It might be hard to believe that in the land of abundance, so many are in need, but hunger is a reality right here in our community. It’s unacceptable that people are facing hunger in a nation with more than enough food to go around. And not only is it unacceptable, but it hurts us all, hunger weakens communities by threatening people’s ability to reach their potential and fully contribute.

Thankfully, where there is hunger, food sites in our community are working hard to get food to people in need. Many non-profits and individuals are providing children with meals to fuel their growth, parents with groceries to fill the cupboards and seniors with the nutrition they need to stay strong. Hilltop Action Coalition along with many partners wanted to do our part in addressing food insecurity in our neighborhood. We were hearing so much about food going to waste because people weren’t coming to pick it up but realized that it wasn’t so much about people not wanting it, but more about getting access to it. For many, limited transportation, a disability or simply not knowing where to go played a major part in food sites having to throw away tons of food.

In a brainstorm session with Alyssa Torrez and Roberta Schur from Tacoma Housing Authority we came up with this idea of activating an empty space in our community by turning it into a food distribution site. The location at 1202 MLK Way was the perfect spot for us. It was centrally located, easily accessible and directly on two major bus lines. We quickly acted on connecting with the leadership of Community Health Care to make this idea a reality. After a series of conversations, CHC agreed to allow Hilltop Action Coalition to occupy the space on a temporary basis.

I reached out to partners that I knew were distributing food but were having the issue of having to throw it out. The conversations were simple, they would give us the food they had leftover and we would get it in the hands and on the tables of folks in our community.

On October 4th, Hilltop FED (Food, Equity, Distribution) officially launched and it has been full steam ahead ever since. We call it a “no barrier” site. People that come through don’t have to show ID, give their zip code or any other information. Our goal is to simply get them food and do it with dignity and respect. We have had very generous community supporters contribute to this effort and that’s what makes the Hilltop so great.

I am extremely grateful to our team for all of the ways they have stepped up. Hilltop FED wouldn’t be possible without support and energy from Tacoma Housing Authority, A. Philip Randolph Institute, Elijah Barrel, Community Health Care, Moore Housing and Food is Free.

Please stop by to see us Monday, Wednesday or Friday between 11 am and 2 pm.
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.

By Brendan Nelson

Hello Hilltop Family,

As 2021 draws to a close I want to take the opportunity to look back on a year that turned out much differently than anyone could have imagined. While it was certainly challenging in many ways, it also showed how strong HAC is, even in the toughest of times. We take pride in the fact that when the pandemic brought the world to a halt and forced us to keep our distance from family, friends and one another, the work we do helped people to stay connected and made the difficult times hopefully a little easier.

It was no easy task managing both the safety of our community and the increased use of our networks and platforms. The reliability of the service we provide and the quality of the content we offer defines us. We rose to the challenge and we proved as an organization to be extremely flexible in the face of change.

I’m proud to say that while 2021 might have slowed us down, it certainly didn’t stop us. We continued to produce three business crawls, hosted two interns, and formed new lasting partnerships that will strengthen and enhance our mission.

We also launched Hilltop FED in October, helping to meet the increased need of getting food into the hands and on tables of our community. To share and learn from each other, we took the opportunity to look back on a year that turned out much differently than anyone could have imagined.

I hope that when you’re celebrating the holidays with friends and family that you look back on the year with the same sense of hope and gratitude that we all should feel.

Love and Light,
Brendan A. Nelson
Meet HAC Board Member: Tiffani Reyes
Part of an ongoing series highlighting Hilltop Action Coalition Board Members.

By Jo Davies

The pandemic shook things loose for Tiffani Reyes, her husband and two sons. Tiffani is a new resident to Hilltop, having moved here last year from West Texas. Life in Texas during the pandemic made her realize that her family’s life could be different, more fulfilling. Oregon was the original destination until they spent an unhurried week in a Tacoma Air BnB due to the COVID shutdowns. By the end of their stay in the Hilltop community, the family had decided this was where they wanted to stay and raise their sons. Since the decision was made to stay, they have concentrated on finding a place in Hilltop because of its diversity on all levels (age, gender, race), and rich history.

Though only in the neighborhood for a short period of time, Tiffani has already acquainted with many of her neighbors, several of whom have been active in HAC over the years. New to gardening, she has benefited from the openness and expertise of her Hilltop neighbors. She is fortunate to have met Brendan Nelson, who will also transition off the HAC board in December to take on the role of HAC Executive Director, expressed gratitude for Jo and Jennifer helping to strategize and grow an organization that was faltering six years ago. “When I came on the board” said Brendan, “we were told essentially to figure out what you are going to do, or your doors are going to close. HAC has undergone tremendous change over these six years.”

“Brendan came to my high school to talk about serving the community. I was later inspired, as a University of Washington student, to apply for an internship at HAC. It’s been a great experience.”

The People’s Community Center multi-purpose room is available for community events. Preston Childs, a long-time People’s Community Board member, encouraged meeting attendees to consider volunteering at the center and getting involved with the board.

Jennifer Schaal, who has been active in HAC and currently volunteers assisting with photographs, videos and other activities, praised Brendan Nelson for his leadership in the Hilltop Action Coalition and the HAC for sparking her enthusiasm about living in Hilltop. She brings that enthusiasm to the HAC Board where she will work to strengthen relationships with Hilltop schools, students, and parents.

HAC Monthly Community Meeting A “Warming Experience” A day of celebration for HAC as they held their 1st Monthly Community Meeting, in person, since February 2020.

By Jennifer Schaal, Photographs by Hunter Henderson

On November 29th, the Hilltop Action Coalition hosted its first in-person Community Meeting in almost two years. Approximately forty community members joined the full HAC board of directors at Peoples Community Center to express gratitude, make Warming Bags, learn about HAC transitions, and keep up-to-date with community news. news-email hacoffice15@gmail.com. Meetings will continue on into 2022.

