



Lynnwood City Council
Position 1 and 3
candidates debates **P8**



The Cannabis Debate:
Rising health risks,
addiction, and regulation **P7**

Real News ⚡
Real Impact

Jayda, 'Forever 13,' remains a symbol of a life taken too soon and a call for change



Hundreds gathered at Mukilteo Lighthouse Park on Thursday, July 3, 2025, to celebrate the life of Jayda Johnson. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By MARIO LOTMORE

MUKILTEO—Roughly 200 gathered at Mukilteo Lighthouse Park on Thursday, July 3, to celebrate the life of Jayda Johnson, whose life was tragically cut short when a stray bullet, allegedly fired by Samuel Gizaw, struck and killed the seventh grader in the food court of the

Alderwood Mall. Now, one year later, the family is still seeking justice and urging legislators for juvenile criminal justice reform and funding for juvenile gun violence prevention.

"It's comforting," said Cheryl Huffman on Thursday's turnout for the remembrance bonfire event. "There has

been emails and outreach from people around the world. Jayda has touched so many lives. The stories we had to hear from people we didn't know existed and how Jayda brightened their day.... We got to know Jayda outside of being a family member through the lens of

Continued **PAGE 8**

Community Mourns Tragic Loss of Dr. Jantz



Dr. Gregory Jantz. Source: Support 7.

By MARIO LOTMORE

WOODWAY—The Woodway and Edmonds communities are mourning the tragic loss of Doctor Gregory Jantz, a pioneering mental health expert and beloved family man, who passed away in an unexpected accident at his home on July 4, 2025.

"The family is deeply touched by the outpouring of love, prayers, support from friends, colleagues and members of the public during this incredibly difficult time," Shannon Sessions, Executive Director of Support 7, speaking on behalf of and with permission from The Jantz Family. "They ask for privacy and respect for the family as they navigate this heartbreaking loss."

Dr. Jantz, founder of The Center: A Place of HOPE in Edmonds, was a trailblazer in whole-person care, dedicating over 40 years to transforming lives through innovative treatment for depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and more. A best-selling author of over 45 books and a trusted media voice

Continued **PAGE 12**

Rick Steves announces \$1 million challenge

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—Local philanthropist Rick Steves has pledged a \$1 million challenge match to support the public phase of the Lynnwood Neighborhood Center (LNC) capital campaign, a \$26.5 million project set to transform

human health and community services in South Snohomish County.

The LNC, a 39,000-square-foot LEED Gold-certified facility, will offer gathering spaces and critical services, including a medical, dental, and vision clinic, behavioral health center, early learning classrooms, youth and teen

programs, a community resource center, and more.

This 15-year vision is a partnership between Trinity Lutheran Church & Schools, which donated the land; Rick Steves, the lead donor; and Volun-

Continued **PAGE 12**



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Florida company selected to build hybrid-electric ferries for WSF, sparking local job concerns

By MARIO LOTMORE

Washington State has selected Florida-based Eastern Shipbuilding Group to build three new 160-vehicle hybrid-electric ferries for Washington State Ferries (WSF) at a cost of \$714.5 million, a decision that prioritizes cost savings but has raised concerns about bypassing local shipbuilders and its impact on Washington's economy.

"After careful consideration and conversations with legislative leaders, I believe Eastern is the best option to build these critically important vessels at a fair cost to our taxpayers," Governor Bob Ferguson said.

The contract, announced by Governor Ferguson on July 1, marks Washington State Ferries' (WSF) first competitive bid for ferry construction in over 25 years. Eastern's \$714.5 million bid was 6% below WSF's engineer's estimate and significantly lower than the other bidder, Nichols Brothers of Whidbey Island, following a year-long process

of advertising, pre-qualifying shipyards, and addressing bidder inquiries.

"As we follow Governor Ferguson's direction to focus on service, it's exciting, as we restore additional vessels on three routes, to also move forward with constructing new ferries," said Deputy Transportation Secretary for WSF Steve Nevey.

Beyond the shipyard bid, additional costs for owner-furnished equipment, construction management, crew training, and risk contingencies bring the first ferry's cost to \$405 million, the second to \$360 million, and the third to \$325 million. The state's 2025-27 transportation budget allocates nearly \$900 million for ferry system capital projects, with over half supporting new vessel construction and electrification.

WSDOT's Ferry System Electrification Program, estimated at roughly \$4 billion, is partially funded with \$1.03 billion from the Move Ahead Washington package and \$599 million from the

Climate Commitment Act.

Supporters of the decision highlight fiscal responsibility. Sen. Marko Liias (D-Edmonds) stated, "The budget constraints we face — combined with rising construction costs driven by tariffs and inflation — mean we must make the most of every taxpayer dollar to deliver the ferries we urgently need."

However, critics argue the contract undermines Washington's shipbuilding industry. Port of Everett CEO Lisa LeFebre called it "a missed opportunity to invest in a skilled workforce as well as create over 1,300 jobs for the state."

Rep. Andrew Barkis (R-Olympia), House Republican transportation lead, criticized both the decision and its lack of transparency, stating that Nichols Brothers' bid exceeded Eastern's by over \$350 million.

"It's deeply concerning that Nichols Brothers, a long-established Washington company with decades of experience, could not offer a competitive bid

despite having home-field advantage," Barkis said. He blamed high taxes, regulations, and compliance costs, warning, "If building ferries in Washington is no longer financially viable, we've done something terribly wrong."

Barkis added, "There was no Four Corners meeting, no briefing, no explanation of the final process or rationale."

Eastern Shipbuilding, Panama City's largest employer, emphasizes its workforce development through its "BUILD" initiative. In a phone call with Eastern, HR shared with the Lynnwood Times that to her knowledge Eastern is not a "union shop."

Meanwhile, WSF is expanding its service, adding a second boat to the Seattle-Bremerton route and planning further vessel additions. Governor Ferguson also reported progress on the Wenatchee's hybrid-electric conversion, set to resume service in early July, enabling the fleet to reach 21 vessels and full pre-pandemic service levels.

OSPI steps in to sustain WA's Imagination Library Program

By MARIO LOTMORE

OLYMPIA—In a move to preserve early literacy opportunities, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has committed discretionary funds to maintain Washington's Imagination Library program for the 2025–26 fiscal year. This decision follows the state Legislature's elimination of the program's funding in the recent session due to a \$12 billion budget shortfall, highlighting OSPI's critical role in ensuring young children continue to receive free books.

"Washington's youngest children cannot afford to have their opportunities for early learning cut to this extent," said State Superintendent Chris Reykdal. "While I plan to advocate for renewed funding in the supplemental session next year, the Imagination Library of Washington risks losing their effective, statewide infrastructure if funding generated from the statewide match is halted for even one year. Through limited discretionary funds, my agency will keep this program funded for one more year with the goal being to obtain permanent funding from the Legislature next session."

The recent legislative session prioritized K–12 education but reduced funding

for early learning programs, including Transition to Kindergarten, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, and the Imagination Library.

The Imagination Library, inspired by Dolly Parton to honor her father's inability to read and write, delivers a free, age-appropriate book monthly to children from birth to age 5. Since 2022, Washington has expanded the program statewide through a partnership between the Legislature, OSPI, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), reaching 120,000 children across all 39 counties. Each book costs \$2.60, with local partners covering 50% and the state typically funding the other half. Families can opt for a bilingual option, receiving books in English and Spanish.

Brooke Fisher-Clark, Executive Director of the Imagination Library of Washington, praised OSPI's support, noting the program's impact on kindergarten readiness scores.

"We are grateful to Superintendent Reykdal and OSPI for their investment in and continued support for the Imagination Library," said Brooke Fisher-Clark, Executive Director of the Imagination Library of Washington. "This program has the potential to be absolutely life changing for Washington

students, and we already see through rising kindergarten readiness scores that our efforts, along with other early learning investments, are making a difference in our children's learning. As Dolly Parton often says, 'you can never get enough books into the hands of enough

children.'"

Families can enroll children at no cost via the Imagination Library's website. OSPI's funding ensures the program's continuity while advocacy for long-term state support continues.

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The graphic features a cartoon character with blue hair, glasses, and a green frog on its head, reading a blue book. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.

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A victim of Governor Ferguson's veto: Kent's PICC center for babies exposed to drugs



On Wednesday, June 25, I toured the Pediatric Interim Care Center (PICC) in Kent. There was no media, no speeches — just a bipartisan group walking through a place that has dedicated 35 years to quietly saving lives.

PICC is a unique Newborn Nursery in Kent, Washington, that specializes in the care of drug-exposed newborns. Image Source: Pediatric Interim Care Center Facebook page and Rep. Travis Couture's legislative page.

It may have been a final visit. Unless something changes by Monday, June 30, PICC will close its doors for good. Not because it failed. Not because the need disappeared. But because our state government chose to let it die — through ideology, indifference and a single veto.

PICC specializes in caring for newborns suffering from drug withdrawal. These are infants born into agony — their bodies trembling, their cries raw and guttural. PICC gently nurses them through the most painful days of their lives. The average stay is 30 to 40 days. The outcomes are remarkable.

For decades, PICC received about \$700,000 per year in state support — a fraction of the state's \$70 billion-plus budget. The rest came from private donors, community support and non-profit partners. This year, Democratic budget writers stripped that funding. Republicans pushed to restore it. After bipartisan negotiation, \$100,000 was included in the final budget — just enough to buy one more year and create a long-term plan.

Gov. Bob Ferguson vetoed it.

Even after the veto, PICC might have survived. But the Department of Children, Youth, and Families terminated PICC's contract — the agreement that allows hospitals and state services to place infants there. Without it, PICC can't take babies, regardless of how many beds are open or how urgent the need.

This decision came without warning. No complaint, no violation, no consul-

tation. Despite invitation, the governor never visited. Then he vetoed their last chance — and said nothing while DCYF severed the lifeline.

Behind the scenes, state officials offer weak justifications. DCYF suggests the care center is "outdated" or inconsistent with "best practices." But that claim falls apart under scrutiny.

PICC uses modern, evidence-based care models — including "Eat, Sleep, Console." It avoids overmedication. In 35 years, Narcan has been needed only once. It offers extended visitation, hotel vouchers for families and structured support. The facility even tried overnight stays until those led to dangerous incidents, including on-site drug use and an attempted infant abduction by a parent under the influence.

PICC's policies aren't to punish parents. They're to protect babies.

But DCYF has changed. Since its formation in 2017, and especially after the 2021 Keeping Families Together Act, the department has embraced a rigid ideology that prioritizes reunification at almost any cost, even when parents are actively using meth or fentanyl. This ideology has fueled a tripling of child deaths and near deaths in the first quarter of 2025 compared to the same period last year — over half due to fentanyl.

If PICC closes, these infants will be sent to overstimulating hospitals at 10 times the cost — or worse, placed back in homes where substances are used.

PICC wasn't built by bureaucrats. It was built by people who care. Founder Barb Drennen dedicated her life to it. Over the years, she was joined by a bipartisan coalition of supporters: pediatricians, police chiefs, local officials. Former Lt. Gov. Brad Owen and others. Every rocking chair, every crib, every detail of that facility is a testament to purpose, compassion and community.

Continued PAGE 5

A YOUNG HEART NEVER GROWS OLD.

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LEISURE CARE

Lynnwood QFC manager recognized as Top Women in Grocery from Progressive Grocer

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—Quality Food Centers (QFC) announced that Mafi Vasquez, store manager of the Lynnwood QFC #835 located at 196th Street Southwest, received national recognition as a Top Women in Grocery (TWIG) honoree for Store Manager of the Year by Progressive Grocer (PG). She will join scores of women employed in all sectors of the grocery industry who will be celebrated during PG’s annual Grocery Impact event in November.

Mafi Vasquez, store manager of the Lynnwood QFC #835 located at 196th Street Southwest, who is a Top Women in Grocery (TWIG) honoree for Store Manager of the Year by Progressive Grocer (PG). Source: Lynnwood Times image generated by original photos by Progressive Grocer.

Vasquez earned the award for her leadership, community engagement, and dedication to her 83-member team. Originally from Peru, Vasquez studied nursing before immigrating to the United States and joining QFC. Her career in grocery retail became a platform for her commitment to helping others.

