



You Belong Here

NORTHEAST
COMMUNITY
CENTER  NE



2023 Annual Report

Mission

Our mission is to improve the quality of life of residents in Northeast Spokane—with emphasis on social, health, economic, educational, and recreational needs.

Vision

Our vision is thriving neighborhoods in Northeast Spokane, in partnership with residents, schools, and organizations to create community-driven supports and opportunities, assuring children and youth are safe and nurtured, residents are engaged, and all families have what they need to thrive.

Values

- Promote a center atmosphere that honors human dignity through respect, compassion, and justice.
- Assess and respond to quality-of-life issues.
- Serve as a center of community activity, collective impact, and action.
- Amplify resident voice through support, advocacy, and facilitation of group action.
- Facilitate and support the work of service providers and community members who are meeting identified community needs.

What is The ZONE?

The ZONE is a place-based initiative at the Northeast Community Center supporting households, schools, and neighborhoods in Northeast Spokane. Our foundational question is: **What does it take for your family to thrive?** Resident-led and grant-funded, ZONE staff co-design 2-Gen programming aligned with the goals and priorities of students and families. Residents have elevated: Affordable Housing, Student Achievement, Employment, Access to Childcare, and Financial, Mental and Physical Health. A network of partner organizations collectively action these supports and advocate for systems change. We measure increased academic outcomes (attendance, behavior, coursework) for children and youth in the households, sense of belonging to school and neighborhood, decreased depression and anxiety, and household financial self-sufficiency. The ZONE is a recognized Family Resource Center in Washington, with an asset-based whole-child whole-family model. ZONE funding supports free youth and adult programming through partner organizations, cultural connectors, and staff embedded in schools and at the Northeast Community Center. **Community is the answer.**

Numbers At A Glance

17,094

families served

77,192

hours of after school and summer programming provided

116,414

units of service

1,024

coats distributed to 308 local families in partnership with Coats 4 Kids

1

behavioral health clinic opened

12,539

hours of adult participation in ZONE programming & events

\$86,400

in donated room rentals to 49 community organizations

\$825,448

in 776 tax refunds from AARP Tax Aide to local residents

10,000

books given to residents at our free book fair with Page 42 Bookstore

1,421

hours of service by 132 volunteers

1,081

pets vaccinated at Dr. Laura Talaga's monthly pet clinic

2,567

hours of free fitness classes offered to the community

\$23,000+

spent at our Farmer's Market

41

years of neighborhood action

113

partner organizations

2023 Annual Awards

Resident of the Year: Shanda Blunt

Shanda is a Chief Garry resident, served as a founding Advisory Board member, and is a current Resident Steering Committee member. Shanda brings personal and professional expertise to our programming—co-designing and co-leading peer groups, resident leadership workshops, parenting courses, and leading free Zumba classes at NECC three times a week. Through AmeriGroup, Shanda tables at community events, sponsors community meals throughout the year, and is on call to meet northeast families to help them get healthcare and other supports. Shanda received a scholarship from Gonzaga University (GU) and The ZONE to take a Design Thinking for Innovation course at GU. We look forward to her bringing her signature energy and joy with what she's learned back to benefit our neighborhoods. Shanda's favorite quote: "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude."—Maya Angelou



The Resident of the Year Award is given to a Northeast Spokane resident who volunteers time and talent in an exceptional way to connect community and help neighbors thrive.

Agency of the Year: NorthEast Support Team (NEST Coalition)



Lorraine Holokai, NEST Coalition Coordinator, knows that by creating spaces for families to spend quality time together, children and youth have a higher chance of making positive choices, remaining drug-free, and having better outcomes in life. With this in mind, she has worked with Coalition members to create monthly family nights held at NECC, where parents and children come together to have dinner, watch movies, do crafts, and play games. She also ensured that every Farmer's Market resource fair had a Kids' ZONE, with fun activities, like pumpkin painting, sidewalk chalk, and raffle items. Additionally, NEST holds the Medication Take-Back events twice per year, getting hundreds of pounds of unused medications out of homes and away from children.

The Agency of the Year Award is given to a campus partner who goes above and beyond to support the entire Northeast Community Center, living into our mission of improving the quality of life for residents of Northeast Spokane.

