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LYNNWOOD TIMES

Washington Kids in Transition, keeping over 5,000 children fed P-04

Jim Smith: The Truth about the Racism Report P.06

Parents beware, Rainbow Fentanyl is here in the PNW P-09

Real News Real Impact

VOAWW presented with \$1 million for Lynnwood Neighborhood Center



Snohomish County Councilwoman presenting VOAWW with a \$1 million check towards the completion of the Lynnwood Neighborhood Center. (L-R) Pictured are Wally Webster II, former Rep. Ruth Kagi, Pastor Hector Garfias-Toldeo of Trinity Lutheran Church, Councilwoman Stephanie Wright, Steering Committee member Mr. Witt, VOAWW President/CEO Steve Corsi, Mindy Woods, Denny Derrickson, Sandy Schneider, and VOAWW COO Brian Smith. Others in attendance but not pictured are VOAWW Vice President of External Affairs Kirk Pearson and Mountlake Terrace Councilman and VOAWW Vice President of Community Engagement Dr. Steve Woodard. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—The executive team from Volunteers of America Western Washington (VOAWW) along with members of Lutheran Trinity Church, and the Lynnwood Neighborhood Center Steering Committee, were presented with a generous \$1 million check from Stephanie Wright on Monday, August 31, in her last official act, concluding 12 years of service on the Snohomish County Council.

“I know everybody thinks we’re here about the \$1,000,000 gift, but to me, the reason I’m here is I wanted to come out and thank the members of Trinity Lutheran who had this vision for this project, who saw something next to their church and proactively worked with Rick Steves and everybody else to



Artist rendition of the Lynnwood Neighborhood Center. Source: Architecture Resource Collaborative (arc).

purchase this and put this into motion.” The Lynnwood Neighborhood Center Stephanie Wright said to attendees.

Continued PAGE 08 >>

Stephanie Wright resigns to be Executive Policy Officer for County

By KIENAN BRISCOE

SNOHOMISH COUNTY—Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers announced the hiring of Stephanie Wright as Executive Policy Officer for Snohomish County. In this role, she will focus on the county’s state and federal legislative priorities, develop and implement important policy goals, including Snohomish Health District integration, assist with outreach to regional organizations, and maintain strong relationships with Cities, Tribes, and other partners.

“Stephanie has a sharp mind and deep well of experience in every policy area important to Snohomish County’s residents,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “Stephanie led the Board of Health through the pandemic, has been Chair of the Council for many years, and knows county government in minute detail. I want leaders in our office who not only can solve problems but also ensure county government is working for everyone.”

“I’m excited to take on this new role with Snohomish County. It has been the honor of a lifetime to represent the residents of my district on the County Council, and I look forward to continuing to serve the needs of all those who call Snohomish County home,” said Councilmember Wright. “We have many challenges ahead of us as we work to increase public safety, address the affordable housing crisis, protect our critical areas, and prepare for a new generation of transit options. We face these challenges head on so that we may strengthen our community and economy and improve the quality of life for all of our residents.”

Snohomish County Councilwoman Stephanie Wright (D), representing the

Continued PAGE 07 >>

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Lead the Way graduation: Strive and struggle are your strength

By MARIO LOTMORE

EVERETT—Last Thursday, twelve young men and women graduated from the third class of the Snohomish County Sheriff’s LEAD the Way program. The ceremony took place at the Gibson Center in Everett, WA, and began with a dinner for graduates, their families, and other attendees.

Sheriff Adam Fortney, his co-teacher Tyler Ware, along with influential guest speakers Snohomish County Prosecutor Adam Cornell and renowned Independent Journalist Brandi Kruse spoke at the graduation ceremony.

Graduate Emony Villa-Johnson told us that he appreciated how the program taught him how to learn from one’s mistakes and move on.

“I really like the great support system with the officers and be able to speak with them and get that bond with them,” Villa-Johnson said.

The program’s goal is to provide Leadership, Encouragement, and Direction (LEAD) for youth in the county who may be involved in the criminal justice system or at a crossroads in their life. One of the enduring benefits of the program is the relationships of trust and mentorship that continue beyond graduation.

“This is a fantastic program,” Snohomish County Prosecutor Cornell told the Lynnwood Times. “I applaud the sheriff and the Sheriff’s Office for supporting the effort. It is making a difference in the lives of young people in our communities. I am all for it and I am happy to be here.”

The LEAD the Way program involves two-hour classes held once a week for eight weeks. The classes are co-taught by Sheriff Fortney and Tyler Ware, who has been through the criminal justice system, but now has a story of recovery and success to share. The classes are also frequently visited by guest speakers with relevant experience.

County Prosecutor Adam Cornell shared a message to graduates of “paying it forward.” The county’s top attorney opened up about his childhood trauma growing up as a two-time orphan – first when his mom gave him up for adoption and secondly when his adopted father committed suicide.

He attributes the belief his first foster mother, Stella, instilled in him at eight years of age to not being a victim of life’s tragedies that made a huge differ-



Third graduation ceremony of Sheriff Adam Fortney’s Lead the Way program. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

ence to his future self. “You are never too old to have a happy childhood,” Cornell told the youth. “What’s in the way, is the way.”

Journalist Brandi Kruse, host of unDivided, a podcast offering commonsense solutions to the issues facing society, shared her experience of overcoming the guilt of leaving her brother with their mentally ill father for college, a bought with alcohol in both high school and college, and the anger she held inside for the struggles of growing up in a troubled family.

Her guilt stemmed from the contrast of how she coped with childhood trauma compared to her brother who eventually changed his life for the better but not after legal troubles that led to a three-year incarceration for attempted robbery.

That moment she stopped feeling sorry for herself, stopped allowing her past to continue impeding her happiness, and stopped blaming challenges or setbacks on situations out of her control, was reading a quote from an Arnold Schwarzenegger interview with Barbara Walters in a memoir titled, “Audition.”

Walters when asked, “What makes one person a champion and the other one not,” Schwarzenegger, who grew up in abject poverty post-World War II in Austria, replied, “Strife, struggle.”

He continued, “When you grow up in peace and happiness, that will make

a balanced person and a good person, world.” but it will not give you the drive and hunger you need to be the best in the

Continued PAGE 12 >>

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To be considered for publication, letters must include a *first* and *last name*, *address* and *phone number* for verification purposes. We also reserve the right to edit letters as necessary for brevity, grammar and decorum.

LYNNWOOD TIMES

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Investigation substantiates claims of race and sex discrimination by Lynnwood councilman

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—A third-party investigation by Haggard & Ganson LLP into one of Lynnwood's councilmembers concludes that "claims of race and sex discrimination" by one complainant is substantiated but the claim of a hostile work environment by the other "not substantiated." The council will decide in September on possible disciplinary actions against one of its own, if any. The Council is currently in its annual recess until September 6, 2022.

On August 8, 2022, the City Council was informed of the outcome of the investigation and reviewed a report containing redactions of complainants' and witness's names as required by State law RCW 42.56.250(6). The investigation originated from complaints of alleged discrimination submitted by two city employees against Councilman Jim Smith.

"After participating in and reviewing the documentation provided, I was pleased to see that there was not any merit to the discrimination claims by two City employees," Councilman Smith told the Lynnwood Times on his thoughts of the report's findings. "All communication protocols were followed, and all emails were polite, succinct, and were appropriate. Our service to our community is the responsibility of not only our employees, but our elected officials as well."

