

*This past fall quarter I took Introduction to Journalism with Professor Gustafson, where we worked with local newspapers. I wrote an article for the Bothell-Kenmore Reporter that got published on their website. This spring quarter I have been working with Professor Gustafson again as part of my undergraduate directed-study to write more articles for publication. Being a resident of Edmonds, I reached out to the publisher/editor at My Edmonds News in hopes of writing articles for them. Since then, they have been sending me news releases and article pitches for me to report on. It has been a great practice for improving my journalism reporting and writing skills.*

– Hannah Horiatis

## Jayapal visits Edmonds to discuss health care, gun reform and more with 7th District constituents

March 30, 2018



Rep. Jayapal intently listens to constituents' questions during the Town Hall at the Edmonds Senior Center.

U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal returned to Edmonds on Thursday, March 29, to host a town hall meeting at the Edmonds Senior Center for her 7<sup>th</sup> District constituents.

“The Edmonds Senior Center is such an important place. It’s such an important community, location and center, and I’m so blessed to have this in my district,” she began.

For the first half hour, Jayapal talked about a few topics for which she is fighting and she believes the 7<sup>th</sup> District cares about before answering constituents’ questions.

“The first thing is for you to know how grateful I am to you for electing me and giving me this honor and privilege of representing you in D.C.,” she said. “It

really means so much to me. And it means so much to me because this is such a consequential time in our country's history."

Jayapal came as an immigrant to America alone with nothing in her pockets at age 16. Today, she is in the U.S. Congress as the first Indian-America woman ever elected to the House of Representatives and the first person of color ever in the Democratic delegation for our state.

Jayapal shared that the 7<sup>th</sup> District is the most engaged congressional district in the country. This means that her D.C. office gets the most mail, email and phone calls of any district in the country, adding up to almost 300,000 in the 15 months since Jayapal has been elected. Jayapal said she also likes hearing from her constituents in person. This is her 15th town hall, one for every month she has been in office, and her second in Edmonds since being elected.

After introducing her team members who were present, she reminded the crowd about her case work.

"You can always contact us if you have any issues with a federal agency," she said. "This is what we do, and we're really, really good at it."

Her team has closed over 500 constituent cases so far, and has been able to get \$581,259 back for 7<sup>th</sup> District constituents. This statement received a round of applause.

"As a minority party, as Democrats (this statement was interrupted by a cry of 'Not for long!' from the crowd) we do have to be an opposition party," she began. "But we also have to be a proposition party. We have to propose the vision of what we stand for."

Jayapal said she wants to bring hope to people who have felt traumatized around the country since the presidential election and let them know people are fighting.

The first issue she talked about was expanding Medicare for all. With hopes of Democrats taking back control of Congress in November, she is starting a Healthcare for All caucus, which would move health care to a single payer system. The Affordable Care Act has influenced the majority of Americans to believe health care is a human right, she said, but there are still issues related to people getting quality affordable health care. Jayapal said she believes the best way to achieve this is to have a government-funded system that takes the profits out of the health care system.

"No one should be one health care crisis away from bankruptcy," she said. "That's just not right."

Second, she talked about expanding and protecting Social Security. Jayapal said she views Social Security as a collective program where everyone's dollars are going toward taking care of each other.

“It is not an entitlement program, it is an earned benefit program,” she said.

Third, she wants to tackle student debt. She has introduced a bill called College for All, which Sen. Bernie Sanders also introduced in the Senate. They want to push college as an affordable option for anyone.

“Nobody should worry about being \$40,000 in debt if they go and get a higher education,” she began. “A tiny tax on Wall Street could pay for all of our kids to be able to go to college without debt.”

Additionally, she said she’s been working diligently on immigration issues, something with which she’s very familiar. She also worked on a bill related to reforming the U.S. detention system and stopping the use of private detention facilities.

The last topic she wanted to briefly share was democracy reform.

“I do not take any corporate PAC money. I do not believe people should take corporate PAC money,” she said. “We need to end Citizens United.”

The crowd responded with a round of applause. Jayapal said she wants a public financing system for elections and has created a set of five bills all around election reform.

“We do have to fight against a lot of things that are happening right now in our country that we are pushing back on,” she continued. “We have a president who likes to be the star of his own reality TV show and likes to govern in chaos. Likes to operate in chaos — I can’t call it governing . . . My biggest concern is we don’t get numb to what’s happening, that we don’t allow the unacceptable to become acceptable” she said.

Jayapal talked about her meeting with students affected by the Parkland school shooting and encouraged her constituents to recognize the fight young people are making. She said she was in Washington, D.C. for the rally, where more than half a million people came to march. The Parkland students came to see her the day before the rally to talk about gun reform. All were high school freshmen.

