

## Community Connections

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## Teens explore history of Yesler Terrace

hey knocked on many doors and interviewed countless residents.

They took photos and shot videos, too—all part of an extensive project by Seattle teens to capture the rich history of Yesler Terrace.

Claire Garoutte of Seattle University's Fine Arts department partnered with Asfaha Lemlem, coordinator of the Yesler Terrace Computer Lab and Learning Center, Kat Vellos, program director at Youth In Focus, and Assaye Abunie of the Multimedia Resource and Training Institute to lead a group of 13 teens in a summer youth media program at Yesler Terrace. The students tackled a range of historical topics over six weeks about the subsidized housing project. An exhibit of their work will be featured on the SU campus from mid-September through November. (See You're Invited for more details.)

"It's good for the university to engage with the community for something like this," says Abunie, whose nonprofit serves Seattle immi-

grant communities and seeks to mobilize young media enthusiasts through multimedia training. Youth in Focus is an afterschool photography program for disadvantaged teens.

Yesler Terrace's backyard and community gardens drew one team to arrange a visit with Vinh Nguyen, a 15-year resident who agreed to appear in a video in front of his whimsical backyard plot. His grandson Jason Nguyen translated his grandfather's native Vietnamese language for interviewer Rekeik Meshesha, a sophomore at Holy Names Academy. She discovered this satisfied gardener spends four days a week proudly tending his red, pink and yellow roses and other ornamentals.

The students and their volunteer mentors, including several from SU, gathered four mornings a week at the Yesler Terrace Community Center to map out their efforts. In small teams, they hammered out plans to interview community figures from the Seattle Housing Authority and SU's Center for Service and Community Engagement as well as Seattle City Council President Sally Clark, who chairs the council's special committee on Yesler Terrace.

Yohanna Gebregiorgis, a freshman at Garfield High School, said her group planned to ask Clark about Section 8 housing vouchers and which of the more than 500 Yesler Terrace households would receive first choice.



Mohamoud Kodah, a Garfield High School student, prepares to shoot a video at a Yesler Terrace garden.

"It's good for the university to engage with the community for something like this."

Assaye Abunie, Multimedia Resource and Training Institute

Some teens focused on the first residents to be displaced by phase one of the redevelopment. Others interviewed elders at Yesler Terrace who have called it home for a decade or more. They also probed how the redevelopment could impact residents who serve as neighborhood childcare providers and the history and future of basketball at Yesler Terrace.

The enterprising teens occasionally learned not everyone was interested in appearing on camera. Mentors encouraged them to regroup, rethink how to present their project with more polish and try again.

Garoutte says she hopes to find funding to engage new teens in the program annually until the Yesler Terrace redevelopment is complete, which could take 15 years or more.

## Basketball Coach 'Peps Up' Area Youngsters

ameron Dollar, head coach of men's basketball at Seattle University, predicts a good season for his Division I team.

"We spend a lot of time early on developing a culture so team members teach each other and their team confidence grows," says Dollar. "They've earned the right to have success in this moment and what that brings."

The tone this Squire Park resident sets for his players is much larger than basketball, though.

"For me, coaching is more than a means to an end. The purpose of my life has always been to facilitate the growth of young people," he says. "As you go through life, it's about building relationships, investing in people, giving back and serving others."

He credits SU President Stephen Sundborg, S.J., for challenging everyone at the university to contribute more time and energy to the neighboring community—youth in particular.

"That's at the core of who I am, too. It's not just talk. It's who we really are as a university,' says Dollar, who joined SU in spring 2009. "I can legitimately look in the faces of parents and say I'm training their sons to serve others."

In addition to partnering with the Seattle University Youth Initiative to offer a summer basketball camp on campus for at-risk youth, he works with the Breakfast Club, a group of African American businessmen that sponsors youth who can watch and learn from SU team practices and meet the players. Varsity and junior varsity basketball teams from area high schools and as far away as the Tulalip Indian Reservation near Marysville have opportunities to meet and visit with the SU team.



Cameron Dollar leads a summer basketball camp on the SU campus.