Partner of the Year: URM

"It's my dream that one day a new hire says, 'I remember when URM bought me shoes' or 'I remember URM sponsored my family for Christmas,'" says Josh Leech, Director of Warehouse Operations. To this end, he has ensured that students in Northeast schools have winter boots, athletic shoes, and socks by sponsoring our Boot & Shoe Drive the past 2 years. He also brought a literal semi-truck full of toys, wrapping paper, and more before the holidays. We were able to distribute them to local schools, and set up a toy room at our December Family Night for parents to "shop" and wrap gifts for their children. With the hundreds of families that URM has supported in Northeast Spokane, it won't be long before Josh hears those words from a new hire.



The Partner of the Year Award is given to a collective impact partner whose organization innovates roles, funding, and strategy to meet community needs in Northeast Spokane.

Partner Agency Highlights

Hillyard Senior Center Director Jerry Unruh Retires; Tony Cane Takes the Helm

After 25 years as Executive Director of the Hillyard Senior Center, Jerry Unruh retired. On September 1, a standing room-only crowd came together to celebrate Jerry's career. Past and present staff, patrons, and board members spoke about the impact he has had on their lives and this place. Songs were sung, cake was eaten, and tears were shed. It's tough to sum up everything Jerry has done here, and the overwhelming sentiment from everyone was that Jerry is kind and you can count on him. Whether it was picking someone up so they could attend an event, going the extra mile so a friend could tend to a sick loved one, or boosting someone's confidence, Jerry was always there. What a wonderful legacy.

Taking his place is Tony Cane, who spent 8 years here at NECC, starting at the front desk. While it may seem that he was always at the front desk, during his time here he went back to school and got his master's degree while also taking on more responsibilities such as Safety & Security, social media, and more. Most importantly though, he created real relationships with the seniors who come here every day. When Jerry announced Tony as the new director to the seniors, the room erupted with cheers and applause. He has jumped right in—organizing events and coming up with new program ideas. Congrats, Tony!



Manzanita House's Language Program Moves In



In 2022, Manzanita House piloted a Heritage Language class for children of Arabic-speaking parents, so that the children can remain connected to the language of their home countries. The program was so successful they decided to run the program all year, expand it to more languages, and maintain an office here at NECC. Now running 3 days per week, the classes have included Arabic, Marshallese, and Farsi/Dari.

In addition to the classes, they also offer Women's Tea Time, allowing the women from these communities to gather, strengthening their bonds here in Spokane while they also learn about different topics ranging from computer and financial literacy to local resources. They have also hosted great parties to celebrate the holidays in their own culture, as well as Western holidays, like Christmas.

In partnership with: The ZONE and Washington Department of Financial Institutions



MultiCare Behavioral Health Clinic Opened in October

On October 4, the new MultiCare Behavioral Health Clinic opened on the NECC campus in the former Hillyard Library building. This clinic fulfills a need residents labeled as a top priority in a community survey in 2019. “This is exciting to get them something that is a one-stop shop at NECC...and for many people, on the bus line they already take,” says Samantha Clark, MHA, assistant vice president for strategy and business development, MultiCare Behavioral Health.

