

# THE BLACK LENS SPOKANE™

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

## JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REPORT SAYS:

# USE OF FORCE BY SPOKANE POLICE "NOT RACIALLY BIASED"

## But Blacks 2% of Spokane Population; 10% Use of Force Incidents

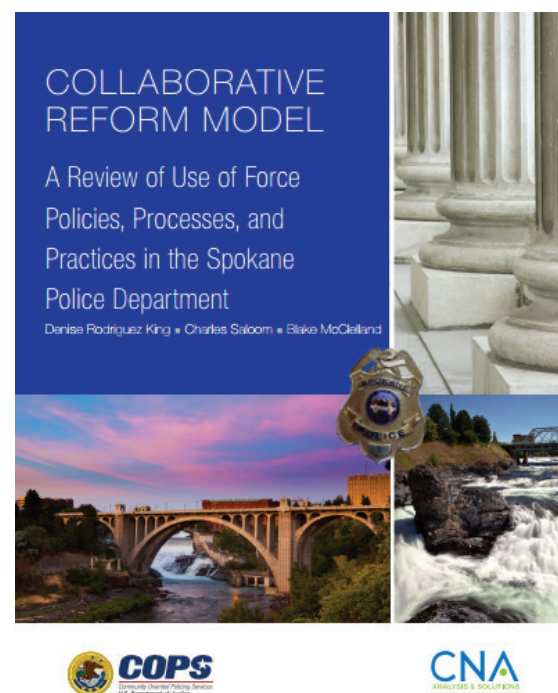
On December 19, 2014, eight and a half years after the March 2006 death of Otto Zehm at the hands of Spokane police officers, the highly anticipated report from The U.S. Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) that detailed their findings about Spokane Police use of force, policies and practices was released.

Ronald Davis, Director of the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, was joined by U.S. Attorney Michael Ormsby, Spokane Mayor David Condon, Spokane Police Chief Frank Straub, and City Council President Ben Stuckart for a press conference to present the results of the DOJ's eleven month investigation and a description of the report's findings and "plan of action for reform at the Spokane Police Department."

Despite the forty-two findings and recommendations detailed in the 100 plus page report titled, *Collaborative Reform Model: A Review of Use of Force Policies, Processes, and Practices in the Spokane Police Department*, the report "did not find that police officers in the SPD routinely and deliberately engage in excessive use of force or deadly force", nor did the report find "evidence of biased application of force."

In its section on race, located on page 27, the report acknowledges that African Americans make up 2.3% of the population of Spokane, but 10% of Use of Force Incidents. Similarly, the report states that American Indians make up 2% of Spokane's population but 7% of the Use of Force Incidents.

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# EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY CENTER CONTRACT RENEWED BY CITY

## City of Spokane, ECCO and Community Reach Agreement to Move Forward

For well over a year, a very engaged and determined group of community members attended meetings, participated in community forums, spoke to city officials, made phone calls and sent e-mails, all in an effort to express their unhappiness with the way the East Central Community Center was being managed.

Spearheaded by the efforts of Pastor Happy Watkins of New Hope Baptist Church, who addressed both the NAACP and the Washington State Commission on African American Af-



fairs with his complaints, community members also shared their frustrations, and in some cases anger, that they were feeling increasingly disenfranchised and excluded by a center that used to be an important neighborhood hub and gathering place for them.

To illustrate his point, Pastor Watkins created a display with aging photographs of the dozen or so African American women, only two still living, who he said founded the Center with a dream to help the children. Dragging the poster board around with

him, and telling the story to whoever would listen, he said that he felt compelled to honor their legacy. "These ladies started the Center," Pastor Watkins recounted, pointing to the photos, "but with the current management, the African American community, especially

our youth, no longer feel like we have a place to go."

The East Central Community Center (ECCC), which opened in 1979, had been operating as a department of the city since it was built, unlike the Northeast and West Central Community Centers, who had been managed by non-profits from the very beginning. Eventually, decreasing revenue prompted the City to transition ECCC from city management to non-profit management, and in December of 2012

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## ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR



### Why a Newspaper?

*“Whoever controls the media controls the mind.”*

- Jim Morrison

I am frustrated by how little interest Black people these days seem to have in reading. Aside from posts on social media or text messages from friends or blog pages about over the top celebrities, there is simply not much interest in the written word.

We, as a people, seem to have forgotten that for Blacks in this country reading and writing have always been *revolutionary acts* that in the not too distant past were illegal and punishable offenses in many states. Our ancestors knew, better than we, that information was power, and that reading was the key to accessing that information and that power. Many risked their lives, as a result, for something that we take for granted every day.

Decades ago I was invited to participate on a community advisory committee for our local newspaper. Three of us raised concerns about the lack of representation of people of color in the paper, and that when people of color, in particular Black people, did appear, it was more often than not for something negative. In response to our concerns, the committee decided to “commission a formal study” by a local university “to look into it”.

I didn’t see the need for a formal study, instead, in the month that followed, I clipped out every article and photograph that appeared in the paper about a Black person, and at the next meeting I presented my plastic bag full of clippings to the committee. My study demonstrated what many of us already know, that Black people have three choices as to how they will appear in the news: (1) Athletes (2) Entertainers (3) Criminals. Very little else.

I am not sure what ever happened with that “formal study” because I ultimately resigned from the committee, frustrated by what I viewed as not a lot of interest from the powers that be in addressing their portrayal of Blacks in a substantive way. And to be honest, decades later, it seems to me that very little has changed.

So, why a newspaper? At a time when newspapers across the country seem to be dying, and some are even predicting the death of the newspaper industry as a whole, why in the world would I set out to start a Black Community Newspaper in Spokane of all places?

Just the other day, I was watching coverage of a local news story on television and as I watched I thought to myself, I bet that story would look different if it was told through a *Black Lens*. I bet the perspective would be different. I bet who they interviewed would be different. I bet the overall message of the story would be different. That’s where the idea for this newspaper came from.

There is nothing more powerful than THE WORD, the written word, and I believe amazing things will begin to happen when we in Spokane’s Black Community stop hoping the mainstream media will get it right and we begin to do it right for ourselves, defining our own issues, discussing our own solutions, and celebrating our own heroes, all through a *Black Lens*. I am excited to see what can happen when we tap into that kind of power.

## YOU SHOULD KNOW

(Or Things You Probably Didn't Learn In School)

### WHO IS BESSIE COLEMAN?

Bessie Coleman, also known as “Queen Bess” or “Brave Bess”, was the world’s first licensed African American pilot.

Born to Susan and George Coleman in Atlanta, Texas on January 26, 1892, Bessie was the tenth child in a family of thirteen children. Her father, who was part Cherokee, returned to Indian territory when Bessie was a young girl, leaving Bessie and her siblings to help support the family by picking cotton and taking in laundry.

Bessie was an intelligent, hard working student, who loved math and reading, walking four miles each day to attend an all Black school. During WWI she read about the air war in Europe and dreamed of flying. Since American flight schools



did not take women, especially women of color, Bessie saved her money and traveled to Le Crotoy, France in 1920 to attend aviation school. In 1921 she received her International Aviation license. Bessie returned to France 1922 to learn stunt flying and by 1926, the year of her death, she had become one of America’s most popular stunt fliers.

Sources: [bessiecoleman.com](http://bessiecoleman.com), [rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://rootsweb.ancestry.com)

### WHAT IS KWANZAA AND WHY IS IT CELEBRATED?



Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African holiday, celebrated from December 26 through January 1. It was established by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach in 1966 in the midst of the Black Liberation Movement in the United States.

While many African Americans join people of African decent around the world to celebrate Kwanzaa each year as an important cultural and family tradition, many others do not know what the holiday is, where it came from, or why it is significant to the Black community.

According to the official Kwanzaa Web site ([www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org)) “Kwanzaa was created out of the philosophy of *Kawaida*, which is a cultural nationalist philosophy that argues that the key challenge in Black people’s life is the challenge of culture, and that what Black people must do is to discover and bring forth the best of their culture, both ancient and current, and use it as a foundation to bring into being models of human excellence and possibilities to enrich and expand our lives.”

Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday, not a religious one, so it is celebrated by people

of all faith traditions. It originated from the first harvest celebrations of Africa, which is where the name comes from. The word Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase “matunda ya kwanza”, which means “first fruits” in Swahili. The first fruits celebrations in Africa are recorded as far back as ancient Egypt and have been celebrated in Africa throughout recorded history, and in the tradition of many African Harvest festivals and first fruits celebrations, Kwanzaa is celebrated for seven days.

The Kwanzaa site also says that “Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce seven basic values of African culture which contribute to building and reinforcing family, community and culture.” These values are called the *Nguzo Saba* and they are embodied in the seven principles of Kwanzaa, which are: Umoja (unity); Kujichagulia (self-determination); Ujima (collective work and responsibility); Ujamaa (cooperative economics); Nia (purpose); Kuumba (creativity); and Imani (faith).

One principle is highlighted on each of the seven days of the Kwanzaa celebration, and participants reflect on how they can incorporate that principle into their lives and into the community.

Kwanzaa is also intended to serve as a community gathering and celebration “to reinforce the bonds between Black people, strengthen the community, and reaffirm a common identity, direction and purpose.” It is through this connection that the community will flourish.

*For more information on Kwanzaa, its history and how to plan a celebration visit: [www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org)*

# BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

## From Across the State and Around the World

### Study Says Funding Cuts Spirred Ebola in W. Africa



(TriceEdneyWire.com)

Spending cuts, pushed by an international lender, “weakened health care systems in the West African region”, leaving the countries “under-funded, insufficiently staffed and poorly prepared.”

In a report published this month in the journal *Lancet Global Health*, UK-based researchers blamed policies of the Washington-based International Monetary Fund that hobbled the development of an effective healthcare system in the three affected West African nations. The number of people who have died from Ebola has crossed the 7,500 mark, with over 19,000 infected.

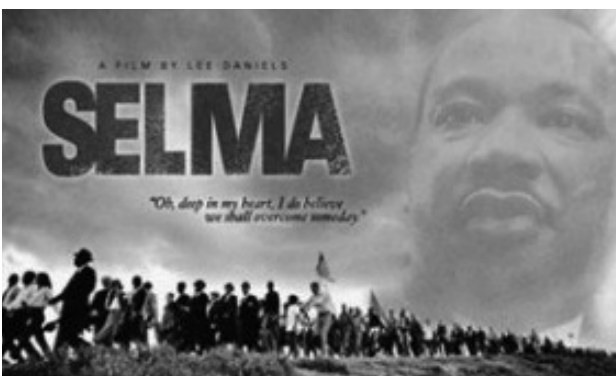
### Five African Americans Named Rhodes Scholars

(jbe.com)

The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* recently reported that five African American students will be studying at the University of Oxford as recipients of the prestigious Rhodes Scholarships. The scholarships, which were created in 1902 by the will of wealthy industrialist Cecil Rhodes, who made his fortune in colonial Africa, are considered to be one of the highest honors that can be awarded to a college student. The first African American Rhodes Scholar was Alain LeRoy Locke in 1907. Rumor has it that the awards committee did not know Locke was black until after he was selected. It wasn't until 1952 that the next African American Rhodes Scholar was selected. This year's class of Rhodes Scholars was chosen from a pool of 877 students.

### MLK Biopic “Selma” Receiving Critical Acclaim

(TriceEdneyWire.com)



The civil rights drama “Selma” has been named the top film of the year by the African-American Film Critics Association (AAFCA), and also leads NAACP Image Awards nominations with eight.

“Our members found the output of cinema released this year to be a truly insightful mix of titles that reflect the world we live in,” AAFCA president Gil Robertson said in a statement. “The members of AAFCA were especially pleased with this range of storytelling supported by the studios that gave voice to the many sides of the experience of Black people in America and around the world. We had a lot to pick from this year from ‘Belle,’ ‘Dear White People,’ ‘Top Five,’ ‘Timbuktu’ and ‘Selma’ and hope the industry will continue to provide a platform for diversity on the big screen.”

The AAFCA will hold its annual award ceremony on Feb. 4 at the Taglyan Complex in Hollywood.

### ‘Scheme’ to Lower Gas at the Pump Hits Africa Hard

(TriceEdneyWire.com from Global Information Network)

Falling oil prices are happy news for American car owners but disastrous news for Africa which was recently celebrating an “oil boom” around the continent.

Some energy consultants see falling prices as a political maneuver by the West designed to bring rebellious countries to their knees. Saudi Arabia also had a bone to pick with Iran. Soon there was a glut of cheap oil, pushing down prices in Iran, Russia and Venezuela. But the “collateral damage” of these price manipulations have been the people of Nigeria, Angola, Ghana and Uganda whose economies are heavily oil-dependent.

Examples of the pain abound. In Angola, government is budgeting major spending cuts on HIV/AIDS programs. According to Bloomberg news wire, Angola will set aside \$11 million to fight HIV next year, compared to \$16 million in 2014 and \$22 million in 2013. Angola's government relies on oil for more than three quarters of revenue.

In another case, the newly-blessed oil state of Ghana borrowed heavily – about \$500 million from the IMF - on the back of anticipated profits to fund fuel subsidies and salaries. This hasn't helped Ghana's currency, the cedi, which depreciated by about 40 percent to the dollar in the first three quarters of this year.

“We are woefully short,” Sydney Casely-Hayford, a financial consultant and former adviser to Ghana's treasury, told Dow Jones.

Ugandan officials say they fear lower oil prices could deter companies from following through on plans to invest up to \$15 billion to develop the country's oil fields. Same for Mozambique which saw a \$5 billion investment to develop natural-gas fields that look a lot less attractive now.

Dow Jones Business wire wrote: “The continent's biggest economies have staked their futures on robust prices for oil and gas... The London-based Capital Economics research firm says falling commodity prices will cut growth across sub-Saharan Africa by one percentage point next year, to around 4%, the slowest rate since the late 1990s. “It's bad for all of Africa,” said Jack Allen, an economist at the firm.

Africa's largest economy Nigeria is another case in point. The oil crude producer has grown 7 percent a year for the past decade. As retail and telecommunications companies have taken off, the oil industry has shrunk to a more balanced 14 percent of economic activity.

But Nigeria's government revenue hasn't evolved with its economy. Oil still fuels more than 70 percent of the budget, leaving public institutions dependent on the ebb and flow of global energy prices. As Brent crude prices fell below \$70 a barrel this month, Nigeria's naira currency plummeted to record lows.

Nigeria's Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala says the drop in oil prices could drag economic growth down by a percentage point to 5.3 percent in 2015.

Falling prices for oil and other commodities are hurting African economies in other ways, too, notes Don Jones business writers. The country's currency, the rand, has dropped to a six-year low as investors retreat from the slowing economy. Persistent weakness in the rand undermines any lift from cheap oil, said Nico Bezuidenhout of South African Airways.

“You've got the break on the fuel price,” he said. “But the currency has gone to the dogs.”

### DC Staffers Walk Out in Protest of Police Killings



(goodblacknews.org)

Dozens of congressional staffers walked out of their offices on Dec. 11 to show solidarity with demonstrators who are protesting the decisions not to indict police officers who killed Eric Garner in New York and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.



### Gallup Poll Reveals President Obama Is Most Admired Man In America For Seventh Year In A Row

(gallup.com)

A recent Gallup poll, conducted December 8-11, 2014, named President Barack Obama as the man participants admire most.

For nearly seven decades, Gallup has asked Americans to name the man and woman living anywhere in the world whom they most admire. Obama has been the most admired man in each of the last seven years, beginning with 2008, the year he was elected president, and he has appeared on the top 10 list each year since 2006.

The remainder of the top 10 men this year is a mix of religious figures, such as Pope Francis and the Rev. Billy Graham, and political figures -- including former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Russian President Vladimir Putin and potential 2016 presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson. Businessman and philanthropist Bill Gates, astrophysicist Stephen Hawking and political commentator Bill O'Reilly also finished in the top 10.

### Bill Duke Documentary “Light Girls” To Premiere on Oprah Winfrey Network on January 19

(oprah.com)

Award Winning Filmmaker Bill Duke, Producer of the documentary film, DARK GIRLS, which premiered on The Oprah Winfrey Network last year, and began an important conversation about the issue of colorism within the Black community, is back to continue the conversation with the sequel, LIGHT GIRLS, an OWN TV original film.

