to continue to take action and speak to government representatives. "It's the fact that you live here and have a right to speak, so I want to hear your voice."

Rasmussen promised to work with community representatives to save the Rainier Valley from potential displacement and gentrification. He said he plans to take community members' ideas to the state legislature.

Although Seattle Housing Authority officials did not speak at the rally, leaders said afterwards that their developments in the Rainier Valley already follow principles of equitable development.

"Many residents of the former communities have, in fact, progressed to home ownership in the neighborhood, and most of the residents who said they wanted to return to the redeveloped communities have been able to do so," said SHA Communications Director Virginia Felton. "People assume that the beautiful new housing is too expensive for poor people, but (much of) it is just as affordable as the old housing was... The for-sale houses that are more expensive help to pay for additional low-income housing."

To become involved in the effort to promote equitable development in the Rainier Valley or to find out more on the issue, contact Michele at the Tenants Union at (206) 722-6848 ext. 114.

#### The Voice

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The Voice, the newspaper of Neighborhood House, is published monthly with the support of the Seattle and King County Housing Authorities. 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.



## One to grow on

### Garden tips for community gardeners

By ANZA MUENCHOW  
Special to the Voice

As the end of the 2005 growing season approaches, I hope you have time to enjoy your harvest.

Take some time to pick your squash, eggplant, tomatoes, cucumbers, and beans. Prepare some delicious meals and share them with friends.

You may have heard of the "slow food" movement. As food gardeners, you are the backbone of this movement.

Slow Food USA is an educational organization dedicated to sustainable food production and to the revival of the kitchen as the center of families, culture and community. Slow Food encourages regional and seasonal food traditions and a slower, more harmonious rhythm of life.

My favorite fall recipe is a ratatouille.

I usually cook it in a cast iron pot, first stir frying in olive oil the following ingredients in this order: garlic, onion and eggplant (until eggplant starts to get soft).

Then I add peppers (green or red, not hot), zucchini and several chopped, peeled tomatoes. Add a handful of chopped fresh Italian herbs or a couple tablespoons of dried herbs. Salt to taste.

The amount of each ingredient depends on your harvest and your preferred taste.

I think it is the freshness of the ingredients that makes this a great dish. Serve it alone or on pasta or rice. It's good with Parmesan cheese, too.

To extend your fall food harvests, watch out for those early rains and heavy mists. This weather pattern can help spread harmful fungi. Prune any tomato plants with blight, which forms dark brown splotches on the leaves, stems and fruits. Also remove

powdery, mildew-infected leaves on your squash and cucumbers. This white, moldy-looking fungus spreads rapidly.

Later in the fall, most tomatoes and squashes finally do die from fungal pests, but cleaning them out of your garden will lessen and slow the damage to you crops.

Even though the weather may seem damp, you may need to water the soil around your plants to ensure the root zone below the surface stays moist. Draught stress (dry roots) weakens your plants.

Make time to weed your garden well before you put it to rest for the winter. Many annual weeds are setting seeds in September. For the best weed control, pull them out before the seeds spread.

As the rains begin, watch for newly sprouted perennial weeds also. These should be removed before they get a chance to get established this winter.

The best weed control methods are hand-pulling and then covering the soil around your crops with weed-free mulch. A cover of mulch excludes light and thus prevents the germination of the new weed seeds.

Mulches can be made out of a weed-free compost, wood chips, shredded paper or dried leaves and grasses (without seeds).

Using a winter cover crop is another excellent way to reduce weeds. Planting nitrogen-fixing "green manure" like crimson clover, vetch or field peas will prevent weeds and enrich your soil. Sow these cover crops this month while the weather is still warm.

Enjoy the seasonal bounty!

Anza Muenchow is a P-Patch volunteer and an avid gardener. If you have questions or comments about the material in this column, send her an e-mail at [mahafarm@whidbey.net](mailto:mahafarm@whidbey.net).

## Bells ring for after-school programs

By VOICE STAFF

With school back in session, parents are searching for after-school programs to help their children succeed in school.

Following is a list of programs that serve public housing communities in Seattle and King County.

**Catholic Community Services'** youth tutoring program is an evening educational enrichment program for students living in six Seattle public housing communities, including Cedarvale Village, Jackson Park Village, NewHolly, Rainier Vista, High Point and Yesler Terrace.

The program focuses on developing students' reading skills, providing them with homework assistance and increasing academic knowledge through skill-building curricula. Call (206) 328-5659 for more information.

**SafeFutures Youth Center** provides programs for West Seattle youth aged 6 to 18.

Programs include homework help, counseling, enrichment activities and field trips. Students can also get involved in special initiatives such as an anti-violence leadership team or a healthy communities project. Call (206) 938-9606 ext. 118 for more information.

**Kent Youth and Family Services** provides youth programs for residents 5 to 19 years old at three KCHA developments, Cascade Apartments, Springwood Apartments and Valli Kee, with after-school activities beginning on Sept. 1.

At Springwood, the program is in Building 23, while the Springwood Youth Center is under construction.

Activities include tutoring and homework help, arts and crafts, cooking classes, intramural sports leagues, teen nights and

career exploration. Highlights include a talent show in February and a three-on-three basketball tournament in April. Youth are encouraged to take part in program planning and to set goals for field trips. Call (253) 859-0300 for more information.