The last HAC in-person monthly Community Meeting was held during February 2020. When COVID struck in March, attendees pivoted quickly to find a way to keep community members informed. Using the live meeting capability on Facebook, at 6:00pm on nearly every Monday for the past 90 weeks, HAC checked in with neighbors, business owners, bank operators, city council members, school board members, and many community service organizations to see how folks were doing and what resources were available to those in need. HAC continues to publish the Hilltop Action Journal, which quickly became a major source of news in the Hilltop area.

During a warm and dry evening on this fourth Monday, the board members and neighbors acknowledged that there’s no substitute for being together in person and celebrating the chance to gather again. Board president Brendan Nelson opened the meeting by asking attendees to share what they are grateful for. Many attendees responded with gratitude for pets, family, friends, open spaces, health, and opportunities to serve.

Jo Davies and Jennifer Schaal, who are current and former board members of HAC, appreciated the opportunity to attend an in-person meeting after six years, expressed gratitude for the people who show up for their community, volunteering, writing articles for the Journal, participating in Weekly Updates, and helping each other with needs.

Brendan, “we were told essentially to develop the connections which result in a united community and keep the place together, to interact, and to makes connections. Collaborative co-sponsored events provide opportunities for exploring new places, meeting new people and making intentional connections. Focused events such as PTA gatherings, issue-based forums and meet and greets help inform community connections. Public events such as the People’s Community Center board member, encouraged meeting attendees to consider volunteering with Tacoma Housing Authority, her employer, to organize Hilltop business and community support events such as the upcoming HAC Holiday Crawl. Alyssa is also an active member of the City of Tacoma’s Planning Commission.

Jo and Jennifer received plaudits of appreciation for their service to HAC. The plagues commemorated their two-year terms of board membership, the maximum allowed by HAC board by-laws. “It’s been an honor to work with this group” said Jennifer. Meeting attendees worked together to assemble Warming Bags to be given to anyone experiencing homelessness or just needing something to keep them warm and dry during the winter months. Donated hats, scarves, gloves, socks, handwarmers, energy bars, and many first aid and personal care items were loaded into zip-lock bags for easy distribution. Approximately 120 bags were completed, and many were carried home by meeting attendees to give out to anyone they see in need. Anyone needing a Warming Bag should contact the HAC office, or stop by the Hilltop Feed.

One meeting participant expressed gratitude for the opportunity received to her business, Lavonne’s Room, that provides gently used children’s clothing, shoppers, and other equipment at low cost to families in need. Owner BridgetDemerson wants anyone to reach out to her through Lavonne’s Room Facebook at @lavonneroomMARKET, at her email address lavonneroom@gmail.com, or visit the store located at 1120 5.11 St., in the Fab-5 building.

Another meeting attendee expressed gratitude for both the opportunity to serve HAC as an intern, and the donation to HAC that she encouraged from Bengisu Cecik, in the amount of $1,825 from Pacifica Foundation Seattle.

Stephon Graves, who also interned at HAC and currently volunteers assisting with photographs, videos and other activities, praised Brendan Nelson for his leadership in the Hilltop Action Coalition. “Brendan came to my high school to talk about serving the community” said Stephon, “and I was later inspired, as a University of Washington student, to apply for an internship at HAC. It’s been a great experience.”

The People’s Community Center multi-purpose room is available for community events. Preston Childs, a long-time People’s Community Board member, encouraged meeting attendees to consider volunteering at the center and getting involved with the board.

The People’s Community Center is in Seattle.

Regular HAC Community Meetings will continue on into 2022. Until the Community Healthcare Community Room becomes available again, Community Meetings will be held in the People’s Community Center multi-purpose room. The next Community Meeting will be held on Monday, December 27th.

Receive HAC weekly eNewsletters and keep up-to-date with community news-email hacoffice15@gmail.com.

Jennifer Schaal and Jo Davies are celebrated for six years of service on the HAC Board of Directors.

Bengisu Cecik shares her success of obtaining a $1,825 donation from Pacifica Foundation Seattle for Warming Bags and Hilltop FED. Brendan Nelson announces MichelleDemerson as the new HAC Board.
Hilltop Action Coalition, Tacoma Housing Authority and Hilltop Business Association are partnering once again to bring a Holiday Crawl experience to the Hilltop. Grab your mittens and head over to your local business district for a hot drink to warm you up while you shop for holiday gifts. Whether you are looking for clothes, toys, ornaments or candy, you’ll find a local selection on Saturday, December 18th from 10 AM to 4 PM during the Hilltop Holiday Crawl.

Eager to get started on your gift list? Head on over to https://www.hilltopcrawl.com/ to check out the Hilltop Virtual Marketplace where you’ll find trusted shops that you’ve been to before and new businesses that are happy to provide you with unique handmade items. You can meet these new businesses, in-person, at the Holiday Crawl in the Marketplace area. Stop by and see everything they have to offer for one-of-a-kind gifts that will WOW your family and friends.

Of course there will be a Holiday Crawl Passport where you can patronize local businesses, vote for your favorite holiday decorated shop, and add your contact information for entry into the Holiday Business Raffle. There will be lots of great prizes to win! HAC will offer a Grand Prize too.

Don’t forget to stop by the HAC office to say hello to our Board Members. You can grab a hard copy of the Hilltop Action Journal and spin the HAC Prize Wheel ... you never know what you might win.