OWN.com wrote, the film shares “the untold stories and experiences of lighter-skinned women, diving deep into the discussion of skin color, preference, privilege, pain and prejudice. The documentary features interviews with Russell Simmons, Soledad O'Brien, Diahann Carroll, India Arie, Iyanla Vanzant, Michaela Angela Davis, Kym Whitley, Salli Richardson-Whitfield and more.”

LIGHT GIRLS is an in depth study of the advantages and disadvantages of being a light skinned woman. Does light skin make for an easier life? LIGHT GIRLS explores skin color from historical, sociological, psychological and scientific perspectives. This documentary is a global analysis of skin color addressing the following contemporary issues: bullying, skin bleaching, and this popular #teamlightskin versus #teamdarks skin rivalry on social media.

Light Girls is scheduled to premier on Jan. 19 at 9 p.m. ET/PT on OWN. A film trailer is available at oprah.com/own.

### Missouri NAACP Files Federal Lawsuit Against Ferguson School District

(aclu.org)

On December 10, the ACLU( American Civil Liberties Union) filed a federal lawsuit against Missouri's Ferguson-Florissant School District, charging the district's electoral system is locking African-Americans out of the political process. The case, brought on behalf of the Missouri NAACP and African-American residents, is challenging the district's at-large system used to elect school board members. The at-large system violates the federal Voting Rights Act by diluting African-American voting strength, the complaint charges.

The district was created by a 1975 desegregation order intended to remedy the effects of discrimination against African-American students. Yet, 40 years later, there is just one African-American member on the seven-member board in a district where African-Americans constitute 77 percent of the student body.

# MLK: BEYOND CIVIL RIGHTS

## “A Time to Break Silence”-The Martin Luther King Speech We Rarely Hear

When Martin Luther King Jr. is remembered and celebrated around the world, his famous “I have a dream” speech is the one that is recounted over and over again as his legacy and the primary representation of who he was and what he stood for. A Civil Rights leader.

But when Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, he was there for a march in support of striking sanitation workers. He was not only a Civil Rights leader, he was also a champion of the poor, an advocate for economic justice, and a vocal critic of the Vietnam War and America’s foreign policy, although this is not talked about nearly as often.

On April 4, 1967, a year to the day before his assassination, Dr. King delivered what was considered a “controversial” speech against the Vietnam War and against the principle of war in general.

Speaking at Riverside Church in New York City in front of an audience of thousands, the speech, titled “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence” was condemned by many



Civil Rights leaders at the time who felt that King’s anti war stance was damaging their cause.

The speech angered many in the United States government, making King a target of FBI investigations. According to the Tavis Smiley documentary “MLK: A Call to Conscience”, 168 major newspapers denounced King the day after the speech, and an angry President Lyndon Johnson disinvited him from

the White House. Despite the negative impact of the speech, King felt that he could no longer in good conscience remain quiet about the war and called on others to do the same. The rarely heard speech is considered by many to be one of King’s greatest, and still relevant as wars continue in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Following are excerpts from Dr. King’s speech “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence.”

*I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.*

*We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.*

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# BLACK LIVES MATTER: EWU BLACK STUDENT UNION JOINS NATIONAL PROTESTS

When the EWU campus newspaper published an opinion piece in October, written by a student staff writer, that criticized the protests taking place in Ferguson, MO in response to the killing of unarmed Black teenager Michael Brown by a white police officer, and claimed that in reality, Blacks “are treated the same – or even better in most cases – as white Americans”, the article touched a very raw nerve.

The EWU Black Student Union, responding to students and staff who were offended and outraged by the article, organized a campus march and protest in November

and created a memorial to twenty-five Blacks who have been victims of police shootings. More than one hundred fifty faculty, staff and students joined them.

The BSU followed up the protest with a forum to educate the campus community about the issues behind the protests in Ferguson and other cities, and to demand that the university’s administration make insitutional changes.

BSU students will continue their Black Lives Matter campaign by co-hosting a Teach-In January 16th at 11am on the EWU campus.



Joshuena Williams



Gayla Thomas



Joshuena Williams

# OUR COMMUNITY PEOPLE SERVICES PROGRAMS

## MLK CENTER TO UPGRADE BUILDING TO SERVE MORE YOUTH

The Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center is embarking on a year long capitol campaign to build a new building on its current site that will kick off in March of 2015. The project, which will involve the entire community, will bring a much needed “state of the art building and expanded programs to the neighborhood,” according to Executive Director Freda Gandy.

Like the little engine that could from the well known

children’s book, the MLK Center has been saying “I think I can, I think I can,” for the past forty years as it has been quietly and steadfastly serving the needs of Spokane’s children and families despite its many challenges.

Located on Sherman Avenue and operating out of an old fire station leased from the City of Spokane, the current building hasn’t met the center’s needs for the past 10-12 years, and not owning the building made it difficult for

the MLK Center to apply for state funds and grants which could have helped with upgrades or expansion.

In early December, however, the City of Spokane agreed to sell the building to the MLK Center, paving the way for the dream of a new Center to become a reality.

The Martin Luther King Center started as a summer camp in 1970 for disadvantaged youth run by Bethel A.M.E. church. When community members saw the need for a year round program to support youth development, they came together to create the Southeast Spokane Youth Center, which became the MLK Center.

The mission of the non-profit social service agency is to live out the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for the families that it serves, paving the way for them to have a more equitable future



Photo courtesy Mary Stamp, The Fig Tree

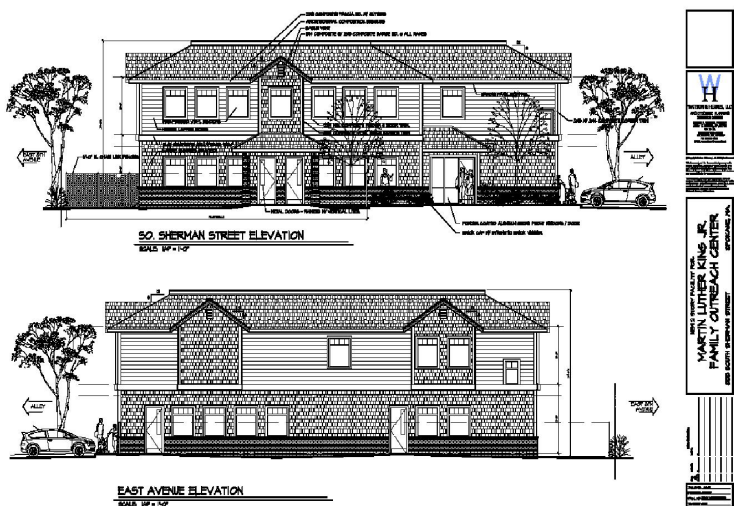
Freda Gandy, MLK Center Executive Director

by encouraging families to take responsibility for their success- preparing children to succeed in school and life, providing leadership opportunities for youth, celebrating cultural diversity in Spokane, and fostering meaningful connections between community members from all walks of life.

The MLK Center provides a long list of children and family services designed to meet the needs of the community, including ECEAP

(Early Childhood Assistance and Education Program); Community Preschool; wrap around child care; a structured after school program for Grant, Sheridan, Franklin and Roosevelt; summer youth academy, teen leadership programs; individual and family counseling; parent education; and a variety of family preservation and emergency services.

For more information contact the MLK Center at (509) 455-8722 or [www.mlkspokane.org](http://www.mlkspokane.org)



## NEW NAACP PRESIDENT ISSUES CALL TO ACTION FOR BLACK SPOKANE

### Movement Toward a Powerful Future

by Rachel Dolezol, President Elect NAACP Spokane

The heaviness with which we faced police brutality and the murder of our people in this past year has only been mitigated by the ways in which we have rallied to grieve with each other and the commitment we have catalyzed to end institutional injustice in America.

We enter the New Year with a sense of urgency and resolve to do whatever it takes to ensure protection of life and the creation of equity, specifically for people of African heritage living in America. As we find our balance individually and collectively, my hope is that 2015 will be a year of stabilizing. We cannot afford to lose the momentum we are feeling at this moment in time. We must heed the call to action and shun distraction as we move toward our highest and best as a people. Now

is the time to set aside lesser things that would divide us and come together to do the work necessary to protect the lives and opportunity of our families and our children.

