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UNITY NOT VIOLENCE



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Deputy Seattle Police Chief Nick Metz, joined Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn and dozens of other community members at a press conference Monday Feb. 27 at Rainier Vista Boys and Girls Club to discuss how to deal with what the mayor has characterized as a "public-safety emergency." Also present was City Council member Bruce Harrell, Pastor Lawrence Willis, of the United Black Christian Clergy of Washington, and other community members including J'Quai Holiday, an outreach worker at the Metrocenter YMCA in downtown spoke about the need for the entire community to unite to help stop the violence.

Minority Kids with Autism

Experts say kids of color not being diagnosed early

By Lauran Neergaard
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Early diagnosis is considered key for autism, but minority children tend to be diagnosed later than white children. Some new work is beginning to try to uncover why — and to raise awareness of the warning signs so more parents know they can seek help even for a toddler.

"The biggest thing I want parents to know is we can do something about it to help your child," says Dr. Rebecca Landa, autism director at Baltimore's Kennedy Krieger Institute, who is exploring the barriers that different populations face in getting that help.

Her preliminary research suggests even when diagnosed in toddlerhood, minority youngsters have more severe developmental delays than their white counterparts. She says cultural differences in how parents view developmental milestones, and how they interact with doctors, may play a role.

Consider: Tots tend to point before they talk, but pointing is rude in some cultures and may not be missed by a new parent, Landa says. Or maybe mom's worried that her son isn't talking yet but the family matriarch, her grandmother, says don't worry — Cousin Harry spoke late, too, and he's fine. Or maybe the pediatrician dismissed the parents' concern, and they were taught not to question doctors.

It's possible to detect autism as early as 14 months of age, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that youngsters be screened for it starting at 18 months. While there's no cure, behavioral and other therapies are thought to work best when started very young.

Yet on average, U.S. children aren't diagnosed until they're about 4 1/2 years old, according to government statistics.

And troubling studies show that white kids may be diagnosed with autism as much

King County: Jails 100 % Better

Officials say series of problems led to reforms, improvements

Reforms at King County Jail have led to a grade of "100 percent" from U.S. Department of Justice

"Timely, proactive and tireless efforts" noted by federal monitors in declaring successful completion of civil rights review begun in 2009

The King County Jail earned exemplary ratings in meeting all conditions set by the federal government for housing inmates in a safe and secure environment, according to a letter this week from the U.S. Department

of Justice (DOJ) that successfully concludes a three-year review of jail operations.

"These findings from the Justice Department affirm the reforms we've made in two short years, while reminding us that effective reform must be ongoing and consistent over the long haul," said King County Executive Dow Constantine, in thanking the federal monitors for their review. "Our employees work daily in an inherently volatile environment, and daily vigilance is required."

Remark on the "productive and cooperative relationship" with the County, the DOJ this week closed its monitoring of the jail begun in 2009 under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that set practice standards for jail and jail health operations.

"The DOJ letter and the final monitors' report confirm that King County has a jail facility that appropriately balances the safety of our citizens with the rights of inmates," said Claudia Balducci, director of the Coun-

ty's Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, who credited the hard work of jail employees at all levels, from both her department and Public Health.

"The Department of Justice said what we know to be true: the excellence of our jail and jail health staff has been the driving force behind our continual improvement in the jail, and I want to thank them for their outstanding efforts," said Dr. David Fleming, Director and Health Officer for Public Health - Seat-

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Metro Buses Move Mountain of People

Transit ridership in King County roars back as economy strengthens

A growing economy combined with improved transportation services to better meet the needs of riders led to a nearly 3 percent boost in Metro Transit ridership in 2011. In all, about 370,000 people hopped aboard a Metro bus each weekday for a total of nearly 113 million rides.

"A near-record number of people are experiencing first-hand the benefits of taking the bus, and I look forward to even more

commuters getting on board with transit as the economy comes back," said King County Executive Dow Constantine.

2011 was a big year for Metro. Ridership climbed to levels not seen since 2008, when employment was at its peak. Transit ridership even outstripped job growth by more than one percentage point, which suggests that more people are using transit to get to more places.

"With gas prices on the rise and more RapidRide lines coming later this year, we expect to see transit demand strengthen even further in the weeks and months to come," Metro General Manager Kevin Desmond said.

The increase in transit ridership was not just limited to Metro. Transit use was up

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