

FREE PANDEMIC EDITION

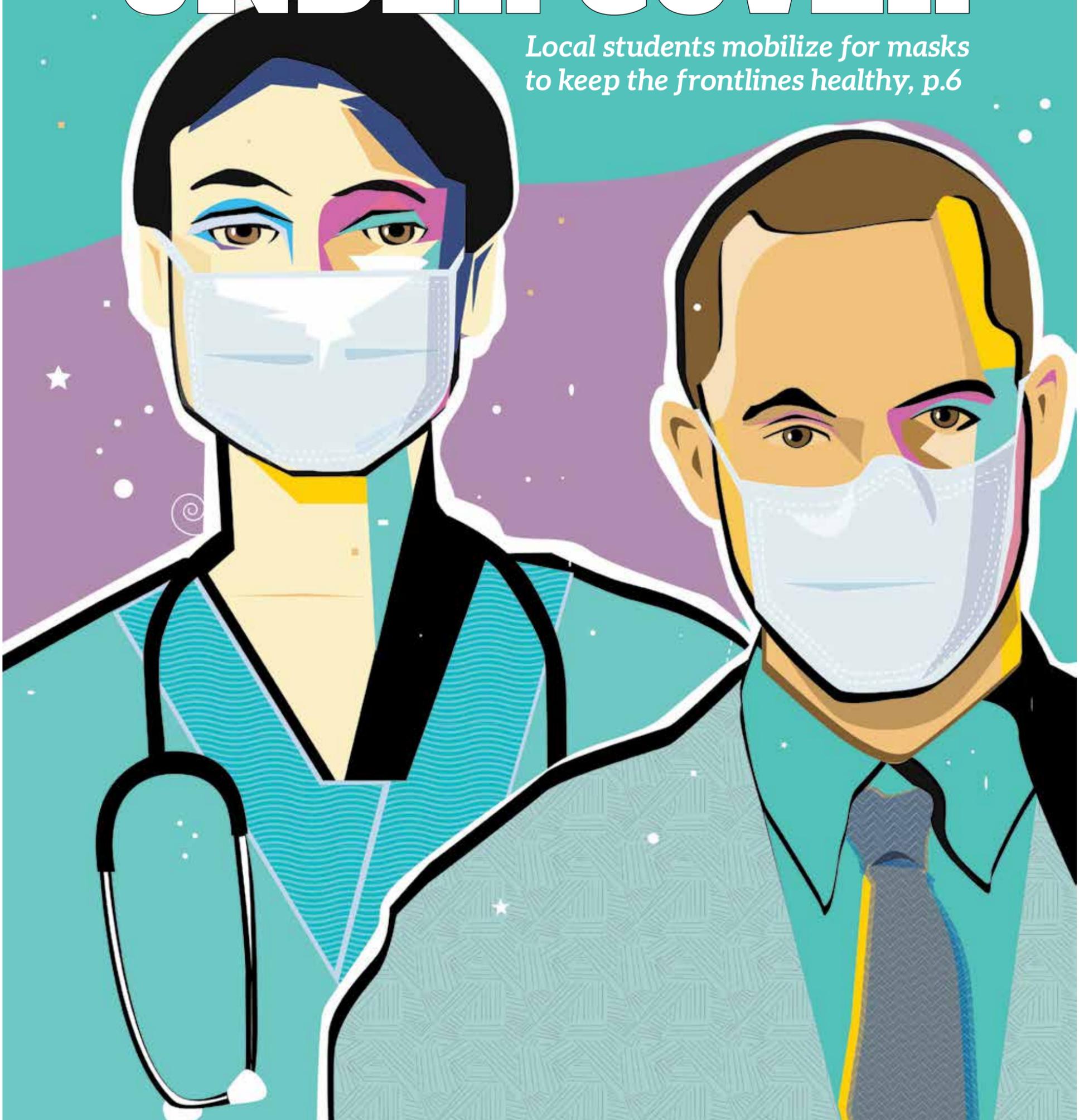


# REAL CHANGE

MAY 13 - 19, 2020 ■ VOLUME 27 NUMBER 20 ■ REALCHANGENEWS.ORG

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Real Change exists to provide opportunity and a voice for low-income and homeless people while taking action for economic, social and racial justice.

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**ON THE COVER**

Four Issaquah, Washington, students united to provide protective equipment for health care workers who are on the frontlines of the pandemic. See the story on page 6. Illustration by Jon Williams.

**Clallam Bay Corrections Center increases COVID-19 risk on West End of Olympic Peninsula**

**E** The EMERALD in Real Change

By **MEGAN MUNK**  
Guest Writer

As a resident of Forks, Washington, I am encouraged to see that our community has been proactive in taking steps to minimize the impact of COVID-19 when it comes to our town. We closed parks, are staying at home and made changes to our hospital and pharmacy protocols to limit contact.

But I am worried that we are not taking into account a large population that is within our community and currently incarcerated. As of May 5, 24 incarcerated people in Washington have tested positive for COVID-19, along with 36 prison staff members. Only 20 incarcerated people at Clallam Bay Corrections Center (CBCC), one of the local prisons on the West End of the Olympic Peninsula, have been tested.

We know that this virus can spread quickly even before it is identified, and that is exactly why we are taking precautions in Forks to protect our community. We should ask the same of the Department of Corrections (DOC), which continues transferring incarcerated people between facilities.

In the article "What COVID-19 Means For America's Incarcerated Population — And How To Ensure It's Not Left Behind," written by a doctor, an epidemiologist and a medical student, the authors warn:

"With nearly a quarter of the world's prison population, the United States is home

to an ailing prison health care system and its large aging subpopulation. Our nation's experience with tuberculosis, HIV and the ongoing hepatitis C epidemic has taught us that correctional settings are reservoirs of infectious diseases. Prisons push people into the paths of epidemics."

According to the Washington DOC website, we have up to 858 men at CBCC and 381 men at the Olympic Corrections Center (OCC). These men are housed in close quarters and routinely moved between facilities, which is contrary to Gov. Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" mandate. The men are unable to social distance or follow proper hygiene protocol with limitations on hand sanitizer in the prisons and personal property within their cells. The cleaning agent HEPASTAT 256 that DOC uses to clean facilities does not have an ethanol content high enough to meet the Center for Disease Control's disinfection guidelines.

As COVID-19 moves through the prisons, we are likely to see an explosion of cases inside, as is happening in Marion Prison in Ohio, where 80 percent of prisoners have tested positive for the virus. We are also likely to see an uptick in the outside community as prison workers, without proper protective gear, are frequently being exposed to the virus and then returning out into the world and to their families. DOC has no clear procedures to keep both populations safe during a pandemic that is highly contagious and, without proper testing, incredibly hard to detect.

I worry our community is without the resources to handle this situation. As we are being proactive in many ways, we must

not forget about the DOC system and how it is increasing our risk and exposure. We are at greater risk, along with other rural communities, where over 350 prisons have been built since the 1980s.

The hospital catchment area here in Forks is 10,000 people and includes La Push, the Hoh, possibly Neah Bay. UW/Harborview hospital takes our most seriously ill or injured patients, but they're stretched thin by the virus. Health care professionals in our community are overburdened, lack adequate personal protective equipment and are risking their lives to fight COVID-19 and attend to regular needs. If and when the virus spreads throughout our local prisons, the spread will affect incarcerated loved ones, guards and other prison employees, and our local nurses and doctors. When we are flown from here for medical care, we are usually flown out alone, but how will that work for prisoners? Our systems must adapt and take this crisis seriously.

There are many things that could be done to minimize the risk to everyone. As a society, we need to think about alternatives to incarceration and creating systems of transformative justice. Reducing the numbers dramatically in our prisons and jails is an essential public health measure. According to a March 26 CBS News report:

"U.S. Attorney General William Barr ... directed the Bureau of Prisons to increase the use of home confinement among older inmates with underlying conditions as a means to mitigate the spread of coronavirus within the country's prison system."

See **OP-ED** Continued on Page 12

**DIRECTOR'S CORNER | Timothy Harris, founding director**

Assuming rates of coronavirus infection in Washington state continue to decline, we anticipate that our vendors will return to work with Phase 2 of the Safe Start Recovery Plan. By June 1, our projected reopening date, street sales of Real Change will have been suspended for 10 weeks.

While the loss of daily income has been tough on our vendors, not seeing you has been even harder. Needless to say, we're all eager to get back out on the street.

Real Change is much more than a job. We are a vast network of life-changing human relationships. Each of our vendors is a hub of community, and every time you buy a paper you affirm the humanity of those who often struggle to survive.

At a time when the lives of homeless and low-income people are criminally devalued, Real Change is a countercultural movement that says each and every one of us deserves respect.

Your support of our vendors over the past two months has been beyond inspiring.