Rotary Boys and Girls Club's 7th and 8th grade basketball teams go to SU team practices at KeyArena at Seattle Center and can chat with the players. On occasion, staff at Rotary might notice a youth who needs what Dollar calls "a pep up."

"We routinely have them come to a practice," he says. "It's all about giving them exposure so they can see how our players have the same thoughts, the same struggles."

When St. Francis House, a neighborhood charity that provides clothing for homeless and low-income individuals, had a need for shoes in large sizes, Dollar arranged for players to donate their next-to-new court shoes. It's a relationship that continues. "That's the sort of thing that brings meaning to what I do. And as you reflect, you always find more meaning," he says.

Family is important to Dollar. His dad

Donald, a veteran basketball coach himself, works alongside him as an assistant coach. And Dollar lives within a block of his office at SU's Connolly Center with his wife Maureen and their young children Jalen, Giselle and Jason. Because coaching is such a demanding job, he chose to live where he would have as much access to his family as possible. "It makes the job more manageable and my wife is better able to grasp how she's a part of making this go, too," he says.

#### **BECOME A REDHAWKS FAN**

Single tickets for SU's men's basketball go on sale beginning Oct. 2. For details and complete game schedule, visit www.goseattleu.com. For season tickets or groups of 15 or more, call 206-398-GOSU (4678).



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charge to the SU community and surrounding neighborhoods.

Available online at www.seattleu.edu/connections.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS** 

#### Rachael Steward

#### Associate Director, Center for Service & Community Engagement

Rachael Steward links community members and Seattle University together in partnerships built on engagement and common goals. Through her work with the Center for Service & Community Engagement, this Beacon Hill resident is actively involved with the Seattle University Youth Initiative, a long-term commitment to neighborhood youth by the university. What began with involvement from fewer than 30 community organizations today has 60 community partners, all doing their part to help children succeed in school and in life.

- Can you describe one of your biggest challenges since you started in 2010?
- The Youth Initiative had an action plan in place at the beginning. It included mobilizing students, staff and faculty who could contribute their knowledge. As we learned more about what it takes to reach our desired outcomes, we recognized that without deeper engagement we wouldn't get what we want for our students or the organizations and residents in our neighborhood. We had to examine the needs, successes, challenges and trends in the community and look at our partnerships and how they were changing.
- ► How were those partnerships changing?
- We had to seek out community residents, attend meetings and activities and host gatherings over coffee to meet them. We realized it didn't

make sense for SU to connect to every project. At a certain point, we began to determine which strands were most critical and among them we realized that family engagement needed to be addressed immediately

- What did that involve?
- Parents wanted to know what's really happening, what's going well with the Youth Initiative. The pipeline of school support is strong for kindergarten through fifth grade, but there's very little in place for children from birth through age 5. Jumpstart is the one early learning piece we have. This is a wonderful opportunity to be able to steer the energy, begin to make links and see what develops for early learning. Parents want their children to be ready for success in kindergarten. We have engaged parents and childcare providers in family literacy. This is a bridge between early learning and parent engagement in K−12 schooling.
- ► What role do you play?
- ▶ I get to be the catalyst. Sometimes it's a lot more than being a convener, sometimes not. I get all the organizations together and provide various tangible and intangible resources. I end up chasing down contracts and talking to attorneys to get the details worked out. Then I get to see how everyone learns and grows. This is why I love my work.



Rachael Steward is a community catalyst.

# HONORING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AWARDS

Seattle University's Center for Service and Community Engagement honored the achievements of Asfaha Lemlem of the Yesler Terrace Computer Lab and Learning Center with its 2012 Community Partner Award. Lemlem was recognized for his efforts to locate resources when he spots a gap in services at Yesler Terrace. Frequently, this means reaching out to partners at SU, who have provided support over the years.

Other Spirit of Community Awards were presented to Le Xuan Hy, associate professor of psychology, for engaging hundreds of SU students in learning through service to the community and Marie Wong, associate professor in the Institute of Public Service, for guiding just as many SU students in studies that benefited residents of the International District and other parts of the city.