After an executive session that included the City's attorney on May 9, the Lynnwood City Council voted unanimously, 6-0, to launch an investigation into allegations of inappropriate conduct by a councilmember.

"I move to authorize the City to initiate an investigation of allegations of inappropriate conduct of a councilmember," President George Hurst motioned that was seconded by Councilwoman Julieta Altamirano-Crosby. Councilwoman Shirley Sutton did not attend May 9th's meeting.

THE HAGGARD REPORT: THE INVESTIGATION OF JIM SMITH

The investigation was conducted by a Kathleen Haggard, cofounder of Haggard & Ganson LLP and has over 15 years of experience investigating allegations of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and school bullying. After interviewing several people including Mayor Frizzell, city staff, Councilman Smith, and



Lynnwood City Council, January 2022. (L-R) Vice President Jim Smith, Shirley Sutton, Shannon Sessions, Josh Binda, President George Hurst, Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, Patrick Decker.

current and former Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission (DEIC) members, Haggard's conclusion was mixed.

The allegations are from two complainants who state that "Jim Smith discriminated against them on the basis of race." According to the 19-page report, one complainant identifies as a Black woman, City Executive Assistant Leah Jensen, and the other as a Black man, City of Lynnwood Race and Social Justice Coordinator Douglas Raiford. The female complainant, Jensen, also alleges discrimination by Smith "on the basis of sex."

Jensen "supports the DEIC along with other boards and commissions" and Raiford "serves as the staff liaison to the DEIC."

Haggard made it very clear in the report that she bases her conclusions "on a preponderance of the evidence standard" under which she accepts "an allegation as fact when it is more probably true than not true."

Haggard concluded that the "claims of race and sex discrimination" by Jensen are "substantiated" and is based "on the totality of the circumstances."

She continues in her conclusion that, "Smith, a white man, treated Jensen, a Black woman, as if she must answer to him, then publicly criticized her when she did not comply. At the same time, he opposed the DEIC confirmation of a woman of color in favor of his preferred candidate, a white male, and he failed to support or add value to the City's work on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues."

Haggard's report fails to mention if Mayor Frizzell or Human Resource Director Evan Chinn was ever aware or addressed the issue of Councilman Smith "directing" a mem-

ber of the staff between the parties involved.

According to the report, Smith has ongoing requests of staff dating back to 2021 for the "list of applicants for boards and commissions" that have been fulfilled. However, Jensen to the latest request on April 12, 2022, according to the report, stated that "Smith's request that she provide an updated list crossed the line from a request for information to directing her work."

The lists of applicants for boards and commissions according to the complainant is a semiannual report and therefore would have been available within six weeks of Councilman Smith's request. She never responded to his request and told the attorney during her interview that "she supports the Mayor, not the councilmembers" and "feels that Smith deliberately tries to intimidate her."

As a matter of state law, RCW 35A.12.100, and city policy, a councilmember has no authority to direct the work of the Mayor's employees and in January of 2022, Mayor Frizzell adopted new communications standards, that establish parameters for councilmember interactions with staff.

Councilmember Smith's statement of "Please send right away" in his second email request of the list of applicants for boards and commissions on April 14th to the complainant may be understandably and reasonably misconstrued as "directing" city employees.

Haggard's report does not include an interview with a person of contention within her findings, a Michael Miller, who applied to the DEIC and is referred to as a "white male" and "an older, white, straight man . . . upper middle class." The Lynnwood Times has confirmed with Miller that he was not interviewed by Haggard nor anyone from the investi-

gation. Miller applied January 25, 2021, and on January 10, 2022, for the DEIC, and told the Lynnwood Times he was only contacted a couple weeks ago by Douglas Raiford, Lynnwood's Race and Social Justice Coordinator, that the vacancies on the commission have been filled.

Miller is of mixed race and is a card-carrying member of both the Cherokee and Shawnee people. He also confirmed with the Lynnwood Times that he was never interviewed by any member of the DEIC to fulfill the vacancies on the commission. According to the City and posted on its webpage, the only requirements to being on the DEI commission are that members must live within Lynnwood City limits and be a registered voter, both of which he met. It also states that there is a selection "preference for city of Lynnwood residents over nonresident candidates."

The DEI commission recommended to the Mayor an applicant who identifies as an LGBTQ+ Asian woman, Arra Rael, who resides outside of the city limits to be appointed to the commission. At the time of Rael's appointment in May of 2022, the DEIC had five commissioners and two vacancies. At the time, all five existing members reside within the city limits of Lynnwood and identify as female.

According to the City, "The Commission may accept up to two members that reside in the city's municipal urban growth area" — territory that is located outside of a city only if such territory already is characterized by urban growth.

In April of 2022, one month prior to being appointed to the Lynnwood DEIC, Rael was appointed to the DEI Advisory Committee for the City of Bothell. Rael did not disclose this information during her

two interviews with the Lynnwood City Council. As of August 19, 2022, she is still a member of the DEI Advisory Committee for the City of Bothell.

Through a public records request the Lynnwood Times confirmed with the City of Bothell that there was no application for Rael.

"After reviewing the first round of applicants, it was realized there wasn't representation from our Human Services partners, so we asked them for recommendations," Aimee Rosse, Public Records Officer wrote to the Lynnwood Times. "One of our largest partners, Center for Human Services, sent the request to Arra, who is on their staff and does DEI work for them. We added Arra to the committee after the application window closed, but before the appointments were finalized."

According to the City of Bothell, an applicant "Must be a Bothell resident, business owner, employee, property owner or student, or a stakeholder or nonprofit partner with cultural competency skills, experience in diversity work, or connections to the Bothell community."

During her interview with the city council for the DEIC appointment, Rael admitted that she was a registered voter in Marysville as she lived in unincorporated Lynnwood. However, by her confirmation vote on May 23rd, the report states that she updated her voter registration information to her unincorporated Lynnwood address.

Also, Rael in her interview with the city council mentioned that she has lived at her current unincorporated Lynnwood address prior to applying to the DEIC for approximately five years. The report does not state if Rael voted as a resident of Marysville during the period she lived at her current Lynnwood residence.

In Haggard's report, it is alleged that the DEI commission "in evaluating candidates the commissioners look at whether potential members understand oppression, the need to 'elevate and amplify voices,' and the 'systemic nature of inequity.' They ask, 'Can this person be an advocate for community members?' [Redacted] said Miller did not fit these criteria."

Another added criterion the commission allegedly uses to screen applicants is DEI experience.

Continued PAGE 10 >>

Washington Kids in Transition, keeping over 5,000 children fed



By KIENAN BRISCOE

LYNNWOOD—In September of 2014, an Edmonds School District bus driver noticed one of his passengers drinking a jelly packet in the backseat. The student appeared frightened that someone would take it away from her. When he approached the young girl, he learned that this modest snack would be all she would have to eat until the next school day.

Disheartened to hear this, the bus driver teamed up with his colleagues to supply snacks for their 275 homeless students at the time – most of whom depended on school-supplied meals for their one, and only, meal of the day.

Currently, there are over 1,200 children in South Snohomish County that are considered homeless and part of the McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act. These children may live in shelters, tents, cars, transitional housing, or other temporary housing.

When Kim Gorney heard this, she jumped into action. Gorney assembled a coalition of four parents and started a certified 501(c)3 a month later. Paid for by the Lynnwood Elks Club, her team assembled bags of food for bus drivers to distribute to food insecure children. This nonprofit would eventually become known as Washington Kids in Transition – helping over 5,000 families connect to resources such as food, housing, and clothing since 2015.

