



## Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## “The Gathering”

### **Rainier Beach celebrates strengths and explores challenges through art and music**

SEATTLE – The public is invited to “The Gathering,” an interactive event to creatively explore the stories of the Rainier Beach community and identify collective and individual steps to address the negative perceptions of the community and reduce youth violence. “The Gathering” will take place on Saturday, May 31 from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. at Southshore K-8 School (4800 S Henderson St.). Community members will experience the stories of more than 120 local residents through art, video and photography exhibits, audio recordings, and live storytelling.

“The Gathering” is a result of a unique partnership between *Breaking the Pane*, a United Story project, and *Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth*. For one week in April, *Breaking the Pane* engaged South Seattle community members through storytelling to explore themes of community identity and perceptions. *Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth* is an innovative, community-led initiative to address youth violence in the Rainier Beach neighborhood through non-arrest approaches.

“The Gathering” will mark the start of a 21-day challenge designed to address themes that emerged through the storytelling process and kicks-off the implementation phase of the *Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth* initiative.

Cambrie Nelson, United Story Coordinator, says “*Breaking the Pane* is an opportunity for Rainier Beach to engage and assert the reality of our community beyond the perceptions some may hold about it. United Story believes that our experiences and stories are the key resource we need to create actions that break the cycle of negative perceptions and unlocks the power of our vibrant community.”

Barb Biondo, project coordinator for the *Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth* initiative commented that *Breaking the Pane* has been an integral part of getting youth perspectives on how to prevent youth violence. “*Breaking the Pane* will foster positive relations between youth and the community, which are critical to creating a safe place where youth can grow and thrive.”

The event will include performances by a premier Seattle DJ, a community hip-hop artist Mike Day, and a special guest appearance. The event will culminate with food and recognition of the community volunteers.

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### **About *Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth***

*Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth* is a community and place-based violence prevention initiative to identify and holistically address the underlying causes of youth victimization and crime in the Rainier Beach neighborhood through non-arrest interventions. Grounded in the research of George Mason University's (GMU) Center for Evidence-Based Crime Prevention Policy, it builds on the vision developed through the Rainier Beach community during the Neighborhood Plan Update (2012) to reduce crime that affects youth by taking a "hotspots" approach. The Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative is the lead agency.

### **About *Seattle Neighborhood Group***

The mission of Seattle Neighborhood Group is to prevent crime and build community through partnerships with residents, businesses, law enforcement and other organizations. SNG seeks to connect people to their communities and provide expertise, communication and information promoting safety.

### **About *United Story***

United Story is an organization that uses a story-telling platform to facilitate creating democracy and creative community organizing. Through collecting narratives surrounding a social concern, inspiring art from these narratives, and gathering the community together to hear, see, and interact with these stories, United Story fosters community-owned action in the form of 21-day challenges. Rather than creating yet another new "project" or colonizing communities, United Story facilitates the organization of stories and the catalyzing story-based solutions.

**Other supporters include:** The City of Seattle, Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, Seattle Police Department, Rainier Beach Moving Forward Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club and the George Mason University Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy.