

# groundviews



REACHING SOLID GROUND

## On an upward continuum

See story, pp. 2 & 3

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

### Brilliance... Kindness... & Persistence...

Solid Ground clients and staff greatly appreciate **King County Metro** for their efforts to ease confusion and congestion during the recent SR 99 Alaskan Way Viaduct closure! ... Our **AmeriCorps Members** are totally juiced to thank **Odwalla** for donating energy bars and drinks to fuel their annual service project at **Marra Farm**. ... Our **housing programs' residents** are grateful for **The Sharehouse**, which provides furniture and basic household goods to turn housing units into homes! ... Thanks to the **Win/Win Network** for providing technology that makes **Statewide Poverty Action Network's** voter outreach efforts more effective. ... Thanks to **Adobe** and **Rudy's Barbershops** for teaming up to raise money by making people look good. ... And **Cooking Matters** is *full* (of thanks) for **Chef's Night Out** sponsors **Charlie's Produce**, **Whole Foods Market**, **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, **Foster Pepper PLLC**, **Kashi** and **UPS**, participating restaurants **Assaggio Ristorante**, **Blackfish Wild Salmon Grill & Bar**, **The Calcutta Grill**, **Library Bistro & Bookstore Bar**, **Pearl Bar & Dining**, **Pomegranate**

**Bistro**, **Purple Café & Wine Bar**, **Red House Beer/Wine Shoppe & Tapas Bar**, **Salish Lodge & Spa**, **Sip Wine Bar & Restaurant**, **Spazzo Italian Grill & Wine Bar** and **Thoa's Restaurant & Lounge** – as well as in-kind donors **Fitz Design**, **The Golf Club at Newcastle**, **McCallum Print Group**, **Jen Minnich Photography**, **The Pike**, **Proline/Avidex**, **Tutta Bella** and **Wine World**. ... Now that's brilliant! ●

#### PROGRAM NEWS

### From the Ground Up

**Homeless Prevention Programs** helped 1,920 households address their housing and financial fitness needs during the first six months of 2011!

#### Hunger Action Center Expansions:

- **Cooking Matters** completed its first series of classes on the Olympic Peninsula this summer. Presented to the Quinault Indian Nation in Taholah, WA, the class reached toddlers through elders and covered cooking, healthy eating and tips for shopping on a budget.
- **Food Resources** has provided coordination, technical assistance and support to Seattle's food banks for many years, and their work is now expanding to city-based meal programs as well.
- **Lettuce Link** completed a pilot Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project, selling shares of produce from Marra Farm to raise critically-needed funding. The program is evaluating possible expansion of the CSA project for 2012!

#### Statewide Poverty Action Network: Special Session Updates.

Keep up-to-date on opportunities to help protect TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and Disability Lifeline benefits for people living in poverty via Poverty Action's website: [www.povertyaction.org](http://www.povertyaction.org). ●

## REACHING SOLID GROUND

# On an upward continuum

A year of AmeriCorps service can be challenging for anyone. Members of Solid Ground's Washington Reading Corps, for instance, tutor children who read below grade level five days a week – and take intensive leadership development, social justice and anti-racism trainings – all while living on a subsistence stipend. For Penni Carter (not her real name), add to that the struggle of landing on her 27-year-old feet,

fresh from escaping domestic violence. “I was with her dad,” she says, pointing to her two-year-old cutie pie in a pink tutu. “And it was not a healthy relationship. I just got to the point where [I felt], ‘I can’t do this anymore and I don’t want my daughter to end up getting hurt.’ So, I packed up a suitcase and a stroller, and I literally just walked away from my life.”

### Accessing support while giving back

Solid Ground provides a range of services that meet people at various stops along their life journeys. When Penni was preparing to exit her domestic violence shelter, she connected with a Solid Ground JourneyHome Case Manager who helped her apply for permanent housing in our new Brettler Family Place program. In addition to housing, Brettler provides support services and case management for formerly homeless families. People accepted to live there must have stable jobs or be moving in a positive direction in their work lives.

Penni moved into Brettler last spring. Soon after, she learned of Washington Reading Corps (WRC) through a coworker and became a volunteer in its

summer program, Cities of Service. From there she applied for and was accepted to serve a year with WRC. Thus, she became both a program participant and an AmeriCorps Member with Solid Ground.

### Opportunities for self-awareness & growth

Like all Solid Ground employees, Penni and her fellow WRC Members were sent to Undoing Institutional Racism (UIR) training, an intensive experience that unpacks the impacts of racism in America.

“I went to the UIR training and that was life changing,” Penni says.

“Being white, you have to look at yourself. It is not them that is the problem, it is me, too. And I have mixed kids, so it really hits home. A lot of these things that people of color are expressing, my kids are going to go through, too. I’m a white woman, so it is hard to find that balance: How do I support them and not let them think

that being white is bad or being black is bad?”

And Penni says the UIR training helped her learn how to talk to other white neighbors about racial

By serving with the Washington Reading Corps while living at Brettler Family Place, Penni Carter simultaneously accesses Solid Ground services while giving back through one of our programs.

*“Last year during my internship, I learned so much. I definitely want to do my second year in WRC, then I want to go back to school. I want to either be a teacher or work with DV abusers or inmates.”*



## Puppy Power 4-H: A Paws-itive Reading Program



A companionable collaboration is growing at Brettler Family Place. Once a month since July, Puppy Power – a local 4-H club – has engaged school-aged kids living at Brettler in an hour of reading with 4-H youth and their special dogs. The dogs are either working assistance animals or

puppies in training to become service dogs through Canine Companions for Independence (CCI). Brettler kids have a warm, fuzzy experience, while their “volunteering” helps socialize the pups!