What started as a grassroots effort has since grown into a community-wide passion in collaboration with community partners and licensed social workers embedded within the Edmonds School District. Hundreds of food bags are still distributed on buses daily but the organization has grown to providing hotel/motel vouchers, and “emergency closets” offering anything from clothes to hygiene products to gift cards.

Last year Washington Kids in Transition supplied over 32,000 bags of food to children in need.

“I just couldn’t believe that there

were hungry children in this area,” Kim Gorney, Executive Director for Washington Kids in Transition, told the Lynnwood Times. “I think everyone has that moment where something resonates so strongly, [that] they need to follow through. For me it was that day.”

Gorney worked as a Youth Program Manager for the State of California, where she grew up in a middle-class family with most of their basic needs met. Once she relocated to Snohomish County, after taking a job in early education, she caught her first glimpse at working with low-income families and credits this experience as one of the reasons the bus drivers’ cause hit so close to home.

“The thought that someone in this area can go hungry all night until the next day...I never realized how big food insecurities were,” Gorney said.

In many ways Washington Kids in Transition plays the role of bridging food and housing insecure families to resources in the area while providing, emergency, short-term support. This

process begins with a family resource advocate or social worker filling out a request form and sending it to Washington Kids in Transition, who then determines if a family is eligible for funding. To date they have never had to turn down a request.

“Whatever a family needs to get them through an emergency is what we provide,” Gorney told the Lynnwood Times. “If a social worker walks into a house and the family has no food in their refrigerator, they come to us and get food that day.”

The same applies to housing. Washington Kids in Transition will temporarily pay for a motel or hotel for homeless families until they can get connected with one of their partners such as Volunteers of America or YMCA for more long-term assistance. Last year they paid over \$500,000 in rental and utility assistance alone.

Washington Kids in Transition also opened two distribution centers in 2020, one in Lynnwood and the other in Everett, to better serve social workers and family advocates by supplying food, clothing, hygiene, toiletries, diapers, and transportation vouchers same day.

This year Counselors and Advocates will even be able to make specific requests, on behalf of homeless students, through an expansion to the organization’s emergency closets called Granted Wishes. These requests can be anything from prom tickets to sports equipment, sleeping bags to bus passes.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, LYNNWOOD, AND EDMONDS ALLOCATE \$800,000 OF ARPA FUNDS FOR NEW MCKINNEY-VENTO PROGRAM

Recently the Lynnwood City Council approved \$150,000 of their American Rescue Plan Act funds to go toward Washington Kids in Transition’s new McKinney-Vento program, which rolls

Continued **PAGE 11 >>**

Lynnwood historian appointed to the County Historical Commission



By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—The Snohomish County Council unanimously approved the appointment of Cheri Ryan to the Snohomish County Historical Commission on August 24, 2022. The Commission consists of nine members: one member from each Council district and four at-large members. Terms are for three years.

“Cheri Ryan will make a terrific addition to the Snohomish County

Historic Preservation Commission,” stated Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell in a statement to the Lynnwood Times. “Cheri is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to history and heritage in Lynnwood, Alderwood Manor, and Snohomish County. Her deep roots in this community, her passion to educate and honor histories, and her willingness to contribute will serve this Commission well!”

The Snohomish County Historic Preservation Commission was created in 2002 to advise the county on historic preservation issues and to serve as the Design Review Board for special valuation, a state tax incentive for rehabilitation of historic properties.

Ryan serves as the President of the Lynnwood-Alderwood Manor Heritage Association and is Chair of City of Lynnwood’s History and Heritage Board. She is an author and for 15 years curated many historical exhibits and projects. Ryan is also best known in Lynnwood for her annual Heritage Days at Heritage Park.

Her family roots date as far back to the

1880s in Marysville.

“I would like to serve using my historic knowledge of the County,” Ryan wrote on her application for why she would like to serve on the commission. “I have heard and lived many historical moments in my life living here that I know would bring value.”

As recent as April of this year, Ryan was recognized for her efforts to restore the Heritage Park Water Tower, as part of the Phase II Improvement Project supported by the Elizabeth Ruth Wallace Living Trust, Lynnwood Parks and Recreation Foundation, Snohomish County Historic Preservation Commission, and the Washington State Historical Society.

It was Ryan’s idea to express the “Love Lynnwood” theme as a sculpture giving Lynnwood its iconic “Love Your New Neighbor” art piece by B.K. Choi, now adorning the grounds of the Lynnwood Convention Center.

The donation for the sculpture and the Water Tower restoration were from the Elizabeth Ruth Wallace Living Trust of

which Ryan is the trustee.

Snohomish County Code 2.96.020 describes the desired qualifications of Commission members, including that at least two members have professional experience in the disciplines of history, architecture, architectural history, historic preservation, planning, cultural anthropology, archaeology, cultural geography, American studies, law or real estate. Regular members shall have a demonstrated interest and competence in historic preservation and heritage issues.

Ryan will fill the member-at-large opening for District 4.

“She is very active in the Lynnwood historical community and a member of LOSCHO, the League of Snohomish County Historical Organizations,” wrote Gretchen Kaehler, Snohomish County Archaeologist and CLG Coordinator in her recommendation of Ryan to Councilman Jared Mead. “We feel that she would be a very valuable addition to the commission.”

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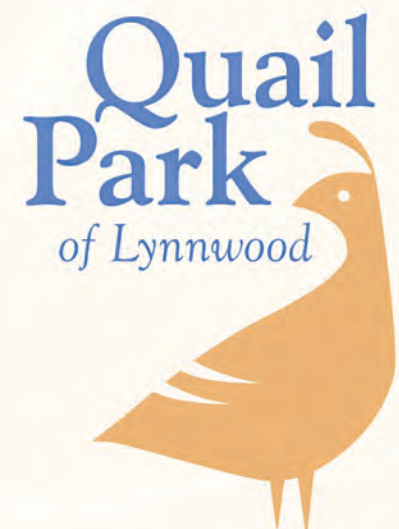
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Local Eats Spotlight: Brooklyn Bros Pizzeria

By **BO JOHN BRUSCO**

MILL CREEK—New York City is over 2,500 miles away, but if you're passing by one of Brooklyn Bros Pizzerias and think you smell the aroma of a classic New York slice, your nose isn't deceiving you. Brooklyn Bro's New York-style pies are the real deal.

The first Brooklyn Bros Pizzeria opened in Everett in 2006, when the owners, Don and Vicky Evola, set out to bring a slice of the NYC to the PNW. Sixteen years later, the pizzeria has opened three other locations in Mukilteo, Mill Creek, and Camano Island.

"I remember walking down to the Everett location after high school with a couple of buddies and just totally falling in love with the place," says Jonny Elia, Brooklyn Bros Director of Operations.

With Jonny's family being Italian and his Dad having grown up on the East Coast, they were elated when Brooklyn Bros first opened shop. "It was just the coolest spot with the writing on the walls and the Italian decor that I was used to seeing growing up," says Jonny. "It just felt like home."

Jonny was stoked to the join the team at Brooklyn Bros as a dishwasher in 2007. Since then, he has been a general manager, helped open new locations, and is now the company's Director of Operations. "As the business grew, I grew with them."

With more than a decade of pizza-making experience, Jonny is well familiar with the anatomy of a New York-style slice. "The perfect New York slice is going to have a crisp outside, sort of a crunchy exterior. But on the inside, it's going to be soft and airy and have a lot of life in it," he explains.