In this spirit of action, I step into the role of President for the Spokane chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). I am excited to connect our local issues and concerns with the five national “Game Changers” for Black America in the 21st century. I will work hard to realize racial and social justice by fighting to ensure the safety and political, educational, social, and economic equality of Black Spokane.

Key to our success will be the combined energy and effort of the members and committees working hard



to eliminate the growing oppression of people of color in the following five areas: **Economics, Education, Health, Public Safety & Criminal Justice, and Political Representation.** If you have not yet joined the Spokane NAACP, consider

this your Call to Action to join the movement locally in at least one of these five areas of empowerment.

**Economic sustainability** is a chance for every citizen to live the American Dream.

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# YOUNG ADULTS

## ESCAPING THE PRISON PIPELINE: From “Hardcore Criminal” to Community Leader

By all accounts, Justin Pimsanguan by now should be in prison serving hard time, or dead. At least, that is the path that he was headed down like countless other young men of color who are funneled into a pipeline that leaves very few other options.

Identified as “high violent” by the Department of Corrections and Law Enforcement, and a self-described “former career criminal and chronic recidivist,” the thirty one year old founder of the community organization Don’t Shoot, Inc., had a criminal history that included seven felony convictions, possession of a firearm, possession of cocaine with intent to deliver, assault with a deadly weapon, and rendering criminal assistance to a homicide when he did not cooperate with a murder investigation.

An arrest in North Idaho in 2011 almost sent Justin to prison for life, but a plea deal and a good lawyer helped him avoid the “habitual offender enhancement”, and he will be completing his probation at the end of this year. “I feel like I have been on probation since I was 12. It’s an exciting feeling to finally be off. It’s even more exciting to know that I’m done with criminal behavior.”

Justin began organizing around gang violence and police accountability after a series of murders, including the death of his best friend, Fabian McBride.

“After the preventable death of Fabian and the senseless murders of several others, I

felt like I had a responsibility to use my street credibility from the drug trade and incarceration to talk to high violent gang members and hustlers. Young kids were killing people, and they had nobody to answer to or be accountable to.”

Justin and others started having community intervention meetings with the “gang community” to identify leaders who could have an impact in reducing gun violence in Spokane and to discuss the problems that were contributing to rising homicide rates.

“I wanted OGs to accept the responsibility of their own influence. Everything we do, we have young eyes on us. I wanted them to be aware of the imprint and legacy left behind.”

The group organized its first Don’t Shoot march in October of 2013. The successful march, a first of its kind in Spokane, brought together community members, faith leaders and gang members to address “the epidemic of gun violence in Spokane.”

Justin continued to facilitate community intervention meetings, but organizing was something foreign to him. He had no idea what he was doing, only that he knew he had to keep doing it.

“When I started organizing, after the series of 2013 murders, I was doing it from my stomach. I was doing the work because my heart was broken and I was grieving for lost loved ones and really trying to understand what happened and why. It was organic or-

ganizing, and a direct result of my trauma.”

Justin eventually joined SPARC (Spokane Police Accountability and Reform Coalition) and met other organizers and activists. It was there that he discovered a way to channel his pain.

After several months of meetings in the streets and with local leaders and officials, Justin formed Don’t Shoot as a organization and with the help of a legal assistance program at Gonzaga University, Don’t Shoot was incorporated as a 501c3 non-profit that will focus on gang intervention and police accountability. Don’t Shoot hopes to eventually have wrap around services, dealing with at risk youth, ex-offenders, gang members, and police accountability to reduce gun violence in Spokane.

“Ex-offenders now have a platform and an advocacy support group with Don’t Shoot and I Did The Time. We meet at Open Gate on Wednesday nights.”

Impressed with his work, Washington Community Action Network, the state’s largest grassroots community organization and one of the state’s largest consumer advocacy groups, hired Justin, so in addition to Don’t Shoot, he is now also a full time organizer for their organization.

“I am learning how to organize from my head as well as my stomach. I’m identi-



Justin Pimsanguan, Founder of Don’t Shoot, Inc.

fying and honing skills, like leadership development, lobbying, advocacy and grassroots organizing. Don’t Shoot and Washington CAN saved my life. I don’t know where I would be if I didn’t go this route. I’m grateful, but I feel like it is as much a responsibility as it is an honor. I want to see other young brothers be empowered and represent their constituency. As men we have that responsibility. If we lived a life of crime, drugs violence and recidivism, and we make it out alive and get our shit together, then we have a responsibility to these streets. We have the rare opportunity to advocate and mentor, to let other people learn from our mistakes. That’s the least we can do considering the destruction and terror we have caused in our past lifestyles.”

Justin is also on the Board of Directors for the Washington Coalition To Abolish the Death Penalty, a police accountability leader with Spokane Police Accountability and Reform Coalition (SPARC), and a member of I Did The Time.



DONTSHOOT.US

## TIME TO JUMP INTO THE FRAY

By Jaclyn Archer

When I first heard about the shooting of Mike Brown in Ferguson I remember thinking, “Here we go again.”

My mind flashed back to the coverage surrounding the shooting of Treyvon Martin in the summer of 2013: the tragedy, the smear campaign, the constant theorizing and arguing on every social media site I frequented, the trial, the acquittal. The case and its aftermath burned up the summer, but eventually it faded with the sun. The school year started and life went on.

As a black woman born and raised in the inland Northwest, I spent much of my childhood trying to fly under the radar with regards to race. There were never more than five other black students in my school throughout my elementary and secondary school experiences, and only once was there another black student in my grade. By age eight I’d learned that body autonomy didn’t matter when your hair was different, and as I grew up my head was regularly touched and petted, with and without my consent, as though I were a cute stray animal.

By age ten I’d learned to resent the month of February. By age twelve I began to grasp that people had very specific notions about “my culture,” despite the fact I had attended the same school and church as they, had been born in the same hospital, listened to the same music and pursued the same kinds of entertainment. These expectations could be embraced, played into, or fought, and I

did all of these things alternately throughout my childhood and adolescence.

And it wasn’t just whites who had expectations. What few black mentors I had seemed bitter and tired. Because I lacked the context of what they endured during the sixties, seventies, and even into the present, I ignorantly perceived them as jaded, and more prejudiced against white people than any white person I had ever met. (I also had no concept of microaggression at this time.)

Growing up black in a predominantly white community carried a unique set of pressures and challenges. For me, it was often easiest to simply keep my head down.

By the time I started college, however, I was more eager to embrace my blackness on my own terms. I had tried simply avoiding it, and learned that no degree of assimilation would make me enough like my friends to feel and be treated as “normal,” I would always be something other. So I became more open to interrogating that otherness.

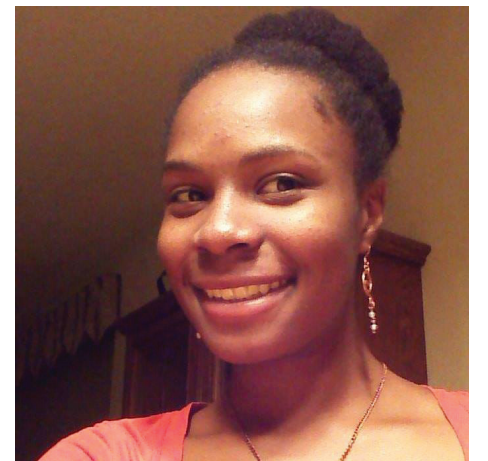
My burgeoning comfort with my black identity was mitigated, however, by many of the same challenges that dogged my efforts to evade it. When I sought to point out insensitivity in my classes or workplace, I feared being labeled the “angry black woman.” I didn’t want to “stick out” or be reduced to an obnoxious trumpet for a single cause in the minds of my white friends

and coworkers. I also didn’t want to come across like the black men and women of my parents’ generation, who bitterly decried the injustices of “them,” “they,” and “the man.” They made me sensitive to the hypocrisy born of fight fatigue in the black community, wherein all whites are painted as oppressors, and young blacks like me were made to feel like traitors for identifying with them.

Ultimately I ended up right back where I started: on the sidelines.

Then I heard the news about Michael Brown’s shooting. I thought “Here we go again.” The smear campaign commenced, my social media feed lit up. But unlike the controversy surrounding Treyvon Martin, the story of Mike Brown didn’t fade away. Instead it was joined by other stories. Those of Eric Garner and Tamir Rice.