The Hilltop Holiday Crawl would not be possible without our community partners and sponsorships. Let’s give a HUGE round of applause to Sound Transit who has provided the highest level of sponsorship for each Hilltop Business Crawl - this will be the 5th Crawl they have sponsored - Thank You, Sound Transit! Downtown on the Go has been providing professional map’s for the Passports, The Community Market has organized Black and Brown small business vendors, EPIC has been providing insurance and permitting assistance, Tacoma Housing Authority provides funding and planning support, and Hilltop Business Association assists with planning and outreach. Thank you everyone for making Hilltop Business Crawls a success!
Construction Continues Through The Holidays To Open Hilltop Tacoma Link in 2022

Minimizing community impacts now to bring Hilltop Tacoma Link transportation options in the near future.

By Liz Ellis, Sound Transit

The Hilltop Tacoma Link project is now 80% complete, and we’re scheduled to open in summer/fall 2022! Over the past year, crews have installed most of the track, as well as stations, substations, overhead wires, poles, curbs, gutters, pavement and more. We’re excited to ride Tacoma Link with you in Hilltop next year!

We appreciate your continued patience during construction. To keep on schedule, crews will be working along the route, including in the business districts, during the holidays. In December, crews will continue construction in the Hilltop, Stadium and Commerce Street business districts and will resume construction near Tacoma General and Kaiser Permanente. In Hilltop, crews will install curb and gutter on the west side of Martin Luther King Jr. Way from S. 13th St. to S. 16th St. In addition, crews will install fiber optic wires underground along the entire route at night.

We’ll be working with the City of Tacoma and our contractor to minimize community impacts. Access will be open to businesses and driveways. We’ll keep people moving, work around businesses’ schedules, and keep parking open as much as possible. In the area on MLK Jr. Way from S. 13th to S. 16th St., customers can park in designated spots in the Allen AME Church’s parking lot near the alley and S. 13th St. Thank you to Allen AME for helping businesses during the holidays!

In early 2022, five light rail vehicles are scheduled to arrive. The vehicles and system will be tested, and some construction will continue through spring 2022. We’ll keep you updated on our schedule and progress.

If you have questions or concerns about the Hilltop Tacoma Link project, please contact me at 253.208.0586 (call or text) or liz.ellis@soundtransit.org. Learn more about the project by signing up for email updates at https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/hilltop-tacoma-link-extension and join the Hilltop Tacoma Link Facebook group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/305866450834906/. In addition, I could meet you in-person or virtually. Let’s stay connected!

Support Hilltop Businesses During The Holidays

During the holiday season, please continue to shop, dine and do business along the Hilltop Tacoma Link route! To encourage customers to keep coming during the holidays and construction, Sound Transit is advertising the “Loyal to the Local” campaign and highlighting specific businesses with Facebook ads and videos, such as Quickie Too, Proof Patisserie, Mr. Mac, Red Elm Café, and Ice Cream Social. We proudly support the Hilltop Action Coalition’s Hilltop Holiday Crawl and the Hilltop Business Association’s Holidays on the Hill. Please check out these events!

Apply for a job with Tacoma Link!

As we get ready to open for service, Sound Transit will hire more employees in the Operations and Maintenance Facility in Tacoma: light rail vehicle operators, mechanics, and supply and administrative positions. We’re currently advertising for several new positions. Look for these and more job opportunities in the next year at https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/jobs. Please consider applying for these jobs!

Hanging wire span above MLK north of 15th. Photos courtesy of Liz Ellis.

Conduit installation next to Johnson Candy Company.

St. Joseph Station 10-22-21

Loyal to the Local - Coretta Harwood, Scott’s Funeral Home 1215 MLK Jr. Way, helps families celebrate their loved ones during difficult times. We appreciate this Hilltop business!

Loyal to the Local - Dr. Michelle Marconi, Marconi Chiropractic & Wellness, serves the Hilltop at 1002 MLK Jr. Way.

This map identifies the location of the curb and gutter work on MLK Jr. Way from S. 13th to S. 16th St. as well as the customer parking in the Allen AME Church parking lot.
TPU Water Heater Study Participants Needed

Tacoma Public Utilities will provide participants $80 for participating in the study.

Koz on MLK

Construction Project Update

Provided By Rania Qawasmadana, Design & Construction, Koz Development

‘Koz on MLK’ - Tacoma, 6 stories, 100 thousand square feet multi-family project is expected to complete construction spring of 2022. The project is 156 micro units consist of studios, 1 bedroom, 2-bedrooms. 3-bedrooms and loft units, and 6300 square feet retail space facing MLK way. The building provides secure bike storage and enclosed parking garage with EV charging. Take a peek from People’s Park at 59th Street and MLK Jr Way to see how this housing development is taking shape.

Vision Statement: Grit City Co-op is a community driven initiative to open and operate a grocery store in the Hilltop area of Tacoma so that everyone has access to sustainable food at a fair price, while providing a living wage to workers and growing the local food system. We will facilitate conversations around where our food comes from, who produces it, and how it nourishes us.

To make this leap, we need your help. There are two ways to give:
1. Mail your $100 check to Grit City Coop, PO Box 2332, Tacoma, WA 98401-2332

If you have questions, please email gritcitycoop@gmail.com. Thank you!
Do you know what goes where? Play “Sort the Sound” Tacoma’s new waste sorting video game! Play all five levels and build a new park. Great for all ages; this game is available in five languages. You might even find the legendary Sortsquatch in the game. Play Sort the Sound at https://tacomawa.recycle.game/!

Glass Drop-Off Locations Update
On Monday, January 4, 2021, residential curbside glass recycling collection for customers in single-family homes and duplexes was replaced with drop-off stations throughout the city. This includes the Hilltop Safeway glass drop-off location, which is now open! Located in the back of the Safeway at 1112 S M St, Tacoma, WA 98405.