“Mafi Vasquez represents the very best of QFC. Her journey, resilience, and heart for people embody what leadership looks like in our stores every day,”



Mafi Vasquez, store manager of the Lynnwood QFC #835 located at 196th Street Southwest, who is a Top Women in Grocery (TWIG) honoree for Store Manager of the Year by Progressive Grocer (PG). Source: Lynnwood Times image generated by original photos by Progressive Grocer.

said Brent Stewart, QFC President.

Vasquez fosters a supportive environment for her team and customers while prioritizing community service. She has led initiatives like QFC’s turkey donations, Food Lifeline packing events, and the Holiday Hunger Program, where her store excels in selling \$10 food donation bags to support local food banks. Her Lynnwood QFC #835 store scored

above 85% on holiday tours and surprise visits, metrics that also reflected Vasquez’s unwavering drive for excellence. Vasquez is also a founding member of QFC’s multicultural resource group.

“She leads with compassion, inspires her team, and makes a lasting impact on her community,” Stewart added. The TWIG award, a prestigious hon-

or in the grocery industry, recognizes women who drive progress in food retail. Vasquez’s contributions highlight her role as a leader and mentor. QFC, a division of Kroger Co., operates 59 stores in Western Washington and Portland, Oregon, and donates over \$1 million and 2 million pounds of food annually to local communities.

Sno-Isle Libraries seeks new members for the Board of Trustees

By SNO-ISLE LIBRARIES

SNOHOMISH AND ISLAND COUNTIES—Sno-Isle Libraries seeks to fill two upcoming vacancies on the seven-member Board of Trustees, which governs the Library District for Snohomish and Island counties.

Snohomish County residents interested in making an impact in community libraries are encouraged to apply by July 13. With five trustees appointed by the Snohomish County Council and two by the Island County Commissioners, the board ensures the unique needs of each service area are met. Among their responsibilities the Board helps set the annual budget, library policies, and organizational direction.

“The Board of Trustees’ knowledge and expertise contribute to our community well-being and the success

of Sno-Isle Libraries. Their ongoing commitment to equitable access helps create welcoming spaces for everyone,” said Executive Director Eric Howard.

Applications will be accepted from June 30 to July 13. To be eligible candidates must be a resident of the Sno-Isle Libraries District in Snohomish County. The successful candidates will be appointed by the joint action of the Snohomish County Council and the Board of Island County Commissioners and begin service in January 2026. Trustees serve a seven-year term. One of the selected candidates will serve a one-year partial term and will be eligible to serve two additional seven-year terms.

About Sno-Isle Libraries

Sno-Isle Libraries serves over 800,000 residents in Snohomish and Island counties through 23 community

libraries, online services, and Library on Wheels. Our Vision: Everyone in our community is connected to their library. Our Mission: We engage and

inspire our communities through equitable access to knowledge and resources.

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2025 EVENTS

June 27
 CELEBRATE!

July 12
HISTORY AND HERITAGE DAY

July 8
August 12
 MEET ME AT THE PARK

July 17, 24, 31
SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

July 27
PAWS IN THE PARK

August 7, 14, 21
 SANDLOT CINEMAS

Sept. 6
FAIR ON 44TH

Snohomish County Mourns and Celebrates the life of Community Trailblazer, Marilyn Jean Quincy

By MARIO LOTMORE

EVERETT—Marilyn Jean Quincy, a revered figure in Snohomish County known for her tireless advocacy for Black American heritage and community equality, passed away on June 4, 2025, at the age of 81. Her funeral, held on June 26, 2025, at New Life Everett Church, drew a diverse crowd of mourners, including community leaders, activists, and residents, who gathered to celebrate her profound impact on the region.

“Now, therefore, I, Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive, do hereby proclaim June 26, 2025, as Marilyn Jean Quincy Day in Snohomish County,” Wil Johnson, Snohomish County’s Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, announced in a proclamation honoring the legacy and contributions of Quincy to the residents of the county. “I encourage all residents, visitors, and businesses to join in remembering and honoring Marilyn’s inspiring service to our community.”

Dy Shauntic Monet Bletson, Secretary of Snohomish County Black Heritage Committee, then read a Proclamation on behalf of the City of Everett and signed by Mayor Cassie Franklin, that recognized Quincy’s efforts in championing the Everett Public Library to establish a dedicated Black history collection “ensuring that local Black heritage is actively documented, preserved, and accessible to all.”

Additional proclamations honoring Quincy were read on behalf of the Snohomish County Black Heritage Committee and the First African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Born in 1944 in Everett, Washington, Marilyn Quincy was a descendant of one of Snohomish County’s earliest Black families, with her great-grandfather, William P. Stewart, a Civil War veteran for whom a highway in Everett is named. Her deep roots in the area shaped her lifelong commitment to preserving and promoting African American history. After graduating from Everett High School, Quincy faced significant racial barriers in the job market. She worked briefly in a nursing home



Senator John Lovick (D-Mill Creek) delivering a celebration of Marilyn Quincy’s legacy and earthly journey to God at her funeral on June 26, 2025, at New Life Everett Church. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

before enrolling at Everett Community College to study nutrition, with aspirations of becoming a dietician. Despite being denied a hospital job due to her race, she persevered, later working at Boeing and as a cashier at Safeway, where she was reportedly the first Black cashier in the region.

Marilyn Quincy’s career spanned 36 years at the Washington State Employment Security Department, where her dedication earned her recognition through House Resolution 4649 in 2007, introduced by then-Representative John Lovick. She also served 15 years as a commissioner for the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO), leading to the renaming of Westwood Crossing Apartments in Marysville as the Marilyn Quincy Community Center in her honor.

As founder of the Snohomish County Black Heritage Committee, Marilyn was instrumental in establishing the Nubian Jam Festival, a decades-long celebration of African American culture in Everett. Her leadership extended to roles with the NAACP and church missions, including Habitat for Humanity projects in Mississippi and aid efforts post-Hur-

ricane Katrina. In 2023, she received the inaugural Marilyn Quincy Award at the committee’s Red and White Banquet, where she spoke proudly of her family’s legacy, saying, “I am so proud to look out here and see all those people part of the legacy of Snohomish County and are carrying on.”

Marilyn’s funeral service, officiated by Reverend Dr. Doris Cope, was a vibrant tribute to her life. State Senator John Lovick (D-Mill Creek) delivered a celebration of Quincy’s legacy and earthly journey to God.

Reverend Spencer Barrett’s eulogy for Marilyn Quincy celebrated her vibrant faith and community impact. Drawing from 2 Corinthians 5, Barrett portrayed Marilyn’s life as a temporary “earthly tent,” emphasizing her readiness for an eternal “building from God.”

He highlighted Quincy’s unwavering belief in Christ, her ability to spread joy, and her resilience against adversity, including racial discrimination. Marilyn’s love for others, reflected in her work with the Snohomish County Black Heritage Committee, was a testament to her Holy Spirit-filled life. Barrett urged

mourners to emulate Quincy by living with purpose, loving generously, and preparing their own “tents” for eternity before featuring a slideshow of her life.

“Marilyn knew her tent was temporary, but she made sure it was filled with love, faith, and a light that pointed to God,” said Rev. Barrett.

During a Reflections segment of the service, friends and families shared stories of Marilyn’s warmth and tenacity, from organizing the first Nubian Jam, to mentoring employees at the Employee’s Security Department, to her steering a boat for the first time towards a Washington state ferry.

Marilyn Quincy was laid to rest in a private burial with her family on June 27, 2025, at Evergreen Funeral Home and Cemetery.

Marilyn Jean Quincy is survived by her sons Anthony and William; grandchildren, Keliyah, Keelah, and Jarrell; and great-grandchildren, Onyx and Ronin; her sisters, Georgina Paul and Mary Barrett (Spencer); her extended family; and a wide circle of friends and community members.

from page 3 **PICC**

This isn’t a call for money. PICC is ready to operate for another year — without any new state funding — if their contract is restored.

The only thing required is leadership. Specifically, Gov. Ferguson and DCYF Secretary Tana Senn must reinstate the PICC’s contract. That alone would give us time to regroup, to find solutions, to do right by the scores of babies still being born into addiction in this state.

If PICC closes on Monday, let the record show it was not for lack of care.

Not for lack of need. Not for lack of donors. And certainly not for lack of love.

It was because of one man’s veto. One agency’s silence. And a failure of conscience at the highest levels of state government.

The Pediatric Interim Care Center deserves better. Barb Drennen deserves better. And above all, the babies do. We still have time to save this miracle.

By Representative Travis Couture (R-Allyn)

Rep. Travis Couture, a U.S. Navy veteran and Washington State Representative for the 35th Legislative District, brings a wealth of experience in service and leadership.

As a submariner aboard USS Alabama and USS Nebraska, he completed multiple strategic deterrence patrols, earning numerous honors before his honorable discharge in 2011. Post-military, Couture managed billions in assets as a Program Manager for a Fortune 500 company, supporting Naval Base Kitsap, and later led over 100 employees as Director of Operations for a Kitsap County non-profit serving people with disabilities.

He holds a master’s in business administration and a bachelor’s in organizational leadership from Brandman University. A decade-long community leader, Couture is driven by his role as a father of four to address challenges like rising costs and quality education.

He resides in Allyn with his wife, Julie, and their children.

COMMENTARY DISCLAIMER: The views and comments expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lynnwood Times nor any of its affiliate.

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Mead, Nehring host Building Bridges Summit at WSU Everett to foster collaboration

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EVERETT—Snohomish County Council members Jared Mead and Nate Nehring teamed up with former investigative journalist, now Results Washington Director, Jesse Jones, for their second annual Building Bridges Summit at Washington State University’s Everett campus Thursday, June 26.

This year’s theme, “Conversations That Connect Us,” highlighted the impact of civil discourse when grounded in empathy, curiosity, and shared purpose. The event featured a live panel, moderated by Jones, insights from Jackson High School students and regional elected officials, a celebration of the Future Leaders Academy—created in partnership with Everett Public Schools—recognition of student essay winners, and networking, light refreshments, and authentic connection with local change-makers.

Wendy Poischbeg, CEO of the Greater Everett Chamber of Commerce, a proud sponsor of Thursday’s event, began the event by sharing a few words, stating that bringing the community together for respectful dialogue, shared purpose, and leadership that brings people together is what the Chamber of Commerce is all about.

Councilman Nehring followed Poischbeg, reminding the crowd that while the Building Bridges project was founded to stimulate civic health across the aisles it doesn’t always mean “agreement,” and “compromise.” It does, however, promote disagreement in a respectful way, finding common ground, and charting a path forward despite disagreements in political policy.

“When people from different political perspectives are able to set those differences aside and find ways to work together it produces better outcomes for everyone involves, particularly for the community,” said Nehring.

Nehring’s co-founder, Mead, shared a story about how his young child formed a connection with someone her age the other day based on a shared interest in coloring. That connectivity, that empathy, Mead continued, can sometimes be lost growing into an adulthood but he believes that what has been lost can be found.

After Josh Estes, Strategic Advisor who assisted Mead and Nehring kickstart the Building Bridges project, briefly mentioned the event’s sponsors, keynote speaker, and Emmy-Award winner Jesse Jones took the stage.

“The government’s job is to make its constituent’s lives easier, better, better than it was for us,” said Jones. “When you look into an issue, all I ask is to find more than two sides. We often hear ‘both sides’ but I’m asking you to look for all sides.”

Jones also emphasized a need to care for one another, equating the scene in Ridley Scott’s 2000 film *Gladiator* when Russel Crowe says to stick together. Using this example Jones said “no matter what comes through that gate we’re going to be okay if we stick together. The



From left to right: Mukilteo City Councilman Jason Moon, Snohomish County Councilman Nate Nehring, Results Washington Director Jesse Jones, Jackson High School graduate Anja Duemchen, Jackson High School Grad Alejandro Carbajal, Building Bridges and Strategic Advisor Josh Estes, Washington State Senator John Lovick, Snohomish County Councilman Jared Mead, and Everett Public Schools Assistant Principle Sechin Tower. Photo Source: Jared Mead

guy that runs is going to get eaten.”

