

THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



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APRIL POOLS



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Two little girls enjoy a free day in the pool during the 18th Annual April Pools Day, Saturday April 16, at Medgar Evers Pool. The free event focused on preparing families and children for the summer by teaching water safety tips like how to properly fit a life jacket.

Mortgage Relief Scams

AG warns homeowners about joining for-profit lawsuits

SEATTLE—If you're faced with foreclosure and thinking of paying to be part of a class-action lawsuit, please think again. According to the Washington Attorney General's Office, nobody should have to pay to join a legitimate class-action lawsuit.

The lawyers and marketers pushing these suits charge upfront fees and frequently promise results. In reality, litigation is time-consuming and even a qualified attorney can't guarantee the outcome of a case. Moreover, representatives of a legitimate class-action suit would not ask for money to join.

Homeowners should be especially skeptical of offers from out-of-state firms. They may not be familiar with state law or even licensed to provide legal services in Washington.

The Federal Trade Commission has banned mortgage relief companies from collecting fees until homeowners have received an acceptable written offer from a lender or servicer. Attorneys are not covered by the rule, but they are required to place any fees they collect in a client trust account and abide by state laws and regulations covering such accounts.

The attorney general's office also warns that it is seeing companies pushing forensic mortgage loan audits and services with titles like, "pre-litigation monetary claims program." So-called loan auditors, often backed by attorneys, offer to review your loan documents to determine whether your lender complied with state and federal laws. They claim they can use the audit report to avoid foreclosure, accelerate the loan modification process or reduce your loan principal.

Beware! The Federal Trade Commission warns that there is no evidence that forensic loan audits will help a homeowner obtain a loan modification or other foreclosure relief. That's true even if the audit is conducted by a licensed, legitimate and

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DEA Holds Drug Take-Back Day

April 30 event will dispose of expired, unwanted medicines

Don't let your expired prescriptions and unwanted drugs fall into the wrong hands or end up polluting our water. Instead you can drop off unwanted medicines—including pain relievers and other controlled substances, no questions asked, on Saturday, April 30 from 10 am to 2 pm. Find out which drugstores and other organizations area accepting drugs online at www.takebackyourmeds.org

Every year Washington state spends \$31.7 million to hospitalize and treat children for unintentional poisonings from medicines. That includes millions to cover emergency room costs for kids who accidentally ingested medications and on expenses for children who have overdosed. Additionally, there are environmental risks that occur when people flush medicines down drains or toilets, or put them in the trash. Drugs that not disposed of properly create environmental contaminants that threaten water quality, aquatic species, and the soil.

National Drug Take Back Day highlights the critical need for ongoing and sustainable safe drug disposal programs. Sponsored by the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration with local law enforcement agencies, the one-day event provides communities with free, anonymous medicine returns for unused medications, including dangerous controlled substances. Take-back programs also help protect the environment, while they safeguard public health.

In Washington state, poisonings are the leading cause of accidental deaths, surpassing car crashes and falls, according to a 2010 study from the Washington State Department of Health. While single-day events like the DEA's National Drug Take Back Day help reduce these risks, the Take Back Your Meds coalition is pushing for a year-round solution—statewide medicine take-back program financed by pharmaceutical manufacturers,

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New School Health Center to Open

International Community Health Services will operate new facility

SEATTLE – The City of Seattle announced today that International Community Health Services has been selected to be the lead agency in developing and operating the City's newest school-based health center at the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center, a school for 6th to 12th grade immigrant and refugee students.

Funding for the clinic was recommended

by Mayor Mike McGinn using money from the City's Families and Education Levy approved by voters in 2004. In December 2010, the City Council voted unanimously to allocate funds to operate the health center through the duration of the current Levy. Last month, the City Council unanimously approved an ordinance to ask voters to renew and enhance the Levy as recommended by a 24-member citizen advisory

committee. A renewal of the Levy will provide ongoing support to the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center's school-based health center.

"We know that refugee students, immigrant students and English language learners are struggling to achieve academic

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