When Real Change suspended street sales with the March 23rd stay-at-home order, our first priority was the safety and continued support of our vendors.

We have continued to produce our weekly newspaper, and asked our community to support the vendors through Venmo while you read Real Change online. A list of vendors by location can be found at [tinyurl.com/venmovendors](http://tinyurl.com/venmovendors).

You responded. Over April, direct support of our vendors through Venmo



shot up to nearly \$11,000, or roughly four times our typical electronic payments.

For many of our vendors, this alone has been a lifesaver. When I spoke with downtown vendor Addis Michael last week, he expressed awe at the continued support.

"My customers have been pouring out love for me," he said, "and I'm not even there!"

Even more remarkable has been your swift and generous response to our Vendor Relief Fund. When we met our \$50,000 goal in the first week, we raised the bar to \$100,000. We quickly reached that goal as well.

Your gifts to the Vendor Relief Fund have meant that each month, we have been able to replace a portion of our vendors' lost income — based on their average sales — with gift and cash cards ranging from \$20 up to \$500.

With your help, we have turned our community meeting room (thanks to Zoom, we won't be needing that for awhile) into a food pantry for our vendors. On Wednesdays, we're open specifically for food distribution and grocery delivery to vendors who are self-isolating.

Every week, our staff calls through the vendor list to see what they need and how we can help. Beyond the gift and

cash cards and groceries, we have assisted vendors with stimulus check and unemployment claims and support for a variety of other needs.

This month, the annual online Give-BIG event offered our community another way to support Real Change. Our goal was to meet the \$50,000 match from Wyncote Foundation NW for a total of \$100,000. We blew right past that, and raised more than \$127,000 from 532 individual donors!

This generous support goes a long way toward replacing about \$30,000 a month in lost circulation income, and keeping all of our essential programs — the newspaper, advocacy and vendor program — fully staffed to meet the needs of our vendors.

Later this month, we'll launch the annual Real Change spring fund drive. Reaching our \$100,000 goal is one more step in securing our future during this extremely challenging time.

We know that we can count on your support.

As we look toward June, our highest priority is to keep both our vendors and our community safe as street sales resume.

That means supplying vendors with masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and other tools to protect public health. You have made all of this possible.

Because of you, we are confident that the new normal includes Real Change and the caring community that brightens our vendors' lives. We are deeply grateful for the love you have shown. ■



Google Maps image

King County rented vacant hotel rooms to house DESC clients experiencing homelessness. Renton officials are asking the County Council to end its lease of rooms at the Red Lion, citing a rise in criminal activity. Yet, many have used the time and shelter to get treatment.

**Temporary shelter and promises of coexistence are expiring in Ballard and Renton**

By **ASHLEY ARCHIBALD**  
Staff Reporter

People experiencing homelessness have been given more space to sleep and promises that they will be left in peace while trying to survive outside during the coronavirus crisis in the Puget Sound region. However, elected officials are signaling that these policies have an expiration date despite positive results reported by service providers.

Renton officials used the public comment period at the King County Council meeting on May 5 to ask that the county end its lease of rooms at the Red Lion hotel after the contracted 90 days, citing increased calls on emergency lines and criminal activity in the downtown core. That same week, Seattle approved a sweep of people experiencing homelessness in Ballard Commons park against Centers for Disease Control guidelines.

There have been 30 calls to 9-1-1 in the past month compared to one during the same time in 2019 said Rick Marshall, Renton's fire chief.

"We have seen significant demands on time and resources in this first month of the deintensification shelter to the point it's straining our ability to serve the rest of the area," Marshall said.

The concerns come even as service providers are reporting that clients who moved into more stable situations are better able to deal with underlying issues such as substance abuse.

DESC clients at the Red Lion Hotel in Renton have also seen benefits since the county rented out vacant hotel rooms to give space to people who once lived at the main shelter at Third Avenue and Yesler Way, said Daniel Malone, executive director of DESC.

"Harborview doctors doing services at the site reported in a meeting that one of the clients had said that they were able to start thinking about how they could address their substance use, and they didn't feel that way before," Malone said. "That's an example of the kind of benefit that we've seen there."

Malone does not dispute that residents of the hotel are calling police and fire, but



Map by Jon Williams

moving people into their own rooms has had a real impact on the health of DESC clients.

"It's going great, it's amazing," Malone said.

DESC is not alone. The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program (LEAD) also moved clients into hotel rooms during the coronavirus crisis. Many have decided to enter treatment programs, said Melodie Reece, a project manager with LEAD.

"Half of our client load have personally opted into medical-assisted treatment, which is essentially a way for folks to help wean off of their drug of choice," Reece said. "For that many people to say, 'I'm ready to stop my addiction and I'm ready to ask for medical help' is really profound and would not have happened if we hadn't given them a place to sleep."

The question is what happens when the coronavirus crisis ends.

Seattle has become addicted to the "narcotic of discussion," said Sara Rankin, a professor at Seattle University's Homeless Rights Advocacy Project.

"We use words like 'homeless,' 'state



Sara Rankin

of emergency,' 'crisis,' 'bold,' 'urgent,' but we don't act in a way that's consistent with those words," Rankin said.

Instead, Seattle relies on other superlatives while rejecting our collective re-

sponsibility for the homelessness crisis, Rankin said.

"We blame people who are homeless and in poverty for their own circumstances, but we also do that as a community where we blame others for the problems we're facing," Rankin said.

The apathy is harming homeless people.

On May 4, the city's Navigation Team swept Ballard Commons park where as many as 40 people were residing at any given time. The sweep came despite assurances from the city that such evictions of people experiencing homelessness during the coronavirus crisis would only happen if the encampments were hazardous.

The park has long been a place that homeless people took refuge. It's nearby a now shuttered meal program and one of the few public restrooms in the city of Seattle. The Seattle Human Services Department tweeted that the sweep had been conducted after extensive outreach and due to a Hepatitis A outbreak connected to the park.

According to Seattle & King County Public Health, there has been a cluster of Hepatitis A cases in Ballard, at least five of which were connected to a local restaurant.

It's not a lack of good intentions, Rankin said, but the city hasn't done the hard work of grappling with what's necessary to confront the overlapping crises of the coronavirus and homelessness.

"There isn't a comprehensive strategy and no commitment to a comprehensive strategy. That's when you start to see the wheels come off," Rankin said. "When the wheels come off, that's when vulnerable people suffer the most." ■

**REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK**

**Tax Amazon plan stalls**

The Seattle City Council will not consider a plan to raise \$500 million from the city's largest businesses until the council can meet in person over concerns that passing the legislation would violate state guidelines for online public meetings.

The decision, announced May 7 by Council President Lorena Gonzalez and first reported by The Seattle Times, was a blow to yet another effort to tax large businesses, including Amazon. The newest iteration, sponsored by Councilmembers Kshama Sawant and Tammy Morales, aimed to put money in the pockets of low-income households immediately and toward affordable housing and climate-friendly building renovations in the medium term.

However, such legislation is covered by the Washington Open Public Meetings Act, which requires opportunity for public comment and discussion. Gov. Jay Inslee suspended public gatherings in March, which precluded in-person local government meetings.

In lieu of traditional meetings, the governor and Attorney General Bob Ferguson put out guidance for limited use of digital meetings to continue the public business. Specifically, that guidance allows for bills that are "routine and necessary" or necessary for combatting the coronavirus.

The City Council held two virtual meetings to discuss the tax proposal before making the decision to shelve it. According to The Seattle Times, Councilmember Lisa Herbold convinced Gonzalez and Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda, who chairs the budget committee, that the legislation did not fit the conditions necessary under the governor's guidance.

Sawant decried the decision in a series of tweets, calling it a "naked attempt to break the momentum of our movement".

She also pointed out that councilmembers had violated the Open Public Meetings Act before voting on a repeal of a business tax in 2018 after The Seattle Times and SCC Insight found that councilmembers had engaged in a "serial meeting" by exchanging messages about the viability of the legislation.

Herbold raised similar concerns when the council considered modifications to the design review process, which had stalled since design review boards do not yet have access to virtual meeting spaces. That caused a bottleneck in new housing production that the council aimed to solve by temporarily allowing administrative review of certain projects and simple approval from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections for affordable housing projects.

Herbold argued that removing affordable housing from design review violated the governor's guidance on open meetings because such projects already received priority in the administrative review process and that changes were neither "routine and necessary" nor meant to help solve the coronavirus crisis.

That time, her colleagues disagreed. ■

—Ashley Archibald

## LETTER TO EDITOR

In reply to Mike Wold's review of 'We Lived Here: Stories from Seattle's Central Area' by Madeline Crowley published in RC April 15

Dear Mike Wold,

Thank you for your very fair, even-handed and well-written review of "We Lived Here."