Leslie Anderson of 4-H says, “It’s been a truly wonderful experience for all involved. I know our 4-H kids have really found coming to Brettler with their pups inspirational. They feel as if they are making a difference in other kids’ lives.” Leslie adds, “Part of what makes this a great relationship is

### For more information:

- Puppy Power 4H: [www.puppypower4h.org](http://www.puppypower4h.org)
- Canine Companions for Independence (CCI): [www.caninecompanions.org](http://www.caninecompanions.org)
- To volunteer with Solid Ground, contact Indiigo Klyne at 206.694.6825 or [volunteers@solid-ground.org](mailto:volunteers@solid-ground.org).

that it is a win-win-win situation. The pups-in-training gain socialization skills, the 4-H kids learn about community service and helping others, whilst the Brettler kids improve their reading skills and get to enjoy the company of the dogs. It’s fun to watch all of the reading, petting and cuddling going on, but I especially like seeing the kids holding the books so the pups can see the pictures!”

Many thanks to Puppy Power 4-H and CCI for this unique and fun experience! ●

A letter from 6-year-old Harlen, just learning to write, to service dog Reading Raider:

*“Reding Radr this is your pal Harlen. Come see me soon. I miss you. Have a good morn. I am reding a lot of books and luring a lot of things. Your nice Raidr. Woff woff.”*

Love Harlen



*Continued from p.2*

dynamics and make better connections with neighbors of color.

“Talk about being an ally; Brettler is the best place to do it,” Penni says. “It is good to talk to my neighbors about white privilege, and let them know there are people out there that know it is real. It *is* going on and it *is not* OK – and you are not crazy for thinking it. It is nice to know that I can be an ally to so many people in my community that live just where I live.”

### Building bridges at Brettler

Over the summer, Brettler Family Place turned from a *location* where 51 formerly homeless families live to a true *community*. Penni says, “This summer was incredible. A lot of families had just moved in, so they were just trying to get on their feet.” One night, “Everybody was outside and I just said, ‘I really want to play kickball.’ We ended up having a big kickball game. I think the youngest kid playing was three, all the way up to the parents and everybody in between. People were sitting on the sides even if they didn’t want to play. We had wheelbarrow races and jump rope and handstand contests – just fun stuff. And all the moms got together

and everybody watched everybody else’s kids.”

From this stable sense of community, Penni has started to rebuild her life and imagine her new future. “Last year during my internship, I learned so much,” she says. “I definitely want to do my second year in WRC, then I want to go back to school. I want to either be a teacher or work with DV [domestic violence] abusers or inmates, and help them go through treatment, and realize, ‘Just because you did these things, you are not a bad person – but what do we need to do to help you not fall back into that pattern?’ ”

Raised by a single mom in Section 8 housing, Penni’s experience could have been one of succumbing to generational patterns. But a continuum of Solid Ground programs supported her in finding stable housing, establishing a goal plan, and getting employment training, community service and leadership development that will help her family thrive. ●

For more information, please visit:

- Brettler Family Place: [www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Housing/SandPoint](http://www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Housing/SandPoint)
- Washington Reading Corps: [www.solid-ground.org/AmeriCorps/Washington](http://www.solid-ground.org/AmeriCorps/Washington)

COMMUNITY NEWS

## Cool / Not Cool

### Cool: Payday lending protections working.

A recent study by the state's Department of Financial Institutions shows consumer protections passed in 2009 (through coalition efforts led by our Statewide Poverty Action Network) have curbed predatory payday lending. Payday lending locations in the state decreased by one-third in 2010, and the total number of loans taken out dropped from 3 million in 2009 to 1 million in 2010. In one year, the law saved Washingtonians \$122 million in loan fees!

### Not Cool: Housing Discrimination in Seattle.

The Seattle Office of Civil Rights' recent fair housing tests uncovered evidence of widespread race-based discrimination. In fact, 69% of rentals tested favored white renters over African Americans. According to the Seattle Times, "Testers found managers quoted a higher rent to African Americans, didn't tell [them] about move-in specials, and used different screening criteria ... including doing credit or criminal background checks." In addition, 36% of tests showed discrimination against people living with disabilities, "including instances of not accommodating service animals, not telling testers about available units, or not providing parking designated for people with disabilities." ●



Statewide Poverty Action Network's *Vote for a Change* volunteer phone banking is supported by technical assistance from the Win/Win Network.

TAKE ACTION

## Some Ways to Get Involved!

- **Our Adopt-a-Family program** provides gift cards to families who participate in Solid Ground's programs. This year, Adopt-a-Family will help over 700 parents and children make the most of the holidays. By contributing to Adopt-a-Family, you and your friends can lift the spirits of families and make the holidays special for those who need it most. To donate to Adopt-a-Family, visit <http://support.solid-ground.org/aaf>.
- **For Volunteer Opportunities at Solid Ground**, please contact Indiigo Klyne at 206.694.6825 or [volunteers@solid-ground.org](mailto:volunteers@solid-ground.org).



Building community to end poverty

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A Community Action Agency... Helping people, changing lives.

**groundviews** is Solid Ground's newsletter, published six times a year to highlight our efforts to create a just & caring community, free from poverty, prejudice & neglect.

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