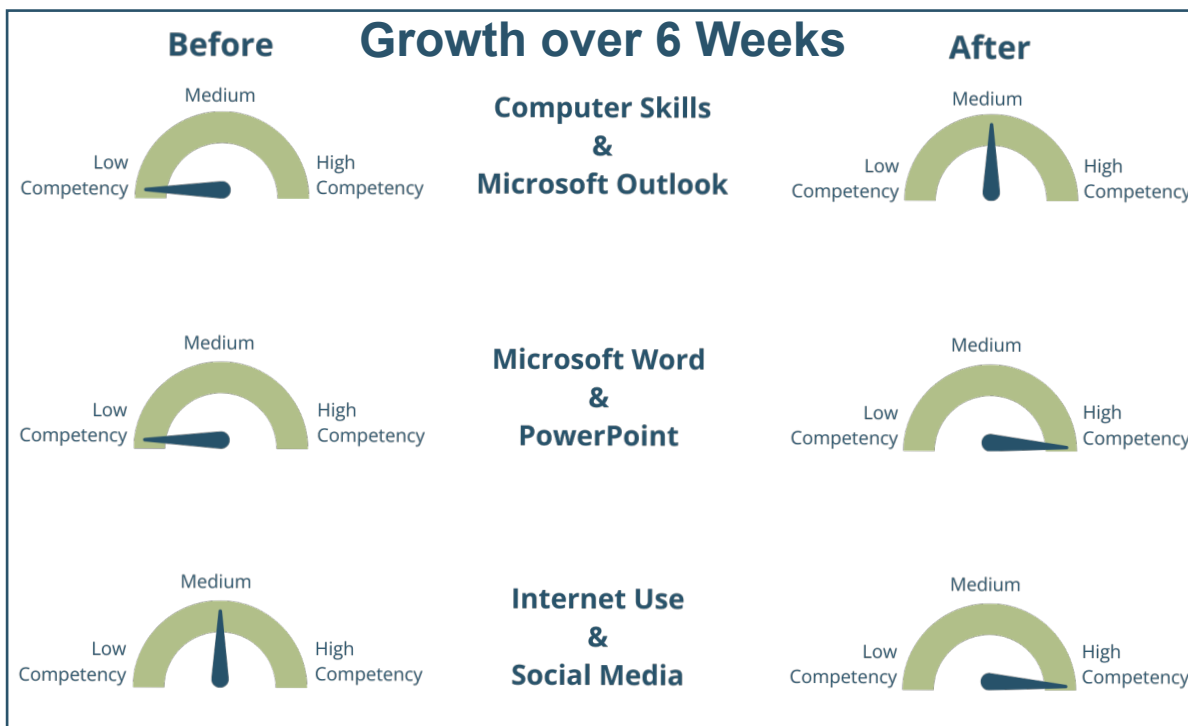
When the library moved across the street, NECC & The ZONE partnered with MultiCare, The City of Spokane, Spokane County, The Washington State Department of Commerce, and Ballmer Group to convert the building into the new clinic.

Samantha Clark has been awarded a 2023 YWCA Women of Achievement for Community Enhancement for her leadership in making this happen.



Essential Skills Moves to Gonzaga Family Haven

This summer, The ZONE & Gonzaga University taught the largest Essential Skills cohort to date—18 women—who learned computer skills, mindfulness, how to write a resume and interview, and a lot more. This 6-week class was held at Catholic Charities’ Gonzaga Family Haven, meeting many of the women where they live. Childcare was provided so that moms could focus on their learning during class time. Just a few months after the program’s ending, 16 of the participants were employed or in school.



In partnership with:
Gonzaga University,
Catholic Charities,
WorkSource, Greater
Spokane Inc., YWCA

Expanded Learning

School-based Youth Programming



1,602

students participated in after school & summer programs at eight local schools.



30,384

hours of after school and summer programming provided.



77%

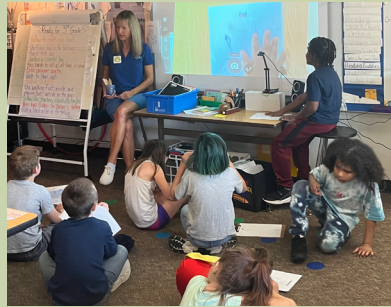
decrease in discipline incidents



>50%

increase in Social Emotional Learning

In partnership with: Spokane Public Schools, Communities in Schools of Spokane County, Ballmer Group, OSPI, and Urbanova



Spotlight: Shaw Middle School

“Shaw’s partnership with The ZONE has been invaluable! From providing school-day snacks for our students, to hosting multiple family events, to assisting our families in finding housing, our Shaw family has benefited greatly from all the services The ZONE provides.”—Patti Weishaar, School Community Specialist, Shaw Middle School

- 100 students received new backpacks
- 130 families regularly receive food through Bite 2 Go & Food 4 Thought programs
- 50 families received Thanksgiving food boxes
- 100 families receive basic needs like food, hygiene items, and clothes
- Light a Lamp sponsorship for mental health packs for students
- 2 Hoopfest teams were sponsored and received new gear
- Over 200 Marshallese community members attended a family night to explain Power-School and create community
- Established a Student Advisory Group
- Established a Parent Teacher Group
- So much more!



