Featured Work of SE Uplift July 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018

1. Mulugeta Seraw Commemorative Sign Cap Project

SE Uplift supported the Urban League of Portland in commemorating the 30th anniversary of the murder of Mulugeta Seraw, a 28-year old Ethiopian man living in the Kerns Neighborhood of Portland, Oregon who was killed by racist skinheads outside of his apartment on November 13, 1988. SEUL staff attended planning meetings facilitated by Urban League of Portland for months prior to the November 2018 anniversary of Seraw’s death, and helped link local neighbors to these planning efforts.

SE Uplift helped the community remember the event that happened within our coalition area 30 years through an article in our newsletter. “Honoring Mulugeta Seraw: Remember, Learn, Change” which was contributed by guest writer Ewnetu Tsegaw, Policy Specialist, Advocacy and Civic Engagement Program, and lead Seraw commemoration planner with Urban League of Portland.

In addition to the creation of a half-day conference focused on the history of anti-Black violence in Oregon, of which SE Uplift was a sponsor, Urban League and partners decided to pursue a commemorative sign cap installation in the neighborhood where Seraw lived. SE Uplift took responsibility for this portion of the Mulugeta Seraw commemoration events using the expertise of Neighborhood Planning Program Manager Leah Fisher. Leah coordinated the sign cap permitting process, secured a sign fabricator, and coordinated a sign cap unveiling ceremony the morning of November 14. The project involved installing sixteen sign caps that show Seraw’s name, picture, and life dates in both English and Amharic at intersections in the blocks surrounding Seraw’s home. The SE Board of Directors stepped up to pay for the sign caps and installation costs with reserve funds, The sign cap unveiling event, planned and hosted by SE Uplift, included Seraw’s lawyers from the Southern Poverty Law Center Jim McElroy and Elden Rosenthal, Seraw’s Uncle Engadaw Berhanu, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, Urban League CEO Nkenge Harmon Johnson, Seraw’s biographer Elinor Langer, Kerns Neighborhood Association...
Chair Jay Harris, SEUL Executive Director Molly Mayo, and others. The event was attended by local neighbors, members of the Ethiopian community, friends and family of Mulugeta Seraw, staff of partner organizations including PBOT, students from Sunnyside School, and others.

The community gathers the morning of November 14, 2018 for the unveiling of the Mulugeta Seraw sign caps. *Photo credit: Skanner*

Another event marking this 30 year anniversary of the hate crime was Mayor Ted Wheeler’s Proclamation that November 13 be Mulugeta Seraw Day. SE Uplift was asked to provide testimony in support of the Mayor’s proclamation. *This testimony* was given by SE Uplift executive director Molly Mayo, and also published in the SEUL newsletter.

The SE Uplift Board of Directors voted to contribute funds from the organization’s reserve to cover all costs associated with the sign cap fabrication and installation. SEUL staff created this [video](https://www.vimeo.com/434687272) to present to the many board members who were unable to attend the sign cap unveiling.

News coverage about the Mulugeta Seraw sign caps can be found in the following links:


2. Anti-hate Work

SE Uplift staff contributed significant portions of their work hours to the Portland United Against Hate Coalition (PUAH). Muz Afzal of SE Uplift was the first co-chair of PUAH, and he and Mireaya Medina worked extensively as part of the PUAH steering committee, communications team and have leadership roles in many other aspects of keeping the PUAH coalition functioning. Over the past 6 months PUAH has grown and developed internal organization
structures, with SE Uplift staff serving as an integral part of PUAH’s development. SE Uplift staff worked on drafting language for PUAH to use to post public, rapid, responses to hate violence. SE Uplift staff were the main point of contact when working with Visible and Studio Dad on the design and printing of new PUAH brochures. (This project is featured here.)

SE Uplift staff are key players in a new project with PUAH, Crime Prevention, and neighborhood associations to develop a toolkit for neighbors to respond to hate (this project is in process). SE Uplift staff have written original newsletter articles drawing attention to hate violence: “We Belong Together,” “Report a Hate or Bias Incident,” To address a national tragedy we partnered with As the Spirit Moves Us on “Lighting the Way, Healing From Mass Tragedy.”

After an incident where bbs were shot into a family’s living room window two nights in a row in late September, SE Uplift was able to respond almost immediately due to pre-established relationships with neighborhoods, PUAH, Eudaly’s office, Civic Life, and Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT). SE Uplift reached out to the family to be a resource for them in whatever way they wanted to process and respond. It was not clear if the violence was related to hate (the family had an “In Our America” sign, a “We Support a Safe Lincoln Street” sign, and are a multi-ethnic household). Working with PBOT and Civic Life, we published a collaborative statement on community safety in our newsletter. SE Uplift staff worked with the family affected to cooperatively plan an event that would be community-building and informational. Titled the Lincoln Street Winter Gathering, the event was held on December 8th, 2018 and was in partnership with Lincoln Street neighbors, PBOT, and PUAH. This event reveals how a successful infrastructure between local neighbors, district coalitions, and City bureaus can allow for rapid, supportive action in difficult times, and is a great example of City-community partnerships.