Outrage spilled from the virtual world into the real world as protestors organized events across the country in solidarity with the community in Ferguson. Witnessed accounts, videos, and photographs of police brutality and excessive force were circulated, adding more credibility to the discussion of race in America, and this discussion permeated every part of my life as my work, my classes, and even extracurricular activities were adjusted to address it. And in each one of these contexts I was addressed not merely as an employee, student, or hobbyist, but as a black woman. I was pulled off the sidelines and into the



fray. I don’t think I am unique. I suspect that there are more than a few of us young black people who, for various reasons, have had a fraught relationship with our racial identity. This relationship can be especially difficult in the homogeneity of Eastern Washington. Still, if the last few months have taught us anything, it is that no amount of assimilation will erase the reality of race in our own lives.

And unlike a year ago, when the public discussion of racism only seemed to last as long as the #RIPTreyvonMartin was trending on Twitter, the discussion is continuing, a movement seems to be growing, and the injustices which have become commonplace to one segment of the population are being illuminated for the nation.

For lasting change to take hold, however, the movement needs us: young, intelligent black men and women who are willing to engage topics of race and inequality thoughtfully and passionately. This discussion isn’t going away and neither is racism. It’s time for us to jump into the fray.

# IN THE SPIRIT

## SPOKANE MINISTER'S FELLOWSHIP

### *Dwelling Together in Unity - Psalms: 133:1*

Once a month, on Saturday mornings, the Spokane Minister's Fellowship gathers at the Emmanuel Family Life Center to provide an interdenominational forum for pastors, and ministers in Spokane and surrounding communities to engage in fellowship, mutual support, teaching, training, Christian Service, and to develop lasting relationships.

The Fellowship, which is made up of Christian Ministers who are predominately African American, although it is open to everyone, serves as a resource for pastors, and ministers to enhance their ministry as they fulfill their vision.

With a population in Spokane hovering around two percent and no African American defined areas of the city to offer the cultural resources and opportunities for connection and gathering that are available in larger cities, Spokane's Black Churches have been a much needed resource to meet those needs, and the Spokane Minister's Fellowship, with its vision to "build unity among Christian ministers across the body of Christ", has played an important role in bridging the gap and offering a means of connection between various members of the community.

The Minister's Fellowship has gone through many changes over the years, as time has passed, church leadership has changed and Minister's



*Rev. Dr. Roberta Wilburn, President Minister's Fellowship*

have come and gone, but 2014 marked a historic turning point for the organization. Rev. Dr. Roberta Wilburn made history on February 22, 2014 when she became the first woman President of the Spokane Minister's fellowship, and the first President not a senior pastor of a church.

Currently serving in a leadership role at Jesus is the Answer, under the leadership of Pastor Shon Davis, Dr. Wilburn moved to Spokane with her husband James in 2007. She started as Secre-

tary of the Minister's Fellowship, then became its first female Vice President in 2012, and last November was elected by Fellowship members to complete the Presidency of former President Pastor Jimmy Pierce when he moved to Georgia.

Dr. Wilburn's vision for the Fellowship emphasizes unity and fellowship. Her vision statement reads: "we the members of the Spokane Ministers' Fellowship agree with one another for unity and restoration of relationships among ministers of the Gospel across racial and gender boundaries. We want to fulfill our destiny as a fellowship, as each member fulfills his/her purpose by carrying out their assigned mission for the Kingdom of God. We want to be on one accord, speaking in like manner so there is no division among us."

The Spokane Minister's Fellowship invites the community members to come to meetings to speak about issues affecting the community.

Dr. Wilburn is the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in Education and Diversity Initiatives, and Professor at Whitworth University in Spokane, WA. She was recently appointed by Governor Jay Inslee, to the Washington State Charter School Commission. Her education includes a Bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College, and Master's and Doctoral degrees in education from George Washington University, as well as a Doctorate in Christian Counseling from Jacksonville Theological Seminary. A two-time breast cancer survivor, Dr. Wilburn is also the co-host and producer of the Humaculture Radio Show.

## WORDS OF INSPIRATION: DYING EMPTY

By James Watkins

Assistant Pastor, New Hope Baptist Church

*Scripture: John 19: 28-30*

*After this, Jesus, knowing all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said "I thirst!" Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there, and they filled a sponge with a sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing his head, he gave up His spirit.*

Jesus was at the end of his three year ministry. On the cross, at the end of his time as a man here on Earth, knowing that everything that had been foretold had been completed, having fulfilled every command of the Father, and every prophecy, he cried out, "It is finished!" This was not a cry of exhaustion, but a cry of completion. He had done everything that he agreed to do. Now, he bowed his head and voluntarily died.

On November 9th of this year the world lost Dr. Myles Munroe, age 60, one of the greatest Pastors, Preachers and Theologians of our time. He, his wife, and his daughter died in a plane crash while leaving Nassau, Bahamas, his birth



place. Just hours before he boarded that plane for the last time, he met with some of his constituents and stated in this last interview, don't die old, "Die Empty!"

Dr. Munroe went on to explain that in the Old Testament, before a father died, he would call his children in and begin to establish them as men and women. He would divide their inheritance and give it to them, and would also give them his blessings. The father wanted his children to have everything that he had, so in essence he would "Die empty!"

As I reflect on the victories and failures of 2014, the things that I have completed and the things that I have left undone, I have decided that I

too want to "Die Empty!" I want to complete everything that God has for me to do. To leave this world with no regrets. To be able to say, "It is finished."

Many of us suffer and struggle because God has impregnated us with a vision, and that vision has yet to be birthed. We struggle as a Woman would struggle if she were in the last trimester of her pregnancy, but the birth of the child keeps getting postponed. Not a good thought! And neither is it a good thought that God is depositing ideas, inventions, music and dance into our spirits, and never seeing them come to fruition. We become a wasteland of good intentions with no action.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said that nothing is more dangerous than "sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity!" We must be prepared to "Die Empty!" and to teach our children to do the same, to take their songs, their dance, their street poetry, and use it to uplift the world, not to defile it.

The Church has to return to its role as a birthing place, not simply a resting place. If we are to change this world, the people of God have to "Die Empty".

# OUR VOICES

## Put Those Police Cameras on the Bankers

By Rev. Jesse Jackson (12/9/14)



(TriceEdneyWire.com)

A week ago Sunday, five St. Louis Rams professional football players entered a game with their hands up, protesting the killing of Michael Brown. They stand in the lineage of John Carlos, Tommie Smith, and Muhammad Ali, identifying with the pain in their communities and turning protest into power.

The gesture turned to chants — “Hands up; Don’t Shoot” in demonstrations across the country. Protesters shut down major thoroughfares from Manhattan to Chicago to Los Angeles to decry the Staten Island grand jury that refused to indict the policemen who killed Eric Garner, turning his plea — “I can’t breathe” — into a call for justice.

In these cases, there was no cross examination and thus no indictments. “Justice” rings hollow across the nation. Injustice reins.

These demonstrations, largely by young and remarkably multi-racial crowds, are not the first. They

were preceded by Occupy Wall Street, indicting the 1 percent and spreading to hundreds of cities. They were foreshadowed by the dreamers, children demanding the right to come out of the shadows of the undocumented. They were accompanied by record numbers of workers in low wage jobs at fast food restaurants and the Dollar Stores walking off their jobs in some 190 cities.

They were complemented by women demanding gender equality, particularly at the workplace where discrimination and sexism are still rife.

The streams of alienation and disparities are converging into a river. Injustices in this new age are not only inflammable, they are increasingly inflamed.

The official reaction to police immunity for the killing of unarmed black boys and men in Ferguson and Staten Island and Cleveland and Brooklyn has focused, not surprisingly, on the police. The president has created a Task Force on 21st Century Policy, with instructions to report in 90 days. He’s committed millions to put cameras on police.

But he might be better advised to put cameras on bankers. Reckless, unaccountable and murderous police behavior must end, but the police are simply the gatekeepers assigned to keep order.

Behind the gate is the American policy of isolating poor people of color in ghettos, ghettos deprived of jobs, of capital, of decent health care, of affordable housing, of good schools.