Community-Based Youth Programming



2,284

youth participated in programming in Northeast neighborhoods spaces.



46,808

hours of after school and summer programming provided.



18

partner organizations provided programming with ZONE funding.

In partnership with: Spokane Public Schools, Ballmer Group, OSPI, Urbanova, North East Youth & Family Services, If You Could Save Just One, KSPS PBS, Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho, Skyhawks Rise, Northeast Youth Center, Slingshot, Manzanita House, Refugee and Immigrant Connections Spokane, SWAG, River City Youth Ops, Boys & Girls Club of Spokane, Spokane Boxing, College Success Foundation, B & B Pro Video, NEST Coalition, Hillyard Farmer's Market

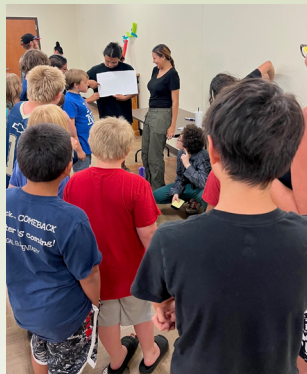
Spotlight: College Success Foundation

"Through The ZONE's generous support, we have been able to help students all across North-east Spokane explore their college and career goals. This fall, funds allowed us to provide a charter bus for 45 students and chaperones to visit the Historically Black College & University Expo being held in Seattle. For most students this was their first experience connecting personally with HBCU representatives, and allowed students to ask personalized questions. Thank you ZONE!"
—Shannon Demant, Executive Director



Spotlight: If You Could Save Just One

"The trust The ZONE bestowed upon If You Could Save Just One, beginning with one parent's dedication and perseverance, reflects the impactful partnership that has followed with the collective commitment of community members and parent volunteers. The ZONE's devotion to our shared vision is a driving force behind our work of creating equal opportunities for disadvantaged families, and ultimately a ripple effect of blessings for us all."—Natalia Gutierrez, Founder



Housing Stability

Housing Diversion Program

Affordable housing for families (3-4 bedrooms) continues to be a top resident priority. Better Health Together, The City of Spokane, and HUD Technical Assistance have provided funding and professional development for our team and community partners throughout 2023. We hired two Housing Stability Family Advocates whose focus is supporting households in leases with school-age children struggling to afford their rent or mortgage. Along with assistance, families engage in a year of case management with goals set through our Financial Opportunity Center, increase household income through employment coaching, and access wrap around supports for all members of their family through our embedded staff in schools and at NECC.



In partnership with: HUD, City of Spokane, Better Health Together

An Actual Client's Progress Over 7 Weeks

<u>November 2023</u>		<u>January 2024</u>
Income: \$4240	→	\$7166
Expenses: \$6022	→	\$5155
Benefits: \$0	→	\$2600
Savings: \$0	→	\$25



Outreach for this program is through our 11 northeast schools with embedded community staff, supported through The ZONE. These school-based, whole family advocates connect with families and staff to understand needs and refer to our programs and supports. As families are enrolled, their children continue to be mentored and supported through these community staff at the school sites, providing wrap around 2Gen supports.

Interactive Dashboard

The ZONE partnered with Urbanova to create a [dashboard](#) that reflects holistic indicators of health in our neighborhoods, as well as changing demographics not captured in the census. All middle school catchment areas in Spokane Schools and all neighborhoods in Spokane are included to explore as comparisons. The ZONE serves the boundaries of Yasuhara, Spokane Garry, and Shaw Middle Schools.



Scan or [click here](#) to use the dashboard

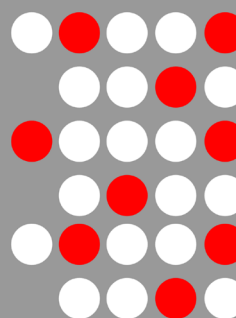


Collective Impact with NEPDA & HUD

In 2023, NECC & The ZONE were excited to partner with the Northeast Public Development Authority (NEPDA) to address the housing crisis in Northeast Spokane, its impact on residents, and on the local economy. We were the recipient of several rounds of HUD Technical Assistance assessing housing stability, supply, and policy, as well as projects like creating neighborhood outreach materials to educate residents about how to utilize new “missing middle” policies to build wealth and community stability. We are also working on a housing investment platform to encourage small-scale residential development, and support networks of community-minded developers in adding meaningfully to the housing supply in an equitable way. We are focused on empowering residents and driving community level prosperity. We are grateful to HUD for their support, and the community for their engagement in these projects and look forward to sharing continued progress.