Changing the curbside program to glass recycling drop-off locations has had environmental, economical, and safety benefits which saves the City about half a million dollars per year and helps eliminate on-the-job safety hazards for staff related to glass recycling pick up.
Pierce Faith Works: A Collective Impact Network

By Carolyn Read

Are you in a congregation that has some activities that support ending homelessness that may need some volunteers? Are you and individual that wants to help ending homelessness, but you don’t know where to start? Do you see yourself as someone with a moral voice and want to influence our leaders to make decisions that help the vulnerable population?

If so, you’ll be excited to hear that several faith communities are now working with Associated Ministries and others on developing a collective impact network, called Pierce Faith Works. The goal is to build networks and relationships so that we can collaborate and have a greater impact on solving homelessness in Pierce County.

We want to use our collective power and influence to bring positive change to the community and especially to end homelessness. Likely many of you are associated with a congregation that helps those that are not housed — such as a food bank, meal program, clothing closet, housing/sheltering opportunities. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all turn to each other and build a network so that we could rely on each other to support a call to action or work in collaboration with each other on some common goals and objectives? Just think of how much more powerful our collective impact would be on ending homelessness?

One of the things that Pierce Faith Works is working on as a collective is Training for volunteers that want to help organizations that work with those that are unhoused. Our first session of the season was October 5th. Please join us for the December session on the 7th at 6:00 PM.

Join Pierce Faith Works for a free zoom session: Homelessness 101 TRAINING— December 7th, 2021 6-6:45 PM.

Learn more about homelessness in Tacoma and Pierce County. A good place to start for:
- people interested in working with local shelters, safe lots, or other shelter options as staff or volunteers
- people already engaged in this work and interested in networking with others
- anyone who wants to know more about homelessness in Pierce County

Session Presenters (6-7 pm):
Rosemary Powers & Theris Powers
Drulis; New Connections

Reflection in Action Facilitator (7-8 pm):
Joel Helfenkamp, Social Justice Commission, St. Leo Parish

Here is the link to register… spread the word!

http://weblink.donorperfect.com/Homeless101

Joel, a social worker from a hilltop parish, attended the training and said it was “right on the mark” and helpful for providing confidence for volunteers that may find themselves in uncomfortable situations with others that have big challenges and needs. After his training, he worked during COVID by making phone calls to folks in the hotels and now works in the warehouse at Food Connection. Once COVID calms down, he plans to get more involved in face-to-face connections.

Nora from First United Methodist church said that they attended with the training because people were living on the street at their doorstep. She said the training helped them overcome misinformation and fears and armed them with good information, facts and skills. By starting with the training, they gained confidence and to be able to engage with the community in a way that works for them. They now lead a group, “Housing, Justice and Friends” which recently provided moral support while witnessing a recent Tacoma encampment sweep.

In addition to the training, we are hoping to collectively support in our community network is advocating for additional revenue for housing. We are doing this by asking the Pierce County Council to approve the 1/10th of 1% tax for housing. If you are willing to give a 3-minute public comment at the end of a Tuesday county council meeting supporting this tax, contact Carol Colleran at cacolleran@msn.com. She will set you up on our schedule and provide notes for you to use.

Let us know what you are doing and keep your eye out for stuff from Pierce Faith works. Let’s start rowing together and see what we can accomplish! If you want to get involved in any of these efforts, contact Carolyn Read readcarolyn@comcast.net.

Join HAC’s mailing list and keep on top of the HACtion!
Email hacoffice15@gmail.com today and start receiving HAC eNewsletters along with the digital Hilltop Action Journal.

Good References:
Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness https://www.pchomeless.org

The Pierce County and Tacoma Housing Help will provide emergency rent and utility assistance to renters throughout the Pierce County who have experienced a reduction in household income or an increase in expenses or other financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes residents of all cities in Pierce County. Submission of a rental assistance application is not a guarantee of payment.

Eligible applicants can receive assistance to pay past due rent and utilities from March 13, 2020. Assistance is based on need, eligibility, and available funding. The total assistance amount available will depend on household need. Rental Payments will be issued directly to the landlord. Utility payments will be issued directly to the utility company.

Rental and utility assistance can be applied for on a single, centralized online portal at https://housinghelp.piercecountytalassistance.org/.

For questions about this program, please email hsrent@piercecountywa.gov.
Honors, Awards & Scholarships

We are trying to spread the word about Honors, Awards and Scholarships to as many people as can be reached.

By Perry L. Newell, Funding College Project

The Funding College Project, and Cash for Kids are non-commercial activities and have been asked to supply to individuals, organizations, newspapers, and community bulletins boards serving the area with information about active honors, awards, scholarships and insightful advice. Take a look at the scholarships available below with December application deadlines and share them with those who benefit. Thank you!

Angela Award - Sponsor: National Science Teachers Association - Amount: $1,000 - Closing Date: December 15, 2021 - Description: Award is open to female students in grades 5-8 who are residents of the United States, US Territories, or Canada. Applicant must have a strong passion for STEM. Link: https://www.nsta.org/awards-and-recognition-program#angela

Community Service Scholarship - Sponsor: Morris Bart, LLC - Amount: $2,500 - Closing Date: December 15, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to students currently enrolled or accepted to attend an accredited college or university in the upcoming term. Applicant must have at least a 3.0 GPA and a history of community service, volunteerism or fundraising in their community. Applicant must submit an essay on, “what is the meaning of service?” Link: https://www.morrisbart.com/about/scholarships/community-service-scholarship/

Distraction-Free Driving PSA Scholarship - Sponsor: Distasio Law Firm - Amount: $2,500 - Closing Date: December 15, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to graduating high school seniors and current college students who have at least a 3.0 GPA. Application must create a video warning fellow teen drivers against the dangers of using a cell phone while driving. Link: https://distasiofirm.com/about/scholarship/distraction-free-driving-psa-scholarship/