Brooklyn Bros' dough recipe took Don and Vicky Evola about eight years to crack. Most other ingredients, including their cheese and tomatoes for their sauce, are imported from top-tier quality sources. (No joke, the tomatoes they use are grown near Mount Vesuvius in Italy).

To ensure consistent quality among its four locations, Brooklyn Brothers has a commissary kitchen in Downtown Everett where they mix all of their dough and make all their sauces. The ingredients are then delivered to each location via Brooklyn Bros' iconic "Dough Mobile." Needless to say, this Pizzeria is serious about its pies.

JONNY'S "PIZZA GO'S OR NO-GO'S"

Jonny is pretty serious about



Jonny admiring Brooklyn Bros Pizzeria's slicelicious Margherita pizza. Lynnwood Times.

pizza, too, at least when it comes to this list of certain controversial pizza practices.

Is there any right or wrong way to eat a pizza?

"It kind of depends on the kind of pizza you're eating. New York pizza, you gotta fold it. It's gotta be that big slice that stands up on its own. You can do the 'Saturday Night Fever,' where you throw both of them on top of each other and go in that way. I think the only time it's acceptable to use silverware with a pizza is when it's the deep-dish Chicago style if you're in Chicago."

Pineapple on pizza?

"Definitely no pineapple. Definitely no pineapple."

Ranch with pizza?

"Ranch with pizza is acceptable...I guess. It depends on the pizza. You cannot put ranch dressing on a Margherita pizza or any other sort of traditional pizza. If it's got some spicy sausage or pepperoni on it, sure."

Artichoke on pizza?

"Artichoke's a big YES."

Anchovies on pizza?

"Anchovies are a yes for me. Sausage, mushroom, anchovies is one of my favorite pizzas in the world."

BBQ Sauce?

"BBQ Sauce is a huge NO. Yeah, you can't. That's all I have to say. No."

Shrimp

"Shrimp on a pizza?...I don't see it."

THE FOOD

The Margherita

The Margherita is a classic and traditional-style pie with simple ingredients, including tomatoes, basil, and Mozzarella cheese. Jonny insisted on making this pie for me, and I think it was to demonstrate how even the most basic kind of pizza becomes ambrosia when it's done

right. And let me tell you, this Margherita was done right. The slice was perfectly thin, crispy, and chewy—the perfect New York Slice according to Jonny's definition.

The Williamsburg

The Williamsburg is one of the newest menu items at Brooklyn Bros. Jonny came up with the recipe as it's one he's been making for himself for years. This pizza comes with Polly-O Ricotta, red onion, basil, and

roasted garlic. Jonny decided to add some of their custom Cascioppo Brothers sausage blend today, too. The Williamsburg blew my mind and captured my heart. As a life-long fan of the New York slice, this pizza checked every box for me. Bold flavors, perfect texture, and let me tell you, that Polly-O Ricotta cheese they use is so smooth, I was in disbelief at first.

THE RATING

Overall, my experience at

Brooklyn Bros in Mill Creek exceeded my expectations. If you're a fan of the New York slice and you live in the area, you'd fall in love with this pizza. I was also a fan of the shop's atmosphere, with all the writing on the walls, the selling pies by the slice—all things emblematic of a classic NYC shop you can find on the East Coast. My least favorite part about this whole thing is the lingering suspicion that I'm going to be disappointed with every non-Brooklyn Bros pizza I try in the PNW from here on out. I hereby present Brooklyn Bros Pizzeria with the "REAL DEAL: New York Slice" award.

Brooklyn Bros Pizzeria in Mill Creek is located at 15121 Main St, Mill Creek, WA 98012. Click here to see the addresses of their Mukilteo, Everett, and Camano Island locations.

You can also follow Brooklyn Bros on Instagram (@brooklynbrospizzeria) and Facebook (@BrooklynBrosPizzeria). Humongous shout out to Jonny Elia and the Brooklyn Bro Pizzeria crew at the Everett location for sharing your story and making pizzas for me!



(Top) The Williamsburg pizza. (Bottom) The Margherita pizza. Lynnwood Times | Bo John Brusco.



Meet the Artist Reception in Lynnwood on Sept 14

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

LYNNWOOD—On Wednesday evening, September 14, the Lynnwood Convention Center will be hosting a *free* Meet the Artists Reception from 5-7 p.m. Attendees will browse the exhibit, meet the artists behind all the beautiful pieces, and enjoy complimentary in-house appetizers and a cash bar.

The 57 pieces of artwork of 13 talented local Northwest artists representing one of Lynnwood Convention Center's most diverse collections yet, and constitute a variety of mediums, including acrylics, embroidery, watercolor, photography, metal print and glass mosaic. The show is organized as a series of 'mini-exhibits' of 2-6 works from each artist, all of whom currently reside within Snohomish County.

Check out the previous "Meet the Artists" reception on April 26, where patrons enjoyed complimentary house-

made appetizers and a no-host bar, while meeting the artists behind the "Northwest Waters" exhibit running through June 2022.



Waiting by Rhonda Shelford Jansen

Art is always better in-person, the Lynnwood Convention Center welcomes you to come see its free exhibit located at 3711 196th St SW, Lynnwood.

Please RSVP at www.eventcreate.com/meet-the-artists.



Tea Party by Teddy Kalonga Haight

from page 1 **STEPHANIE WRIGHT**

3rd District, will be officially announcing her resignation today after 12 years serving on the County Council – the longest current serving member. She will begin her new role on August 30, 2022.

"Stephanie has been a pragmatic and a sensible voice on the county council. It's been an honor to work with her and an even higher honor to call her a friend. She'll be greatly missed and leave big shoes to fill," Councilman Nate Nehring told the Lynnwood Times.

Wright was appointed to the seat August 24, 2010, following incumbent Mike Cooper's election as Edmonds Mayor July 23. The Council, at the time, unanimously selected Wright for the position over Edmonds City Councilman D.J. Wilson, and Lynnwood community advocate Maria Ambalada.

"I am honored to work on behalf of my constituents to keep Snohomish County a great place to live, work, and play," Wright said after her appointment to the council.

In 2019, Wright won her third term against fellow Democrat candidate Willie Russell with 82.82% of the vote. So far there are no confirmed candidates to fill the remainder of her term, which ends early 2023.

During her extensive 12-year career in county service, Councilwoman Wright told the Lynnwood Times she is most proud of the following contributions her efforts have brought to the residents of Snohomish County:

- Bringing the 777x line to Snohomish County, where her efforts involved two trips to Dubai, and she was on the ground at the Dubai airshow when the deal was announced
- Leading the Snohomish Health District as Chair thru the pandemic and Oso mud slide tragedy
- Serving as WSAC president and representing not only the County, but all 39 counties throughout Washington state and in Washington D.C

- Pioneering some of the most significant land and open space purchases, such as Japanese Gulch, Meadowdale ridge, and Eastside Rail corridor, just to name a few
- Community Transit bus Rapid Transit Green and Orange lines

Prior to joining the county council, Wright served on the Lynnwood City Council defeating Robin Dode for the position 5 seat in 2008. Through her time on the Lynnwood City Council, she served as Council Vice President, held a seat on the Finance and Insurance Committee, served as a council liaison to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts and served as Vice President of the Transportation Benefit District.

