

On September 6, I spent two hours at the House of Charity (HOC) alongside the Mithun team as they led a Focus Group with five HOC residents and five Catholic Charities Haven's residents. We gave an overview of the U District Conceptual Plan that is underway, we discussed their concerns, their needs, how they currently use services in the district, and what they would like to see happen in the future. Not surprisingly, many of their concerns, are our concerns.



All of the residents are extremely concerned about the increased use of and access to drugs on the streets and expressed grief in losing many friends and neighbors to drugs these past few years.

All are concerned about the increase in garbage, drug paraphernalia, and human excrement on our sidewalks, and they feel increasingly unsafe walking around downtown. Many said they have seen an increase in anger in the homeless population over the past few years and that in many ways, the homeless should be held more accountable than they are today. They also stated that Spokane is an incredibly generous community and that no one should go hungry here.

While I am no expert on homelessness, I do know it's a crisis that's not possible to solve with a few easy, quick solutions. As a mid-sized city, Spokane has an extremely high level of poverty, domestic violence, and child abuse. All of this lends itself to a repeating cycle of generational trauma. The lack of affordable housing and the impact of cheap and dangerous drugs such as fentanyl only multiplies the pain families, neighbors, and businesses are experiencing.

For me, connecting with these folks, understanding our shared concerns, and seeing their faces light up when we talked about community gardens and increased green space, was an eye-opener. It also gave me a deep appreciation for everyone in our community working directly on these issues in a myriad of ways and at multiple levels, and a greater empathy for those both living in the center of it all and those lost on our streets.

To echo what was expressed at the Spokane Business Association's first annual dinner, we all need to come together across all divides and support

one another to address this crisis in a meaningful way. Supporting our local small businesses is paramount, as is supporting the human beings caught up in this tragedy.

Following are the key takeaways from the HOC and Haven's Focus Group:

- No place to feel welcome in public
- No place for the houseless to rest
- Lack of common courtesy in public
- Desire for more services related to drug addiction
- Improved access to services such as DSHS and Social Security offices
- Infrastructure such as benches, lighting, and trashcans is welcome
- Desire for more security in the University District
- Desire for more food sovereignty for residents of Havens and House of Charities to grow food; welcome the possibility of community gardens and opportunity to sell produce
- South UD needs more cover, shelter, trees, and shade protection
- More water features integrated into spaces that do not get overcrowded; include a spray element so people can cool down in the heat

Juliet Sinisterra, CEO



District Conceptual Plan HOC and Havens Focus Group participants and Mithun team.

Board Focus



Lindsey Myhre is the Executive Vice President and CFO for STCU. Lindsey started her STCU career as an account assistant 23 years ago and now leads STCU's financial management and budgeting, accounting, human resources, organizational development, and strategic planning.

In 2023, Lindsey was named one of the 15 most influential women in credit unions by American Banker magazine. She holds a BS-Business Administration-Finance, from Western Washington University and an MBA from Western Governors University.

Lindsey has served on the University District board since 2020 and was chair from 2021-2022 and treasurer for three years. She also serves on the board of directors for Partners INW, a local non-profit that serves low-income families by providing food, clothing, and emergency services. Lindsey is president of the East Valley High School Booster Club spearheading initiatives to enhance and support student activities and programs. Lindsey and her husband Aaron have two daughters and enjoy being outdoors in all seasons.

Noteworthy Community Events





Developing a Marketing Strategy

September 18

JumpStart presents Josh King. Attendees will gain insights into building an effective marketing strategy.



Mixed Media Art Journaling

September 28

Spokane Art School presents a class with artist Dina Natale. Learn how to create a unique and fun art journal using different mediums.



STA Connect 2035 Community Survey

September 30 Deadline

Help shape STA's 10-Year strategic plan. Your input will help STA decide which projects to prioritize and how to best invest in the community's growth.



The Exotic West: Time Travelers Umeyamas's Accidental Occidental Discoveries

September 20 – November 9

Gonzaga University Art Department and Urban Arts Center present this solo exhibition featuring artworks by Hiromi Stringer, a US based Japanese artist practicing in San Antonio, Texas. She is currently a Senior Lecturer of Interdisciplinary Drawing and Painting at the University of Texas at San Antonio.





SEPTEMBER 22, 2024 | SPOKANE, WA

The Boulevard Race

September 22

Help fight cancer by running and walking in downtown Spokane and the UD.



Hello for Good: Fall Symposium

September 24

Welcomes Annise Parker, former Mayor of Houston, to discuss her initiatives around reducing homelessness.



2024 State of the County Address

September 26

Greater Spokane Inc. and Canopy Credit Union present. What top issues will shape our community in the coming year? What innovations are underway to connect our community and stay competitive?



Spokane Candidates Climate Change Forum

October 2

What do local candidates for office think about climate change? How will it affect your vote in November?

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© 2024 University District
120 N Pine St, Ste 252
Spokane, WA 99202
info@spokaneudistrict.org
www.spokaneudistrict.org

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