State Senator John Lovick (D-Mill Creek), Sen. Ron Muzzall (R-Oak Harbor), Stillaguamish Tribe Vice Chairwoman Kadi Bizyayeva, and Mukilteo City Council Vice Chair Jason Moon made up the first panel discussing how to break barriers, commune with those who disagree with you, and leading by example.

“We have to talk to each other. We can’t be enemies – see where we can find common ground,” said Sen. Lovick. “At the end of the day, if we disagree with something, we disagree on that, we’re not enemies.”

Also in attendance was Everett Mayor Cassie Franklin, Everett City Council member Ben Zarlingo, Mill Creek Mayor Brian Holtzclaw, Mukilteo City Council member Mike Dixon, Snohomish County PUD Commissioner Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, and several others.

Future Leaders Academy

In 2023 the Building Bridges Project launched the Future Leaders Academy to help young people build the skills to address polarization.

Through this academy students learn about the basics of civics, meet with their elected representatives, participate in community volunteerism, and even embark on a field trip to the state capitol where they were able to sponsor a resolution.

Jackson High School Principal Sechin Tower spoke Thursday on the Academy and how “just going into that room was exciting to see students’ eyes light up when they talked about politics.” Most of all, Tower added, when students disagree, they know how to disagree productively.

Two Jackson High School graduates, Anja Duemchen and Alejandro Carbajal, made up the next and final panel with Tower, Mead, and Nehring, Thursday to discuss their time in the Future Leaders Academy and what it taught them about partisan politics.

“I was generally discouraged by the state of things,” said Carbajal. “I think there are a lot of echo chambers and derogatory terms that are used to refer to people on the other side, and I think it’s hard for us to escape from the shroud of partisanship and really have meaningful conversations.”

Duemchen added that prior to enrolling in the Future Leaders Academy she viewed politics as a series of disagreements or feuds that “got people nowhere.”

“Having gone through the program not only have I learned about different parts of the government, not only in the classroom, but being able to experience the state capitol, it’s not all feuds and dis-

agreements, like it’s portrayed on the media, it’s very much a lot of people working together to take action, even if they are on different sides of the spectrum,” said Duemchen.

Carbajal said after the program his biggest takeaway was that people, of varying beliefs, are people who have serious convictions and “you’re never going to get to understand” the root of those convictions if “you’re not even willing to sit down and discuss like equals.”

Deumchen built on Carbajal’s points with an example of one of her friends who, prior to joining the Building Bridges Project, could not have political

Continued PAGE 11

Lynnwood University

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The Cannabis Debate: Rising health risks, addiction, and regulation

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—As Lynnwood City Councilmembers consider approving retail cannabis in September, a growing body of research is shedding light on its potential health risks, particularly for young people, frequent users, and persons exposed to secondhand cannabis smoke.

Recent studies point to increased risks of addiction, cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, and mental health issues linked to cannabis and its primary psychoactive component, THC, while some argue that cannabis offers health benefits and safer consumption methods. However, as THC potency rises and vaping trends among teens escalate, the mounting evidence of harm is prompting calls for stricter regulation and public education.

The debate over cannabis remains complex with the scientific community calling for caution, emphasizing that the full scope of its long-term effects is still unfolding.

Rising Prevalence of Cannabis Use Disorder

Cannabis use disorder (CUD), a condition characterized by dependence on cannabis, is becoming a significant public health concern. In an article written by Mark S. Gold, M.D., in *Psychology Today*, referencing a longitudinal study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* titled, “Association of State Cannabis Legalization with Cannabis Use Disorder and Cannabis Poisoning,” analyzed the impact of state-level medical and recreational cannabis laws on cannabis use disorder of over 110 million employer-sponsored health insurance enrollees and found that states with legalized medical cannabis saw a 42.7% increase in CUD and nearly double the rate of cannabis poisonings compared to states without such laws.

Gold also references a February 6, 2025, *JAMA Network Open* study of 11.6 million people studied for a median of 5 years, which revealed that individuals hospitalized for CUD had nearly three times the risk of death within five years compared to the general population.

“The facts are clear: cannabis is addictive, its use is on the rise, and those affected by cannabis use disorder face a heightened risk of premature death,” wrote Laura Bierut, M.D., in a *JAMA* editorial. “It is time to confront this public health crisis head-on.”

Additionally, a February 4, 2025 Canadian study comprising 13,588,681 individuals, showed a 270% increase in hospital care for CUD after non-medical cannabis legalization, with a rise in schizophrenia cases, from 7% to 16%, prior CUD diagnoses.

Cardiovascular Risks Linked to Frequent Use

Frequent cannabis use is also being linked to serious cardiovascular issues. In a June 2025 article titled, “Cannabis Use May Double Risk of Death From Cardiovascular Disease, Study Finds,”



Portrait of person with mask, glasses and gloves checking hemp plants in a greenhouse. Adobe Stock.

by David Mills in *Healthline*, a meta-analysis published in *Heart* found that cannabis use doubled the risk of death from cardiovascular disease, with a 29% higher risk of acute coronary syndrome and a 20% higher risk of stroke.

“Frequent cannabis use has increased in several countries, and many users believe that it is a safe and natural way to relieve pain or stress. In contrast, a growing body of evidence links cannabis use to significant harms throughout life, including cardiovascular health of adults,” wrote Stanton Glantz, PhD, an emeritus professor at the University of California San Francisco, and Lynn Silver, MD, a professor in UCSF’s Department of Epidemiology and a program director at the Public Health Institute in Oakland, CA.

The research looked at 24 studies published between January 2016 and January 2023 that included about 200 million people. The study participants were mostly between the ages of 19 and 59.

“If we ignore these signals, we are destined to repeat the fatal history of cigarette smoking,” said Robert Page II, PharmD, a professor in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy and the Department of Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation at the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

The study noted that cannabis potency has increased significantly, with THC levels rising from an average of 4% in 1995 to over 16% in 2022, amplifying these risks.

Additionally, a study from earlier this year found that cannabis users were six times more likely to experience a heart attack compared to non-users. Another 2024 study indicated that individuals using cannabis for chronic pain management faced an increased risk of atrial fibrillation and other heart arrhythmias.

Cognitive Impairment and Youth Vulnerability

The impact of cannabis on brain function, particularly in young adults, is another area of concern for scientists.

In a University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus article published in February 2025 by Julia Milzer titled, “Largest Study Ever Done on Cannabis and Brain Function Finds Impact on Working Memory,” detailed a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open* that examined over 1,000 adults aged 22 to 36 using brain imaging technology. It found that 63% of heavy lifetime cannabis users and 68% of recent users showed reduced brain activity during working memory tasks, leading to poorer performance.

Working memory is the brain’s mechanism for briefly storing and processing information needed for a task. It enables people to handle information, address problems, and make choices.

“As cannabis use continues to grow globally, studying its effects on human health has become increasingly important. By doing so, we can provide a well-rounded understanding of both the benefits and risks of cannabis use, empowering people to make informed decisions and fully comprehend the potential consequences,” said the study’s first author Joshua Gowin, PhD, assistant professor of radiology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

The study suggests that heavy cannabis

use may have long-lasting effects on cognitive functions like decision-making and attention, though causation requires further research.

Furthermore, a May 3, 2023, Columbia University *JAMA* study concluded that teens using cannabis recreationally were two to four times more likely to develop psychiatric disorders, depression, and suicidality when compared to their non-using peers.

Teen Vaping and Unregulated Substances

The rise in teen vaping of cannabis-related substances adds another layer of risk.

A July 2025 study by Jack Chung, published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* and reported by *Sci-TechDaily*, found that between 2021 and 2023 in the United States, adolescent vaping of THC, CBD, and synthetic cannabinoids increased significantly.

Chung reported a surge in THC use in 2022, with synthetic cannabinoids—lab-created compounds mimicking cannabis—continuing to rise thereafter.

“We found a significant increase in adolescent vaping of THC, CBD, and SCs from 2021 to 2023,” said Chung. “THC vaping peaked in 2022 while the use of

Lynnwood Times sits down with City Council Position 1 and 3 candidates for in-person interviews and debates



Dio Boucsiequez, Lynnwood City Council Position 1 candidate. Source: Dio Boucsiequez

By KIENAN BRISCOE

LYNNWOOD—Lynnwood Times Senior Reporter Kienan Briscoe hosted and moderated an in-person interview, and debate, with Lynnwood City Council Position 1 candidate Dio Boucsiequez Tuesday, July 8. Position 1 candidates Derica Escamilla and Brandon Kimmel were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts.

Boucsiequez is a two-time elected PCO, Small Businessowner and Department Lead at a local grocery store. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington, where he triple-majored in political science, history and communications, with an emphasis in journalism.

For the first question he was given one minute to share with Lynnwood voters his platform priorities and his policies to enact these priorities.

Boucsiequez shared that he is running for the Position 1 seat because he “loves the City of Lynnwood.” His four main platform points are budget and growth management, trust and transparency, public safety, and fostering the arts, culture, and entertainment in Lynnwood.

Reviewing a series of contentious votes Lynnwood City Council took over the last two years, Dio was then asked how he hypothetically would have voted if given the same opportunity.

The first was the property tax hike approved with the biennium budget. At its Business Meeting held November 25, 2024, the council voted 4-3, to raise property by a “take-home” rate of 52%.

“First off, it’s unfortunate that the person who voted for that 52% increase isn’t here today. I sure would have loved to learn why she voted that way, but I would have voted no,” said Boucsiequez. “I’m a working-class guy, I’m a blue-collar guy, I’m endorsed by various unions, including my own, and I know the struggles that working class people face. Adding rising property taxes to working class folks is not going to help keep our city livable.”

Another contentious issue in the City Council as of late has been the discussion of recodifying residency require-

ments for clarity; included in that is how residency within the city is proven. Dio was asked if he is for residency requirement recodifications in the current Lynnwood Municipal Code.

“We’ve seen over the last couple of years, and especially this last year, a certain council member has had difficulty proving his residency. I believe to serve on the Lynnwood City Council you need to actually live in the city and to prove that you live in the city,” said Boucsiequez. “So I’m absolutely in favor of strengthening, and recodifying, those residency requirements.”

Boucsiequez added that city government needs to have a level of trust and transparency with its residents that, without, there is no public trust.

On June 25 this year, the Council unanimously approved a Unified Development Code (or UDC) which updated and consolidated building development, regulations, and boosts density. In that same vote, Council did not approve the affixed fire sprinkler mandate. Dio was asked if he would have supported the UDC, and additionally, if he would have included the fire sprinkler mandate.

“I would have supported the fire sprinkler mandate. I understand certain council members’ objections regarding the cost but I believe that just one person’s life is worth more than simply thousands of dollars,” said Boucsiequez.

Back in April of 2024, the Lynnwood City Council unanimously approved Mayor Frizzell to enter into an eight-year \$6.4 million Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) with ACG Acquisitions, LLC, the developer of ENSO, a new 318-unit mixed-use housing development scheduled to open next year in Lynnwood’s City Center that will offer new housing options at market value for residents. The Multi-Family Housing Property Tax Exemption program is an incentive to property owners, in this case ACG Acquisitions, LLC, to not have to pay property taxes on the residential improvements for a given number of years.

Boucsiequez shared that he would have voted for a tax deferral but said eight years is “way too long.” He would like to see more condominium construction

in the city to keep up with its growing population.

An upcoming vote this September would either approve, or not approve, recreational cannabis retailers to operate within the city limits of Lynnwood. There have been multiple discussions on this at City Council meetings as of late.

Boucsiequez says he does not support recreational cannabis stores in Lynnwood stating that there are already cannabis retailers operating in Edmonds and in unincorporated Lynnwood on Highway 99. His reasoning, he said, is due to the adverse addictive, and psychological affects, cannabis has on particularly younger residents.

Lynnwood’s motto is “All Are Welcome.” Dio was next asked how he would commit to this mission statement and ensure that Lynnwood remains a safe and equitable community for all.

“In terms of being safe we need to make sure that we continue to support our local law enforcement, and make sure that we have our regional public safety partnerships still in place, as well as continuing to fund our municipal courts,” said Boucsiequez.

In terms of being “equitable,” he added that with a thriving arts and entertainment center would unite people from diverse backgrounds together under a shared interest in the arts.

“When we have a thriving arts, and entertainment culture, we have a much more diverse and equitable society,” said Boucsiequez.