Jen Tilghman-Havens, associate director of Jesuit Mission and Identity on campus, was honored for creating and continuing such programs as Staff Serving Youth, a way for SU staff to volunteer to lead literature circles at Bailey Gatzert Elementary School.

Student awards went to 2012 graduates Rosie Garibaldi (social work), Francesca Murnan (public affairs) and Adam Tousley (Master of Public Administration).

## You're Invited

SU's neighbors and community partners are encouraged to attend these public events.

#### **SEPTEMBER**

#### ► Titus Andronicus

LEE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Thursday-Sunday, Sept. 6-Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday matinees, Sept. 9-Oct. 7, 4 p.m.

This unique all-female production of one of Shakespeare's bloodiest tragedies is directed by Fine Arts Associate Professor Rosa Joshi, whose all-female collective upstart crow is committed to creating classical works for a contemporary audience. Suggested donation: \$20.

#### Summer Youth Media Program Exhibit

VACHON ROOM, SU FINE ARTS BLDG.

Sept. 17–Nov. 30; reception 5 to 8 p.m. Nov.1 (open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mon. though Fri., except holidays)

An exhibit on the history and future of Yesler Terrace from the perspective of local teens who participated in a sixweek summer program (see cover story). It's a partnership led by Claire Garoutte of SU's Fine Arts faculty with Youth in Focus, Multimedia Resource and Training Institute, Seattle University Youth Initiative and Yesler Terrace Learning Center. Free.

#### **OCTOBER**

#### Catholic Heritage Lecture Series

PIGOTT AUDITORIUM

Thursday, Oct. 11, 7 to 9 p.m.

Conversations about Vatican II on its 50th anniversary, featuring Rev. Joseph A. Komonchak, professor emeritus of theology and religious studies at the Catholic University of America. Members of all religious communities are encouraged to attend. Free.

#### ► Arts Entrepreneurship/ InnovationTalk

PIGOTT AUDITORIUM

Monday, Oct. 15, 7 p.m.

Angela Beeching, classical music's renowned arts consultant and author of Beyond Talent, teams up with Seattle's Dave Beck, Vivian Philips and SU faculty for a conversation on entrepreneurial and innovative business skills and how fine arts can be beneficial to creating a successful career in a competitive job market. A partnership between the SU Fine Arts music division and the Albers School of Business and Economics. Free.

#### ► Albers Executive Speaker Series

**PIGOTT AUDITORIUM** 

Thursday, Oct. 18, 5:30 p.m.

Mark Vadon, co-founder and chairman of Blue Nile, is speaker.

#### **NOVEMBER**

### ► Distinguished Guest Artist Recital PIGOTT AUDITORIUM

Saturday, Nov. 3, 7:30 p.m.

Local classical music superstars Rajan Krishnaswami and Mark Salman perform in a cello and piano recital. Admission: \$12.



Rajan Krishnaswami

#### ► Endangered Species Project

LEE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Monday, Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m.

The Endangered Species Project is a confederation of Seattle theater artists dedicated to presenting plays that seldom get full productions. Suggested donation: \$10.

#### ► Albers Executive Speaker Series

**PIGOTT AUDITORIUM** 

Monday, Nov. 19, 5:30 p.m.

Tom Marra, president and CEO of Symetra Financial Corp., is speaker.

#### ► Scratch

LEE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Tuesday, Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m.

An evening of improvisation, poetry, music, dance, singing, spoken word, staged readings and more. Scratch is curated, produced and performed by Seattle University students. Free admission.

#### ► Illuminating the Holidays

SU LIBRARY PLAZA AND STUDENT CENTER

Wednesday, Nov. 28, 7 p.m.

This festive outdoor tree-lighting ceremony includes Christmas carols and cocoa and cookies indoors at the Student Center. Free.

#### ► Christmas Concerts: A Festival of Christmas

ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, 732 18TH AVE. EAST

Friday, Nov. 30, 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 2, 2 p.m.

SU Choirs' present the annual candlelit holiday concerts, complete with enchanting echoes in one of Seattle's loveliest historic spaces. Tickets: 296-5732.