I am so warmed to know that someone has read it. Thanks for the close reading. I have to agree with your gentle criticism; I wasn't dispassionate. I'm not a journalist but an artist who became an oral historian to do this project — and so followed the lines of inquiry that interested me. That's an astute observation, and while I knew I had specific interests, I didn't realize how clear that would be to a discerning reader.

I do value that. I deeply appreciate that you took the time to read it, to write such a thoughtful review, and to get it published.

The book caps what was a very long project so it's nice to know that it's out there and in the few hands that have an interest in hyper-local history.

Sincerely,  
Madeline Crowley

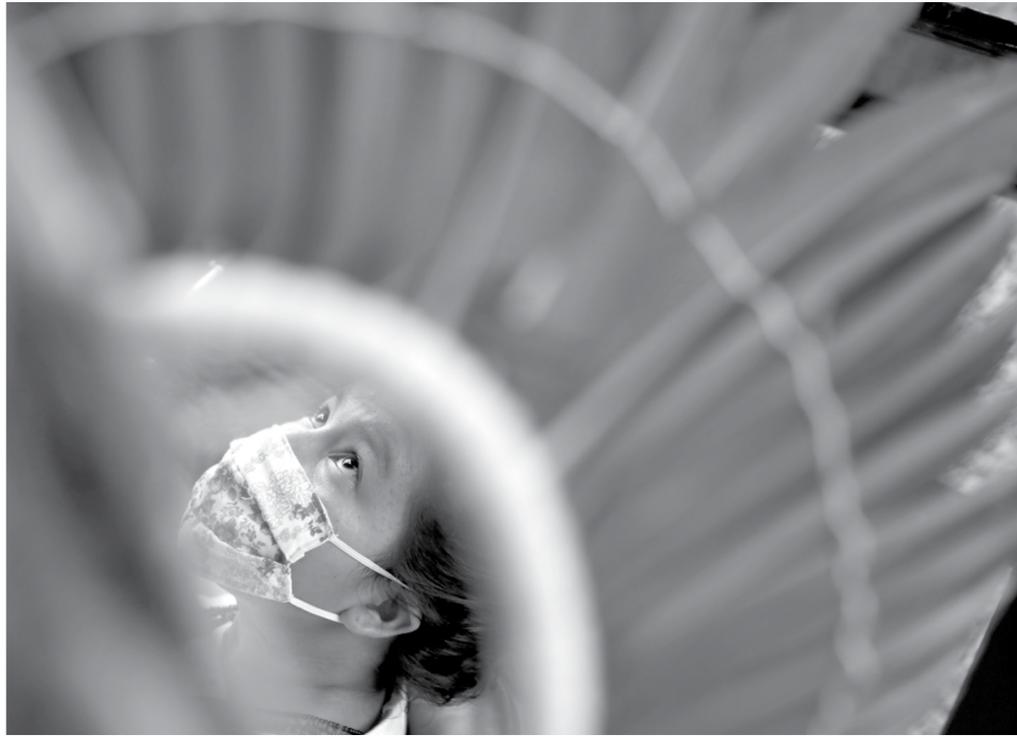


Photo by Bruno Kelly, Reuters

An Indigenous woman wearing a protective mask is seen at the Satere Mawe Association of Indigenous Women, where they are sewing face masks for sale during the COVID-19 outbreak, in Manaus, Brazil, in April.

## How Indigenous people in the Amazon are coping with the coronavirus

By NINA MOELLER  
and JM PEDERSEN  
The Conversation

A 15-year-old boy from a remote region of the Brazilian Amazon, near the border with Venezuela, died of COVID-19 on April 9. A member of the 35,000-strong Yanomami people, the boy was the first known death among Brazil's Indigenous communities in the current pandemic. There are growing and substantial fears that COVID-19 will wreak havoc across the Amazon.

The fear is unsurprising, given an estimated 90 percent of the original inhabitants of the Americas died as a result of European colonization, especially through the infectious diseases Europeans brought with them. Fragmented collective memories of deadly pandemics from the time of distant ancestors still circulate in stories of magical deaths caused by foreigners.

We have worked with Indigenous communities and federations in the region since 2005, witnessing their continuing struggle against deforestation and the wider fallout from relentless urbanization — the very conditions that make zoonotic spill over and new infectious diseases more likely.

### Varied lives

Well ahead of government action, Indigenous federations across the Amazon launched extensive campaigns to mitigate the pandemic and its socio-economic consequences.

This is not a straightforward task. Amazonian people live varied lives ranging from communities many days' canoe-

ing beyond the nearest roads to urban existences entirely dependent on constant cash flow for survival; from landowners to landless; and from those who possess traditional knowledge of forest nourishment and medicines to those who reject the old ways in favor of mobile phones and computer games. The impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous peoples will be as varied as their circumstances.

For the few who still enjoy functional autonomy in remote communities, there is little change: The outside world is an ever-encroaching threat, and the longer isolation can be maintained, the longer cultural survival can be ensured.

Many Amazonian people are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases. They are exposed to the effects of mining and oil extraction and institutionalized racism, which makes it harder for them to access good education, health care and jobs.

### One threat among many

Both legal and illegal resource extraction continues despite the lockdown. Illegal operations are in fact expanding in the absence of an active resistance, disregarding travel restrictions and potentially increasing the spread of infection. Some suspect illegal miners may have brought COVID-19 to the Yanomami.

We asked our network of connections in the Ecuadorian Upper Napo and the Peruvian Ucayali regions about local perceptions of needs and wants now that the coronavirus has reached the region. While many are out of reach at the moment, having retreated to villages and communities without internet, the message from road-accessible Kichwa communities is

unanimous: While concerned about the new disease, a much greater worry is posed by the lockdown. One traditional healer told us: "We have the plants to cure ourselves, but now that we are not allowed to go anywhere, we cannot earn any money."

Many Indigenous families need to bring produce to market in order to supplement their subsistence, fuel generators and canoes, service debts, and access phones or internet. The lockdown prevents all this. In the absence of any social welfare or other economic support, this is as devastating in the Amazon as it is anywhere.

Among Indigenous communities on the urban fringes in the Napo, there is a surge of interest in planting medicinal trees and plants in response to the pandemic. However, for the increasing number of Indigenous families who do not have access to land — their territories invaded, degraded and split into ever smaller parcels — the situation is catastrophic. Unsurprisingly, women and children suffer most, as alcohol consumption and domestic violence grow alongside boredom and desperation.

As we write, Indigenous communities are taking matters into their own hands across Amazonia. They are closing down access routes and retreating deeper into the forest. Whenever possible, they escape into ancestral territories, sometimes to places of cultural or spiritual significance. ■

Nina Moeller and JM Pedersen are academics in the field of water and resilience at Coventry University in England. Courtesy of The Conversation / INSP.ngo

"How do I shelter at home when I don't have a home?"

## CHALLENGING MISCONCEPTIONS OF HOMELESSNESS THROUGH PERSONAL STORY

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or call 206.441.3247

REALCHANGE

# Totem Star music flourishes over digital airwaves and across generations

By ASHLEY ARCHIBALD  
Staff Reporter

"Kiddus is here!" Tate, who goes by the stage name Russ.Le, threw his arms in the air, his face beaming. Kiddus joined the group Zoom call, having just moved his kid brother out of the room so he could talk with his friends and fellow artists in peace.

"Kiddus, I missed you, bro!" Russ.Le said, rocking back and forth with enthusiasm.

"Same, bro, it's been a minute," Kiddus responded, smiling.

"I'm going to go cry, bro!" Russ.Le stood up and walked out of the range of his computer's webcam, for effect.

It had been months since the half dozen young artists on the call had seen one another, months since Totem Star, a recording studio and music workshop for youth, shut its 250-square-foot space to protect against the deadly coronavirus.

But closed doors are no match for the internet, or for the family-of-choice that Totem Star helped create.

The organization, its founders and its artist-mentors have continued to provide lessons, musical advice and community to the young people who call it home, overcoming distance and circumstance to provide artistic development and community in a time when people need them most.

Totem Star is a decade-old organization co-founded by Daniel Pak that was created to give youth a place to come together to learn music, hone their music-business skills and build community.

Grae Violett currently lives in Olympia, more than an hour away from South Seattle where Totem Star is currently based. She found Totem Star three times, once at a music career day, then again at the Seattle Art Museum and finally at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, where she saw Mirabai Kukathas perform.

"Oh my gosh, she can sing!" Grae Violett remembers thinking.

The third time was the charm. Before joining with Totem Star, Grae Violett would write songs in her room, playing them on the keyboard and hoping that eventually, someday, she would find a space where she could record her songs. In Totem Star, she found her "someday" much sooner.

Because she lives farther away, Grae Violett often comes to the studio with music that she already wants to record. Artist-mentors help her arrange her music and work on her singing-songwriting, the base of her work.