Police are assigned to patrol these zones of despair, part of the only thriving industry in these neighborhoods — the jail-industrial complex of more police, police stations, courthouses, bondsmen, jailors, judges, lawyers and prosecutors, court recorders and guards and much more. In this pressure cooker,

all of us are vulnerable — none of us are safe until all of us are safe.

In the Civil Rights Movement, the Bull Connors were the violent enforcers. But they were not the issue: The issue was legal segregation that deprived African Americans of their rights and locked them into second-class citizenship.

Today, the police killing of unarmed Blacks is unacceptable and reaching crisis proportions. But the issue is a national policy that abandons poor people of color in their ghettos. If we put cameras on the police, we may get better policing and less injustice (although Eric Garner’s killing was on camera). But what we need is an urban development policy that attacks segregation by race, rebuilds poor neighborhoods, invests in the health and education of poor infants and children, erects affordable housing, offers training for and transport to jobs that exist.

The demonstrations are about justice for Michael Brown and Eric Garner and others that can be and will be added to the list. But they aren’t just about those killings. They are about a national ghetto policy, a national worker impoverishment policy, a national inequality policy.

The slogan “No justice, no peace,” reverberates throughout the country. And the demonstrations are growing and spreading. Different streams of protest are coming together. Occupy Wall Street exposed the 1 percent. The strikes of low wage workers expose the global corporations. The “Hands up, Don’t Shoot” demonstrations expose the harsh injustices of the jail-industrial complex.

Dr. Martin Luther King taught us: “There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right. Today, across America, more and more Americans are standing up for what is right.

## 10-Point Justice Plan: National Urban League Police Reform and Accountability Recommendations

By Marc H. Morial, President & CEO, National Urban League (12/14/14)



(TriceEdneyWire.com)

The phenomenon we have seen in America since the announcement of the non-indictments of officers in the killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner is new to a generation, but not to the nation.

Young people have always helped to fuel historic social change. We must not forget — 50 years ago, it was young people on that bridge in Sel-

ma, Alabama; young people sitting-in in Greensboro, NC; young people riding Freedom buses all over this nation challenging conventional laws and the status quo; and young people like Schwerner, Goodman and Chaney losing their lives in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

A multicultural band of young people, united with historic civil rights organizations, legislators, clergy, and everyday Americans who decided that it was time for our country to do better and be better, have been the impetus for so many of the changes we’ve witnessed as a nation through the decades.

Millions of Americans have now taken to the streets and to social media not because the problems that have caused the outrage just began yesterday,

but because sometimes difficult circumstances present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring about historic change. Now is that time. Now is our time.

This conversation and the subsequent action that will result from it will continue because we remain committed to the idea that these cases — Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Akai Gurrey, Tamir Rice, John Crawford, Marlene Pinnock and others — do not end where they are.

In addition to the opportunity for the Justice Department to conduct independent investigations, we each have an opportunity to participate in our great democracy by helping to ensure that the America of tomorrow is better than who we are today.

For our part, the National Urban League has developed the following 10-Point Justice Plan for Police Reform and Accountability. We believe that these action steps will be a major step forward in helping to repair police-community relations in cities across America, in significantly reducing inappropriate use of excessive force by law enforcement, particularly against unarmed citizens and in holding police accountable for misconduct:

- 1) Widespread Use of Body Cameras and Dashboard Cameras
- 2) Broken Windows Reform and Implementation of 21st Century Community Policing Model
- 3) Review and Revision of Police Use of Deadly Force Policies

- 4) Comprehensive Retraining of All Police Officers
- 5) Comprehensive Review and Strengthening of Police Hiring Standards
- 6) Appointment of Special Prosecutors to Investigate Police Misconduct
- 7) Mandatory, Uniform FBI Reporting and Audit of Lethal Force Incidents Involving All Law Enforcement
- 8) Creation and Audit of National Database of Citizen Complaints against Police
- 9) Revision of National Police Accreditation System for Mandatory Use by Law Enforcement to Be Eligible for Federal Funds
- 10) National Comprehensive Anti-Racial Profiling Law

We know the problems before us — now let’s work towards solutions.



# DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE USE OF FORCE REPORT

Continued from Page 1

Despite the disproportionality in Use of Force incidents against African Americans and Native Americans in Spokane as compared to their representative population, 5X greater for Blacks, the report's authors stated "in our review of the use of force incidents, we did not

find a pattern of biased application of use of force." Critics have questioned this finding and the implication that it appears to discount claims from communities of color that there is a history of bias and discrimination in their interactions with law enforcement.

Director Davis, however, acknowledged during the press conference, as reported by the Spokesman Review, that the report "did not examine potential bias in stops, searches and other police actions." Perhaps an examination of these statistics will shed additional light on the

subject as the police department works to rebuild what Director Davis called "a fractured relationship with community stakeholders." The SPDS's progress with implementing the recommendations will be reviewed at six and 12 month intervals, according to the report.

# EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY CENTER CONTRACT

Continued from Page 1

after an RFP (request for proposals) process in which they were the only submission, a two year contract was awarded to the East Central Neighborhood Organization (ECCO) to manage East Central.

ECCO had been operating in the East Central neighborhood for decades, serving in an advisory capacity for the Center and as a liaison between the Center and the city, so managing ECCO seemed like a perfect fit. But community members said that it was when ECCO took over that things began to change.

According to Chris Venne, Chair of ECCO's Board of Directors, things at the Center changed out of necessity.

To deal with a rapidly shrinking operating budget and what they viewed as an inherited fiscal crisis that had the potential to close the Center's doors, ECCO's Board and management adopted a fee based business model for programs and services in an effort to make ends meet.

The cost cutting and revenue generating decisions proved effective in the short term, enabling the Center to survive the crisis and maintain programs, but the measures also prompted low income residents in East Central to say that they were being "priced out" of using their own community center.

In July of 2013, when Pastor Watkins and other community members began raising their voices against ECCO's management decisions and the changes taking place at the Center, the two sides seemed worlds apart, with a mutual solution not very likely. But Chris Venne, along with ECCO Board Member Betsy Williams, City of Spokane Neighborhood Services Director, Jonathan Mallan, and the Spokane Representative of the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs, Sandy Williams, all rolled up their collective sleeves and began the arduous process of finding common ground.

With ECCO's contract set to expire in December of 2014, Spokane Mayor David Condon initiated a re-

view process of the contract in an effort to rebuild trust with a skeptical community and address concerns about the Center's management under ECCO.

The review committee, facilitated by Jonathan Mallahan, included George Kessler, President of the East Side Kiwanis Club; Julie Honekamp, CEO of SNAP; Kim Ferraro, Executive Director of the West Central Community Center; Spokane City Councilman Mike Allen; Jim Hanley, Vice Chair of the East Central Neighborhood Committee; James Wilburn, NAACP President; Jennifer Hansen, Health Program Specialist with Community and Family Services at the Spokane Regional Health District, and Sandy Williams.

The committee was tasked with making a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council as to whether or not the contract with ECCO should be renewed, and spent weeks reviewing the City's existing contract with ECCO, along with supporting documents, gathering supplemental information, meeting with community members to get direct feedback, and meeting with the ECCO Board of Directors and staff.

The result of the Review Team's process was a determination that the ECCO contract should be renewed contingent on eight recommendations:

- 1) There should be no reduction in funding for ECCO for the two year term of the contract
- 2) ECCO should hire an Executive Director for the East Central Community Center through a public process, which should take place within three months of renewing the contract
- 3) The Scope of the services for ECCO should emphasize that the mission of the center is "to serve"
- 4) The ECCO Board of Directors should create and adopt a Board Development Plan and commit to a timeline for a By-Law review with attention given to required Board Membership positions

5) The ECCO Board of Directors should develop a plan for engaging the community in center changes and enhancements

6) ECCO's existing Neighborhood Needs Assessment should be updated through a grassroots, public process with particular emphasis on outreach to low income members of the community

7) Customer Service and Cultural Competency training should be provided to ALL East Central Community Center staff

8) Customer Satisfaction survey results and fundraising progress updates should be included in quarterly reports

ECCO's Board of Directors agreed to all eight recommendations, a new two year contract was drafted that incorporated the recommendations and it was subsequently approved by the Spokane City Council in December.