No Sweat Scholarship - Sponsor: Cirkled In - Amount: $2,500 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to students 13 years of age or older who are legal residents of the United States or the District of Columbia. Applicant must create a free Cirkled In account. Link: https://www.cirkledin.com/scholarship/

Opp! Achievers Scholarship - Sponsor: Opp!Loans - Amount: $2,500 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to U.S. citizens who are graduating high school seniors or current undergraduate students with at least a 3.0 GPA. Applicant must submit an essay on a given topic related to financial literacy. Link: https://www.oppleans.com/open/scholarship/

Save for Future Scholarship - Sponsor: Coupons Plus Deals - Amount: $3,000 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to college juniors and seniors of all nationalities and majors who are at least 16 years old and are enrolled at an accredited university or college all around the world. Applicant must submit an essay on a given topic related to saving money. Link: https://www.couponsplusdeals.com/scholarship/

Scholarship Detective Scholarship - Sponsor: Scholarship Detective - Amount: $1,000 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to high school and college students who are permanent residents of the United States. Applicant must submit a short essay on, “what is the meaning of service?” Link: https://www.scholarshipdetective.com/scholarship/

Distraction-Free Driving PSA Scholarship - Sponsor: Distasio Law Firm - Amount: $2,500 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to students currently enrolled or accepted to attend an accredited college or university in the upcoming term. Applicant must have at least a 3.0 GPA and a history of community service, volunteerism or fundraising in their community. Applicant must submit an essay on, “what is the meaning of service?” Link: https://www.morrisbart.com/about/scholarships/community-service-scholarship/

Just Poetry Contest - Sponsor: Live Poets Society of New Jersey - Amount: Up to $500 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to all U.S. high school students. Applicant must submit an original poem with 20 lines or less. Link: http://www.justpoetry.org/submissions

Achieve Today Scholarship - Sponsor: Achieve Today - Amount: $1,000 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to any current students at an accredited U.S. university or college. Applicant must submit a video OR essay on personal development or high performance. Link: https://www.achievetoday.com/scholarships

C.I.P. Scholarship - Sponsor: College is Power - Amount: $1,000 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to students who are seeking a baccalaureate, master’s or doctoral degree in nursing. Link: https://www.aftercollege.com/content/article/aftercollege-acn-scholarship-cip

AfterCollege/AACN Nursing Scholarship - Sponsor: AfterCollege - Amount: $2,500 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to students who are seeking a baccalaureate, master’s or doctoral degree in nursing. Link: https://www.aftercollege.com/content/article/aftercollege-aacn-scholarship

C.P.S. Scholarship - Sponsor: College is Power - Amount: $1,000 - Closing Date: December 31, 2021 - Description: Scholarship is open to students age 17 years or older who plan to start a program of higher education within the next 12 months or who are currently enrolled in a program of higher education. Applicant must be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States. Submit a short online application. Link: http://www.collegeispower.com/scholarship.cfm

Find out more about the Funding College Project at https://www.facebook.com/groups/572664724945361/

Beyond the Bell is part of the Tacoma Whole Child movement—coordinated by Gieseckte and funded in part by Tacoma Creates.
Vaccine Information for COVID-19

Find Your Dose
Get accurate information from your Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

For help with trip planning, contact Pierce Transit’s Customer Service office at 253.581.6000 (option 1, then option 1 again), or use Pierce Transit’s online Trip Planner at https://tripplanner.piercetransit.org. App download is available for your mobile devices.

Around the Sound provides transportation for people with limited mobility, including those who use wheelchairs or scooters. Call (253) 858-7088 or visit https://atstrans.org/.

Have questions? Give the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department a call at (253) 649-1500. They are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, except Thursdays when they stay open until 6 p.m. You may also send an email to or email info@tpchd.org.

Get accurate information from your Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

COVID-19 Vaccine Access In Your Neighborhood

Hilltop Regional Health Center - 1202 MLK Jr. Way - Appointments are recommended. Call (253) 722-1855 or register here: https://tripplanner.piercetransit.org. Walk in appointments may be available.

Sea Mar Community Health Center - 3112 S Cashman - Appointments are recommended. Call (1-855) 289-4503 to register. Walk in appointments may be available. More information is available at https://www.seamar.org/covid-vaccine.html.

COVID-19 Vaccine Information for COVID-19

People’s Community Center
TPCHD provides vaccines close to home.

The Tacoma Pierce County Health Department will be offering COVID-19 vaccinations at People’s Center on the following dates and times:
Dec 3-10am-1pm (12 years and up)
Dec 10-3pm-7pm (5 years and up)
Dec 17-10am-1pm (12 years and up)
Jan 7-3pm-7pm (5 years and up)

Booster shots are available to those permitted/recommended by the CDC.

People’s Community Center is located at 1602 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way.

Lost your COVID-19 Vaccine Card?

If you lost your COVID-19 Vaccine Card, you can call the Washington State Dept of Health at 1-800-325-5599 or submit a request at www.doh.wa.gov/youandyourfamily/immunization. You will receive a new immunization record, showing your Covid-19 vaccine.

Advertisement Rates

5x7 in. quarter page $50
10x7 in. half page $100
10x15 in. full page $200
Purchase 2 months & get 1 month free

For more details, contact Kristine Coman at 253-442-8848 or email hacoffice15@gmail.com.
By BERK Consulting & The Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room Archives and Special Collections

From the late 1980s until 2011, the Swan Creek branch and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. branch served the communities of Eastside and Hilltop. These branches were key to each community, offering a range of library services, classes and trainings, technologies, and community meetings.