Now that the official recording space isn't open, she is exploring new avenues of artistic expression.

"I'm a big guitar person. I love guitar in my music," Grae Violett said. The statewide lockdown is giving her a chance to learn to play the instrument.

Pak and his team saw that lockdown coming. First China, then South Korea and then Italy became virus hot zones and, with the exception of South Korea, places of mass casualties. Travel restrictions were declared in January. It wasn't



Daniel Pak

until later that the United States would discover that the virus was already within its borders, circulating undetected.

"I remember the two things that sealed it for us were when all of our events started

getting canceled, and then the University of Washington canceled all its classes for the rest of the semester," Pak said. "Then Microsoft sent all of their employees home."

Pak's drummer was one of those employees. He called to tell Pak he was on his way home to California.

"That's when we're like — OK. Things are all going to shut down, so we better get on top of it," Pak said.

The staff got together to discuss options. How would the organization continue to connect with its mentees? How would it keep the community together?

"We ended up closing our studio on March 9. The very next day, we launched what we call 'remote sessions,'" Pak said.

Students sign into an online portal and book space. They can work on songwriting, vocal technique, performance, beat making, mixing, music business and other pieces of the craft through one-on-one sessions with artist mentors.

The online space has opened up new opportunities, Pak said.

"In fact, we've had sessions as far away as Holland. Some of our artists who have gone away to study abroad have reconnected with us via these remote sessions," he said.

That's been great for Amina, a poet and self-described "social butterfly."

"I need human beings," Amina said. "I'm okay if you're right next to me."

Opening the online platform has helped with the isolation of the lockdown, giving structure to a week when days blur together in a miasma of monotony.

"It's a consistent thing we look forward to in our days," Amina said. "It's been hard, but they've been making it easier, for sure."

Even in a tech city like Seattle, strong, consistent internet connections are a privilege. While 95 percent of households had internet in their homes in 2018 compared to 85 percent in 2013, the ability to stream live video is about more than access. That's compounded in some neighborhoods in Seattle, which sparked the Upgrade Seattle movement for municipal broadband.

Arete, a rapper, is new to Totem Star and likes it and the people that compose it, but he's only been able to go to a few of the online sessions.

"Everybody here is real helpful," Arete said. "These virtual sessions are really great, too. I haven't been able to go to a lot of them because of the bad connection at my house."

That doesn't stop him, however.

"When I do have good connection, I complete everything I can as quickly as I can. It's not too much of a struggle, but I've got to be quick about everything," Arete said. "I can still manage it, but in a hurry, like Sonic."

When Real Change first met Pak, it



Photos by Tracey Wong

Amina, on the microphone, is a poet who found community with Totem Star. The lockdown has been difficult for this self-described social butterfly, but regular meetings with her friends and mentors at the organization help make a bad situation better.



Singer-songwriter Grae Violett is using her "extra" time during the coronavirus to learn how to play the guitar, one of her favorite instruments.



Photo by Avi Loud

Kiddus Fecto takes the stage. Like numerous people around the world, the artist is currently at home and works with Totem Star via digital conferencing.

was after a weekend conference at Orca K-8 School. He was presenting the music video for "Superhero," which he created with his band Kore Ionz. It dealt with weighty subjects that are just as urgent in 2020 as they were in 2017 — police brutality against children of color, rape and violence.

At the time, Totem Star had been around for seven years, and had worked with more than 1,000 young people.

"We're just planting seeds," Pak told Real Change in 2017.

Despite personal and universal adversity, those seeds are flourishing. ■



Russ.Le is a producer and musician who works and learns with other artists at Totem Star.



From left, Angelina Chin, Isha Rudramurthy, Claire Kang and Faith Lee stand with boxes of medical masks they provided for health care workers.

## Washington Youth mobilize for masks — and much more

By **KAMNA SHASTRI**  
Staff Reporter

One late night in mid-March, Angelina Chin, Isha Rudramurthy, Claire Kang and Faith Lee — all Issaquah High School students — were rapidly sending texts back and forth about the coronavirus. Chin, a junior, had an idea: She wanted to raise \$25,000 to procure 50,000 masks from a Chinese supplier she had worked with through the Issaquah Highlands Chinese Heritage Club, where

she had been volunteering with her family to gather donations of personal protective equipment (PPE). She wanted to distribute them to local health care workers who were facing a shortage of PPE.

Schools had closed, classes were online and even with AP exam prep, students still had unstructured time. Some of their peers were not taking COVID-19 seriously, continuing to meet up in groups. Chin and her friends wanted to send a different message: that youth understand the gravity of the pandemic sweeping the world and have



Health workers from UW Medicine say thank you to Washington Youth for Masks for fundraising to get them personal protective equipment.

Photos courtesy of Washington Youth for Masks

the power to mobilize.

They titled their initiative Washington Youth for Masks (WYM) and, in one month, amassed more than 200 student representatives who are spearheading their own community outreach and fundraising projects. One student representative is handcrafting friendship bracelets to contribute toward the \$25,000 goal. Other projects include online tutoring to create community connections. While many students are from the Sammamish/Issaquah/Bellevue area, students from Shoreline, Tacoma and Chehalis

have joined the growing initiative.

Chin, Lee, Kang and Rudramurthy say the idea behind WYM is not only about masks but about creating a network of young people who are contributing to the immediate needs of the community. "We have the privilege where we can sort of stay home and sit back. But we have frontline health care workers who are risking their lives and working around the clock to try to protect our community," Kang said. "So, the least that we can do is sort of get together and start little projects or big ones to help

give back to them."

All four of the project's leaders understood what COVID-19 means around the world. They have family from China, Korea and India and had heard about the virus and its effects from family even before COVID-19 took hold in the U.S. Kang says while she was aware of how serious the situation looked, she felt disconnected — until schools started closing and the effects of an omnipresent virus crept into her daily life.

Kang and Lee are seniors, and the pandemic upended the commemorative rites of

passage every high schooler looks forward to: prom, graduation and the parties that follow have all been canceled. "At first I was really disappointed, and I was wondering why it had happened during our senior year," Lee said.

Kang added: "It was a bummer at first, but seeing it now ... worrying about graduation or prom is like the last thing in my mind now because we have so many other things."

Lee, Rudramurthy, Kang and Chin start-

See **MASKS** Continued on Page 12

## A TALE OF TWO MASKS

As hospitals in the region consider when to restart elective surgeries, the Washington State Nurses Association sounds caution: Facility leaders need to ensure they have enough PPE for all their workers throughout the pandemic.

**W**SNAs Executive Director Sally Watkins says that each health care institution needs to take the lead on procuring PPE. "It is the individual hospitals that are accountable to make sure they have the adequate supplies on hand for their employees," she wrote in an email.

The process of procuring PPE is complicated; there are issues related to suppliers in China and, according to Jacqueline Barton True of the Washington State Hospitals Association, rural areas in Washington have had a harder time gaining access to equipment because suppliers would rather fulfill orders for mass shipments to large, urban facilities. In addition, COVID-19 took time to reach rural Washington and the delayed spread from urban to rural centers also contributed to how resources were distributed.

Just a few weeks ago, Barton True said some rural hospitals were still scrambling to get PPE, resorting to resource sharing and last-minute shuffling of equipment. But things are coming to a more manageable pace and overall Washington is stabilizing. Barton True said there is currently enough PPE, but the supply will be tested if a second wave of infection courses through in the fall or winter.

WSNA says the situation is changing day by day throughout the state, and an ideal and sufficient response is determined by the size of individual hospitals, their staff and caseloads.

N95 masks are necessary for doctors and nurses who will be in close contact with people infected with COVID-19. But for the rest of us, a sturdy cloth mask will do. There are efforts galore to sew homemade masks. Artists are selling on Etsy and through word of mouth.

The Refugee Artisan Initiative is one collective that has focused its efforts

solely on masks. Business soared after the local women's entrepreneurship organization switched to sewing cloth masks and face shields. The organization, which recruits and trains immigrant and refugee women to be self-sustaining through sewing and jewelry making, already had a stockpile of donated bedsheets in their Lake City office and have upcycled the materials to make thousands of masks.

Founder Ming-Ming Tung-Edelman says the artisans — all refugee women from around the world with varying levels of English proficiency — are thriving with more work than they ever had before. Some of their husbands, many of whom are dependent on a wounded gig economy, are also joining in to help.

Just last week, RAI sent 7,000 cloth masks accompanied by thoughtful, hand-made cards to frontline workers in New York. They are working on 10,000 more for Seattle and King County, with orders from Metro and the city of Seattle. It took 15 women only 10 days to sew 7,000 masks, and more are on the way from them.

If you would like to make your own mask at home, use this illustrated diagram as a reference to keep yourself, loved ones and your community protected.