Continuing the Work

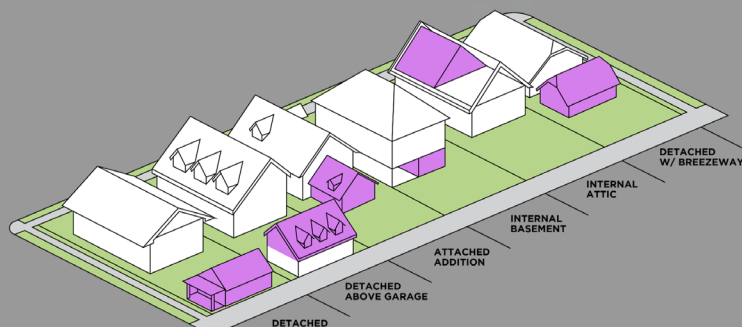
In addition to establishing a housing stability program based on the needs in our neighborhoods we have carried resident voice to local, state, and federal civic and philanthropic partners. Often regional leaders are surprised to hear about our community’s Hidden Homeless—**families**—those doubled and tripled up behind a single door. In October, the City of Spokane made permanent code changes to allow adding housing density in our neighborhoods. The testimony we gave supports the need for more family sized housing to be added in our community. 52% of ZONE survey respondents with school-aged children indicated they have lived doubled up. ADUs (pictured) are one strategy for providing more housing without displacing families from schools and community.



1/3rd of the kids in our community are unstably housed.

9 out of 27 kids in this classroom.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Examples



Credit: City of Spokane

ZONE Director Jene Ray gave a [TEDx Spokane](#) talk connecting stable housing and student outcomes. 2022 state academic data reports only 15% students living doubled up are meeting grade level standards. This is the same rate as students in shelters and living on the street. Stable housing is foundational for academic success. This lack of family sized affordable housing options is a systems issue, which we would appreciate your support in amplifying to the broader community by sharing this TEDx Talk.



Scan or [click here](#) to watch Jene Ray's TEDx Spokane Talk

Community Engagement

Free Book Fair



In January, we hosted a Free Book Fair where we gave away 10,000 books in just 7 hours. In addition, we gave away food, clothing, and hygiene items.

In partnership with: Page 42 Bookstore

Out & About

Throughout the year, staff and partners spent time providing resources at community events, such as Hillyard Festival, OnTrack Academy, Yasuhara Middle School, and more.



Food Security

September 6 at
NECC

464

families served

14,644

meals provided



November 13 at
Shaw Middle &
November 29 at
Garry Middle

216

food boxes
distributed to local
families

Community Garden
at Rypien Field

39

families using

56

garden beds

**Twice per
week**

bread & baked
goods given to local
seniors and
immigrants

In partnership with: Second Harvest, Beef Counts, Four Roots Farm, and Hillyard Senior Center

Family Nights

We began hosting monthly Family Nights in October, after the Farmer's Market ended. Every month has a different activity, October was a movie, November was Turkey BINGO where five winners received a box with all the fixins' for Thanksgiving, and December was crafts and a toy giveaway for parents to shop for their children. Attendance has been great with 70-135 at each event. We also serve a free dinner, and usually have canned food or clothes to give away in addition.



In partnership with: NEST Coalition, Shaw Middle School, URM

Holiday Toys

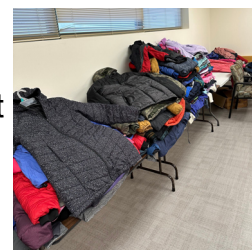
Thanks to the generous donations from businesses and individuals across the area, we were able to give holiday gifts to hundreds of children at several events throughout December.



In partnership with: URM, Rock Star Wheelers, and Horizon Credit Union

Coats 4 Kids

Families received 1,024 coats and other winter items at our annual Coats 4 Kids distribution.