The Swan Creek Library Branch served the Eastside community from 1989 through 2011. Located at the intersection of East Street and Portland Avenue East, the branch was built with funding from an ambitious $15.8 million library bond that voters passed in 1984 (all other library buildings were remodeled or rebuilt with this bond). It opened to the public with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 20, 1989. The library offered community meeting rooms, adult basic-education materials, and a collection of books in Southeast Asian languages. In May 2001, due to budget cuts, TPL turned the branch into a “magnet library” by reducing the collection and partnering with Tacoma Community House to provide services as the Swan Creek Library and Literary Center, increasing its weekly operating hours from 45 to 66 hours.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. branch was located at the intersection of South 19th and South Cedar streets. The branch was made possible by the 1984 library bond. The Library Board chose the name for the branch to recognize the history and political commentary, and groundbreaking took place on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1987. Governor Booth Gardner memorialized King to a cheering audience of 500, including many members of the local Black community. The library opened November 7, 1988 and dedication took place on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1989. Budget cuts to the library system escalated following the 2008 financial crisis. The Swan Creek and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. branch were closed in 2011 due to rising operational costs, costly deferred maintenance and capital repair needs, low circulation rates, a small and limited collection size. At the same time, hours of service were reduced across the library systems.

Open House for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. property was held in 2012 and the Swan Creek property was sold in early 2013. This decision diminished library access for residents of the Eastside and Hilltop communities and intensified equity gaps that continue to have repercussions today.

Efforts to Restore Library Services and the Swan Creek branch reflect the impact and symbolic meaning of this disinvestment in historically underserved neighborhoods and communities. The increased emphasis on BIPOC populations cannot be understated: the branch closures have been a significant loss and detriment to the communities then, specifically the African American community in the Hilltop neighborhood and the Latinx and Southeast Asian communities of the Eastside neighborhood.

In 2014, following a series of four community cafes, a grassroots interest group, called the Hilltop Library Planning Committee, was formed to pursue the effort to restore library services on the Hilltop. While the Library has made some attempts to address the service needs of these neighborhoods, including a micro-library at the Eastside Community Center and funding outreach for several years since, it became clear that a comprehensive and updated understanding of community needs and resources was needed. This Feasibility Study is the next step in a series of efforts to right historical wrongs, rebuild trust with the communities of Eastside and Hilltop, and ensure that provision of library services in Tacoma is vibrant and in harmony with community expectations and the City’s stated values.

The City-funded Feasibility Study to restore services to these communities was poised to kick off when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, making the availability of funds for the study uncertain. Those funds were reinvested by the City of Tacoma in 2021, and the Feasibility Study is now under way.

The Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods have evolved in many ways since the library closures happened a decade ago. Libraries have also evolved since those branches were initially built in the 1980’s. Modern libraries come in many sizes and shapes and forms. In addition to material collections, they can offer a wide array of programming, services, community partnerships, and access to different resources.

This Feasibility Study is a comprehensive effort to determine the best possible options for library services in the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods of Tacoma considering current needs, interests, budget, and other resources.

Opportunities for community input will be ongoing throughout the study period of September 2021 to June 2022. The Feasibility Study team will present its findings in June of 2022. Here are some ways to engage with the study:

Stay up to date on the effort on the study website: https://www.telaatslibrary.org

• Submit your opinion of neighborhood needs and interests here by December 31, 2021 https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TPL-Eng

• Stay tuned for a January neighborhood workshop and additional engagement meetings.

By Dementia Friendly Pierce County

“...and looking for an activity, consider Opening Minds through Art. The class is free, all supplies and materials are dropped off at the artist’s home, and the 6-week sessions are virtual. For more information contact dementiaservices@lcar.org or 253-272-8433."

Communicating Through Art

Speechless Tacoma man finds voice through his art.

By Dementia Friendly Pierce County

“The glitter is our favorite,” Cheryl says. “It’s really important.” Picking up on her son’s grin, she brings him into the conversation with a smile of gentle pride that only good parents and former teachers can manage. “Isn’t that right, Nathan?” Cheryl says. “We really like the glitter.” Nathan nods right, Nathan?“ We really like the glitter.”

“Then the magic happens,” Cheryl says. Bold, expressive works of art. Colorful, bold creations. Nathan’s art has been drawing a crowd on Cheryl’s Facebook page. People express appreciation in the comments; there have even been offers to buy some of Nathan’s pieces that only half of it. "He’s speaking and looking in harmony with the comments," Cheryl says, pride humming in her voice. Cheryl echoes this statement when she tells us anything she wants people to know at OMA, “Take the class. If you or someone you know in Pierce County or the surrounding area is living with dementia or another cognitive challenge, and looking for an activity, consider Opening Minds through Art. The activity is free, all supplies and materials are dropped off at the artist’s home, and the 6-week sessions are virtual. For more information contact dementiaservices@lcar.org or 253-272-8433.”
Thoughts On Healing Circles And Hilltop’s Unhoused Neighbors

“Residents who live in the Hilltop, housed or unhoused can make a contribution to a thriving Hilltop community.” ~ Alumni Larry Norman

By Dr. Marcia Tate Arunga, Dean of The Evergreen State College Tacoma

As the encampment sweep continues in the Hilltop, this is a moment to reflect about the housing crisis that is occurring around us. We hope that our unhoused neighbors will receive the opportunity to be housed in a safe and warm space through the cold season, however we are all aware that emergency housing is not a permanent solution. There is a lack of sufficient housing, and a need to examine the systemic forces that perpetuate the unhoused pandemic.

Tents began emerging on Evergreen-Tacoma’s property following the encampment sweep that took place at People’s Park more than two years ago. First about half a dozen tents arrived, then 12, then 20, eventually totaling 49 tents within the camp at its height. Mandates surrounding COVID-19 prohibited encampment removal on city property during COVID restrictions.

As a learning community, we began to return to Evergreen-Tacoma and it became necessary to reach out and communicate with our unhoused neighbors. During this time, the community engaged in an inquiry and dialogue process: We determined this to be key to coexisting peacefully.