When it came to the most important infrastructure project in the City of Lynnwood, his answer, again, referred to more housing options to absorb the projected growth of the city, and Snohomish County at large.

There is a lot of emphasis on making Lynnwood a “live, work, play city.” Dio was asked what he would do to establish Lynnwood as a “destination” city.

Circling back to his platform point on bolstering Lynnwood’s arts and entertainment culture, Dio referenced Edmond’s Porch Fest which, he said, Lynnwood doesn’t have anything similar.

“I think having comedy clubs, piano bars, we need to be open to having diverse entertainment options so that people of all ages can live, work, and thrive in the city,” said Boucsiequez.

To improve the city’s green spaces, Dio used Savannah, Georgia, as an example – a city that was intentionally designed with green spaces in mind, he said – to exemplify what he would like to see in the City of Lynnwood. He added that he would sit down and talk to the Parks and Recreation Department to figure out how to make more green spaces to allow residents to “connect to nature,” especially given its projected population boom.

Seeing as Boucsiequez was the only Position 1 candidate to attend Tuesday’s event, the debate portion of the evening was more of a continuation of questions beginning with what he would recommend to mitigate the city’s \$4.3 million budget shortfall if the Budget Management Plan presented by Finance Director Michelle Meyer doesn’t close the gap.

Dio’s priority, he said, is to ensure that city staff will not lose their jobs. He then would like to have a third-party financial and process audit to have a date-driven approach to making spending more efficient.

Regarding public safety, Boucsiequez was asked what he believes the city is doing right and where he believes there might be some opportunity of improvement.

As far as what the city is doing “right” Boucsiequez said that the Lynnwood PD has a “great relationship with its community.” Having recently coached the ACCESS Project’s Cops v. Kids basketball program, he would like to see more

Continued **PAGE 9**

from page 1 **RICK STEVES**

teers of America Western Washington (VOAWW), which will own and operate the center. The LNC will unite nonprofits and community groups to address local needs, with current partners including Medical Teams International, Center for Human Services, Boys & Girls Club of Snohomish County, Korean Community Service Center, Cocoon House, and Latino Educational Training Institute.

To help inspire the community to join the campaign, Steves is challenging philanthropists at every level to help fund this project:

“With my initial gift, I thought I was tapped out. But seeing our dream of a Lynnwood Neighborhood Center becoming a reality, I’m inspired to dig deeper with this \$1 million extra gift to challenge my neighbors to join in.” said Steves. “When it comes to bang

for my philanthropic buck, there’s no better investment. Right now, we need others to step up and help us complete this building campaign. We believe the LNC will contribute to our community in ways we’ve yet to imagine! And with your help—big or small—you can help make this dream...a brick-and-mortar launch pad for our community’s love—come true. Yours will be a gift that will keep on giving for generations to come.”

How You Can Help

Donate online at www.voaww.org/lnc
Mail a check to: LNC c/o Volunteers of America Western Washington, PO Box 839, Everett, WA 98206.

For more information or to get involved, contact Joel Feldman, Philanthropy Officer with the Lynnwood Neighborhood Center, at jfeldman@voaww.org or call 425-474-5785.

from page 8 **CANDIDATES**

programs like that within the community to establish a working relationship.

As far as improvement Dio would like to advocate for the return of the School Resource Officers in Lynnwood schools.

In his closing remarks Dio claimed he is the labor candidate for the position, having been endorsed by various unions, and “just wants to get the job done.”

“No more drama, no more politics (ironically). I just want to be there for the city, to have good, level-headed, calm, representation on the City Council. I want to have good budgets, I want to have good public safety, I want to restore trust and transparency to local government, I want to foster the arts, entertainment, and culture in our city,” said Boucsiguez. “There’s so much that can be done and as of right now we’re on the right trajectory, but we can certainly improve and I want to be a part of the solution.”

Lynnwood City Council Position 3

Joshua Binda did not reply to our several invitations to attend so was not in attendance for Thursday’s discussion with his fellow challengers.

Lynnwood City Council Position 3 candidate, Tyler Hall, has worked for non-profits, small businesses, retail corporations, a local automotive manufacturer, and a local tech giant. His roles have included program management and systems software engineers to a barista and janitor. Tyler holds a JD from the University of Washington School of Law and a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from California Polytechnic State University. He has civil and criminal legal work experience with the Snohomish County Prosecutor’s Office and the Seattle City Attorney’s Office.

Tyler seeks to be a champion for Lynnwood residents, to legislate for them on the “many problems” the city is facing, from rapid growth due to light rail, to climate change, to affordable housing for a diverse pool of different socioeconomic backgrounds.

“[The city’s growth] really needs to be planned in a very smart way with affordable housing and a real spectrum of housing opportunities for different income levels and different homeownership options,” said Hall. “And we need to have the same sort of spectrum for businesses where they can come in at different levels and survive. And we also have a real problem or a real risk with just kind of the changing climate that’s happening throughout the world.”

Our second Position 3 candidate, Bryce Owings, is a foreman, certified journeyman carpenter, and family man who served as the Political Action Committee Chair for the Carpenters Union Local 425 prior to running, shared that his priorities are managing the budget and public safety.

“There’s two ends to [public safety]. There’s reactionary. We need to make sure that the police have the support of the local government as well as enough funding to actually fully fill every role at the police station,” said Owings. “But that’s only going to be like a quick fix. A long fix is I want to work on the homeless issue, the drug addiction, as well as mental illness, get people into an assortment of programs that have a test of time and worked well. And as well as when they get out, bring them into the trade unions.”

The first Lynnwood specific issue involved the property tax increase ap-



Bryce Owings (left) and Tyler Hall (right), Lynnwood City Council Position 3 candidate. Sources: Bryce Owings and Tyler Hall.

proved with the approval of the biennial budget back in November. Each candidate was asked if they would have supported that property tax increase and why.

Hall answered first stating that, while he needed more information before making an informed decision on how we would’ve voted, he believes the city does have room for property tax increases to replace some of Lynnwood’s “aggressive sales tax.” He also proposed looking at alternative tax systems such as a “land value tax,” where the tax is contingent on the value of the land to incentivize development.

“Based on that, I would probably have debated it a little bit heavier to try and rethink what we’re doing with our property tax,” said Hall.

Owings stated that he would not have approved the property tax increase, believing there are “other ways to bring in money to the City of Lynnwood,” such as local priority hire language and large infrastructure projects, which would make work for Lynnwood residents, but also generate more sales tax.

“I believe in getting more money in the hands of the people, and that would trickle up into the government,” said Owings.

Both candidates supported the council’s unanimous approval of the Unified Development Code (UDC), which consolidated building regulations and increased density, while rejecting a fire sprinkler mandate. Owings endorsed zoning for density while protecting single-family neighborhoods, arguing that sprinklers add undue costs for young families.

“The home prices in Lynnwood are already outrageous,” said Owings.

Hall agreed, calling for more debate on fire safety and citing outdated building codes as a concern, especially with increasing wildfire risks.

The council’s approval of an \$6.4 million, eight-year tax exemption for the Enzo housing development drew skepticism from both candidates. Hall criticized such deals, arguing that cities are outmatched by corporations, leading to stalled projects.

“I think the city can’t really contract at the same level as these big corporations, so these deals tend to be bad for the city,” said Hall.

Owings echoed this, pointing to exploited workers and subpar construction.

“It doesn’t benefit the citizens, and it doesn’t benefit the workers,” said Owings.

Steering into upcoming votes, particularly allowing recreational cannabis retailers to operate in the city, Owings backed “adults making adult choices” but emphasized child safety through strict regulations.

“As long as we put in the proper stipulations... I’m not against it,” said Owings.

Hall, initially in favor of cannabis retail in the past, grew cautious after hearing concerns about child safety from Rep. Lauren Davis (D-Shoreline) at a recent City Council Meeting. He cited Montreal’s approach to making dispensaries unappealing to youth.

“I think it’s something we need to delicately walk,” said Hall.

Both candidates saw little need for recodifying residency requirements. Hall called existing statutes sufficient, stating, “This doesn’t feel like something that we need more laws to define.”

Owings suggested clarifying regulations to avoid disputes but opposed adding bureaucracy. “Just more clarification... so we don’t end up wasting taxpayers’ money,” he added.

Addressing a projected \$4.3 million budget shortfall, Owings proposed boosting sales tax revenue by increasing local employment and exploring a higher minimum wage, citing Bellingham’s example.

“Money in the hands of the people is what’s going to fix a lot of issues,” said Owings noting that he knows, from experience, when people have more money they tend to spend it thus generating more revenue for the city.

Hall focused on immediate solutions like accessing opioid settlement funds and exploring local improvement districts and bond options, acknowledging Owings’ approach but noting its longer-term impact.

“I do think we would need the minds of the council to really figure out a good option,” said Hall. “I’d love to rethink taxes very heavily, but that’s not going to come into effect soon enough to really solve a budget shortfall. So I think we have to really dig into the RCWs and dig into what funds are available.”

Regarding public safety, both candidates praised Lynnwood’s police-community relations but saw room for improvement. Hall highlighted programs like “Cops for Kids,” advocating for non-confrontational police interactions.

“I would love to see more things like that where people see their police as people that really are there to protect the people of Lynnwood from harm,” said

Hall. “Because so much of the criminal law is based on this is what society finds to be the most harmful. And I think we just need to make sure everyone knows that and is aware of that and has that relationship with police.”

Owings stressed staffing shortages and community outreach to the homeless, proposing partnerships with organizations like Union Gospel Mission.

“We need to make sure that we have enough manpower there,” said Owings.

When it came to what each candidate believe is the city’s most important infrastructure project, Owings prioritized the light rail expansion, viewing it as an economic driver for local jobs. Hall, on the other hand, pointed to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and disaster preparedness, citing the 2021 heat dome as a wake-up call.

“Are we ready for that in the city of Lynnwood?” he asked, urging proactive planning.

Candidates were then asked what they would do, if elected, to preserve and enhance Lynnwood’s green spaces.

Owings called for cleaner, more accessible spaces, like the recently upgraded Scriber Lake Park, and more green areas near the city center.

“I don’t want to see it just turn into a concrete jungle,” said Owings.

Hall emphasized tree cover and native plants for mental health and climate resilience, noting that “green spaces are key to mental health.”

In closing, Tyler Hall and Bryce Owings presented distinct yet complementary visions for Lynnwood, with Hall leveraging legal expertise for policy innovation and Owings drawing on local roots and trade experience for community-focused solutions.

Hall underscored his legal expertise and ability to craft lasting solutions adding that he is “uniquely qualified through professional experience... to push the city forward.”

Owings highlighted his trade union ties, aiming to connect high schoolers with apprenticeships as a means to prevent youth violence and ensure a skilled workforce for a growing city.

The Primary Election ballots drop boxes open July 17 with ballots due no later than 8 p.m. on August 5.

This article has been a summary of an hour conversation with the three candidates. To see this interview and debate in full visit the Lynnwood Times website and social media channels.

Ballyhoo Theatre presents ‘Pippin,’ a young man’s magical coming-of age journey

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

LYNNWOOD—Ballyhoo Theatre is thrilled to announce its upcoming production of Pippin, a captivating musical that promises to enchant audiences with its blend of magic, poignancy, and unforgettable storytelling. Running from July 18 to July 27, 2025, at the Black Box Theatre at Edmonds College (20310 68th Ave W, Lynnwood, WA 98036), this production is set to be a highlight of the summer theater season. Get your tickets here!

Pippin, featuring music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and a book by Roger O. Hirson, follows the coming-of-age journey of a young man named Pippin, who is on a quest to find his life’s purpose. Guided by a mysterious performance troupe and their charismatic Leading Player, Pippin explores paths to happiness, fulfillment, and an extraordinary life. The story is both a vibrant spectacle and a deeply moving exploration of self-discovery, making it a timeless tale. Parents should note that Pippin may not be suitable for younger audience members due to mature themes; contact ballyhoo.theatre@gmail.com for more details.