As a Snohomish County Councilwoman, Wright has served as Chair of the Council, Chair of the Finance and Economic Development Committee, Chair of the Snohomish County Health District Board, Chair of the Community Transit Board, Aerospace Task Force, Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, Conservation Futures Board, WA State Emergency Management Council, Central Puget Sound Economic Development District Board, Legislative Steering Committee, Vice Chair of the International Economic Development Task Force, Community Economic and Workforce Development Steering Committee, Large Urban County Caucus, and Veterans and Military Services Committee.

"Councilmember Wright has had a long and accomplished career as an elected public servant for Snohomish County," Councilman Jared Mead told the Lynnwood Times. "I was lucky enough to have her mentorship when I first joined County Council. I have enjoyed my time collaborating with her as a peer and look forward to working with her in her new capacity in the Executive's Office."

Born in Everett and calling Lynnwood home for the past 26 years, Stephanie Wright is a life-long resident of Snohomish County. Before entering the world of politics, she worked as a Teacher-Librarian for the Northshore School District. She received her bachelor's degree in History and Political Science from Washington State Uni-

versity, a Master of Arts in Teaching from Seattle Pacific University and her Library Media Specialist Certificate from the University of Washington.

"It's been great working with Stephanie for the last, almost, six years. Obviously, we've disagreed on policy from time to time but I've always felt like she has respected my opinion and point of view," Councilman Sam Low told the Lynnwood Times.

On Wednesday, August 24, Snohomish

County Council presented Wright with a ten-year award for her service at their General Legislative Session. Coincidentally, the date fell on her 12-year anniversary.

"I just want to express how much I appreciate my colleagues and all my co-workers," Councilwoman Wright said. "I always imagined what this job would be and it's so much even more than I ever dreamed, being able to serve my community...it's just meant too much to me."

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September 17
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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Mission 22 offering Veterans science-based wellness programs

By KIENAN BRISCOE

Mission 22, an Oregon-based nonprofit, gets its name from the number of veterans who lose their lives every day by suicide. While this number comes from a report released by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs in 2013, somewhat intensified by the conflicts in the Middle East, its most recent report shows that veteran suicides continued to be an ongoing issue at a rate of 17 deaths per day.

Mission 22's objective is to diminish this number by supporting veterans and their families with extensive, personalized wellness and sustainable growth programs consisting of everything from biometric monitoring of stress, sleep, and activity levels; to meditation and coaching; to exercise programs and a wellness supplement regimen; to books and learning resources to help veterans put their experience in context.

Since its inception in 2013, Mission 22 has served approximately 5,187 veterans and families, investing over \$10 million into their programs – the flagship of these being the Recovery and Resiliency Program (or R&R for short).

A typical day-in-the life of the R&R program is waking up and journaling in a Monthly Manual, jotting down gratitudes and daily plannings, reviews, and otherwise allowing participants to get down on paper ideas that may be buzzing around in their mind. Next, members engage in some sort of morning activity organized by a Health Coach, or Post Traumatic Growth Facilitators as they're referred to in-house. This can be anything from working out, practicing martial arts like Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, to reading (members of the program are challenged to read at least a book a month).

Meditation also plays a key role in the R&R program paired with a variety of applications such as a Garmin watch app that shows sleep scores and stress levels.

"The watch is not the causal thing that helps people be able to calm down, they're just able to see it, however we do have a device that does that," Marcus Farris, Post Traumatic Growth Director for Mission 22, told the Lyn-



Second annual Xtreme Couture G.I. Foundation poker run at the Evergreen Speedway in Monroe on Saturday, June 25, 2022. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

wood Times.

Farris was referring to NuCalm, a cutting-edge device that puts members in a parasympathetic state, the calm flowing state of the nervous system that enables the body to relax, repair, digest and so on. At the core of everything, however, is good nutrition and while the program does not supply nutrition-focused meals they do include supplements that are targeted to improving mental wellbeing such as expanding gut health and helping the body respond better to stress in general.

The Program also offers an online forum, through WorkPlace, where members can consult and encourage each other to succeed. The community aspect of the R&R program is absolutely crucial to participant's success, Farris said.

"It will be tough. It is something you won't want to do alone. But what I will say is you get out what you put in. It will be a challenge because making significant lifestyle changes is always a challenge but you're going to be provided all of the resources you will possibly need," Farris said.

The Recovery and Resiliency Program is designed to be integrated into every day life while taking all the fundamentals of healing, in a non-clinical setting, and packaging it into a single whole, Farris continued. All of the resources, the devices, the supplements, the reading material are delivered in a box and the program is conducted remotely al-

lowing anyone in the country to participate.

Farris informed the Lynnwood Times Mission 22's decision to launch the R&R program and other similar programs remotely was not at all influenced by the pandemic, as it was always intended to be "decentralized".

Mission 22 is also currently in the works of expanding its R&R program to first responders and have been in communication with local police departments to hash out the details although this opportunity is still in its idea phase.

Farris has been involved in the R&R program since it launched in 2019, around the same time he obtained his Health Coach Certification and wasn't quite sure how he wanted to utilize. He was contacted by Magnus Johnson, Chief Vision Officer and Co-Founder of Mission 22, to assist in some health coaching and was offered a full-time position about twelve weeks later.

"As company commander it's my job to create a culture where it's completely normalized to reach out for help...to make it normal to ask for help, to make it normal to participate in community events, to read, to self-improve, to have a higher goal that's attractive for people to aspire to," Farris said.

The two met while Farris was participating in a triathlon in the Portland area, where Johnson was mentoring some of the athletes. Both veterans,

Johnson a former Green Beret serving 36 months in combat, and Farris serving four and a half years in Active Duty as an Engineer in Alaska, they hit it off and the rest is history. Farris still serves on reserve as an Officer and Company Commander to this day.

Aside from Johnson and Farris, Mission 22 prides itself on being a for-Veterans by-Veterans organization run by a Board of Directors who are all veterans and most of its staff being either Veterans, spouses of Veterans, or those with immediate family who have served in the U.S. military.

While the R&R program may be targeted toward veterans proper, Mission 22 offers many other programs for spouses of veterans and civilians alike.

The Elements program, for example, is a free, multimedia self-guided crash course introducing the basics of moral injury, post-traumatic stress, and the differences between PTS and PTSD, which Marcus explained is similar to a college course.

"The idea of it is, by the end of it, a lack of knowledge is no longer a barrier for making change in someone dealing with PTS," Marcus said. "The Elements program is self-driven where the R&R program is self-driven as well, but you're going to be challenged to join a local community and a local gym."

More recently, Mission 22 has also dipped its toes into documentary film-making with their most recent being United We Heal, produced by AO Films, and available on Amazon.

Perhaps the greatest way to get involved in Mission 22's cause, whether a veteran or not, is through its Ambassador Program – a group of volunteers, leaders, and active community members that help make connections and raise awareness that Veteran struggles with PTS and TBI are real, and that support is available. Ambassadors connect with communities all over the world. Currently, Mission 22 has 3,648 volunteer Ambassadors across the United States.

To learn more about the Ambassador Program, R&R, or Mission 22 in general visit <https://mission22.com/>.

from page 1 VOAWW \$1 MILLION

will be a 40,000 square-foot Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified facility on approximately two acres of land located at Trinity Lutheran Church near 196th St and HWY 99. Monday's contribution by then-Councilwoman Wright brings the total monies pledge to \$14 million, just about 60% of the project's total pre-pandemic funding goal of \$20 million.

Plans call for the site to be leased to the Snohomish County offices of Volunteers of America for \$1 per year for the next 50 years as part of the social service hub envisioned on the property. The next phase of the project is expected to break ground by mid-2023.