“They are doing this because they know what is right and it is our job to follow and to support and to make sure that we ban assault rifles,” she said. “They are an inspiration, and so we have tremendous hope in front of us.”

The remainder of the meeting covered topics such as tax reform and the Omnibus budget before Jayapal answered constituents’ questions. Attendees expressed concerns about pharmaceutical drug prices, access to health care, immigration, subsidies on meat, gun violence and the housing crisis.

A 12-year-old student activist for gun reform and school walkouts asked what the biggest issue is for young people. Jayapal returned the question to him to answer, and he responded that it was gun violence.

“I think it is violence in all forms.” Jayapal added. “Gun violence is a big piece of that but I also think it is violence of the soul.”

— *Story and photo by Hannah Horiatis*

*Hannah Horiatis is a media and communications student at University of Washington-Bothell. She lives in Edmonds.*

<http://myedmondsnews.com/2018/03/jayapal-visits-edmonds-to-discuss-health-care-gun-reform-and-more-with-7th-district-constituents/>

# Hairstylist gives back by baking birthday cakes for 14 fire stations

April 8, 2018



Tanya Rae Piper

Tanya Rae Piper loves her job as a hairstylist, but her real passion is baking cakes for the local firefighters.

When Piper was 10 years old, she decided she wanted to bake a pie. Her mom told her making pie crust was difficult and showed her how. One day after school, Piper made a pie for her dad. It turned out better than her mom's — and her mom hasn't baked since.

Piper has lived in the Edmonds area for 52 years. She first started baking birthday cakes for the 21 women who work with her at Salon Zuberenz in Lynnwood. She said they always told her to stop baking because they were worried about the extra calories.

Then, almost seven years ago, Evergreen Church in Bothell held a special service for the 10th anniversary of 9/11 to honor first responders. They had a list of the local police and fire departments, to encourage people to sign up to bring cookies and invite the first responders to this special event.

Piper chose Lynnwood Fire Station 15. It was the station that came to her home when her dad had a heart attack. Her dad was a police officer, so she understands the stressful situations first responders experience regular basis. Baking cakes for them is something really simple she can do for them, she said.

“A little voice in my head said bake birthday cakes for them,” Piper said.

She started baking cakes for the firefighters that September, almost seven years ago. She stayed anonymous for the first few months because she said it wasn’t about meeting the firefighters — it was about giving back to the community and doing something.

“Birthdays to me, everybody needs to be celebrated at least one day a year,” Piper said.

In October, Fire District 1 and the Lynnwood Fire Department merged and became the South Snohomish Fire and Rescue Regional Fire Authority. Piper recalled March 3 being the first day that a lot of the people from Lynnwood got moved to other stations.

Before the merger happened, one of the Lynnwood firefighters was getting his hair cut by Piper and said, “If we get transferred out of (fire station) 15, we aren’t going to get cake anymore.”

Piper responded, “Just because you’re not at (station) 15, doesn’t mean you’re not going to get cake. You can’t get rid of me that easily.”



A color-coded schedule keeps Tanya Rae Piper on track with her baking.

Piper said she was up for the challenge. Since March, Piper has been baking birthday cakes for all 14 South Snohomish Fire stations. That is 265 cakes a year — excluding the cakes for her salon and other family events.

Going from 68 cakes for the Lynnwood station’s firefighters, administration and EMTs to 265 came with a jump in budget. She had a plan to try to do fundraising on Facebook, but the firefighters union got together and voted unanimously to fund the whole thing, allocating \$2,000 for the cakes.

Piper said the firefighters' favorite cakes are chocolate peanut butter, coffee cake and lemon cake. When she first started baking for them, she said, it was boring. All they wanted was chocolate cake.

"Really there is no limit to what they can have," she said.

Now she makes all different kinds of chocolate cake as well as varieties of cheesecake, carrot cake and cookies. Baking is therapeutic to her.

"As long as I'm baking, I don't care," she said. "Baking is kind of like how I wind down. I love being in the kitchen. It's never stressful to me, ever."

She has 21 cakes this month just for the fire department and 27 next month. To track all the birthdays, she keeps a color-coordinated calendar and a list of all the workers and their shifts.

Last Friday she had four deliveries to do, at all different stations, before she went to work at 9 a.m.

She visited the other 12 fire stations, and she could tell the different atmosphere in the stations compared to Lynnwood.

Piper said one of the firefighters from a different area told her that cake was last thing they needed.

Her response? "That man just needs more love. He's bitter because of what they have to see all the time. I'm going to kill him with kindness, and he's gonna love me and he's gonna love cake."

Though she loves baking, Piper said she would not consider opening a bakery because it wouldn't be as fun if she had to do it for work. Piper usually makes sheet cakes or bundt cakes because they're easiest. She doesn't do fancy, she said, and the firefighters don't care.