This production is helmed by director Shileah Corey, whose vision brings a fresh perspective to the classic musical. The choreography, crafted by Alia Thomaier, promises to dazzle with its energy and creativity, while Max

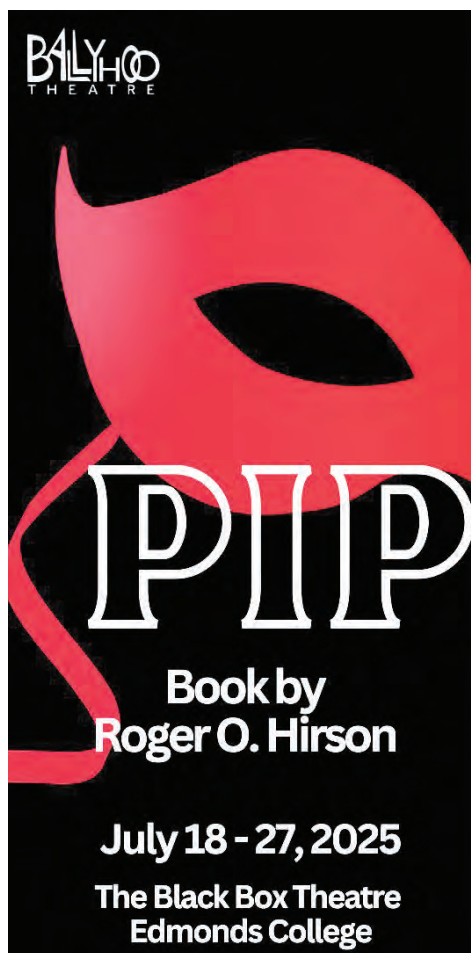
Chastain leads the orchestra, ensuring Schwartz’s iconic score—soaring numbers like “Magic to Do” and “Corner of the Sky”—resounds with vibrancy.

About Ballyhoo Theatre: A Pillar of Inclusive Arts in Edmonds

Founded in 1999, Ballyhoo Theatre has been a cornerstone of the Edmonds arts community, dedicated to enriching, educating, and entertaining through exceptional theater experiences. As a queer-led nonprofit, with 95% of its staff identifying as part of the LGBTQIA2S+ community, Ballyhoo is committed to creating a safe and inclusive space for all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or ability.

The theater’s mission, as articulated by founder Shileah Corey, is to provide a superior theater experience while fostering education in the theater arts for children and young adults.

Corey, whose background is in education, envisioned Ballyhoo as a safe space for young people—particularly those who feel “other”—to explore the arts. Initially a summer theater arts program, Ballyhoo became a certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2015, solidifying its role as a year-round hub for theatrical education and performance. Today, the theater produces five musicals annually alongside special proj-



Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

ballyhootheatre.org

ects, offering classes in voice, acting, and audition preparation. Corey herself teaches at Ballyhoo, drawing on her 19 years of experience at Edmonds Heights K-12.

As Ballyhoo Theatre prepares to bring Pippin to life, audiences can expect a production that not only entertains but

also reflects the theater’s core values: creativity, inclusivity, and the transformative power of storytelling.

Don’t miss this opportunity to join Pippin on his extraordinary journey—secure your tickets at ballyhootheatre.org and be part of the magic!

Seattle Tattoo Expo returns to Seattle Center in August

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

SEATTLE—The Seattle Tattoo Expo, a beloved annual celebration of ink, art, and culture, is back for its 2025 edition, taking over the Seattle Center Exhibition Hall from August 15-17. Hosted by Seattle’s iconic Hidden Hand Tattoo and Supergenius Tattoo, this one-weekend-only event brings together over 250 of the world’s most talented tattoo artists, alongside a dynamic lineup of contests, DJs, karaoke, burlesque, and more. Tickets are now on sale at SeattleTattooExpo.com.

For three days, tattoo enthusiasts and curious newcomers alike can immerse themselves in the rich history and artistry of tattooing. The 2025 Expo showcases legendary artists like VyVyn Lazonga of Madame Lazonga’s Tattoo (Seattle), Tony Hundahl of Rock of Ages Tattooing (Austin), and Big Gus of Tattoo Nightmares and Collective Ink Gallery fame.

Attendees can book tattoo appointments in advance or on-site, depending on each artist’s preference. A full list of participating artists is available at SeattleTattooExpo.com/artists.

Since its inception, the Seattle Tattoo Expo has been a platform for discovering new talent, celebrating fan-favorite artists, and uniting a community passionate about this timeless art form. Over the decades, the event has drawn thousands of attendees and introduced Seattleites to hundreds of in-

ternational artists, cementing its status as a cornerstone of the city’s cultural scene.

“We’re thrilled to bring the Seattle

Tattoo Expo back to Seattle Center, where creativity and community collide,” said organizers from Hidden Hand Tattoo and Supergenius Tattoo. “This year’s lineup of artists and en-

tertainment promises an unforgettable weekend for everyone, from seasoned collectors to first-time visitors.”

Event Details:

- When: August 15-17, 2025
 - Friday: 2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
 - Saturday: 12:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
 - Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Where: Seattle Center Exhibition Hall, 301 Mercer Street, Seattle, WA 98109
- Tickets:
 - Day Pass: \$30
 - Full Weekend Pass: \$70
 - Available now at SeattleTattooExpo.com

Whether you’re looking to get inked by a world-renowned artist, explore tattoo culture, or enjoy the lively entertainment, the Seattle Tattoo Expo is the place to be this August. Don’t miss your chance to be part of this vibrant celebration of art and expression.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit SeattleTattooExpo.com.



Western Washington University launches new Multilingual Education Program in Everett

By **MIKAYLA KING, WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

EVERETT—The Woodring College of Education at Western Washington University is launching a new multilingual education program in Snohomish County to address the growing need for educators prepared to work with multilingual students.

There are 140,000 multilingual English learners in Washington state, representing 13% of K-12 students. These students speak more than 230 languages, the most popular of which is Spanish, which is spoken by 55% of English-learning students.

In Snohomish County, 23.7% of homes

speak a language other than English.

State Superintendent Chris Reykdal has set a goal to offer all students dual language education by 2040. The state legislature has designated grants for schools to establish dual language education programs beginning in kindergarten, especially to schools in the education opportunity grant.

Joe Gaydo's (upper left) book, "Explore the Salish Sea," was used as a part of Migrant Summer School's salmon study.

Students in the Bilingual Teaching Fellows – Everett program will graduate with a bachelor's degree in Multilingual Elementary Education, an Ele-

mentary K-8 teaching certification and either an English Language Learners or Bilingual Education endorsement.

Students will enroll in a 7-quarter, full-time program with classes held on weekday evenings and summer daytime hours at Everett Community College. Bilingual Teaching Fellows will work in Dual Language schools or multilingual classrooms throughout Snohomish County. The program is designed as a small, cohort-based model with a focus on language, culture and educational equity.

"All students benefit academically from Dual Language education, and for our multilingual learners it is the best way to close the opportunity gap they

face in U.S. public schools," WWU Professor of Multilingual Education Maria Timmons Flores said. "The program recognizes the cultural, linguistic and professional assets that paraeducators bring to this work, and we anchor the curriculum in their experiences in schools."

While priority is given to multilingual applicants, it is not a requirement to enroll in the program.

Online information sessions will be held at 4 p.m. every Wednesday until July 23. Learn more about the program and how to enroll at <https://wce.wvu.edu/bilingual-teaching-fellows-everett>

Monumental Talks Foundation holds essay contest for high schoolers with generous cash rewards

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

SNOHOMISH COUNTY—The Monumental Talks Foundation is holding an essay contest for all Snohomish County high school students with the theme 'Reflections on 9/11'. Submissions will be open from July 4 through September 5 with generous cash rewards for first, second, and third place winners.

The competition is open to grades 9 through 12, and open to public, private, or home-schooled students. Submissions can be an original, creative, poem, music, or artistic creation on the theme, so long as their submission is original, a personal composition, created without assistance, instruction, or collaboration of A.I. or other external means. This will be enforced through the honor system, the Monumental Talks Foundation said.

Essays must be type-written (Microsoft Word preferred) in Times New Roman font, sized 14, with 1.5 line spacing. Essays are limited to 500 words or less.

First place winner will receive a \$1,500 prize, second place will receive a \$1,000 prize, and the third place winner will receive a \$500 prize. Winners will be announced at the organization's 9/11 Remembrance Event on September 11, at the Everett Civic Auditorium. Contest participants will receive complimentary tickets to this event.

Judging and sponsorship will be supported by the Monumental Talks Foundation, donations, and the support of various businesses, media, service organizations, and individuals.

For more information on the contest and submission guidelines visit: <https://hartleymansion.com>. For questions contact the event coordinator, Dan Matthews, at 425-422-3105.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED: All submissions accepted will be considered a donation to and become the exclusive property of The Monumental Talks Foundation, which may retain, publish, print, distribute, display, and disseminate any entry at its sole discretion.

Upcoming 9/11 Remembrance Event Monumental Talks Foundation is hosting at the Everett Civic Auditorium on Thursday, September 11, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. a panel discussion titled, What is the cost of Freedom, hosted by Sanford Wright, MD.

Monumental Talks are dialogues the values of the American Dream, American Freedom, and how much people are willing to pay for the "Cost of Freedom."

Speakers this year include Everett Mayor Cassie Franklin, John Carswell, Steve

Mclaughlin, Antonio Williams, Jeff Swan, Ray Lockman, Ricardo Velasco, Marcie Velasco, Lia Tetreault, and Karina Choe.

Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased here. Everett Civic Auditorium is located at 2415 Colby Avenue, Everett, WA. 98201.

About Monumental Talks

"Monumental Talks: What is the Cost of Freedom" is a powerful initiative rooted in the core American value of defending freedom, inspired by the historic legacy of Everett's Hartley Mansion and the events of September 11, 2001. While the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, granted Americans freedom, the 9/11 attacks threatened it, prompting the creation of the Christmas Spectacular in December 2001 by Everett's Volunteers of America. This annual show, running for 19 years, emphasized the importance of "Freedom" during the Christmas season, reminding Americans that without it, such celebrations might not exist.

In 2006, during the Iraq War, Dehner Franks' song "What is the Cost of Freedom" was performed at the Christmas Spectacular, delivering a stirring message about the sacrifices required to preserve liberty. In 2024, this song forged a profound connection with the legacy of Roland Hartley, a Canadian immigrant

who became a U.S. citizen in 1878 and, at age 53, joined the Washington National Guard in 1917 to fight in World War I. Artifacts in the Historic Hartley Mansion—Hartley's citizenship application, a 1917 family photo with sons ready for war, and a banner noting his service—reflect this commitment to freedom.

This connection birthed "Monumental Talks," a platform celebrating the core value: The Cost of Freedom. This value, shared across generations, faiths, ethnicities, and political divides, unites Americans in their resolve to protect freedom against any threat to the "Monument" of the American Dream. Monumental Talks are essential dialogues that reaffirm the priceless worth of the American Dream and American Freedom, for which Americans are willing to pay the ultimate cost.

Every Monumental Talk incorporates three key elements:

- The American Dream
- American Freedom
- The Willingness to Pay the Cost of Freedom

These talks are vital for fostering remembrance of events like 9/11 and ensuring that the sacrifices for freedom are never forgotten. Through Monumental Talks, Americans are called to engage in meaningful conversations to uphold and defend the values that define the nation.

from page 6 **BUILDING BRIDGES**

conversations with seeing as they both supported different ideologies.

Now, she said, her relationship with her friend is stronger.

Background of Building Bridges

On January 6, 2021, when Mead and Nehring had only been council members together for about six months, the two tuned in to the attack on the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington D.C. and exchanged a set of text messages agreeing that however you classified that day's events – whether an insurrection, a riot, or otherwise – common

ground could be found on one thing: the demonstration that day reflected a sad state of affairs in the political culture of the nation.

Mead, a Democrat, and Nehring, a Republican, had already shared their ideological differences most accurately demonstrated through their council voting record, but they were united that day on the grounds that the United States needed to come together as a country as opposed to being torn apart.

The two co-authored an op-ed piece for a local newspaper together, receiving expected heat from their respective political organizations. That was to be expected, what wasn't to be expected

was all the positive response from community members, and many community-based organizations who invited the two to speak.

For the next two years the two shared their message at approximately 40 speaking events at local high schools, colleges, local Rotaries, Kiwanis Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and other groups throughout Snohomish County.