**Neighborhood House** runs an after school youth tutoring program for kids aged 7 to 18 at Burndale and Green River Homes in Auburn and at Park Lake Homes in White Center. It also provides after-school tutoring to students at Tyee High School in SeaTac. For more information call (206) 366-5084.

KCHA's Eastside developments - Eastside Terrace, Avondale Manor, College Place, Spiritwood Manor and Hidden Village - benefit from youth programs offered by the **Bellevue Boys & Girls Club**, (425) 454-6162.

After-school activities focus on education, character development, the arts, fitness and health and life skills.

In Auburn, youths at Firwood Circle participate in after-school programs provided by the **Auburn Boys & Girls Club**, a satellite of the Federal Way club. The Firwood Circle club is closed during renovations of the community room, but is expected to be back in operation by October. For more information, call (253) 804-5915.

At Ballinger Homes in Shoreline, the **Center for Human Services'** Homework Factory has long provided kids with a helping hand for schoolwork. There is also QuEST (quiet evening study time), the Awesome Possums service club, weekly teen outings and art classes on Saturdays.

Youth programs at Ballinger, provided by CHS, begin on Wednesday, September 7. For more information, call (206) 362-2842.

## Conference teaches leadership, organizing

By LYNN SEREDA  
Voice reporter

Seniors, immigrants, youth and low-income public housing residents were among the more than 100 citizen activists who gathered for a weekend of workshops at Seattle University last month.

The event, called "Taking Action, Making Change," was sponsored by the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations. Washington Citizen Action is a member of this federation along with other groups from Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

Washington Citizen Action is a statewide social and economic justice organization with over 50,000 individual members. Its board includes partners representing labor, senior, faith and community organizations, and its mission "is to achieve economic fairness in order to establish a democratic society characterized by racial and social justice, with respect for diversity, and a decent quality of life for those who reside in Washington State."

The conference began with an immigrant rights plenary, which included a panel of immigrants who shared their stories.

Issues addressed included maintaining worker protection, reuniting families and making the dream of higher education possible for immigrant youth by lifting federal restrictions which force states to deny in-state tuition to immigrant students.

Attendees participated in a wide variety of workshops, some of which focused on racial and social justice. Others focused on skill-building in areas such as public speaking, computer use and canvassing.

A major highlight of the conference was the "Put People First" forum on the health care crisis in Washington, which was organized by Washington Citizen Action. Union leaders and organizers spoke about initiatives for more affordable and universal health care.

Then several dozen citizen activists came to the microphone to give testimony and recite statistics that illustrate the current health care dilemma.

For instance, nearly 800,000 people in Washington are uninsured and the cost to the state is nearly \$318 million a year.



SHA resident Regina Owens spoke about health care issues at the conference.

Steve Hill, administrator of the Washington State Health Care Authority spoke about the State's plan to address health care issues and fielded some very tough questions from the floor.

Several residents from the Seattle and King County housing authorities attended the conference and a few played major roles in organizing it.

Regina Owens of Greenlake Plaza has been involved in WCA since July 2001. She currently sits on the state board and chairs the King County Action Team, which holds meetings on the first Wednesday of each month from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Greenlake Plaza Community Room, 505 N.E. 70th St. in Seattle. The group organized a garage sale as a fundraiser for the conference.

Owens also gave testimony at the Put People First health care forum. Her daughter Tiffany traveled to Olympia to testify for the Fair Share Health Care Bill. Both mentioned many benefits to becoming involved with WCA, such as the leadership training and mentorship that is offered.

"The more low-income voices that are heard, the more they take our views into consideration," Tiffany Owens said.

For more information about Washington Citizen Action or the King County Action Team, call (206) 389-0050, ext. 105 or visit the Web site at <http://www.wacitizenaction.org>.

### Community notes

#### Win funds for neighborhood projects

The City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods is holding an "ideas fair" for those interested in applying for funding for neighborhood projects.

Project funding is available through a number of City programs, including the Small Sparks program and the Race and Social Justice fund.

The fair will feature displays on past projects including playground improvements, oral histories, traffic calming projects, youth involvement projects, cultural programs and more.

It takes place on Saturday, September 10 from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at the Seattle Vocational Institute, 2120 S. Jackson St.

A workshop on the Race and Social Justice fund will take place from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. Learn more about the fund and hear from 2004 award recipients.

Other workshops will cover tips for submitting competitive applications, and developing proposals.

For more information contact the Department of Neighborhoods at (206) 684-0464.

#### Senior job fair at Seattle Center

Older adults looking for possible jobs and networking opportunities can find them at the fourth annual Senior Employment Fair on Wednesday, September 14, at the Seattle Center.

The Mature Workers Alliance of Puget Sound presents Hire Experience: 50+ Job Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Seattle Center House.

At this job fair, you can network with potential employers, participate in job search workshops and learn how to start your own business. Admission is free. Bring your resume and dress for success.

For questions or accommodations, please contact the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging at (206) 838-8163. For Metro Transit bus rider information, call (206) 553-3000.

The Mature Workers Alliance of Puget Sound is a group of public and private organizations committed to empowering older workers and increasing their presence and productivity in the workforce.

More information is available on the web at <http://www.seattlecenter.com>.