The new space will be anchored with a new Boys and Girls Club and provide an integrated facility with multiple nonprofits working to engage the

community and support low-income families through the complex struggles they may experience. The building will include gathering spaces, training facilities, and event space, an Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) classroom, and behavioral, medical, and dental services.

The Neighborhood Center received a jump start with a \$3 million gift from television personality and local philanthropist Rick Steves and \$2.2 million in funding from the state's capital budget in 2018 thanks to District 32 Rep. Ruth Kagi (1999 to 2019) and Rep. Cindy Ryu.

"I just give so much credit to Trinity for their vision," Rep. Kagi told the Lynnwood Times. "For Volunteers of America, I mean they're just really a remarkable organization and I'm looking forward to working on getting the remaining funding and coming back for the ribbon cutting."

VOAWW President and CEO Steve Corsi thanked both Kagi and Wright for their ongoing efforts to help secure both partnerships and funding for the project. He recognized Trinity Church member Denny Derrickson who first proposed the need of a neighborhood center 11 years ago.

"Councilmember Wright means what she says...you don't just talk but you do, that means a lot and we are very grateful to all of you," Corsi said.

He recalled a sticky note message from a phone conversation he had with Councilwoman Wright that read, "Let me know what you need. Finances don't matter. Please tell me how I can help. I want homework."

And coming through is what outgoing Councilwoman Wright did.

"We found a way to do community grants in each district because each district had different needs, especially

coming out of the pandemic," Stephanie Wright said to attendees. "And I think that this center, with childcare, behavioral health, dental, medical, education, training rooms...it's everything that we needed in this community. So, for us to be able to give this grant to VOA...is just an amazing honor for me to be part of your vision, part of your project. Thank you for letting me be part of this and to all of you."

The Lynnwood Neighborhood Center fully aligns with the VOAWW's mission "to serve people and communities in need and create opportunities for people to experience the joy of serving others."

This community commitment would not be possible without VOAWW's ongoing partnerships with Trinity Lutheran Church, Center for Human Services, Medical Team International, Boys & Girls Clubs, Korean Community Service Center, and Latino Educational Training Institute.

Parents beware, Rainbow Fentanyl is here in the PNW

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—On Tuesday, August 16, Rep. Rick Larsen (WA-02) met with Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell and other City of Lynnwood officials to tour the future site of the Poplar Way Extension Bridge.

First reported by the Pierce County Sheriff's Office and shared on social media by Hope Soldiers, a grassroots organization helping those struggling with addiction, a dangerous new form of fentanyl has made its way to the Pacific Northwest called "rainbow fentanyl," a brightly-colored version of the highly-toxic synthetic opioid responsible for hundreds of fatal overdoses every day in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, there has been at least two notable seizures in the last several days in the Portland Metropolitan Area.

Rainbow fentanyl has appeared recently in several forms in cities across the country. A version seized recently in the Portland area resembles thick pieces of brightly-colored sidewalk chalk. Some versions seized elsewhere in pill or tablet form resemble candy. It is usually 100% pure fentanyl unlike the typical blue M-30 pills. There is also growing demand for fentanyl power.

At both the U.S. southern border and in Oregon, law enforcement officers have recently seized rainbow fentanyl in two forms – pills and pressed blocks. The pills could be easily mistaken for candy, and the pressed blocks resemble the sidewalk chalk that children play



Rainbow fentanyl. Source: U.S. Department of Justice.

with.

Law enforcement is not only concerned that children may mistake rainbow fentanyl as candy or a toy but are also worried that teenagers may be tempted to try the drug due to its playful coloring.

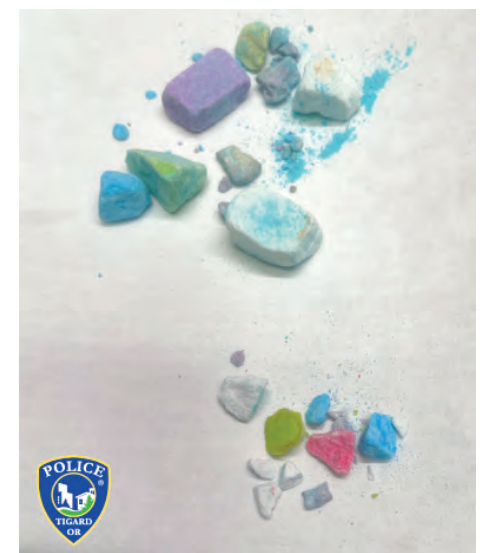
"Fentanyl is the deadliest drug threat we face today," said DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge Jacob D. Galvan from the Seattle Field Division. "It doesn't matter what color, shape or form it comes in; just two milligrams of fentanyl – the equivalent of 10 to 15 grains of salt – is enough to kill someone. DEA's Portland Office is seizing record amounts of fentanyl and we will continue this important work because we know American lives are at stake."

If your children play in public spaces,

such as the local park, law enforcement is advising you to please be on the lookout for suspicious substances. If you are a parent of a teenager, please talk to them about the dangers of fentanyl, and other drugs.

If you or someone you know encounter any version of fentanyl, please refrain from handling it and call 911 immediately.

Opioid abuse affects communities across the nation. Provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that there were more than 107,000 fatal drug overdoses in the U.S. in 2021, an increase of nearly 15% from the previous year. Synthetic opioids (primarily fentanyl) accounted for more than three quarters of these deaths. Drug overdose continues to be the leading



Rainbow fentanyl. Source: U.S. Department of Justice.

cause of injury or death in the United States.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid 80 to 100 times more powerful than morphine and 30 to 50 times more powerful than heroin. A 3-milligram dose of fentanyl—a few grains of the substance—is enough to kill an average adult male. The availability of illicit fentanyl in Oregon has caused a dramatic increase in overdose deaths throughout the state.

If you or someone you know suffers from addiction, please call the Lines for Life substance abuse helpline at 1-800-923-4357 or visit www.linesforlife.org. Phone support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also text "RecoveryNow" to 839863 between 8am and 11pm Pacific Time daily.



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from page 3 **JIM SMITH**

“Unlike other candidates who work in the DEI field and/or serve as spokespeople for communities of color, Miller never demonstrated a real understanding of DEI issues or a true interest in the work,” a redacted witness alleges.

It appears that the report does not address, from the witness testimony, that the DEI Commission may be screening candidates outside of the commission’s authority, something similar to the DEI commission appointment debacle in Mukilteo back in March of 2022.

It was disclosed in Haggard’s report that in reviewing Miller’s application only, that the DEI Commission “saw an older, white, straight man.” The DEI Commission never interviewed Miller who identifies as White and Native American, to confirm his Native American heritage. A redacted witness states that “with the history of Lynnwood as majority white in terms of number and in terms of power, Rael’s voice was ‘more important’ than Miller’s.”

Miller, an 18-year Lynnwood resident, is the President of Lynnwood Food Bank and a member of the Lynnwood Public Facilities Commission. According to his application, he works directly with “about 2,700 immigrant and families” assisting them with “nutrition, resources for rent assistance, dental care and medical care” and “would like to assist them further.”

He speaks a little Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. In an interview with the Lynnwood Times, he shared that he feels the city isn’t doing much for its diverse population.

“The Food Bank is dealing with a very diverse population,” Miller said. “I want to keep talent into Lynnwood. There are a lot of people who are new to the nation and immigrants and refugees who we need to bring into our economic culture.”

He hoped to add energy to the commission.

“Wally and Naz brought a lot of energy to the commission. I haven’t seen things on the commission improve since they left,” Miller said.