If Mead had to guess, he and Nehring must have talked to about 10,000 people during those two years of speaking events. The most educational part of these conversations, for them, was to learn that most of their community who engaged them shared their same views.

In 2023 Mead and Nehring launched a more intentional speaking tour they called the Building Bridges tour, in partnership with the YMCA, Sno-Isle Libraries, and the Boys & Girls Club, where they held round table discussions to each of the four corners of Snohomish County for city officials and the public alike. Anywhere between 75 to 100 people attended these events participating in a discussion of how to get the country back on track.

That tour culminated in a Building Bridges Summit event in December of 2023 featuring Washington Lieutenant

from page 1 **JAYDA**

her friends.”

Both Cheryl and Cali Huffman felt grateful for spending a whole week with their cousin Jayda prior to her being taken from them. Cali emphasized what she called “many signs leading up to this tragedy” by the alleged shooter, Gizaw, who came from a stable and affluent family but still chose violence.

“There’s hundreds and hundreds of kids posting their guns on social media publicly, and there’s nowhere to send that information to,” Cali told the Lynnwood Times. “And it doesn’t take a lot of digging. It’s there. It’s open. It has their name, their face, it’s public.”

Cali criticized the lack of consequences for juveniles caught with firearms in Washington state, describing the current system as “catch and release.”

“We’re just asking for more accountability,” Cali added.

Currently there is a petition for “Jayda’s Law” on Change.org, which seeks stricter penalties for juveniles possessing or discharging firearms in public spaces along with preventative measures. Jayda’s Law seeks to enact the following:

- Juveniles accused of serious crimes like murder to be held in custody for 24–72 hours during initial investigations, with no option for release on bail or ankle monitors, to prevent evasion of prosecution.
- Juveniles who illegally possess firearms to face adult penalties, including detention in juvenile facilities until the age of 18, followed by potential jail time.
- Juveniles with no prior criminal history found illegally possessing a firearm to receive a minimum of six months of community service, working with gun violence victims, alongside monitored probation and 12 months of mandatory counseling.
- Parents or guardians of juvenile offenders to be financially responsible for victims’ medical bills, memorial costs, and time off work for grieving. If the juvenile has a prior criminal history, parents could face criminal liability.

A bracelet from the vigil held for Jayda at Brier Terrace Middle School a year ago, is kept in her car as a daily reminder of the need to support youth, Mayor Frizzell shared with the Lynnwood



Cali Huffman (left) and Cheryl Huffman (right) speaking at Mukilteo Lighthouse Park on Thursday, July 3, 2025, to celebrate the life of Jayda Johnson. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Times during Thursday’s event.

“It [the bracelet] moves me to remember that we need to be taking care of our youth,” said Frizzell. “We need to be giving our youth positive places to be, positive places to gather that are safe, that aren’t filled with weapons, that are filled with activities and age-appropriate things there.”

Frizzell added that she will work with groups like the Access Project which collaborates with schools to support at-risk youth and guide them toward positive paths.

Jayda, a seventh grader at Brier Terrace Middle School who would have entered eighth grade that fall, was an innocent bystander caught between a violent altercation between then-16-year-old Samuel Gizaw, who was suspended from school at the time, and another teen. During the altercation, Gizaw allegedly discharged a firearm, fatally striking Jayda in her back near her right shoulder, with the bullet traveling through her body, hitting her right lung and her heart, then exiting through her upper left chest. Jayda succumbed to her injuries on the way to the hospital.

Gizaw, a student at Kamiak High School in the Mukilteo School District, was turned over to law enforcement by his mother and initially released on a \$500,000 bond the following day. Gizaw eventually pled not guilty to charges of first-degree and second-degree murder, first-degree assault and unlawful possession of a firearm. He currently remains in custody on \$2 million bail with an expected trial date in January of 2026.

were often treated in isolation. This insight led him to develop the Whole Person Care approach, a multidisciplinary framework that addresses the root causes of mental health issues rather than merely their symptoms.

In 1984, he founded The Center: A Place of HOPE where he and his team of licensed, board-certified professionals provide personalized treatment for conditions including PTSD, eating dis-

Jayda was remembered as a bright and joyful presence who wanted to be an actress, a singer, and dancer when she grew up. She was a hard-working student with a love for art and science, maintained good grades and presented a kind demeanor.

Her favorite color was red, and she enjoyed romance films like The Notebook, running track, dancing, eating ramen noodles, and sending playful videos to her friends.

“Jayda I will always remember you. I don’t think I’ll ever forget the moments we spent together,” said her friend Macy at the 2024 vigil held in her honor.

On July 7, 2024, hundreds of people gathered at Mountlake Terrace High School’s football field for a candlelight vigil to mourn Jayda’s death. Attendees

wore red shirts in tribute to her favorite color.

The vigil, opened with a prayer by Pastor Sean Perez, followed by opportunities for family, friends, and community members to share memories. Attendees left flowers and offered prayers by photos of Jayda, with many calls for justice.

Amid the tragedy, the bravery of three Alderwood Mall employees—Ruby Robles-Muniz, Joe Nieves-Rogue, and Chris Marsh—was highlighted at Support 7’s 4th Annual Reception & Auction on April 13, 2025. These individuals rushed to Jayda’s aid immediately after the shooting, attempting to save her life.

Maelisa Nawas, Jayda’s best friend who was with her at the time, praised their efforts, noting that they helped calm her and provided critical support and comfort to Jayda in her final moments. Support 7, a nonprofit assisting public safety agencies, recognized the trio for their heroism, with Jayda’s parents, Tabatha and Jeremy Johnson, present to express gratitude for the community’s support.

Now, one year later, Jayda’s memory endures through community efforts like Thursday’s remembrance bonfire.

As Tabatha Johnson shared, “A whole community was shaken that day... One terrible choice created a ripple that hasn’t stopped.” Jayda, forever 13, remains a symbol of a life taken too soon and a call for change.

Lynnwood political officials attending Thursday’s event were Lynnwood City Councilman Robert Leutwyler and Lynnwood City Council candidates Dio Boucsieiguez and Brandon Kimmel.

from page 1 **JANTZ**

on behavioral health, he leaves behind his wife, LaFon Jantz, co-owner of Red Twig Cafe, two adult sons, and a daughter-in-law.

Dr. Jantz’s career took a pivotal turn early on when he identified a critical gap in mental health treatment—patients suffering from co-occurring disorders like depression, anxiety, and addiction who

orders, substance abuse, etc. The Center has now become a beacon of hope for individuals seeking comprehensive care, offering therapies such as nutrition counseling, sleep therapy, spiritual guidance, and advanced dialectical behavior therapy.

Dr. Jantz was also a sought-after media personality and keynote speaker, having provided over 3,000 interviews for major outlets like CNN, FOX, ABC,

CBS, NBC, The Dr. Phil Show, and The 700 Club. He has spoken at more than 100 conferences and expos, educating audiences with his faith-informed perspective on mental health.

Over the last 40 years, the work by Jantz and his team have helped thousands of men, women, and adolescents overcome challenges ranging from emotional abuse to technology addiction.

Greater Seattle Korea Association holds Green Earth Cup Kickoff

By KIENAN BRISCOE

TUKWILLA—The Greater Seattle Korea Association held its official Green Earth Cup Kickoff event Saturday, June 28, at its headquarters in Tukwilla – to celebrate its upcoming Green Earth Cup League and Tournament this August.

Soccer fans eagerly awaiting the 2026 FIFA World Cup will have a chance to satiate their appetite on August 2 with the Green Earth Cup League and Tournament at Valley Ridge Fields in Tukwila. The event will pit 20 teams against each other, each representing a different country including Korea, China, Vietnam, Mexico, and more, in a round robin-style tournament with cultural celebrations, food, and performances sprinkled without.

“The Green Earth Cup is not just about competition — it’s about connection. As someone representing teams from many cultures and communities, I’ve seen firsthand how soccer brings people together beyond language and borders,” said Hwan Choi, Washington Korean Soccer Association President. “This tournament is a symbol of unity and mutual respect. We may wear different jerseys, but we all share the same love for the game, and the same hope for a better future together.”

At Saturday’s kickoff event, popular fitness influencer Minsoo Go provided opening remarks before the crowd of roughly 75 people joined in for the U.S. National Anthem. A moment of silence was then held to honor unity, peace, and community.

Wonjun Kim, President of the Greater Seattle Korea Association and Chairman of the Green Earth Cup League and Tournament, then took the stage to share a few words.

“The Green Earth Cup is more than just a tournament — it’s a celebration of who we are as a community. In a time when division is easy, this event reminds us that unity takes courage,” said President Kim Saturday. “By bringing together people of all backgrounds through sport, we’re planting seeds of friendship, understanding, and respect. As Seattle prepares to welcome the world in 2026, we’re proud to lead by example and show that many nations can share one passion — and one purpose.”

President Kim’s speech resounded with the Green Earth Cup’s motto: “Many Nations. One Passion.” What started as a small idea leading up to the FIFA 2026 World Cup, President Kim hopes, will



The Greater Seattle Korea Association celebrated the official kickoff of its upcoming Green Earth Cup on Saturday, June 28. Photo by: Roy Kim, Executive Producer, SeattleKDaily – used with permission

stretch beyond a simple soccer competition and bring people of different cultures living together in the U.S., to get to know each other, share their culture, and cooperate in solidarity.

Sam Cho, Port of Seattle Commissioner, then took the stage to share some remarks followed by Mae Pineda-Dominquez, President of the Filipino Chamber of Commerce, TC Lo, President of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and Marcos Wanless, President of the Latino Chamber of Commerce.

As part of the kickoff toast ceremony, Sam Sim, Vice President of the Greater Seattle Korea Association and Executive Director of the Green Earth League and Tournament, delivered a unifying message that stood in contrast to the growing polarization seen both locally and globally. Sim emphasized the importance of demonstrating to the world that despite our differences — whether in race, ethnicity, political background, or orientation — we can stand together in unity.

“The Greater Seattle Korea Association has been around for 40 years but really this is the first time ever that we’ve had so much ethnic diversity at a gathering, meeting, or social function,” Sam Sim told the Lynnwood Times. “It validated

everything that we’re doing.”

He highlighted that through the power of sport, we can bridge those differences, uplift one another, and become an example for all. At our core, we all share one common goal: the desire to build the best lives possible for ourselves and for our families. That shared human pursuit, Sim noted, is at the heart of the Green Earth Cup’s mission and reflected in its theme — “Many Nations. One Passion.”

After the speakers the event broke for a delicious Korean dinner with traditional Korean dance performances. In part

two of the evening coaches and athletes for participating Green Earth Cup teams held a panel where they answered questions about the upcoming August event.

Following the panel, President Kim presented an official appreciation plaque before Chair Alisa Na gifted a bouquet of ceremonious flowers to Consul Kyungho Park with the Korean Consulate of Seattle.

Concluding Saturday’s festivities, a partnership agreement was signed be-

Continued PAGE 16

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Seattle Paine Field Airport named 5th Best US Airport

By MARIO LOTMORE

SNOHOMISH COUNTY—Seattle Paine Field International Airport's commercial passenger terminal has been ranked 5th in The Washington Post's list of the 50 Best Airports in America. The airport is recognized for its convenience, efficiency, and enhanced passenger experience.

"Our goal was to transform the airport experience, and this ranking reflects our commitment to traveler convenience and comfort," said Brett Smith, CEO of Propeller Airports.

The Washington Post's travel team assessed over 450 U.S. airports using airport data, Yelp ratings, and reader reviews. Seattle Paine Field was listed alongside notable airports such as Portland International, Ronald Reagan Washington National, and Minneapolis-Saint Paul International.

The terminal offers features like valet parking, a lounge-like environment,

boutique dining options, and streamlined check-in and security processes. Its modern design includes floor-to-ceiling glass windows, fireplaces, glass jet-bridges, and tables with fresh flowers.

Since its opening in 2019, Seattle Paine Field has served over 3.4 million passengers and contributed to the regional economy. Alaska Airlines and Frontier Airlines provide direct flights to destinations across the West Coast, Colorado, and Hawaii. For more de-

tails, visit www.flypaine.com.