Washington Lieutenant Governor Cyrus Habib's office has created a Washington mask challenge to encourage people to make and donate masks (see the graphic below). The challenge will funnel donated masks to organizations that need them through a partnership with United Ways of the Pacific Northwest. These masks will help curb the spread of COVID-19 and can benefit nursing homes, grocery stores, food banks, service workers and, of course, everyone else. ■

— Kamna Shastri

The Centers for Disease Control advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure. There are examples of how to make simple masks on the CDC website here: [bit.ly/2Leedr2](https://bit.ly/2Leedr2)

Below are directions for pleated masks you can make to donate. Anyone who wants to donate to health care workers needs to follow sanitation guidelines to ensure that your workspace and materials are sanitary, that you are following proper hand-washing protocol, and that no one in your household is sick. Those guidelines are located here: [bit.ly/2WiemQS](https://bit.ly/2WiemQS)



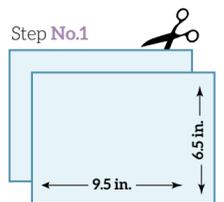
### HOW TO MAKE A FACE MASK

Step-by-step instructions for donations



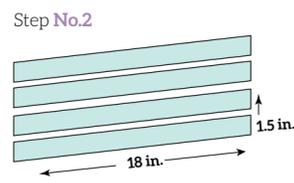
#### MATERIALS

Two 9.5 in. x 6.5 in. rectangles of cotton fabric | Either two 7 in. pieces of elastic (or hair ties) OR four pieces of 18 in. x 1.5 in. fabric | Needle & thread | Scissors | Iron | Ironing board



Step No.1  
Cut two pieces of fabric into 9.5 in. x 6.5 in. rectangles.

\*If you have elastic, you can skip to step No.5



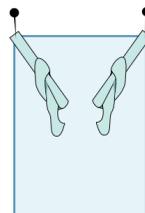
Step No.2  
Cut four 18 in. x 1.5 in. strips of fabric for the ties, then iron the strips.



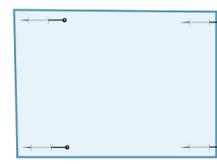
Step No.3  
Fold the fabric in half and iron a crease

Step No.4  
Open the strip flat, then fold each edge toward the center, then iron. Fold it in half lengthwise along the original crease. Iron again. Repeat the process for each tie to make four. Then stitch down the seam of each tie.

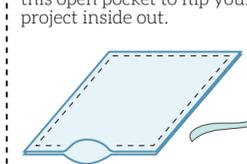
Step No.5  
Pin each of your ties to each corner of your rectangle of fabric. Gather or knot each tie at the end so they are easier to contain.



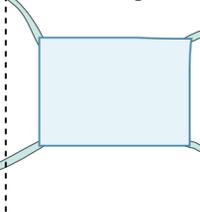
Step No.6  
Stack the two rectangles of fabric on top of one another, with the ties gathered inside. Pin the edges to begin sewing.



Step No.7  
Stitch around the perimeter about a quarter of an inch from the edge, leaving one small section open. Once you are done stitching, use this open pocket to flip your project inside out.



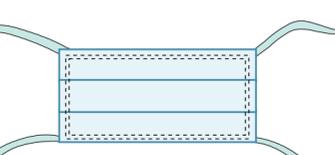
Step No.8  
Once inside out, iron your mask to prepare it for stitching.



Step No.9  
Fold your mask into 2 or 3 pleats, pinning each pleat.



Step No.10  
Stitch the perimeter twice: first stitch one-quarter inch from the edge, then stitch a second seam one quarter inch from that. Reinforce the stitching, keeping the ties in place at the corners.



## BOOK REVIEW: 'A Collective Bargain: Unions, Organizing, and the Fight for Democracy'

By Jane McAlevey | 2020 | Harper Collins | 304 pages | \$26.99



Jane McAlevey's 'A Collective Bargain' lays out a union organizing plan that could save democracy

## CAN AMERICA BE GREAT AGAIN?

Review by **MIKE WOLD**  
Contributing Writer

American democracy is in trouble. Yet in all the discussion about how to save it, pundits almost never mention the most effective way to counteract corporate power: strong unions.

That's the argument that union organizer Jane McAlevey makes in "A Collective Bargain." Recent union struggles and victories have brought significant changes in hospitals, schools and the tech sector much faster than any legislative process could have. "The mechanism for securing these victories was the collective bargaining process, and each involved strikes — the key leveraging mechanism of unions ... Strikes are uniquely powerful under the capitalist system because employers need one thing, and one thing only, from workers: show up and make the employer money."

Furthermore, she argues, the techniques used by successful union organizers to win strikes require a commitment to consensus building among workers. "This commitment to consensus building is exactly what's needed to save democracy." To win, organizers have to stop talking only to people who agree with them on a particular issue and instead "devote most

of our time to ... helping people who do not agree come to understand who is really to blame for the pain in their lives ... working through hard conversations, over and over, until everyone agrees."

That, McAlevey says, is the key to taking this country back from corporate control. We need to build a unified consensus among working people about what they need and who their enemies are and use the willingness to strike as the strongest weapon against corporate power and misinformation.

While the frame of "A Collective Bargain" is the relation of unions to democracy — as McAlevey puts it, unions at their best are about democracy in the workplace — the bulk of the book is a kind of primer, with extensive examples about how unions work, how to run a successful organizing campaign, and how to win a strike by building unity within the workplace and support in the surrounding community. Specific examples include organizing among Philadelphia hospital workers, Los Angeles and West Virginia teachers, and women in Silicon Valley.

McAlevey emphasizes the importance of identifying natural leaders in the workplace — the people everyone goes to when they have a problem — and getting them on board rather than just telling the workers what to do. Organizers should be open and honest about the chances of winning the struggle, what it will require and what their risks are. Key to winning is finding opportunities to make the workers' case to the public and getting the surrounding

community on board, meaning parents in schools, customers in workplaces, patients and their families in hospitals.

The book devotes a chapter to the insidious and well-funded game plans used by union-busting consultants, who are almost always hired by for-profit and nonprofit companies when they're faced with an organizing campaign.

Typical strategies include:

- Using misinformation to turn work groups against each other and against the union
- Buying off some workers with sketchy promises
- Convincing workers that they're going to lose and might as well give up
- Limiting the work groups that can be included in a union election, sowing distrust of unions.

All these strategies have spilled over into our politics in general. In a sense, union suppression has been a testing ground for the many techniques of voter suppression.

The book acknowledges that many unions have had problems with sexism, racism and a lack of sensitivity to environmental issues. As democratic institutions, unions suffer from the same problems rampant in the society at large. McAlevey points out that many unions have explicitly set out to combat racism and sexism among their membership, and that the most successful recent organizing drives have been among workforces that were racially diverse and predominantly women. She blames

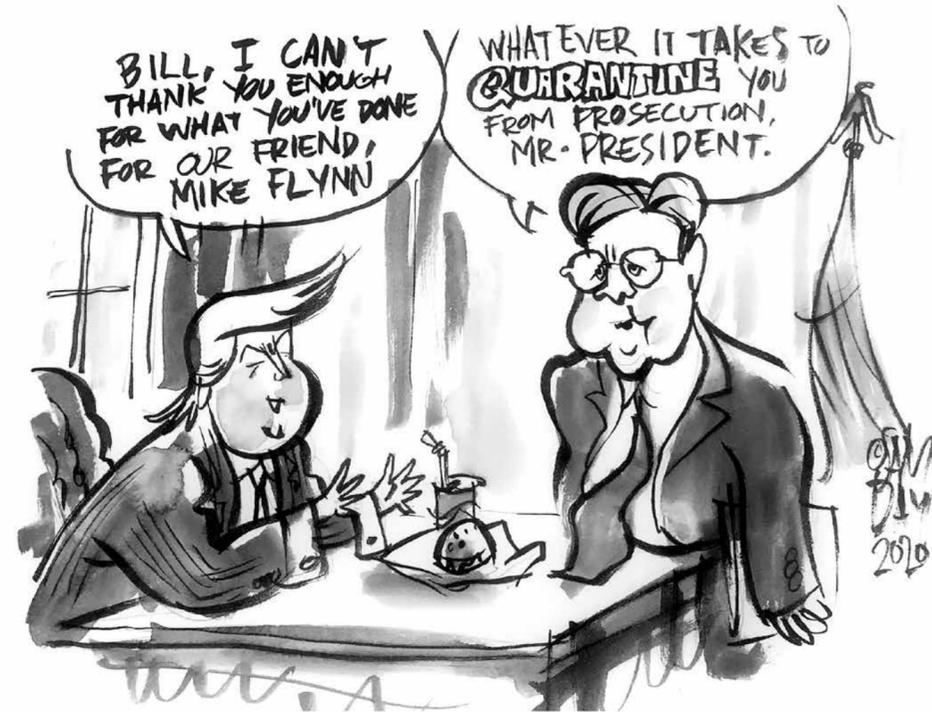
problems with corruption on conscious efforts by management to corrupt union officials.