Evergreen-Tacoma called upon its alumni and other community partners to formulate most effective ways to address our unhoused neighbors’ needs through Healing Circles. Informal outreach began and quickly illuminated our mutual humanity. These conversations engaged topics such as communal respect, fostering safety, and amicable cooperation. As we learned the very real and pressing needs of the encampment, we wanted to partner with organizations who have built some reliance with our unhoused neighbors.

Our alumni included community activist Larry Norman, Leah Ford from The Pierce County Health Department, Tara Newton from The Rainbow Center, Merrill Pasey of the First Peoples Center at Evergreen Olympia, and many more. Through their efforts and extended networks, we were able to partner with more organizations including, the AIDS Foundation, the Needle Exchange, the Lived Experience Coalition, and a host of housed neighbors and current Evergreen students. All of the community partners brought information, resources, and attention to the well-being of the unhoused.

As Alumni Larry Norman observed, “Residents who live in the Hilltop, housed or unhoused can make a contribution to a thriving Hilltop community.” With that spirit, our neighbors both housed and unhoused, students, alumni, and community workers all pulled their social and community capital together. Out of this effort emerged a RICH Conversation, based on the acronym of the values at Evergreen State College, Reciprocity, Inclusivity, Civility, and Hospitality. This was an opportunity to invite our new Executive Vice President Dexter Gordon to witness first hand the stories of our unhoused neighbors. We used ongoing shared dialogue to discover our humanity and through our humility we shared meaningful stories about ourselves.

I was struck by the resilience that was in each other’s stories, the number of those with roots in the Hilltop, loss of homes and family ties, displaced communities, gentrification and much more. Through dialogue, we began to consider that our unhoused neighbors are not in a permanent situation.

We were introduced to the Healing circle process by Ashley Ellis of BREATHE and the Pierce County department of health in 2020. There are a some features that are used in this indigenous circle practice of dialogue. All participants were equalized inside the circle, and we listen to each other speak one at a time. There is the center piece that is a hand woven mat. On the mat, fruit or plants are some of the items placed to represent the human connection with all living things and the cycle of life. Water is placed to symbolize the life elements that humans share. We added a cup of soil from the college grounds to represent the need for healing and restoring the land as well as the humans in the neighborhood. The talking stick was symbolic of the agreement that the one holding the stick is the one who should talk. Eventually the walking stick was taken over by the microphone. Finally, an African cowbell symbolized the call for unity and understanding for the whole community.

For me, this journey has been about the relationship between humans. I realize that the healing is in the human connection. We need to make more of an effort toward compassion and recognize the power of dialogue when one person gets to hear the other. When we get a chance to replace a stereotype with a name and story, we are getting closer to the beginning.

Beginning December 8th through 12th Evergreen has the pleasure of hosting Ashley Ellis from the BREATHE center to train us in the facilitation skill of healing circles. I had the honor of experiencing Ashley’s training and found that it offered important ways to have a dialogue with other people.

Registration is still open for the healing circle training virtual training hosted by Evergreen State College, Tacoma. If you are a student and can commit to this three-day training, it will be considered the prerequisite to receive 2 credits for conducting your own healing circle during winter quarter. Please email Marla German at germainn@evergreen.edu with the heading “healing circle” to indicate your interest.

If you are a community member interested in participating, please reach out to Henry Jauregui at HJauregui@tpchd.org.

Thank you!

Dr. Marcia Tate Arunga, Dean of The Evergreen State College - Tacoma
Home In Tacoma: Impacts On The Hilltop

By Elliott Barrett, Senior Planner for City of Tacoma - Planning and Development Services

The City Council is scheduled to take action on the Home In Tacoma Project recommendations in 2022. Some of the dates have changed:

- Final reading of adopting ordinance – December 7, 2021 (changed from Nov. 30, 2021)
- City Council Special Meeting dates are soon to be posted (available on cityoftacoma.org/homentinacoma)

The City Council continues to work through policy changes to the package. On November 16, 2021, the Council held a First Reading of the ordinance adopting the package, then discussed the project at its November 23, 2021 Study Session. For more information visit cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma

What’s in the package:

The City Council will consider adopting the Home In Tacoma Project policy actions (Phase 1). The package includes:

- Comprehensive Plan policy updates – changing Tacoma’s housing growth strategy to protect size and standards supporting infill housing.
- Near-term Code Changes – adding flexibility to Tacoma’s current housing rules to promote affordability and infill. Public hearing will be on February 16, 2022 at 6 p.m.
- Tacoma’s Housing Action Plan – guiding long-term implementation of housing goals.
- The complete package, including a new Housing Growth Scenario Map, is available at www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma

Wondering what happens on the Hilltop in between Hilltop Action Journal bi-monthly editions? Sign up for HAC’s weekly eNewsletter at hacoffice15@gmail.com.

Home In Tacoma City Update

Final reading of adopting ordinance – December 7, 2021 (changed from Nov. 30, 2021)

By Bengisu Cecik, HAC Journalist and Community Planner for the Tacoma Ladder

Hilltops homes are varying in form, from single-family homes to new newly built apart . The neighborhood of Hilltop is peaceful to family, aging-in-place, generating income and living in walkable, transit-oriented communities. For many people, building a house is the single biggest financial decision they make. It’s getting harder to find housing in Tacoma. The City is considering changes to housing rules intended to help meet our community’s housing, supply, affordability and needs. For many years, Tacoma’s housing rules for most neighborhoods were primarily aimed at keeping out low-income households. Under these proposals, the City would allow more residential types – including duplexes, cottages and multifamily to be built in Tacoma’s neighborhoods, as well. The City would adopt standards to make sure that the design and size of new housing is not different from that of nearby houses. The Council’s July 13th Public Hearing, the IPS Committee has been working to address issues raised at the hearing through to the proposals. The City’s recommendations, which reduce the amount of Mid-scale and smaller homes, affordability and infrastructure policies, are included in the package now headed for a Council vote.