Located in Everett, Washington, Propeller Airports focuses on optimizing commercial air travel by collaborating with local communities and governments. The company, in partnership with Global Infrastructure Partners (part of BlackRock), invests in and manages general aviation and commercial airports across the U.S. For more information, visit www.flypaine.com, www.propellerairports.com, and www.global-infra.com.

Lynnwood's Juneteenth Freedom Festival unites hundreds in commemorating emancipation

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—Project Girl hosted its third annual Juneteenth Freedom Festival at Cedar Valley Community School in Lynnwood on Thursday, June 19, to commemorate the day the last remaining people in the United States were freed from the evil of slavery and servitude.

"I think our community is starting to support us now," said Olympia Edwards, Founder of Project Girl Mentoring Program and Lynnwood Times' 2022 Person of the Year. It's such a beautiful event. Everyone's just having a great time. And really that's what it's about. I'm walking around seeing all the families, seeing the kids playing ball, seeing people hanging out on the lawn. You want people to feel safe. You want people to feel comfortable. And for me, that's what Juneteenth is about. It's like being able to provide a space where people just feel loved."

Edwards shared with the Lynnwood Times that after Juneteenth she is gearing up for Project Girls' Summer Immersion Lab where scores of young women of color will take hikes, go on tours, and immerse themselves in confidence building and health habits for the summer starting July 7. She continues her heroic efforts in passing to the next generation of young woman of color how they can be seen, loved, and supported by the community.

Speaking at the Juneteenth event was Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell who emphasized the importance of honoring Black American heritage while fostering an inclusive community in the city where everyone feels valued and welcomed.

"As mayor, I promise to continue to advocate and lift up our BIPOC communities, to help amplify your voices," said Mayor Frizzell to attendees.

Four Lynnwood Councilmembers—Josh Binda, Goerge Hurst, Derica Escamilla, and David Parshall—each read portions of the city's Juneteenth Proclamation. Mountlake Terrace Councilman Steve Woodard was also in attendance.

"We're in an atmosphere where some people are concerned about how things are going federally," Councilman Hurst told the Lynnwood Times when asked about the importance of recognizing Juneteenth. "But Juneteenth really celebrates the end of slavery in the U.S. as far as the Confederacy. We did have to



Olympia Edwards, Founder of Project Girl Mentoring Program attending the 3rd Annual Juneteenth Freedom Festival. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

pass the 13th Amendment to end slavery, but then 100 years later, we still had to have the Civil Rights Act. So, I have confidence that in America, we do eventually get it right. It just takes a long time sometimes. And so, Juneteenth is really a reminder that we just need to keep working on and keep focused on making America a great place for everyone."

"It's a wonderful celebration here in Lynnwood," Mukilteo City Councilman Mike Dixon told the Lynnwood Times. "This is terrific. I'm so happy to see so many people coming out and enjoying themselves. Really wonderful community event. I hope that we can do something like it in Mukilteo."

Lynnwood City Councilman Robert Leutwyler who originally lived just minutes from Galveston, Texas, where Major General Gordon Granger back in 1865 first shared the news with then-slaves that they were free, shared with the Lynnwood Times his appreciation to Edwards and community partners for hosting Juneteenth as they do back in Texas.

"I think Juneteenth is something that should be a celebration that brings everyone together," said Leutwyler. "I think we should all find pride in what we did in the past and then look at all the work that we still need to do together. So I'm just glad that we've got this opportunity and we've got so much community that came out for it!"

The 2025 Freedom Festival offered family-friendly fun featuring:

- Local Performers & Cultural Expressions

- Interactive Youth Activities
- Kids Face Painting
- Kids Soccer Demo
- Black-Owned Small Business Vendors
- Community Resource Booths
- Food Trucks and Music

Sponsors for Lynnwood's Juneteenth celebration were:

- Project Girl Mentoring Program
- City of Lynnwood
- RAW Aesthetics and Wellness Med Spa
- Sno-Isle Libraries
- Verdant Health Commission
- Edmonds School District
- Verdant Health Commission
- Wellpoint
- Sea Mar Community Health Centers
- Community Transit
- Sound Sports Performance and Training LLC
- Manora Marketing

This is the fifth year Juneteenth has been recognized as a federal holiday and the fourth time Juneteenth has been recognized as a state holiday in Washington, following State Rep. Melanie Morgan sponsoring of House Bill 1016 which went into effect in 2022.

2025 marks 160 years since the news of the Emancipation Proclamation reached the deepest parts of the former confederacy. Black Americans have been celebrating Juneteenth for generations, but the first recorded celebration of Juneteenth in the Pacific Northwest was in Kent, Washington, in 1890.

Juneteenth dates to 1865 when, on June 19, Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger arrived at Gal-

veston, Texas with news of the end of the Civil War and that the slaves were free known as General Order Number 3. This news was two-and-a-half years after the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, which didn't impact Texas since there were very few Union soldiers to enforce the proclamation.

General Order Number 3, reads as follows:

The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property, between former masters and slaves and the connection heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employer and hired labor. The Freedmen are advised to remain at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts; and they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.

The surrender of General Lee in April of 1865 coupled with the arrival of Granger and his regiment finally provided the influence necessary to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation.

Juneteenth became a federal holiday on June 17, 2021, and the first known official movement to make Juneteenth a federal holiday began in 1994. All 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia recognize Juneteenth either as a state holiday, a ceremonial holiday, or a day of observance.

from page 11 **BUILDING BRIDGES**

Governor Denny Heck, and former Republican Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler as keynote speakers as well as Mayors, and tribal leaders. It was during this event when Mead and Nehring officially announced their idea for a Building Bridges Project nonprofit. That nonprofit officially launched at the beginning of 2024.

"I think both civic education and community engagement are critical for a healthy society and for combatting political polarization," Nate Nehring told the Lynnwood Times. "Quality civic education can help us to better understand our own history, including the most trying times our great nation has faced. Many may look at the current political situation and think "there's no way we can ever turn this around", but the reality is that we have faced greater challenges to remaining united as a country before and have come through even stronger."

Everett Community College closes Early Learning Center

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EVERETT—After over an hour of public comment backlash, the Everett Community College Board of Trustees unanimously decided to close its Early Learning Center during a court-ordered special session Thursday, June 26. To a packed room, the crowd chanted, “shame,” immediately following the Board’s vote.

“This is not a cavalier decision, this is well thought out and well discussed,” said Board Chair Jerry Martin. “These decisions aren’t easy and it’s heartbreaking...I hear you loud and clear but as trustees we also have fiduciary responsibilities and part of that responsibility is to ensure that the college itself can survive. It impacts each and every aspect of every operation and we take that responsibility very seriously. Whether you agree or disagree with whatever decision the board makes, it is being made out of greater necessities that we feel is our obligation and duty as trustees.”

Everett Community College operates an Early Learning Center (ELC) that provides early childhood education services to approximately 76 children and employs 22 faculty and staff.

The ELC holds the highest possible rating (Level 5) from the state Early Achievers Quality Rating and Improvement System and maintains national accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This school is unique in all of Washington and represents a model institution for early childhood education.

The ELC operates under state regulatory oversight pursuant to WAC Chapter 110-300, with its own licensing and accreditations independent of Everett Community College, demonstrating its status as more than an internal administrative program, but rather a regulated educational facility that requires Board-level decisions for closure.

Public comments at Thursday’s board meeting resounded with disapproval of the ELC closure, with parents, and community members alike, criticizing the board’s untransparent and “unlawful” process, prioritizing making money over offering a necessary service to the region.

“I can’t begin to explain how shameful it is that money is more import-

ant than our children and that this has been swept under the rug,” said ELC parent Magnus Johnston who spoke at Thursday’s board meeting.

Some public comments noted that the special session felt more like a formality than a genuine act; that the decision had already been made, especially given a recent Superior Court order to do so just one day prior.

Also speaking at Thursday’s meeting was County Councilwoman Megan Dunn, speaking personally, not representing the County Council. Washington State Representative Mary Fosse was also in attendance.

“In these tough financial times we do have to make hard decisions, and these are hard decisions, to maximize our resources to meet our statutory mission,” said Josh Ernst, VP of Human Resource for EvCC Thursday.

Announcement of closure

On May 7, 2025, at approximately 5 p.m. – during Teacher Appreciation week and a few days before Mother’s Day – Dr. Chemene Crawford entered the ELC for the first and only time as President, to inform teachers and administrators that they were terminated as of June 30.

That same day, Josh Ernst, Vice President of Human Resources and Compliance, sent out official layoff notices to the Washington Federation of State Employees formally notifying the union of the closure decision and elimination of 19 union positions and three non-union positions.

One day later, Rachelle Reffling, ELC Director, issued an official letter to ELC families announcing the permanent closure of the ELC. In every official communication about the closure there is no mention of the Board of Trustee’s involvement in the decision, nor mention of public comment, public meetings, or voting procedures.

This is not the first time the college has attempted to close the ELC. It made a similar decision in 2021, also citing budget shortfalls, but, after the City of Everett and Snohomish County allocated a portion of their COVID-relief funds to keep it afloat, the college said it would return to the drawing board to identify a “long term solution” to make it sustainable. However, according to ELC faculty, and public testi-

mony in court, the college made no attempt to do so.

Violations of the Open Public Meeting Act

Just yesterday, Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Patrick Moriarty found Everett Community College in violation of the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and ordered them, by way of a writ of mandamus, to hold a public meeting where they would officially vote on closing its Early Learning Center (ELC). Given the immediacy of the ELC’s closure, that meeting was scheduled just one day later, on Thursday, June 26.

Court documents indicate that the decision to close the ELC was done without a board vote or public comment. Additionally, the College made the decision to close the center back in March but did not notify parents, or staff, until May — leaving faculty scrambling to find new jobs (and health insurance) while parents were left with no viable childcare for their children.

Public records indicate that the Board and Administration met during a “study session” on April 22, 2025, where the decision to close the ELC was made. Later, through an email exchange with EvCC President Dr. Chemene Crawford, Board Chair Jerry Martin questioned the need for public comment.

Obtained emails also indicate that Dr. Cathy Leaker, Vice President of Instruction for the College, advised administration to “develop the narrative rationale” for the decision to close the ELC.

At no point was notice for public comment given on the issue, nor was the topic included in the meeting’s agenda (or subsequent minutes) as an action item. The college made no effort to advise the staff of the ELC, or students-parents of the ELC, that a discussion of its closing was ensuing. The discussion to close, which allegedly took place during that April 22 study session, was also not included in that meeting’s minutes.

The college’s “narrative rationale” of budget shortfall

According to Shelby Burke, Vice President of Finance for Everett Community College, the decision to close the ELC stems from it running deficits since 2021 – in the amount of near-

In Loving Memory

Marjorie S. Thomas, 47



Marjorie S. Thomas, born on July 9th, 1977, a beloved mother, wife, daughter (oldest sibling of five), and very dear friend to many of Port Townsend, Lynnwood, Olympia and the Seattle areas, passed away on May 24th, 2025, in Skagit county, Washington. Doing what she loved, with those she loved, she died in a motorcycle accident on State Route 20. Her departure was instantaneous. Marjorie built a life of beauty, joy and authenticity. A beacon of light & liberty, her presence had a way of healing and freeing others of what entangled them. The truth of HOW she lived leaves a legacy and timeless offering to this life.

Marjorie is survived by her son Mackenzie Howerton, Husband James Thomas, Father Walter Massey, three brothers Justin Massey, Marc Massey, Jonathan Massey, and sister Meredith Massey. Lifelong friend Augustine Veliz, David & Kelly Moore (With James riding alongside Marjorie the day of the accident) and many more extended family and friends will greatly miss this magnificent soul.

Marjorie moved to Seattle from South Carolina in the early 90’s at a young age. From the start, she did not mince words, was a fierce friend, and steadfast companion in spirit to all who knew and loved her. Her late mother Norma Massey (whom she called a “superior mother, friend, and confidante”) took her and her brother Justin under grace’s wing where they resided in Queen Anne. Her father Walter Massey, proprietor of Massey Copper, created in Carolina Appalachia, and remaining siblings were to follow. Where the family reunited once more. All witnessed the blessing of a “full circle” second wedding for Norma & Walter Massey held on Whidbey Island. Marjorie graduated from Franklin High school and lived in Seattle proper for the majority of her life. A Seattle city raised soul, she loved dancing, playing the violin, crocheting, her cats, crafting, hiking, her family, and anything you told her she couldn’t do. Stardust and all things magic, she was a universal force.