A few months ago, Miller joined the DEIC of his local Rotary Club and told the Lynnwood Times that the Food Bank is now forming its very own DEI commission to address the needs of Lynnwood’s diverse community.

Between January 1, 2021, to June 21, 2022, according to a Public Records Request by the Lynnwood Times, a total of 16 persons (six men and 10 women) applied to the DEI commission. Of all seven DEI commissioners, currently there are no men on the DEI commission.

However, Haggard found that the allegation by Douglas Raiford, the City’s Race and Social Justice Coordinator, of discrimination on a basis of race was “not substantiated.”

Then-Mayor Nicola Smith sent a memo to the City Council of Lynnwood, Friday April 2, 2021, informing that she is moving forward with hiring of a Race and Social Justice Coordinator (RSJC), despite a majority of council members’ reservations.

During the budget process approved in November 2020, Mayor Smith proposed a racial justice coordinator position to replace the Inter-Governmental Liaison in an effort to focus on implementing equitable principles and practices into the work of City Government. The Lynnwood Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission (DEIC) asked the Mayor to bring the topic of a Race and Social Justice Coordinator to the City Council. The Council was never informed of the DEIC request.

A motion was brought forth to the council by Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, to delay the hiring for the RSJC until more research was conducted to define what the roles of the position would be, which was passed by the council. The Mayor then hired a consultant to conduct a survey to learn what types of needs Lynnwood’s diverse community require.

The position was revisited by Mayor Smith again in February 2021, insisting it be fulfilled immediately. George Hurst, City Council President, brought an additional motion to delay the hiring for the position until the data from the survey could be assessed. This motion also passed by four council members, Jim Smith, Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, Ian Cotton, and Hurst, which provoked discussion whether the council has the right to tell the Mayor who she can and cannot hire.

Haggard states that, “as an elected official, Smith is entitled to express his views on politics and City business, even if others may find those views objectionable.”

She adds that, “Councilmember Smith has demonstrated underinformed views on race and social justice issues, along with a lack of willingness to educate himself or develop true empathy for these causes,” but “without a showing that Smith has treated a particular employee with disrespect, an expression of views is not enough, in my opinion, to sustain a claim of hostile work environment.”

“When you talk disparagingly about race and social justice causes, a Black woman in the room is going to feel like she’s ‘less than,’” a redacted witness or complainant said in the report.

The report further states that Councilman Smith is accused of attempting “to change the municipal code to ‘eliminate applicants of color’ from commissions. The only instances mentioned of revisions to the Lynnwood Municipal Code (LMC) were on pages 7, 8 and 16. It is clearly stated that the “City Council voted to amend LMC 2.24.030” that passed 6-1 on December 13, 2021.

The amendment to the LMC pertained to “Advisory body members” and that its “members shall be registered voters. Voter registration requirements for up to one member of each board or commission may be waived by the mayor and confirmed by council if the individual is ineligible to be a registered voter.”

Prior to the amendment, the voter registration requirement could be waived for up to two members of an Advisory body. Redacted witnesses accused this action by six members of the Lynnwood City Council that included Councilman Smith was “an unnecessary discriminatory barrier.”

The report further mentions that on July 20, 2022, the Council discussed proposed other amendments to the LMC.

“Sessions proposed language that would require applicants to be correctly registered to vote at their current residence. Decker proposed language that would give Lynnwood residents priority over nonresidents, regardless of their relative qualifications. Smith indicated support for this, but others disagreed.”

**CITY OF LYNNWOOD
DISCRIMINATION AND
HARASSMENT POLICES AND
RECOURSE**

According to the City’s Workplace Harassment policy, “The City will not tolerate harassment or other discriminatory conduct by its employees, supervisors, elected and appointed officials, volunteers, vendors, suppliers, contractors, or members of the public on the basis of race, age, sex, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, the presence of any physical, mental or sensory disability or sexual orientation. The City will promptly investigate workplace harassment complaints.”

Examples of Harassment outlined in the City’s policy includes:

- Negative or offensive comments, Jokes, slurs or suggestions about another employee’s race, age, sex, creed, religion, national origin, creed, religion, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation
- Using degrading words to describe an Individual’s race, age, sex, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, disability or sexual orientation.
- Obscene or lewd sexual comments, jokes, suggestions or innuendoes.
- Unwanted touching, patting, or lewd physical conduct.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, like requests for dates or propositions for sexual favors.
- Offering or conditioning an employment benefit, like a raise, promotion or special job assignment, In exchange for sexual favors.
- Making or threatening reprisals, or changing performance expectations after an employee has turned down a sexual advance.
- Deliberate or repeated behavior of a sexual nature which Is unsolicited and unwelcome
- Excessive, one-sided, romantic attention in the form of requests for dates, love letters, telephone calls, emails or gifts.
- Displaying offensive pictures, offensive cartoons or offensive calendars on City property.

Because Councilman Smith is an elected official and not a city employee, Mayor Christine Frizzell and members of her administration lack the legal authority to act on any inappropriate behavior.

In July of 2017, then-Mayor Nicola Smith signed citywide “Safe, Welcoming, and Equitable,” resolution that was passed by the city council reaffirming the “City Council, Mayor, and Police Chief” of its commitment to “a safe, welcoming, and equitable community for everyone that lives, works, plays, does business, goes to school in, or visits our city.”

A resolution is a non-binding “formal expression of opinion” according to

the Municipal Research and Services Center, a nonprofit organization that provides legal and policy guidance to governments across Washington state.

Lynnwood’s Board of Ethics was recently established to “hear complaints and determine if violations of this ethics code, or state ethics law applicable to cities, have occurred by the mayor, a councilmember, a member of a board or commission...”

Complaints from the Board of Ethics does not include Harassment nor discriminatory conduct. Below are the violations listed that may be submitted to the Board for an investigation:

- 2.94.030 Personal gain or profit – Use of persons, money or property
- 2.94.040 Conflict of interest
- 2.94.050 Acceptance of gifts
- 2.94.060 Campaign activities
- 2.94.070 Confidential information

“I have now read the report and there are some serious and disturbing findings in this investigation,” Council President George Hurst told the Lynnwood Times in a statement on the reports findings. “We know that claims against Councilmember Smith is substantiated but we know that some actions by the council as a whole have also been criticized by the DEI commission as a pattern of exclusion and discrimination.

“It is not only Councilmember Smith being looked at by the investigation.

“So as a whole, the council needs to take a deep look at the issue of DEI in our city, and to that end I will be proposing a joint meeting between the city council and the DEI commission and other commission to build common ground. We need to really talk.”

The Council is expected to discuss the findings of the report at its September 6, 2022, meeting.

from page 3 **KIDS IN TRANSITION**

out this upcoming school year.

The McKinney-Vento program is for students, primarily 11 and 12 grades, transitioning to a life outside High School toward making a livable wage. The program offers three free courses – personal, professional, and financial – and offers additional financial assistance while participating students get their feet on the ground after graduating high school.

“Many [housing insecure] students depend on their teachers for a lot of things the parents usually give, in terms of going to college and life skills. We found that a lot of these kids did not have these life skills. The teachers do an amazing job but once the kids leave there’s no one to help with a lot of these major life decisions. We felt that if we could design a program that touched on what their interests were, and there was a way that they could learn a livable wage, that maybe it would increase the graduation rate,” Gorney said.