How to learn more:

- The public can attend Council and Planning Commission meetings, which can currently be held online, or view video recordings after the meetings. Town Hall for the City Council, you can call (253) 591-5030 (Option 4). The City of Tacoma launched the Home In Tacoma Project to gain community insight and in the City Council vote. Please help to spread the word and continue to participate.

By Bengisu Cecik, HAC Journalist and Community Planner for the Tacoma Ladder

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How can we improve transportation in Pierce County?

We need your feedback!

The Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC) is a dedicated group of people who understand that reliable transportation is important for people to stay independent and healthy in their community.

Please take five minutes to fill out an anonymous survey. Your answers will help us develop transportation services for people with limited or no transportation options.

PierceCountyWA.gov/Tsurvey

Call 2-1-1 for other languages or a paper copy.
Dec 18 - Saturday - 10 am to 1 pm. Annual Winter Glass Sale. Hilltop Artists. Hilltop Heritage Middle School. Get involved in the art action and help with rent or utilities.

Dec 6 - Monday - 6:00-7:30 pm. Hilltop Business Association Meeting. At HAC. Join HAC Board members with guests who bring news and information of interest to Hilltoppers. See the Facebook Live. Join HAC Board members with guests who bring news and information of interest to Hilltoppers. https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition.

Dec 7 - Tuesday. Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. Each year on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Survivors, veterans, and visitors from all over the world come together to remember and remember the 2,403 service members and civilians who were killed during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.


Dec 13 - Monday - 6:00-7:00 pm. Hilltop Action Calendar Dec-Jan HAC Virtual Weekly Update on HAC Facebook Live. Join HAC Board members with guests who bring news and information of interest to Hilltoppers. Find out about the Dec 18th Hilltop Holiday Crawl. See the Facebook Live. https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition.

Dec 14 - Dec 14 - Tuesday – 5:30 - 7 pm. Annual Carol Sing in Neighbors’ Park (South 8th & S St). Raise your voice in song and celebrate the beginning of the season. Music lyrics will be provided. If you would like to bring potluck soup or volunteer, contact 81960342310@gmail.com and let us know, so we can make a plan.

Dec 16 – Hilltop Library Planning Committee meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm via Zoom at https://zoom.us/j/81980342310 with Meeting ID 819 8034 2310.

Dec 18 – Saturday - 10 am to 4 pm. Hilltop Holiday Crawl. Pick up your Crawl Passport at HAC or participate in virtual marketing along MLK Jr. Way & S 11th Street. Shop locally for seasonal gifts and enter the Holiday Business Raffle to win fantastic prizes. Find out more on HAC Virtual Weekly Update or by visiting www.hilltopgrow.com.

Dec 19 – Saturday – 2 – 5 pm. Holiday Jazz on the Hill. Don’ts be handed out by the Peace Bus Santa (Kwabi) at the Tacoma Arts Community Center located at 1102 S 11th St, Tacoma, WA 98405. Santa will also be available for pictures! Hot cocoa and hot apple cider generously provided by Red Elm Cafe.

Dec 20 – Monday - 6:00-7:00 pm. HAC Virtual Weekly Update on HAC Facebook Live. Join HAC Board members with guests who bring news and information of interest to Hilltoppers. https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition.

Dec 21 – Tuesday. Winter Solstice. the first day of winter, is the shortest day of the year. rejoice - the light starts to return tomorrow.


Dec 25 - Saturday - Christmas Day

Dec 26 – Sunday - Todaysday that is the first day of Kwanzaa which celebrates African culture and traditions. It is observed on December 26 through January 1. https://www.officeforallkwanzaa.com.

Dec 27 - Monday - 6:00-7:30 pm. Monthly Community Meeting at People’s Community Center in the Multipurpose Room located at 1602 MLK Jr. Way.

Jan 1 - Saturday - New Year’s Day

Jan 3 - Monday - 6:00-7:00 pm. HAC Virtual Weekly Update on HAC Facebook Live. Join HAC Board members with guests who bring news and information of interest to Hilltoppers. https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition.

Jan 8 – Monday - 5:30 – 7. New Tacoma Neighborhood Council is on Facebook Live at https://www.facebook.com/newtacomaneighbors. For more information, please contact NCNТBoard@gmail.com.

Jan 10 - Monday - 6:00-7:00 pm. HAC Virtual Weekly Update on HAC Facebook Live. Join HAC Board members with guests who bring news and information of interest to Hilltoppers. https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition.

Jan 17 – Monday - 6:00-7:00 pm. HAC Virtual Weekly Update on HAC Facebook Live. Join HAC Board members with guests who bring news and information of interest to Hilltoppers. https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition.


Jan 24 – Monday - 6:00-7:00 pm. HAC Virtual Weekly Update on HAC Facebook Live. Join HAC Board members with guests who bring news and information of interest to Hilltoppers. https://www.facebook.com/HilltopActionCoalition.

Jan 31 – Monday – 6:00-7:30 pm. HAC Monthly Community Meeting at the Multipurpose Room located at 1602 MLK Jr. Way.

If you have any local events you share with the Hilltop Neighborhood? Email them to hacoffice15@gmail.com with full links and flyers in JPEG format. We’ll share them in our weekly eNewsletter and the Hilltop Action Journal.
Community Health Care has the full range of maternity services.

- FREE pregnancy tests! No appointment needed!
- Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Have your delivery at a local hospital.
- Specialized maternity program to help you prepare for your baby.
- You can choose your doctor from a staff of 12 physicians.

Hilltop Regional Health Center
1202 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Tacoma
(253) 441-4742
Learn more at www.commhealth.org