Commenting on the renewed contract, Chris Venne shared that "after a very challenging contract renewal process, ECCO is ready to move into the new year." He continued, "we plan on continuing to grow quality programs for seniors and youth at the East Central Community Center to serve all our neighborhood residents. We will be emphasizing customer service and updating both our community needs assessment and sustainability plan. In early January we will be advertising for the new Community Center Director position."

Jonathan Mallahan added in response to the contract renewal, "the City appreciates the ECCO Board's willingness to work with members of the community and the City in amending the contract to build on the success of the East Central Community Center through enhancing a service-centric, inclusive culture. The city received excellent feedback throughout our evaluation process. The process highlighted areas where the Center was succeeding, as well as areas for improvement." He believes, he continued, that "the amended contract will result in positive changes in areas where ECCO

and the City received critical feedback through this process."

As for the community, word of the review committee's recommendations, especially that ECCO should hire an Executive Director through a public process, was greeted with cautious enthusiasm. The current Director had been the focal point of much of the community's ire, and many felt that trust could not be rebuilt, nor would the healing process have chance of successfully moving forward until the issue of the Center's leadership was addressed.

Pastor Watkins agreed, and was satisfied with the results of the process that he got started, but, he said, "what's important now is to make sure that they (ECCO) do what they say they are going to do."

It will take a combined effort between ECCO and the community in order for the East Central Community Center to be successful. "With more community involvement, more volunteers in our programs like the food bank, we can stretch our resources to serve more people," said Chris Venne. "Since 1980, ECCO's goal has been to improve the quality of life for all neighborhood residents. Over the next two years, we will be working hard to meet that goal."

Despite the challenges over the past year, Jonathan Mallahan is optimistic about the future of ECCO. "I would like to thank all of the members of the East Central community, ECCO board members, evaluation team members and the staff of the East Central Community Center who have been integral to the past and future success of the East Central Community Center."

Community members are watching and waiting to see what happens when the new leadership is in place, still distrustful of ECCO, they say, and a bit bruised from the past couple of years, but hopefully the new contract will become a catalyst for them to return to East Central and to take on a more active role in rebuilding the Center that they fought so hard to reclaim.

# KING: BEYOND VIETNAM SPEECH EXCERPTS

Continued  
from Page 4



*I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.*

*I cannot forget that the Nobel Peace Prize was also a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for the brotherhood of man. This is a*

*calling that takes me beyond national allegiances. But even if it were not present, I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me, the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I am speaking against the war. Could it be that they do not know that the Good News was meant for all men—for communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the one who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this one? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?*

*Here is the true meaning and value of compassion and nonviolence, when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition.*

*Increasingly, by choice or by accident, this is the role our nation has taken, the role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I am convinced that if we are to get on to the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must*

*undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin, we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.*

*True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.*

*The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.*

*A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war, "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.*

**To view the text or listen to the audio of this speech and others visit the Stanford University - Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute: <http://kinginstitute.stanford.edu>**

## NAACP PRESIDENT CALL TO ACTION

Continued from Page 5

Our goal is that every person will have equal opportunity to achieve economic success, sustainability, and financial security.

A recent report shows the median wealth for white people in the United States is \$142,000, but the median wealth for Black people is only \$11,000. This wealth gap is growing to the point where it now exists regardless of education.

We need to turn this trend around in a new direction by supporting Black-owned businesses, focusing on fair hiring and retention, promoting homeownership, and eliminating all forms of economic disempowerment that is attached to institutional racism. Without resources, we are limited in power and opportunity, so this is indeed a core justice issue for Black Spokane.

**Education** is also at the center of our focus, because a high quality education for every child is necessary to ensuring a high quality future and opportunity for every individual. Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Indeed, we must ensure that every child receives a free, equitably-funded, excellent public pre-K and K-12 education followed by diverse opportunities for accessible, affordable vocational or university education.

Black students in Spokane and across the nation are suspended and expelled at disproportionate rates and are falling behind in college readiness and academic achievement. Black students

account for 18% of the nation's pre-K enrollment but make up 48% of preschoolers with multiple out-of-school suspensions. We see similar trends from K-12 and need to continue efforts in Spokane to provide a safe and equitable education environment for all our students, from pre-K through college. In an era of misinformation and lost information, knowledge is indeed power and must remain a focal point to ensure a just future for the Black community in Spokane.

**Public Safety and Criminal Justice** means equitable dispensation of justice for all. With 57% of our Black population in Spokane having a conviction record, we have work to do. Let's greatly reduce disproportionate incarceration, racially-motivated policing strategies, and racially-biased, discriminatory, and mandatory minimum sentencing. We need to support families affected by criminal injustice and reduce incarceration to ensure our communities are safer. Due to racial bias in sentencing, we must work to abolish the death penalty at the state and federal level, as well as in the military.

If 2014 taught us anything, it was that we need to get on our grind when it comes to demanding justice in law enforcing. Our city has an Office of Police Ombudsman with a Commission overseeing local law enforcement. We have an opportunity to engage in dialogue about new policies relating to use of force and body cameras, ensure that complaints about excessive force and racial profiling are met with just outcomes, and volunteer as interns in City

Hall to assist the process of providing meaningful civilian oversight of law enforcement.

With diligent work, we can not only protect Spokane from becoming the next Ferguson, but we can lead the national cause by working toward sustainable solutions for safety and justice.

**Health equality**, including a healthy life and high-quality health care is also at the heart of our struggle and liberation. We can bring about equal access to affordable, high-quality health care and end racially disparate health outcomes in Spokane and nationally. Black Americans currently have shorter life spans than white Americans, and the chronic stresses of institutional racism and other social disparities are seen as causes and perpetrators of poor physical and mental health.

With 0.37% of biomedical research funding going to Black scientists and researchers, we need to know what the intentions are for the current manufacture of more than 30 race-specific drugs today. Lord-knows, we don't want another Tuskegee on our hands, so let's get involved and keep the pulse on our healthcare system. We can empower our communities with information and encourage our communities of color to participate in the new medical school opportunities in Spokane. Health is indeed a justice issue for the 21st century.

**Voting rights and political representation** are signifiers of how much power we hold in the governing structure of America. As citizens, we have an

obligation to protect and enhance voting rights and fair representation at the local, state and national level. We need to keep this country accountable to provide free, open, equal and protected access to the vote and fair representation at all levels of the political process.

By protecting democracy, enhancing equity, and increasing democratic participation and civic engagement, African Americans will be proportionally elected to political office. Spokane has only witnessed one Black mayor in its history, and the tally of African Americans in other elected offices is slim to none as well. This is not an acceptable situation. Let's mobilize and engage to ensure that we have proportionate representation in government, to build access and opportunity for our voices to make an impact in local and state government. We have seen movement politics in action from Ferguson to Staten Island, and this has exposed the need for greater work in electoral politics to ensure a more just future.

Collective action in these five areas will bring justice into tangible form in Spokane and connect us with the movement that is swelling in our state, our region, and across the nation. As one of our most inspired leaders, Malcolm X, said, "Tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today." Let's waste no time in preparing, for tomorrow will be upon us soon. I am determined that the Spokane branch of the NAACP will not sit idly by when we have the chance to steer the course of history toward a powerful future.

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## JANUARY CALENDAR



**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.  
UNITY RALLY AND MARCH  
JAN. 19 - 10AM - SPOKANE CONVENTION CENTER**

### JANUARY 1 - 10

#### Amen, Amen: Religion & Southern Self-Taught Artists

A survey of selected objects from the private Mullis collection in Atlanta, Georgia, with a focus on images with religious or spiritual subject matter, created by self-taught artists from the American South. The exhibition's title derives from the African American spiritual "Amen," the song's use of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as salvation history, and its many appearances within American popular culture.

Exhibit runs through Jan. 10, 2015  
Jundt Art Museum  
200 E. Desmet Ave. Spokane - East  
Museum hours: Mon-Sat 10 am-4 pm.  
phone 509-313-6843

### JANUARY 2, 3, 4

#### Church Basement Ladies: A Second Helping

Catch the Northwest premiere of an all new musical comedy, the *Church Basement Ladies Sequel: A Second Helping*, packed with heartwarming humor, contagious songs, and hilarious antics! A Second Helping takes you from the Luther League Banquet to a church sponsored Missionary night. A laugh filled treat for the whole family!