In partnership with: 4 News Now

Hillyard Farmer's Market

The Hillyard Farmer's Market perfectly encapsulates the way that NECC and The ZONE work with partners to bring resources and opportunities to residents. By hosting the weekly market June–October, we bring fresh food and local art to residents who come to the center everyday. The residents can then use their EBT, WIC, Senior Checks, and other benefits right here in their community.

Before the market began, we partnered with NewTech Prep's Graphic Design classes for a new logo. We had over 20 entries, and the winner's design was featured on our promotional items, including shopping bags. All four finalists were excited to have designs to put in their portfolios as they move into professional settings.

At five markets this year, we invited community partners to table around different themes, allowing residents to receive information about legal and employment services, school supplies, hygiene items, summer programming for children, and more. These community resource fairs were not only fun and interactive, but they also provided free dinners to families, a Kids' ZONE, as well as increased foot traffic for the vendors.



21

micro businesses
supported



\$8,354

spent with
Senior Checks



\$2,421

spent with EBT



\$500

spent with with new
Afghan refugee program



Community Resource Fairs



1,800

free meals provided at five
Community Resource Fair
Markets



500

backpacks with school
supplies given to local kids



52

community partners offering
free resources

In partnership with: NewTech Prep, Amerigroup, and NEST Coalition

Community Involvement

2024 Resident Steering Committee Priorities:

- Affordable Housing for families of all sizes (increasing availability of 3 & 4 bedroom units)
- Increasing opportunities for safe & engaging activities for youth
- Increasing job training



Steering Committee Members in Community

The City of Spokane and Gonzaga University are hosting ongoing Neighborhood Leadership Academies at the Northeast Community Center. Residents, including Steering Committee members, are building connections and tools to navigate carrying the voice and needs of our neighborhoods to local decision-making bodies such as our City Council and School Board.

Steering Committee members are also given scholarships to enroll in certificate-bearing leadership courses at Gonzaga University, such as Design Thinking, Servant Leadership, and Women's Leadership, to further their advocacy goals for their families and the communities they represent.

Our Youth Steering Committee Representative continues to convene groups of youth in our community to understand how we can break down barriers and walk beside them as they lean into their futures. She has been sponsored to attend Youth Leadership Spokane, and be a Page in the House of Representatives at our state capital, and will continue to bring this understanding of policy and funding processes in our state to her peers in Northeast Spokane.

Want to follow along? Our Resident Steering Committee is doing a book study, *Fragile Neighborhoods* by Seth D Kaplan, studying other place-based work across the nation to guide resident strategy in The ZONE.

ZONE Resident Steering Committee:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Melissa Bedford | • Charles Hanson | • Joe Potter |
| • Shanda Blunt | • Lorraine Holokai | • Debra Raub |
| • Allonda Brown | • Peggy Huan-McEwen | • Lisa Rice |
| • Gydance Brown | • Marcia Johnson | • Marsha Valenzuela |
| • Pat Castaneda | • Amber Lenhart | • Lori Veitenheimer |
| • Pat Donahue | • Stacy Lenz | • Lisa White |
| • Tienaya Godes | • Onnika Merkle | • Shante Williams |
| • Natalia Gutierrez | • Terrance Nixon | • Bailley Wootton |



Check out our 2023 [video](#),
Being a ZONE Kid



You Belong Here





2024 Board of Directors

Alvaro Figueroa
President

Eric Owens
Vice President

Betty J. Craipo
Secretary & Past President

Sean Bresnahan
Board Member

Eric Christiansen
Board Member

Dr. Brian Davenport
Board Member

Mackenzie DeGon
Board Member

John Dickson
Board Member

Jarren Long
Board Member

Holly Renga
Board Member

Matt Sonderen
Board Member

Serving the neighborhoods of:

- Bemiss
- Chief Garry
- Hillyard
- Logan
- Minnehaha
- Nevada Heights
- Shiloh Hills
- Whitman