One weakness of the book is that it doesn't include examples of how to reform undemocratic unions or challenge weak or corrupt union bureaucracies. McAlevey emphasizes the importance of transparency and including workers in negotiations, but she doesn't make suggestions or give examples — of which there are many — of how rank-and-file workers can challenge entrenched union leadership.

In fact, that's exactly what progressives face with the 2020 election. Leadership of the Democratic Party is, to put it mildly, ambivalent about challenging corporate power. Instead it "relies on data geeks zeroing in on minute numbers of voters getting 'activated' or 'pushed to the polls for one election day,' and then putting them back to sleep for four years." McAlevey's organizing model, instead, emphasizes combating voter suppression by building a "supermajority" for progressive policies and inoculating voters against feelings of futility and the "horrible things" that conservatives will inevitably say, and then keeping those voters active after the election is over.

McAlevey doesn't say exactly how this model can be implemented for this election or if somebody is doing that — but, win or lose in November, it's a strategy that could swing this country back from disaster. ■

## THE MIDDLE GROUND | By Sam Day



## Hey, Trump, I need underpants mailed to me from Cincinnati

After decades of telling us that shelter couldn't be found, it got done as soon as it seemed homeless people could pass this virus to the non-homeless.

I don't know what's crazier: we're all going down the tubes because of a virus, we're all going down the tubes because of a president, or NASA is going to let Tom Cruise shoot a movie at the International Space Station.

So far, who's even trying to guess what the movie will be about? Mission Impossible 9?

How about a heartwarming rom com? He's an aging American billionaire who's totally lost his mojo. He buys a one-way ticket to the ISS, to end it all there. She's a lively, out-of-this-world idealist and Russian cosmonaut who at first plays hard to get, but they end up together at a motel outside of Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, where he teaches her how to beat the stock market, play gin rummy and cribbage, all while sucking her soul dry until the credits roll.

OK, so I don't really know what a rom com is.

If it turns out to be "Top Gun" set in the U.S. Space Force, I'll be annoyed, unless it includes a space battle against aliens and alien spaceships get blown up.

A weightless version of "Rain Man" could be cool. Get Dustin Hoffman in space, too, to be Raymond again. "Raymond: I get my boxer shorts at K-Mart in Cincinnati." / Charlie: We're not going back to Cincinnati, Ray, so don't even start with that."

NASA is planning a new space station, this one called the Integrated Lunar Gateway, which will be in high orbit around the

## Adventures in Irony

Dr. Wes Browning

moon rather than Earth, hopefully in 2023. Tom Cruise could film a sequel in a brand-new location, with all different carpets and wallpaper, and different sights out of the windows.

Astronomers just found a black hole only 1,000 light-years away. Sadly, that's still too far for us to send Cruise to make a movie. We need to find one a lot closer.

Speaking of space, recently a space rock fell from the sky and exploded somewhere north of Seattle. Zombie brain-eating murder horns have come to our cul-de-sacs looking for fresh chihuahua brains. We can't catch a break.

If it isn't one thing, it's something else. Last week, President Donald "Art of the Deal" Trump decided he might just let the U.S. Postal Service continue to exist, but only provided they quadruple charges for packages. Right in the middle of extended lockdowns, when everyone is ordering goods to be delivered. All I wanted was new underpants from a Cincinnati K-mart.

[Stray thought: When you mail-order underpants, and they charge for shipping and handling, what exactly does "handling" entail in this context?]

We get breaks we don't believe in. Suddenly, as the coronavirus got really scary, Seattle and King County miraculously found the resources to expand the number

of homeless shelters so that people didn't have to be packed in so closely, and even found a way to pay for homeless people to be put up in hotels and motels. After decades of telling us that finding more and better shelter couldn't be done overnight, it got done overnight as soon as it looked like homeless people could pass this virus along to the non-homeless.

Now what everyone I know in homeless services is asking is: If and when the pandemic winds down, will the improvements be snatched away? My bet is yes.

What won't be snatched away will be Seattle's new Stay Healthy Streets, liberated for pedestrians. Mayor Jenny Durkan says that liberation will be permanent. We're now talking about at least 20 miles of streets, up from the 9 miles worth I talked about last week. More miles will be added later if there is enough clamor for them.

In conclusion, let's talk about Covetiquette.

People, please. Do not ride the bus unless it's an essential trip. Stay 6 feet away from everyone. No hoarding, especially of toilet paper, rescue kittens and stinky cheese. No hand-shaking. Learn to bow, curtsy or wave hi from a distance. Wear your mask.

That's right, I said wear your mask. I only go out to two places these days: a supermarket and a drugstore. Because I have needs, you know? Why is it half the people I see in either place don't wear masks? What, they all got tested that morning and the test was negative?

Really? How about wearing a big stupid sign around your neck: "I tested negative for COVID-19 this morning." We'll know it's a lie, but we'll at least appreciate the effort. ■

Table-Turning Theology



John Helmiere

## Endurance spirituality

Since this pandemic started, I've been asking, "How do you endure times of profound uncertainty with courage and faithfulness?" I have spoken with therapists, organizers, artists, theologians, priests and parents. We have spoken about their approach to this lockdown, but focused more on their past experiences of enduring extended suffering. I have now heard many stories, strategies for survival and ways of emerging on the other side of trauma. I have been oddly comforted to find that a single, unifying idea has not emerged as the key to gracefully surviving challenging times. The lessons of loss and the pathways through pain are many and varied. Just as I believe that the ocean of God has depths that no one person or religion can fathom, so too does the forest of trouble have many trails through it.

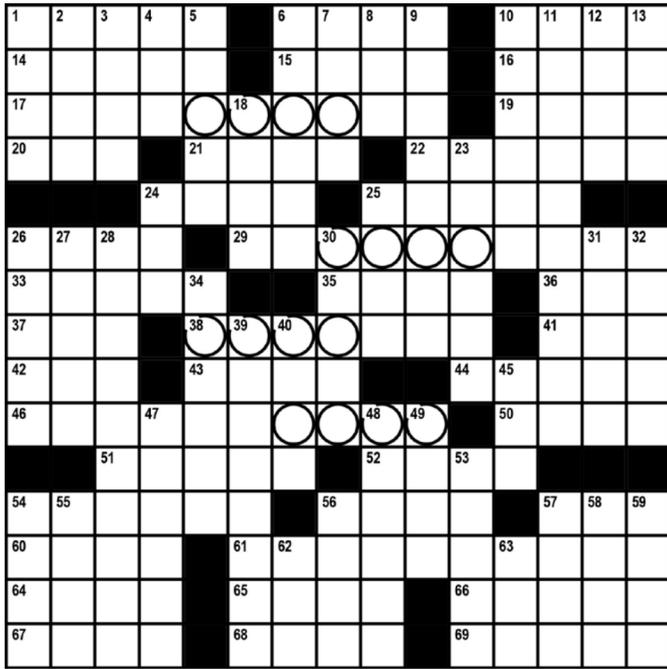
However, hearing each other's stories and listening to one another's lessons can help us to get unstuck from the loops that we so often find ourselves in during crisis. So, I want to share a few rich morsels on what I'll call a "spirituality of endurance" that have emerged from the conversations I've been privileged to have over the past few months.

One: "Sound it out." Rev. Osagyefo Sekou grew up in an Arkansas town of 35 people. As a child, he would sit on the porch and read the mail to one of his aunts, who could not read herself. When he came to a word he did not know, she would invariably say "Sound it out," and that's just what he would do. We are all facing things we have not known before. The only way through it is to haltingly, imperfectly, humbly "sound it out" and stumble our way through the haze before us. Ideally with the encouragement of an auntie or two.

Two: "Resilience is not reversal." Dr. Jan Holton, a professor of pastoral theology at Duke University, has counseled people undergoing forced displacement and the trauma of war for decades. She shares that virtually everyone has a stage where they pine for the past. In our imaginations, resilience (the power of overcoming) can only come through reversing time to bring back the past. In reality, resilience leads us to a new self, a new way of being and, sometimes, a new society.

Three: "This still is life." Marcus Harrison Green, the publisher of the South Seattle Emerald, has been through many struggles before this one and reminds us that "this may not be life as we knew it, but it's still life, and it's still a gift." It is easy to idealize alternative lifestyles that we once had or imagined that we could have. The way to endure amid uncertainty is not to chase a fantasy, but to seek to be the most loving, brave, honorable person that we can be, given the fact of our circumstances.