Piper has no plan to stop. Initially, she was going to bake for all 14 South Snohomish Fire stations for one year, then do two stations at a time after that. However, if the funding continues, she would enjoy continuing to bake for all.

"This doesn't freak me out. This really makes me happy. I get excited when I have to deliver three cakes in a day," she said.

Two years ago, Piper started cooking Thanksgiving dinner at the Lynnwood station so the firefighters could have dinner with their families.

"That is something I will always do now. That was the most rewarding thing ever," she said.



If the firefighters work on Thanksgiving, they won't get a dinner and they don't get to be with their families. Piper does a lot of the preparation at home, but at 11 a.m. she goes to the station to use their well-equipped kitchen to do everything else.

"It's really hard to have a bad attitude or be ugly and hateful and there's enough of that in this world right now, especially in this nation," she said. "If you're doing a kindness for someone else, it's really hard to have bitterness and anger, towards anything."

*–Story and photos by Hannah Horiatis*

<https://myedmondsnews.com/2018/04/hairstylist-gives-back-by-baking-birthday-cakes-for-14-fire-stations/>

# Scriber Lake students build tiny house for homeless

April 14, 2018



Scriber Lake High School students build the tiny house foundation.  
(Photo by Andrea Hillman)

Students at Edmonds-based Scriber Lake High School got a real-world lesson in why math matters during a week-long project building a tiny house for a homeless women's encampment

According to Scriber Lake Principal Andrea Hillman, the school has wanted to do a building project for a long time. Everything came together thanks to Bob Perkins, who sits on the board of Seattle-based nonprofit Sawhorse Revolution and is also married to a Scriber Lake counselor.

Sawhorse Revolution teaches high school students building skills, and received a King County grant to build 10 houses this year. Perkins said that Sawhorse will build four or five houses on its own and is partnering with other organizations — including Scriber — to produce the rest.

Scriber Lake High School has one-week mini-courses, such as this, taught between the first and second quarter and between the third and fourth quarter. They are all day, every day for those five days only.

“We do super-hands-on, engaging, high-interest courses that offer credit,” Hillman said.

Two math teachers work on the houses with the students, who receive general elective credit. Additionally, if the students need to complete some math credit, they also have a real-life math lesson daily after lunch to connect the math with their project, she explained.

“This has been a really, really great crew,” said Bob Perkins of Sawhorse Revolution. “These kids are kinda amazing. They’ve really been focused and they’ve been working hard.”

The students have been learning many different skills. Each one received a tape measure to take home, in the hope they will build something. Perkins said two students were talking about building their own tiny house this summer. The students have been learning how to deal with fractions and also use several power tools such as the chop saw, circular saw and power nailers.

The crew started with the foundation, building the frame and adding insulation. One of the pieces of feedback from individuals who live in the tiny houses, which have no power or water, is that the floors get cold. The students are trying to solve this issue by insulating the floors and the walls as much as possible. The basic design of the house came from the Low Income Housing Institute, which coordinates many of the tiny house villages in the Seattle area.

“Whoever gets this is going to have a really nice little home,” Perkins said.

Scriber Lake students participated in a number of mini-courses during the past week. Another group of students visited college campuses and worked on the FAFSA financial aid form, college essays and scholarships. In addition, a group called Making it in the Music Industry lets students explore music-related careers and jobs. Other students are spending the week at the YMCA learning water survival and taking other classes.

“That’s what we try to do with all of our mini courses,” Hillman said. “Make what you’re learning really relevant, so kids can really see why we study what we study.”

— *By Hannah Horiatis*

<http://myedmondsnews.com/2018/04/scriber-lake-students-build-tiny-house-for-homeless/>

## Talk with teens about depression and suicide, mental health experts advise

April 18, 2018



Verdant Health Commission Superintendent Robin Fenn speaks to the audience Tuesday night.

In Washington state, suicide is the second leading cause of death among teens. A group of more than 100 parents, teens and other interested community members gathered at the Edmonds Library Tuesday night to learn about this serious topic and find out what kinds of resources are available for mental health support during the Teen Depression and Suicide Forum, part of the Sno-Isle Libraries Issues That Matter series.

Verdant Health Commission Superintendent Robin Fenn moderated the discussion, which included four panelists who work with local youth. Fenn, who is a licensed mental health clinician and has over 20 years of experience counseling young adults, asked audience members to raise their hands if they were concerned about a child in their life. A majority of those in the audience raised their hands.

Fenn shared results from Edmonds School District students who responded to the state's 2016 Healthy Youth Survey, which showed that young people are dealing with depression and suicide. According to the data, of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed at district high schools, between 11-20 percent said they have no adults to talk with when they are sad and hopeless. A total of 31-39 percent reported that they are depressed, between 63-72 percent said they feel anxious most of the time and approximately 21 percent said they made a plan for suicide in the past year.