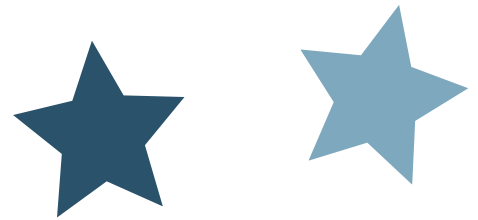
Directors & Staff



Jene Ray
ZONE Director
NECC Associate Director
JRay@NECommunityCenter.com



Dave Richardson
NECC Executive Director
DRicharson@NECommunityCenter.com



Northeast Community Center Staff

Front Row: Rosel Amor, Amanda Randall

Middle Row: Ashley Painter, Nahid Sadat, Lavonnie McManus, Jene Ray, Barbara Gongyin, Nic Bowcut

Back Row: Rosa Lopez, Tyana Kelley, Dave Richardson, Greg Forsythe

Ways to Get Involved

Volunteer & Support at Family Nights

Every third Friday of the month during the school year, we have Family Night at NECC. Activities vary, including movies, crafts, and games. Dinner is always served (we love food sponsorships), and is free to attend. Volunteers help with a variety of tasks, like setup, serving food, and cleanup.

Volunteer & Support at The Farmer's Market

Join the fun during our seasonal Farmer's Markets every Monday, June 24–October 28. We need weekly help with our programs & logistics. Family-focused resource fairs take place once each month, we welcome sponsorships and volunteer support with setup, take down, and day-of logistics.

For either opportunity, contact Tyana Kelley at TKelley@NECommunityCenter.com or 509.487.1603 x222

Engage in an Action Area

The following programs can always use community time, talent, and treasure. You could teach a class, volunteer for the day, or join a committee. We are always looking for community partners who want to help.

- Youth Expanded Learning Programs
- Adult Employment
- Youth Employment
- Affordable Housing
- Resident Engagement/Voice
- Youth Wellness
- Leadership Skill Building

For more information, please contact Jene Ray at JRay@NECommunityCenter.com or 509.487.1603 x224

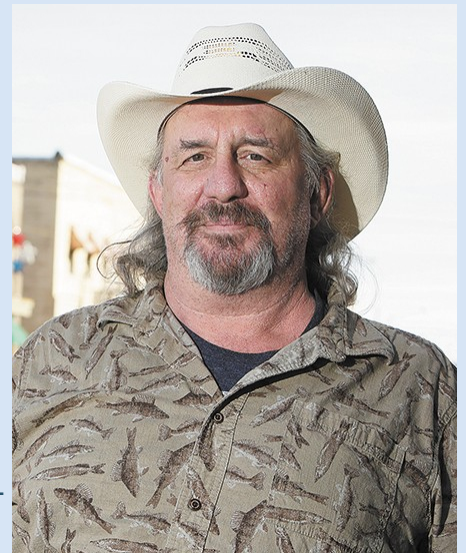


In Memoriam

Paul Hamilton passed away on August 7, 2023. He was a remarkable individual, who dedicated an incredible 28 years of his life to the Northeast Community Center. His unwavering commitment, boundless passion, and profound love for our community have left an indelible mark that will be felt for generations to come.

Paul was more than a board member; he was a guiding light, a pillar of strength, and a true embodiment of our nonprofit's values of improving the quality of life for the residents of northeast Spokane neighborhoods. His dedication to serving and nurturing our community was unparalleled, and his impact can be seen in every corner of our organization. Through his tireless efforts, he consistently demonstrated his genuine care and compassion for those around him. Paul worked relentlessly to uplift and empower the lives of those he served. His advocacy and commitment were the driving force behind positive change, and he inspired us all with his steadfast determination to create a better future for everyone.

His legacy is one of selflessness, perseverance, and a deep-rooted love for the betterment of our community. His leadership, innovative ideas, and unwavering support have been instrumental in shaping the path of our organization and empowering us to achieve our mission. More than anyone, he truly believed that *you belong here*.



Partner Agencies at NECC

Akin
Community Court
Hillyard Senior Center
Make It Spokane/NE PDA
Manzanita House
MultiCare Behavioral Health
Northeast Child Development Center (Head Start & Early Head Start)
NorthEast Support Team (NEST)
SNAP
SPD Community Outreach
Unify Community Health
WIC

Visit our website
for a full list of
113 partners



NORTHEAST COMMUNITY CENTER NE



Contact Us

Websites

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thezonespokane.org

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Hours

M–F, 8:00am–5:00pm

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