Lynnwood Council President George Hurst’s wife, Pam Hurst, has been a volunteer at Washington Kids in Transition for many years and introduced the Council President to their cause. Mrs. Hurst recommended Gorney apply for a grant with the city to utilize its

Jim Smith: The Truth about the Racism Report

By COUNCILMAN JIM SMITH



As Councilmembers, it is our responsibility to hold the Executive branch accountable. Asking for information does not equate to “directing their work”, and certainly is not harassment. In fact, asking for information is one of our important responsibilities. There must be transparency...not secrecy.

The report is misleading and distorts the evidence regarding the claims of racism and sexism. The comments are heavy on subjective views and lacking in facts and evidence.

Also troubling is the fact that there was never any attempt to bring the parties together in order to resolve any issues. A staff member filed a complaint on May 9, 2022. The complaint was immediately escalated and brought to a Council Executive Session that evening. The mayor had already arranged for an attorney of her choosing to be contracted that night for \$20,000 and begin an investigation. The attorney was not vetted by the Council and never met with the Council...ever. This appears to be an attempt to cancel out a representative of the people of Lynnwood.

But I will not be bullied!

A couple months went by before the attorney finally met with me. The actual complaint was not provided. After requesting a copy of the complaint it was later sent to me. However, the attorney never met with me again (or the Council) to go over the actual complaint.

So, here is the actual complaint filed by the mayor’s executive assistant as well as my replies to each issue.

Harassment and sexism:

- *CM Smith attempted to direct my work by requesting information that I provide to council twice a year. My position is supervised by the Mayor, not by council members.*

The mayor does supervise the executive assistant. However, that does not prevent Councilmembers (or the public) from making requests. In fact, the mayor’s Communications Guidelines specifically indicates that “you may send an email to the mayor’s executive assistant.” Additionally, the Communications Guidelines specifically requests Councilmembers to “directly email the contact person listed on the agenda.” The mayor’s executive assistant was specifically listed as the contact person for the DEIC confirmation agenda.

Conclusion:

- *CM Smith requested information from a male staff member. The staff member sent a reply by email. CM Smith did not respond to the male staff member’s email. I received the same request from CM Smith. I replied to his email with basically the same message that he received from my male coworker. However,*

CM Smith continued to send me emails with a demand for the information. He also instructed the Council’s Executive Assistant to send me emails.

It was discovered by the investigator that the male staff member never sent the reply to me. He wrote it but never sent it. This pretty much nullifies this portion of the sexist complaint. There has never been a duplicate request sent to both parties.

Racism:

- *CM Smith requested information about DEIC applicants that is not within the purview of a council member. He asked for addresses of DEI applicants and commissioners, but never questioned the residency of any of the other board or commission applicants.*

In previous years the Council has been provided unredacted applications of all commission applicants. That was appropriate since there are residency requirements for most commissions. I requested the address of the DEIC applicant since they were not listed in Lynnwood on the County voter registration list. That list is public information. The non-DEIC applicants were on the voter list so that information was not needed.

- *CM Smith is attempting to block the confirmation of a DEIC applicant by changing the ordinance that governs who is qualified to serve on the commission.*

Not true at all. We are governed by the Lynnwood Municipal Code (LMC) that is in effect. There are several Councilmembers that are requesting better clarification within our code.

- *CM Smith is attempting to persuade other council members to question the qualifications of the candidate.*

As Councilmembers it is our responsibility to verify the qualifications of all candidates for all Boards and Commissions. Questioning residency and voter registration per our LMC is being responsible, not racist.

- *CM Smith’s attempts to persuade other council members to join his desire to rewrite an ordinance to meet his objective is institutionalized racism and should not be tolerated.*

Again, I was not the one that brought up updating the ordinance. The updates that have been discussed by Council include residency requirements as well as voter registration requirements. These changes would be totally color blind. Claims that Council action is “institutionalized racism” is inaccurate and slanderous.

Conclusion:

After experiencing this inaccurate investigation, it was obvious that the attorney was not independent, but, rather, the investigator, judge and jury on behalf of the complaining side.

It also appeared that, unfortunately, a few members associated with the DEIC were furthering their desire to keep “older, white, cis-gendered males” out

of their meetings and off the commission. Rather than being welcoming, I’ve seen ironic racism, sexism, and ageist discrimination from a group that is supposed to celebrating the diversity of our community.

The bottom line is that all protocols were followed by me and other members of the Council. Hateful speech will not be tolerated in this city. And making non-substantiated claims in order to fulfill a political agenda is not acceptable.

Probably because most of the staff have been working from home these last couple years, there hasn’t been any in-person communications or phone calls. There has only been four email

communications in all of 2022 requesting information from the mayor’s executive assistant. Three of the four were because the mayor’s executive assistant was listed as the contact person of the agenda item.

Even though I completely followed the mayor’s published Communications Guidelines, until I read the report, I was unaware that the engagement with the mayor’s assistant, who is a nice person, felt uncomfortable receiving these email requests for information.

It is unfortunate that City Leadership didn’t address the concerns earlier. We need to find better ways to communicate with each other...and that includes myself.

Two Lynnwood PD Officers graduate Basic Law Enforcement Academy

LYNNWOOD—On August 29, the Lynnwood Police Department announced that two of their newest officers graduated from Basic Law Enforcement Academy on August 25, 2022 – Officer Muneeb Ahmad and Officer Han Nguyen.

Police Chief Jim Nelson and Mayor Christine Frizzell were at the graduation to celebrate this accomplishment and to welcome them to the next phase of their training.

With a focus on a guardian model of policing, Officer Ahmad and Officer Nguyen attended a wide array of courses throughout the 720-hour academy, including legal analysis, patrol procedures, emergency driving, firearms, cultural awareness, interpersonal communication, and many other topics.

They will now start the Field Training Phase by working and learning alongside a veteran officer and instructor.



Officer Han Nguyen (left) and Officer Muneeb Ahmad graduated from Basic Law Enforcement Academy on August 25, 2022. Source: Lynnwood Police Department.

from page 10 **KIDS IN TRANSITION**

ARPA funds and her application was subsequently approved by the City's Finance Department. Mayor Christine Frizzell has also toured the Washington Kids in Transition Distribution Center in Lynnwood twice and fell in love with the cause.

The decision came to council at its July 25 Business Meeting, moved forward by Council Vice President Jim Smith and unanimously passed by the rest of Council. Edmonds City Council also approved \$250,000 of its ARPA money for the program. Both cities' contributions were matched by Snohomish County, as part of its existing ARPA program, for a total of \$800,000.

"The night that they unanimously approved it I was beyond excited and so grateful," Gorney said. "We've been able to provide for the students in Edmonds because we've received a large amount of funding, but this leveled the playing field for the students in Lynnwood."

Gorney hopes to work with local business in the area once the program launches this fall. Specific businesses have yet to be determined.

"Our whole mission is for every student

to have an equal opportunity for an education and if a homeless student, or very low-income student, aren't feeling good about themselves, if they don't have a safe place to sleep, or have shoes with holes in them, then they're not going to focus on their education," Gorney said.

from page 2 **LEAD THE WAY**

sized to the youth in the audience that strife and struggle gives you an advantage in life, it is a strength.

Last year, the LEAD the Way program graduated nine youths, 18 graduated earlier this year and the current session has 12 participants: Layne Moore, Ava Palmer, Delaney Silvia-Gilvin, Rydar Baker, Devina Barker, Channing Dias, Isaiah Guerrero, Anthony Guiod, Joel Murphy, Layton Murphy, Anthony Petruzzeli, Neila Stone, and Emony Villa-Johnson.



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