When Fenn was 16, her sister attempted suicide and survived. There was a sense of shame surrounding her family, and everybody at school treated her differently. There is still a stigma around depression and suicide today, she added.

Fenn said that a goal of Tuesday's meeting is to practice having the hard conversations, which will help break down the stigma.

Bullying can add a lot of stress to teens. According to the same Health Youth Survey, one in four to one in five of Edmonds School District 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders get bullied every day at school. Teens just need someone to listen.

Noting that she already observed some tears and sniffles in the audience, Fenn offered this key takeaway: "Have the hard conversations, when they are the hardest to have."



JoAnna Rockwood, Edmonds School District psychologist, talks about the district's suicide prevention program.

The first panelist to speak was JoAnna Rockwood, school psychologist and behavioral specialist from the Edmonds School District. She described a suicide prevention program, Signs of Suicide, now operating in all middle schools and high schools. It educates teachers, parents and students on warning signs and what to do to help a friend.

"It's not your job to try to solve this problem," Rockwood said. "It is your job to care enough to come tell somebody who can then help them."

Screenings take place in the secondary schools for every student. She said this helps catch quiet students who have already made a suicide plan and students with performance anxiety. In addition, Rockwood said the district is also working to implement social-emotional learning and problem-solving curriculum in K-12 schools.

She said there is now a district-wide procedure in which every school employee is trained in depression and suicide, rather than just training for one or two adults on

campus. The district is also encouraging students to make a student planning tool that would include ways to calm down, what to do in crisis and things to live for. There are now student support advocates, family resource advocates and mental health counselors in the school. In addition, state law requires that these staff members have three-hour suicide prevention training.

Rockwood said she believes that the issues of depression and suicide should be taught in school just like curriculum related to alcohol, drugs and sex.



"The biggest thing we can do is care and show we care," said Shira Hasson-Schiff of Cocoon House.

The next panelist was Shira Hasson-Schiff, Director of Prevention Services for Cocoon House, which is a Snohomish County non-profit that fights to end the cycle of homelessness. She reminded the audience to breathe when feelings arise and invited everyone in the room to take a breath. Hasson-Schiff works with a lot of youth who have mental health needs, and she focuses on prevention.

"The biggest thing we can do is care and show we care," Hasson-Schiff said. "Fortunately, that's something all of us can do."

She said 30-35 percent of the youth they serve are LGBTQ youth. These teens have an increase in risk of depression and suicide. She said a big reason for this is related to bullying or rejection from their family. Hasson-Schiff also said four out of five youth give warning signs before attempting suicide. She noted that it's important to know what normal is to determine if your child is acting differently and to look for the warning signs. She said it is also important not to wait for warning signs to arise before having a conversation about depression or suicide.





Dipti Chrastka describes Teen Link, a free and anonymous chat service run by teens, for teens.

Next, Dipti Chrastka, Clinical Director of Crisis Clinic, spoke. She said their mission is to be there and empower struggling people by connecting them to resources in the community. One program they have is Teen Link, which was founded in 1996. It is a free and anonymous service run by teens, for teens. Every day, teens can call in and talk to a trained teen for emotional support. Chrastka said they visit schools in King County to talk about depression and suicide warning signs. Afterward, students can volunteer to go through the 50-hour training to become a part of Teen Link.

“Every week, we lose two teens to suicide in the state of Washington,” Chrastka said, and that reinforces the need to talk about the issue.



Carolina Mooney, a former Scriber Lake High School student, discusses her experiences writing about her depression as part of the school's writing program.

The last speaker was Carolina Mooney, a Scriber Lake High School graduate. She spoke with first-hand experience with depression and suicidal thoughts. In 2012,

she became involved with the Scriber Writing Program, where young adults write and share stories about mental health issues.

She read to the audience her story, “Bastard Child,” which was included in the Scriber students’ book *We Are Absolutely Not Okay*. She said she wrote the story to let others know they are not alone and to help her deal with her past. The Scriber Writing Program has had six books published, and she said they are now working on their seventh.



Panelists and moderator take a selfie to share.

The panel then moved to a question-and-answer session with the audience. Concerned parents as well as education and resource workers asked questions about how to fix bullying and anxiety, specific warning signs and more.

A worker from Volunteers of America Western Washington noted the group offers care crisis services, which has 24/7 phone line, with a link available on their website.

One parent who has children in private school asked about the resources that private school have. Rockwood said the state’s required suicide prevention training is just for public schools so it is important to do research when choosing private schools to ensure they have mental health resources.

Before closing the forum, the panel gave their final remarks. The conclusion: Everyone has the power to help someone with mental health issues or suicidal thoughts. The first step, though, is having the conversation.

— *Story and photos by Hannah Horiatis*

<http://mltnews.com/talk-with-teens-about-depression-and-suicide-mental-health-experts-advise/>