January 2 & 3 at 7:30pm

January 4 at 2pm

Tickets \$19 - \$25

The Modern Theater - 174 S. Howard St,  
99201, (208) 676-7529

### JANUARY 14

#### Day of Dialogue

#### *Dissonance in American Justice: An Open Discussion*

Spokane Community College Lair

7:30-8:30 - **The History of Law Enforcement and Race in America**

8:30-9:20am - **We Can't Breathe: How Racial Oppression is Choking the Justice out of Law Enforcement**

9:30-10:30am - **Unravelling the Road to Peace**

8am - Noon - **Resource Fair**

Contact: SCC Multicultural Student Services - (509) 533-8875

### JANUARY 15

#### SCC Black Student Union presents Erin Jones

11:30

SCC Auditorium

1810 N. Greene Street, Spokane

### JANUARY 16

#### Black Lives Matter Teach-In

*Presented by EWU Black Student Union*

Featuring Mary Lou Johnson, Dr. Scott Finnie, Rachel Dolezol, Krista Benson, and a student panel organized by the BSU

11am - 1pm

126 Patterson Hall, EWU Cheney Campus

### JANUARY 16

#### Call Mr. Robeson:

#### A Life With Songs

*MLK Center Benefit Performance*

7pm (doors open at 6pm)

Bing Crosby Theater

901 W. Sprague Ave, Spokane

Tickets \$40, VIP \$50

### JANUARY 17

#### Youth Empowerment Luncheon and Silent Auction

*Celebrate MLK Essay Winners*

11:30-1:30pm

Spokane Community College

1801 N. Greene, Spokane

Tickets \$10

### JANUARY 18

#### MLK Commemorative Celebration

4-6pm

Bethel A.M.E. Church

645 S. Richard Allen Court

### JANUARY 19

#### MLK Unity Rally, March and Resource Fair

10am

Spokane Convention Center

334 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard

### JANUARY 19

#### MLK Celebration

Rev. Percy "Happy" Watkins will deliver Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech

1pm - Providence Holy Family Hospital  
5633 N. Lidgerwood St., Spokane

3pm - Sacred Heart Hospital

101 West 8th Avenue, Spokane

Contact: 509-474-3081

### JANUARY 20

#### SFCC MLK Celebration

11:30am - 1pm

SUB Lounges A/B/C

3410 West Fort George Wright Drive, Spokane

### JANUARY 20

#### The State of Civil Rights Education in the U.S.

Dr. Kate Shuster is the author of a seminal 2011 study, commissioned by the Southern Poverty Law Center, examining how states in our country teach the history of the U.S. Civil Rights movement. In the original 2011 report, Washington state received a failing grade.

Dr. Shuster will review the motivation for the original study, the means by which she graded states, and her overall findings as they have been updated in 2014. She will answer the question: "Where are we now in our efforts to educate today's students about the history of the U.S. Civil Rights movement?"

7pm

107 Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University

Contact: Elizabeth Porter, 509-777-4279

### JANUARY 22

#### Angela Davis:

#### The Dream Behind Bars

*28th Annual MLK Community Celebration at Washington State University*

7:30pm (doors open at 7pm)

CUB Senior Ballroom

WSU Campus, Pullman

\*Videostream of Angela Davis Lecture

WSU Riverpoint - SAC - Room 20 (basement)

412 East Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane

Contact - Yvonne Montoya Zamora -


509.358.7554

Please send information about upcoming community events to [events@blacklensnews.com](mailto:events@blacklensnews.com).

# COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

**2015 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebrations in Spokane - Jan. 16-19**

*The Pursuit of Peace, Justice & Equality: Believe in It, Strive towards It*




**'Call Mr. Robeson: A Life, with Songs'**  
 Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center Benefit Event  
 Friday, Jan. 16 - 7 p.m.  
 Bing Crosby Theater - 901 W. Sprague  
 Ticketswest.com (\$40 or \$50 for VIP)

**Youth Empowerment Luncheon & Silent Auction**  
 Saturday, Jan. 17 - 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
 Spokane Community College - 1801 N. Greene - \$10  
 Hear essays of contest winners.

**Commemorative Celebration**  
 Sunday, Jan. 18 - 4 to 6 p.m.  
 Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church - 645 S. Richard Allen Ct.

**Unity Rally, March & Resource Fair**  
 Monday, Jan. 19 - 10 a.m.  
 Spokane Convention Center - 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

For more information, call 509-455-8722 or visit [www.mlksokane.org](http://www.mlksokane.org)



**Call Mr. Robeson: A Life, With Songs**  
**JANUARY 16 2015**  
 Bing Crosby Theater 7pm (Doors Open @ 6pm)

PAUL ROBESON IS A GREAT AND FAMOUS ACTOR, SINGER AND CIVIL RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER. WHEN OVER THE YEARS HE GETS PROGRESSIVELY TOO RADICAL AND OUTSPOKEN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT'S LIKING, HE IS BRANDED A TRAITOR TO HIS COUNTRY, HARASSED, AND DENIED OPPORTUNITIES TO PERFORM OR TRAVEL. JUST AS PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL STRESS THREATEN TO PUSH HIM OVER THE FINE LINE BETWEEN GENIUS AND MADNESS, HE IS SUMMONED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE HOUSE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE, TO GIVE THE MOST DIFFICULT AND IMPORTANT PERFORMANCE OF HIS CAREER. THE PLAY IS A ROLLER COASTER JOURNEY THROUGH ROBESON'S REMARKABLE AND EVENTFUL LIFE, AND HIGHLIGHTS HOW HIS RADICAL ACTIVISM CAUSED HIM TO BE DISOWNED AND DISREMEMBERED, EVEN BY THE LEADERS AND DESCENDANTS OF THE CIVILRIGHTS MOVEMENT. IT FEATURES MUCH FIERY ORATORY AND SOME OF HIS FAMOUS SONGS, INCLUDING A DRAMATIC RENDITION OF 'OL' MAN RIVER.

**TICKETS \$40 VIP \$50**  
 Get Tickets at [TICKETSWEST.COM](http://TICKETSWEST.COM)

VIP tickets include: Access to private VIP rooms; Reserved seating; Pre-Show complimentary refreshments and a glass of wine; Gift bag; Photos taken; 1 complimentary raffle ticket; A chance to meet the actor

BING CROSBY THEATER ■ 901 W SPRAGUE AVE ■ [WWW.MLKSPokane.ORG](http://WWW.MLKSPokane.ORG)

**BLACK LIVES MATTER TEACH-IN**

**WHEN**  
 January 16, 2015  
 11am-1pm

**WHERE**  
 Patterson Hall, 126  
 Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA 99004

FOLLOWING THE 4 PRESENTATIONS, A STUDENT PANEL ORGANIZED BY THE BLACK STUDENT UNION WILL RESPOND TO THE PRESENTATIONS & RELATED ISSUES.



**PRESENTED BY:**  
 EWU BLACK STUDENT UNION  
**ORGANIZED BY:**  
 KEVIN DECKER

**MARY LOU JOHNSON**  
 Smart Justice candidate for Spokane County Commissioner

**DR. SCOTT FINNIE**  
 Interim Director & Senior Professor of Africana Education Program, EWU

**RACHEL DOLEŽAL**  
 Africana Studies Faculty, EWU  
 President, Spokane NAACP  
 2015 Chair, Office of Police Ombudsman Commission

**KRISTA BENSON**  
 PhD Candidate, Department of Women Gender & Sexuality Ohio State University


**"THE DREAM BEHIND BARS"**

**28<sup>th</sup> Annual MLK Community Celebration**  
 Keynote speaker will be scholar and activist **ANGELA Y. DAVIS**  
 Free and Open to the Public  
**Thursday, January 22, 2015**  
 CUB Senior Ballroom  
 Doors open 7:00 pm • Program starts 7:30 pm

Presentation of the MLK Distinguished Service Awards

[mlk.wsu.edu](http://mlk.wsu.edu) #WSUMLK15

Sponsors: Office of the President, College of Arts and Sciences, Diversity Programs, College of Education, Office of Student Affairs, College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS), Graduate School, Global Campus



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

**THE BLACK LENS NEWS SPOKANE**

The Black Lens is a local newspaper that is focused on the news, events, people and information that is of importance to Spokane's African American Community. The paper will be published monthly and available via subscription and or free at limited locations.

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