I have stopped trying to preach these days. In its place, I have discovered the riches of sharing deep conversation about the many paths through the shadow of the valley of death. As we walk through this valley, may we open ourselves to hearing and sharing our stories of endurance and be carried through on strength and wisdom beyond our own. ■



Blizzard

Puzzle by Patrick "Mac" McIntyre

ACROSS

- 1 Paintings by surrealist Salvador
- 6 BB's and bullets
- 10 Former Israeli PM Barak
- 14 Chicago airport
- 15 Apparel for Augustus
- 16 Start for call or cop
- 17 Type of labor that a well-worn phrase says "...is never done" 2 wds. (6,4)
- 19 Monthly util. bill (Abbr.)
- 20 Bill \_\_, TV's Science Guy
- 21 Use an upright revolving wheel to twist wool fleece into 68-Across
- 22 They're used in soft tissue surgery to cut, ablate, vaporize and coagulate
- 24 Listen : hear :: touch : \_\_
- 25 Tobacco kilns
- 26 Lotion ingredient
- 29 Outfits for Bozo and Emmett Kelly (2 wds.) (5,5)
- 33 Kind of journalism associated with and popularized by Hunter S. Thompson
- 35 Skin that's tanned
- 36 Tiny criticism
- 37 Bother, with "at"
- 38 "Sure. That'll be a breeze" (2 wds.) (2,5)
- 41 \_\_ roll (winning) (2 wds.) (2,1)
- 42 To the \_\_ degree
- 43 Greek war goddess
- 44 Of sounder mind
- 46 Outcomes of the 1969 and 1986 World Series' (3 wds.) (3,4,3)
- 50 Bunkhouse furniture
- 51 Face this way by turning your body 45 degrees to the left 3x

DOWN

- 1 Elevator option
- 2 Sailor's hail
- 3 Flimsy, as an excuse
- 4 Pique condition?
- 5 Good judgment
- 6 Freely (2 wds.) (2,4)
- 7 Neil Armstrong walked upon it first
- 8 Baseball VIP (Abbr.)
- 9 Reggie "Mr. October" Jackson during the 1968-75 and 1987 MLB seasons, briefly (2 wds.) (7,1) (incls. abbr.)
- 10 1974 hit with Spanish lyrics
- 11 Tiger Woods has had three in PGA tour competition (3 wds.) (5,2,3)
- 12 App that arranges a lift but not a Lyft
- 13 M.D. degree holders, casually
- 18 On \_\_ (without a contract)
- 23 Stocks, bonds, cash, etc.
- 24 Shriner's topper
- 25 Scraped knee in totspeak
- 26 Insurance seller
- 27 Very strongly unwilling (to)
- 28 Close to being down for the count, maybe (3 wds.) (2,3,5)
- 30 "That's amazing!" (2 wds.) (2,3)
- 31 Having prongs like a fork or metal rake
- 32 Red carpet walkers, often
- 34 Dieter's omelet ingredient, perhaps (2 wds.) (3,3)
- 39 Not openly (3 wds.) (2,3,3)
- 40 Part of CBS (Abbr.)
- 45 Six packs in the gym, for short
- 47 Low level workers?
- 48 \_\_ Kenobi of "Star Wars"
- 49 Role for many extras in "Sister Act" and "Sister Act 2"
- 53 Aussie pals
- 54 Pipe or petunia part
- 55 Finish a drive?
- 56 Film genre
- 57 Disney World transport
- 58 Saddam's supposed (but ultimately non-existent) stash (Acron./Abbr.)
- 59 Offshore
- 62 Cultural org.
- 63 Reproductive cells (Lat. pl. ending)

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realchangenews.org/index.php/site/giving

**SOLUTION**

**Animal Friends**  
May 6 Issue

Solutions to this week's puzzle will appear in the next issue.

# Streaming to stay sane

Almost all King County events are canceled, so we're listing streaming events for optimal physical distancing

May 19

Wow, No Thank You: With Samantha Irby and Angela Garbes

6 p.m., donations encouraged  
Streaming info and registration: [tinyurl.com/y9h2fotw](http://tinyurl.com/y9h2fotw)

Author and comedian Samantha Irby will be joined by Seattle-based writer Angela Garbes for a livestream conversation about her book of essays "Wow, No Thank You," her experiences in Hollywood, life in a blue town in a red state and other confessional tales from her life. This conversation is sure to have you laughing and, honestly, probably inspired! If you're an aspiring comedian or writer, these are two people who would be great to learn from. Also, if you're looking for a lockdown book, "Wow, No Thank You" is excellent and available at many local Seattle shops.

May 20

Women's Travel Book Club  
7 p.m., free  
Zoom info and registration: [tinyurl.com/ybmkfpel](http://tinyurl.com/ybmkfpel)

While physical travel is out of the question these days, it's an absolutely perfect time to travel ~mentally~. By that I mean read a book, ideally a book about a person who did go (to another place) to experience life and then tell us

about it — the next best thing to traveling abroad when we all don't go anywhere. Enter: "The Year of Living Danishly," written by Helen Russell about a year abroad. What's it like to live in the happiest country on earth? Seriously, when you land at the Copenhagen airport, a huge sign welcomes you and reminds you of this fact. So, what do the Danes get right? Or wrong? Take a trip in the book and find out, and then discuss it all with your new club.

May 22

Solitude Social Club: Literary Happy Hour with Marie-Helene Bertino  
5 p.m., free  
Registration and Zoom info: [tinyurl.com/y9h2fotw](http://tinyurl.com/y9h2fotw)

Hugo House is bringing together readers and writers through their literary happy hours hosted on Zoom. Every happy hour will feature a guest writer — in this case, Marie-Helene Bertino, who will share how they've been finding happiness through art during these trying times. After the conversation, there is the opportunity to break into smaller groups so people can actually have a chance to speak together and get to know each other. This will be a lovely event for readers, writers and those with an interest in the arts to find a place to connect over a shared passion.

Eclair Workshop

7-9 p.m., \$55, Tickets and Zoom, info: [tinyurl.com/y9v1oqc5](http://tinyurl.com/y9v1oqc5)

Looking for a labor-intensive but educational activity? Make some tasty eclairs! The class will be taught on Zoom and a full list of ingredients will be sent to you prior to class for you to get fully prepared. Also, you will receive a recording of the Zoom session so you can reference it the next time you feel like being fancy and making eclairs. Transform your home into a French bistro with these delicious pastries. Plus, what's better motivation to get out of bed than knowing you made yourself a pastry for the occasion? Nothing!

Thursdays

Beer Barre with EshelYoga  
5:30-6:30 p.m., donations encouraged  
Facebook Live info: [tinyurl.com/yachlemw](http://tinyurl.com/yachlemw)

There are two types: people who can work out at home and people who can't. This event is pretty much perfect for both. All you need is a yoga mat, two small weights (a can of beans or wine bottles work as well!) and a cold beer waiting for you in the fridge. EshelYoga will be instructing you through a full barre class via their livestream, and at the end, you get to enjoy a beer together — how's that for some motivation? Donations are encouraged as 100 percent of proceeds

will be donated to Seattle Foundation's COVID Response Fund. With this event, you can do good, feel good and look good: triple threat.

Fridays

Jet City Improv: Comedy in Quarantine  
7:30 p.m., \$5 minimum suggested donation  
Tickets and Twitch info: [tinyurl.com/y9v1oqc5](http://tinyurl.com/y9v1oqc5)

Jet City Improv will be bringing together improvisers from around the country and maybe even the world (!) to perform comedy remotely. Jet City Improv heavily relies on donations to keep their theatre afloat and to support all of their other initiatives, such as teaching campers and incarcerated youth. Let's help keep Jet City Improv alive, and they'll help us keep in good spirits. Then we'll have places to go and people to laugh with forever and ever.

Calendar compiled by Michelle Galluzzo. Got something we should know about? Email it to [calendar@realchangenews.org](mailto:calendar@realchangenews.org). The deadline for calendar submissions is nine days prior to the date of publication.

# Homeless 'treated as criminals' amid virus lockdowns

Police enforcing orders that people stay off the streets are targeting those with nowhere else to go

By UMBERTO BACCHI and RINA CHANDRAN  
Reuters

From the Philippines to Italy, homeless people have faced fines or arrest for failing to comply with coronavirus lockdown restrictions, activists and researchers warn, calling for more support and leniency from authorities.

Governments around the world have been racing to house the estimated 1.8 billion people who are homeless or live in inadequate housing and are uniquely at risk of being infected and infecting others during the pandemic.

But housing campaigners said many of the measures taken — from opening up shelters to making more funds available to homeless charities — fall short and are accompanied by counter-productive, strict policing and enforcement.

Leilani Farha, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, said she had been "appalled" to hear that in countries like France and Nigeria people had been ticketed, arrested and "treated as criminals."

"This is state behavior against homeless people that we certainly saw pre pandemic. ... But in the time of COVID-19 it can be a death sentence," she said in emailed comments.

