

THE SKANNER™

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



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PLUNGE!



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Friends Ellen Diaz, Dennice Jordan and Mary Margaret Kopcho emerge from Lake Washington on New Years Day after immersing themselves during the 10th Annual Polar Bear Plunge at Matthew's Bear. Each participant received the 2012 Official Patch of Courage for braving the frigid waters.

State Redistricting Fight

New minority-majority district passes in King County

As of Jan. 1, Washington State has gained its first majority-minority congressional district and Latino majority legislative district.

Activists are cheering a new voting map that could result in new voting – and law-making – power for communities of color.

United for Fair Representation, a coalition established to educate and encourage communities of color to be involved in the redistricting process, turned out 600 Unity Map supporters to almost all 18 redistricting forums around the state.

“Thanks to the commission for taking into account the changing demographics of the state, and for offering people of color in Washington the opportunity for meaningful participation in the democratic process,” said Celestino Gallegos, board member at Latino Community Fund.

The new 9th congressional district is just over one half minorities, at 50.3 percent, including Southeast Seattle, Bellevue, North Tacoma and South King County.

The final redistricting plan also establishes four majority-minority legislative districts: the 15th in Yakima county and 11th, 33rd and 37th in south King county.

Supporters say Washington’s gain of a new 10th congressional district can be attributed to the growth of minorities, now one fourth of the statewide population.

The Washington Redistricting Commission heard a tidal wave of testimony from communities of color throughout the state about the need for the new district lines to reflect the growth of communities of color over the last decade.

The 15th legislative district will serve an unprecedented 54.6 percent Latino majority population.

“Let the record show that in 2011 we stood up – Black, Brown, Asian Pacific Islander, Native Americans, more – and said in one unified voice that we will be represented, our voices will be heard, we will never again be taken for granted and we

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Children’s Health Program Wins

Supporters hope state lawmakers won’t make cutbacks in services

Apple Health for Kids, Washington’s health coverage program for children, has won \$16.9 million from the federal government – money earned for the state’s efforts to connect more children to health care.

The program’s elated supporters say that getting and keeping kids insured means healthier families, and helps our state allocate scarce health dollars wisely.

Washington’s children are more likely to have health cov-

erage than children in 39 other states because of Apple Health for Kids’ affordability and streamlined enrollment practices.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded the money, a performance bonus, to Washington and 22 other states with health coverage programs that are doing outstanding work to enroll eligible children.

This is the third year in a row that Apple Health for Kids has earned this federal recognition.

“This is something to celebrate,” said Jon Gould, deputy director of the Children’s Alliance. “In a few short years, advocates for kids and lawmakers have built Apple Health for Kids into a national model for children’s health coverage.”

“This honor is richly deserved – and it’s another reason for legislators to protect Apple Health for Kids when they return to Olympia in January.”

The state Legislature created Apple Health for Kids in 2007 for families with no other

options for affordable coverage. It quickly became vital to ensuring family stability during the recession.

Between 2006 and 2010, nearly 165,000 children lost health coverage via their families’ employers. During that time, Apple Health for Kids enrolled 208,000 more children. The program now covers more than 4 out of every 10 children in the state (733,000 children).

Gould noted that affordable children’s health coverage com-

To Survive, Declining Churches Unite

Tacoma Churches Unite to Survive

By Steve Maynard
The News Tribune

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) – Something was different this Christmas for members of two declining Tacoma congregations that share the same faith and fate.

They knew unless a dramatic change took place, their two churches would run out of money and die. More than 180 combined

years of history and tradition would be lost.

Instead of giving up, the people of Sixth Avenue and St. Paul’s United Methodist churches let go of their buildings and merged into a larger, growing congregation.

This holiday season, there’s a new sense of joy and hope, members say. At services Saturday for Christmas Eve and Sunday for Christmas Day, the two groups from opposite sides of Tacoma will celebrate their first

Christmas together as a merged congregation.

Margaret McGrath, 84, a member of Sixth Avenue Methodist for 50 years, said she is happier, hopeful and more relaxed.

“We’re not worrying about if the bills are going to get paid,” she said. “I think we’re alive and well.”

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