She later married Jason Howerton and brought forth in life, Mackenzie Howerton, born October 12th, 2000. in the Lake Stevens and North Seattle areas “Mac” grew strong alongside her. Visits to Port Townsend with her nearest & extended family for gatherings evolved into a time living in Port Townsend. And, while her son Mackenzie went to middle school at Blue Heron. She navigated a divorce from her first husband, Jason. The Massey family Copper-smithing studio and business were based in Port Townsend since 1999. And, days spent amongst the healing arts, multi-generational roots, and family surroundings gave great solace to them both.

It was then, with her known insatiable desire to learn, that her focus would bloom into a highly talented scientist’s journey. She moved back Seattle side to pursue her studies where she met Robert Farid. Robert, a strong ally, partner and love of Marjorie was met through friends, and they shared a deeply renowned life together until his passing in December of 2017. Nothing met by this woman was ever left incomplete, unknown, or unchanged in the way of holistic betterment of soul. In keeping, Marjorie graduated from South Puget Sound Community College with two Associates of Science degrees (Track 1 & 2) in 2017. She was extremely keen on microbiology.

Marjorie moved from Olympia to Seattle and would work a few roles over the years before settling in her chosen field of Histology at Dermatopathology Northwest, in Bellevue. During which time, in March of 2019, and after a time of mutual pursuit many remember well, Marjorie and James Thomas were wed. They crafted a gorgeous home in Lynnwood, Washington, and set out to live in a way many do not experience in life. Frequent motorcycle rides, adventures in the great outdoors, elopements, dancing at their favorite clubs, and game nights with the crew.

Marjorie adored the wildness of the outdoors as much as the city, and nothing could stay unknown to her, as much was found in these beautiful mountain ranges of Washington both Olympic and Cascade. We find her in the wild growing things... the rustle of leaves on trees, the opening blossom, the gale off the sea. She was the peace and the storm all in one, and breathed serenity upon the garden she tended. An abundant home garden and sanctuary with her husband James, son Mac, and extended family member Augustine. They are tended to this day still by those close to her...

A true champion of life, advocate of truth, and kind soul. She conquered the hearts of all she met. A quote she chose in life:

“It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. Then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you, not by angels or by demons, heaven or hell.” —Buddha

A celebration of life will be held at 17232 61st Pl. W., Lynnwood, WA, September 5-7th 2025.

Continued PAGE 16

from page 7 **CANNABIS**

SCs continued to increase. Adolescents increasingly expressed uncertainty about the substances they were vaping; for example, uncertain respondents answering 'don't know' if they have vaped SCs tripled across the years. Our results also showed that females had a higher prevalence of THC, CBD, and SCs vaping compared to males."

In 2023, an estimated 7.4% of U.S. adolescents (2.55 million) vaped THC, 2.9% (or 999,000) were vaping a cannabidiol (CBD), and 1.8% (620,000) vaped synthetic cannabinoids, which are often unregulated and dangerously potent.

"The growing popularity of SCs among youth raises serious concerns about potential health risks and highlights the urgent need for targeted public health interventions and regulatory oversight,"

said Chung. "These synthetic cannabinoids products could potentially be deadly, with many adolescents unknowingly vaping these harmful and synthetic substances."

Defending Cannabis

Despite concerns from members of the scientific community, some argue that cannabis is not as harmful as portrayed and may offer health benefits.

Paul Armentano, deputy director of NORML, a cannabis advocacy group, told Healthline that while tobacco smoke's role in cardiovascular disease is well-established, the evidence for cannabis smoke is less conclusive. He cited studies from 2020 and 2023 suggesting no or reduced cardiovascular risk from cannabis use.

Armentano also pointed to vaporization as a safer alternative, referencing 2006

and 2007 studies that found no health effects from this method.

Additionally, a 2023 study of 3,100 patients who were treated with various forms of medical cannabis, including THC and CBD, found that medical cannabis improved quality of life for some chronic pain patients, and other research suggested its benefits in managing depression, social anxiety, PTSD, and reducing cancer treatment side effects.

Calls for Regulation and Education Stanton Glantz, PhD, and Lynn Silver, MD, argue that cannabis should be regulated like tobacco, not criminalized but discouraged, with protections against secondhand cannabis smoke exposure.

According to the Center for Disease Control, secondhand cannabis smoke contains many of the same toxic and cancer-causing chemicals found in tobacco smoke and some in higher

amounts. It also contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the compound responsible for most of cannabis's psychoactive effects (or the "high").

THC can be passed to infants and children through secondhand smoke, and people exposed to secondhand cannabis smoke can experience psychoactive effects.

"There is an important role for public health and public policy in addressing the risks identified," wrote Glantz and Silver.

Similarly, Chung emphasized the need for "targeted public health interventions and regulatory oversight" to address teen vaping of unregulated substances. Cheng-Han Chen, MD, recommended that patients with cardiovascular risk factors avoid cannabis altogether.

from page 13 **GREEN EARTH CUP**

tween the Greater Seattle Korea Association and the Latino Chamber of Commerce.

Then, in a comedic, and theatric fashion—in which the Korea Association leaders pretended President Kim had gone missing—President Kim appeared revealing the official Green Earth Cup League and Tournament trophy to "oohs" and "ahhs" from the crowd.

Elected officials and dignitaries in attendance included: Port of Seattle Commissioner Sam Cho, Edmonds City Councilmember Will Chen, Captain Ben Kang with the U.S. Army, Joint

Base Lewsi-McChord, Consul Hyun-Seok Kim with the Korean Consulate of Seattle, Consul Park with the Korean Consulate of Seattle, SeaTac City Councilmember Peter Kwon, Martha Lee, President of the Ethnic Chamber of Commerce Coalition, President TC Lo, Chinese Chamber of Commerce, President May Deza Dominguez, Filipino Chamber of Commerce, President Marcos Wanless, Latino Chamber of Commerce, Snohomish Superior Court Judge George Appel, Snohomish Superior Court Judge Tam Bui, and Mukilteo City Councilmember Jason Moon.

The following candidates running for elected positions in attendance included: candidate for Redmond City Council

Vijay Beniwal, candidate for King County Council Kim Khan Vanh, candidate for King County Council Peter Kwon, candidate for Court of Appeals Judge Tam Bui, candidate for Renton City Council Raman Mann, candidate for Issaquah School Board Chinmay Nagarkar, candidate for Northshore School Board Arun Sharma, and candidate for Kent City Council Andy Song.

The Green Earth Cup League and Tournament will be held on August 2 at Valley Ridge Fields in Tukwilla. Games will all take place in a single day, beginning at 7 a.m. through early evening (3 p.m. to 4 p.m.), and utilize all four fields.

The event will also be family-friendly,

offering several attractions for kids including face painting, photo booth, cotton candy machines, and a playground.

Several food trucks, representing a diverse pool of ethnic cuisines, vendor booths, and barbecues will all be representing their countries' cultures.

The event will also feature celebrity athletes such as Ji So-Yun, with the Seattle Reign FC, and Kim Kee-hee with the Seattle Sounders for meet-and-greet and autographing opportunities.

Greater Seattle Korean Association President Kim expects there to be up to 500 attendees, in-and-out throughout the day.

from page 15 **EARLY LEARNING**

ly \$200,000 a year. With COVID relief funds running dry, she added the ELC is projected to run a deficit this coming year in the amount of \$300,000, which will only keep increasing as the cost to keep the facility open increases (such as salaries, supplies, and so on).

For years the college would have to pay those deficits from its own funding, Burke said, leading to the decision to close.

The ELC received American Rescue Plan Act funds from the City of Everett (approx. \$150,000) as well as the County (approximately \$293,520 over two years, from 2022 through 2024) to remain open but the County-allocated funding ended last October, and the City of Everett funding will be drying up this September.

"We're not experts in early learning; we're experts in higher education. We were not able to identify any long-term solutions to make it sustainable and now those grants have ended or will be ending," Burke told the Lynnwood Times.

Despite the college continually citing financial deficits as the reason to close the ELC, they never once filed a financial emergency as required by state law, RCW 28B.50.140, or board policy.

Also, according to Alejandra Wood, Family Support Specialist at Everett College, the ELC was never allowed to access the COVID relief funds in 100% capacity despite the County and City explicitly stating the dollars could not be used to fund other college programs. President Crawford, however, told parents that the County-allocated funds were for the college generally, not the ELC specifically.

Wood informed the Lynnwood Times

that throughout her 10 years, the college had little to nothing to do with the ELC. Even after successfully securing funding via the state and county, there were no conversations about how to improve overall enrollment. In fact, for three years, the ELC had more staff members than it did enrolled students which County Councilman Jared mead told the Lynnwood Times makes "no financial sense."

Though the ELC has been serving 76 children on average, it has the license to serve up to 108. The board had the option of expanding the ELC's classrooms to serve toddlers, one of the age groups in the highest demand for the region, but the board decided not to, for example. They then used the data of their low enrollment to support its decision to close.

Wood, who was just months shy of her 10-year anniversary with the college, added that she will be missing out on her pension due to her layoff.

The college failed to hire a business consultant, as requested by the County, explaining "they couldn't fine one" and used outdated enrollment data when justifying their decision. In obtained emails, exchanged between VP of Human Resource Josh Ernst and VP of Instruction Cathy Leaker, Leaker even noted the outdated data and that there could be "slight differences."

Everett College has also been receiving state Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account (PSTAA) money since 2021 in the amount of approximately \$283,000 (\$162,000 of which goes to the ELC), per RCW 43.79.520. These funds continue to be available and would cover the non-self-sustaining portions of the ELC's budget, Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Moriarty concluded Wednesday.

Public testimony at the hearing revealed

that viable alternatives to address the budget shortfall Burke cited existed, including modest tuition adjustments and enrollment increases that would maintain accreditation standards, but college administration were not interested in hearing potential solutions before making the decision to close the ELC.

Pre-COVID, Everett Community College's ELC was consistently profitable, financial reports state. Post-COVID the ELC continued to be profitable in two, out of five, years. The three years it was not profitable, according to staff, were due to the administration's refusal to hire staff or allow expansion, citing union labor costs as too expensive relative to non-union staff.

According to financial reports, Everett Community College continues to see growth in enrollment in the Spring Quarter 2025. State FTE enrollment reached 3,570, a 5.6% increase. The number of individual State-funded students was 5165, a 7.2% rise. Total enrollment (FTE) for Spring was 5,046, up by 4.7%, and the total number of individual students was 7,028, a 6.8% increase. Running Start also saw growth in Spring with 1040 FTE (a 2.6% increase) and 1,384 individual students (a 6.8% increase).

Potential financial incentive to close the ELC

Everett Community College has stated, and continues to state, that it hopes to use the existing state-owned ELC building in a continued childcare capacity in some way or other.

"We're very hopeful that there will continue to be an early learning center in Snohomish County but we will not be affiliated with it," Cathy Leaker, VP of Instruction, told the Lynnwood Times.

The existing ELC property is state-

owned through the Washington Department of Enterprise Services (DES). DES will be handling the process of leasing out the property after the facility closes, Leaker added.

However, public records obtained by the Lynnwood Times indicate that conversations with potential leasing agencies began in early 2025 – well ahead of the decision to close.

In an email exchange to Dr. Crawford the board discussed how leasing the building out could potentially bring in over \$274,000 to the college indicating financial incentive.

Impacts on students-parents, and staff

Many parents who utilize EvCC's ELC are low-income and in a region where 80% of its residents live in an extreme childcare desert, reliable, affordable, childcare services are few and far between.

Snohomish County is one of the worst areas for childcare access in Washington State, compared to the number of children who need them. According to Child Care Aware, there are 62 slots of childcare in the county for every 100 infants, toddlers, or preschoolers, which is far below the state average of 79 slots per 100 children.

Even if parents can find childcare options in the county it's seldom affordable, costing approximately \$14,000 per year—more than an entire year of tuition at both the University of Washington and Washington State University.

For the select few parents who do manage to find last-minute childcare options, and who could afford them, the immediacy of the ELC closure left students-parents with imminent registration deadlines for summer quarter.