Worldwide, at least 3 million people have been reported to have been infected by the respiratory disease and over 200,000 have died, according to a Reuters tally.

Health experts say the homeless are more likely to contract illnesses such as the COVID-19, in part because of weakened immune systems due to additional stress and lack of nutrition and sleep.

They also often suffer underlying medical conditions that make an illness more serious when it does break out.

Priya Kale, a woman living in a homeless shelter in northeast Delhi with her husband and five children, said a doctor had yet to visit the shelter of nearly 100 families.

"If someone falls sick here, it would be very hard, because it is a small place and there is no room to keep distance," she said.

Fines and arrests

In the Philippines, where President Rodrigo Duterte warned that anyone violating lockdown measures could be shot, tens of thousands of people have been arrested for breaking curfew or disobeying authorities, according to human rights groups. Many among them were homeless people.

At the same time, homeless shelters in Manila have been shut for violating quarantine conditions, forcing millions of people to seek shelter in empty churches and schools.

"Many of those violating the lockdown measures are doing so out of desperation, as they have lost their livelihoods and are still awaiting government assistance," Shamini Darshni Kaliemuthu of FORUM-ASIA said in a press release this month.

Homeless charities in Italy have urged police in some cities to stop fining rough sleepers for breaching self-isolation measures.

A spokesman for the interior ministry



Photo by Anushree Fadnavis, Reuters

A police officer wields his baton against a man as punishment, outside a government-run night shelter in the old quarters of Delhi, India, during a 21-day nationwide lockdown to limit the spread of COVID-19.

said that after a somewhat "jumbled" start to the lockdown, it instructed all local authorities to act in a "humane and rational way" when dealing with homeless people.

In the Indian capital of Delhi, homeless people have been prevented from walking outside to get to the "hunger relief centers" that have been set up to feed the needy during lockdown, according to the Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN).

The nonprofit estimates there are up to 200,000 homeless people in the city.

Kale, the woman living in the Delhi shelter, said "we have heard that homeless people have been rounded up by the police from the streets and taken to camps. Some were beaten. Some could not take their belongings."

Rights groups in the United States said some police have been going against the advice of health authorities by continuing to enforce laws that prohibit trespassing and sleeping in or setting up tents in public places.

With libraries, cafés and other public facilities closed, it has become more difficult for homeless people to access toilets.

That makes it harder for them to follow basic sanitary guidelines such as hand-washing, said Eric Tars, legal director of the Washington, D.C.-based National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty.

It has also exposed some homeless people to fines for public urination, he said in a phone interview.

Squeezed

As many U.S. homeless shelters are reducing their capacity to comply with social distancing orders, finding a safe haven has become almost impossible for many homeless people, Tars said.

"In some of the bigger cities, they are trying to address that. But so far, it's been

largely through creating new congregate facilities, which are not safe at all," he said, noting that cramped conditions heightened the risk of contagion.

Authorities in India and South Africa have also set up impromptu shelters and camps, sometimes using stadiums and soccer fields.

But rights groups have warned that the conditions are often unsanitary and that police have been using force to bring homeless people to the temporary shelters or prevent them from leaving.

"The process of relocating them must be humane and not forceful," said Shivani Chaudhry, executive director of the HLRN in Delhi.

"While several incidents of police assistance and goodwill have been witnessed during India's lockdown, it is alarming that incidents of police brutality have also occurred in parts of the country."

The Delhi police did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment.

Solutions

Homelessness advocates say the situation has improved in some cities as authorities have become more sensitive to the needs of homeless people.

In the Slovak capital Bratislava, early enforcement of social distancing rules by police sent homeless people scattering to hide in places like cemeteries and closed parks, making it hard for activists to help them, charities said.

But a week into the lockdown, the police became more lenient, said Pavol Sabela, manager of Stopa Slovensko, a non-governmental organization.

Many of the homeless have now returned to the city center, where it is easier to provide them with food, face masks and

medical advice, he added.

In Barcelona, Spain, homeless people can get certificates stating that they have nowhere to live, which they can show police to prevent them being fined for being outside, according to the Arrels Foundation, the charity that devised the scheme.

"Since we started doing the certificate — and police started to take into account that there are people living on the streets who don't have a home to go to — the number of fines and complaints to the police has fallen," said Beatriz Fernandez, the charity's legal head.

Cities are also finding unconventional ways to house their homeless during the pandemic, turning vacant spaces and disused buildings — such as festival halls, conference centers and cottages — into makeshift homes.

Several cities have been mobilizing public funds to lodge homeless people in empty hotel rooms, where they can safely self-isolate.

While most of these moves are short-term measures, they also provide an opportunity for some governments to reassess their general efforts to end homelessness, said Patrick Duce, campaign impact manager at World Habitat, a U.K.-based charity.

"In places like England, they have housed thousands of people in one week, when for years the government has said, 'We will end rough sleeping and street homelessness by 2027,'" he said.

"Now we know it can be done. So, in the long term there need to be very serious conversations. If the money is there and the intention is there, why do we accept anybody sleeping rough?" ■

Courtesy of Reuters / Thomson Reuters Foundation / INSP.ngo

**MASKS** Continued from Page 7

ed WYM after schools closed and before a remote education routine had set in. In that time, they created an organizational model and started to spread the word about their fundraising campaign on social media. Then, backlash started to come in, mostly from adults who probed the group about where the money would go and expressed doubts over whether the masks were safe. Ultimately, they were asking whether young people could be taken seriously at all.

"I think it's totally understandable that they're questioning it, but it was sort of hard to reply to those comments," Lee said.

The group not only received skepticism from adults but from their own peers, some of whom wondered if the four students wanted to boost résumés and college admissions. "It was trying to push past those ... misconceptions people might have in the beginning just because it was a group that was started by young people and it's being carried out by young people," Kang said.

Undeterred, they took this pressure as motivation to strengthen their work and prove their legitimacy, Chin said. They responded with FDA documentation that approved the masks and have posted all legal documents on their website. They gained traction with their peers through social media and found that young people around them were starting to change their attitudes about how to respond to COVID-19.

As more youth started to post messages like "stay home, save lives" to their peers and networks, the nonchalance began to taper off. "They take it more seriously just because we're in the same age group," Kang said.

Kang also noted that when educators incorporated current events in the class-



**Washington Youth for Masks successfully funded and procured medical masks, left, from HuBei Weikang Protective Products Co. Ltd. A leader of the group hand-made friendship bracelets to contribute, right.**

room, young people felt more compelled to take community-wide action. She points to her AP government class in which an education about politics and leadership has helped her understand the complexities of COVID-19.

Social media, as controversial as it is, provides a virtual collaborative space for teens who would otherwise be organizing in hallways beside their lockers or around lunch tables in the cafeteria. "Especially since now we have a lot of free time and we spend a lot of it on social media or on our phones, if you just go on and see a bunch of your friends promoting like a cause or doing something to raise money like that, [it's] an easy way for you to get involved," Rudramurthy said.



Photos courtesy of Washington Youth for Masks

To date, the group has donated 30,000 masks — over half of their goal. The efforts won't stop even after hitting the 50,000 mark; they will continue the "developing youth initiative" toward mutual aid for communities impacted by COVID-19 as the world adjusts to a new kind of normal.

Among the things Chin, Kang, Rudramurthy and Lee said they would reflect on from this global shift are the privilege of education and the value of face-to-face interactions.

"Once we slowly start transitioning to our normal daily lives, I'll not be taking these for granted," Kang said. "I'll also be able to recognize that youth can do things to help the community and make a big change if they all just come together." ■

**OP-ED** Continued from Page 2

We can start by releasing inmates who are immunocompromised, all incarcerated youth and those who are close to the end of their sentences. Let those individuals out who do not pose a threat to public safety. And an important way to ensure they don't pose a risk to public safety, regardless of the crime they are incarcerated for, is to ensure the conditions they are returning home to set them up for success.

Many of the people incarcerated are immunocompromised, and the stress of living in prison will exacerbate the condition for anyone who contracts COVID-19. These incarcerated people are our neighbors here on the West End. Taking real care of them is part of taking care of our community. If real changes are not made, the staff in these prisons — our neighbors and loved ones — will also become sick, putting our community's health at risk, not to mention the devastating economic impacts.

Please reach out to your city council; DOC officials locally at CBCC and OCC, as well as at the headquarters in Olympia; our State Department of Health and Gov. Inslee's office and ask them to act immediately to help and reduce our incarcerated populations. ■

*Megan Munk lives off-grid, right outside Forks, in an intentional community. Megan is a prison-abolitionist, transformative justice and conflict transformation trainer, and musician. Megan believes we can create a world where everyone has their needs met (housing, food, community, water, safety, learning, health care, etc.) for free with locally and globally coordinated systems of mutual aid. This can happen without destroying the planet and without coercion. It's about time we all got free.*



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