3. Housing Crisis

SE Uplift staff engaged in a variety of ways to provide resources to the community related to the housing crisis and the humanitarian crisis of houselessness. An important example was SE Uplift serving on the Foster Shelter Advisory Committee and as a signator to the Good Neighbor Agreement, which was necessary to allow plans for a shelter to serve unhoused neighbors in SE Portland move forward after a controversial start. SE Uplift worked with County Commissioner Vega-Pederson’s office to clarify the best role for SE Uplift to serve in this process, then attended several steering committee meetings prior to signing the Good Neighbor Agreement. The process reflected a significant effort from a diverse group of committed government and community partners. Signers on the agreement included the Joint Office of Homeless Services (Multnomah County and City of Portland), Transition Projects, Portland Police Bureau, SE Uplift, Mt Scott-Arleta Neighborhood Association, Mt Scott Learning Center, 7-11, Assembly Brewing Company, and the Foster Area Business Association. There were many others who were an important part of the steering committee such as nearby neighborhood associations.
When SE Uplift staff became aware that homeless advocacy group Right 2 Dream 2 had coordinated a protest at City Hall when Montavilla houseless neighbors were harassed in front of Rahab’s Sisters nonprofit (serving women) and Multnomah County Needle Exchange, we investigated what was happening. It turns out that a group negatively engaging with houseless individuals and those accessing services at the 82nd Ave location referenced the City of Portland’s Crime Prevention team, and said they were engaged Civic Life sanctioned “foot patrols.” SE Uplift communicated with Right 2 Dream 2, Rahab’s Sisters, Crime Prevention, and Civic Life, and we were able to clarify that Crime Prevention had ended its foot patrol program many years earlier, and that materials being used by the Montavilla group were outdated and no longer reflected current programs of the City of Portland. We coordinated a meeting bringing these parties together to create better understanding and emphasize our shared goals for dignified treatment and equitable resources for unhoused neighbors. Clearing up this information, and having relationships with community groups, neighborhoods, and City bureaus, allowed this troublesome misconception that had been the source of a City Hall protest to be completely remedied. New relationships were built, and starting points for several projects to support houseless neighbors were initiated. This was a great example of the role district coalitions serve as a bridge between local community and city government. Without SE Uplift having eyes and ears on the ground of what was happening in our community, an unfortunate misunderstanding that could have further dissolved trust between the community and government was turned into a positive new partnership.

SE Uplift staff included resources for neighbors who are unhoused in our newsletters, as well as information for housed neighbors to offer support or improve understanding. “It’s Cold Outside” by Muz Afzal was also printed in a local paper, and “Affordable Housing at the State, City, and County Agency Levels” educated readers about many efforts to address the housing crisis.

4. Get Out the Vote

During the week preceding the November 2018 elections, SE Uplift created “Lounge and Learn,” where staff equipped our small conference room with a variety of election materials for voters. These materials included APANO’s voting guides in 7 different languages, computers, access to the internet to check ballot drop-off locations and look up candidate information, snacks and staff support available to the community. The voting information area was open all weekdays from October 29th through November 6th during office hours. We sent special invites out to our nonprofit partners that support adults with intellectual disabilities since this population is often under-represented in voter turnout and can benefit from additional resources and in-person help. The concept of
city-wide voting information stations originated from calls between the Mayor’s office and the
district coalition offices, however when the city-wide effort did not pan out, SEUL staff
proceeded with our own “Lounge and Learn.”

In addition to the voting information area set up at our office, SE Uplift staff worked along side
many community partners to encourage high voter participation prior to and during the
November 2018 elections. SEUL published three original newsletter articles to encourage voting
in our October and November newsletters: “Register to Vote” and “Don’t Let Voting Spook You”
by Gaby Saldana-Lopez, and “What’s Your Voting Style” by Mireaya Medina. Our social media
offered continual reminders and inspiration to get out the vote.

5. Ongoing Programs

Small Grants Program: The Community & Civic Engagement Small Grants (formerly
Neighborhood Small Grants) support projects that empower and involve community members to
shape and create their communities. The goals of the Small Grant Program are to increase the
number and diversity of people who are involved and engaged in the broader community;
strengthen community capacity to create change by building community leadership, identity,
skills, relationships and partnerships; and increase community impact on public decisions and
community life. Eight grantees conducted activities related to their grant projects between July
and December 2018:

•Benson High School Tech Geometry Program, Benson High School Build for
  Portland Mercado Plaza
•Edúcate Ya, AVANZA Latinx Young Adult Leadership Program
•The Foster Powell Community Shelter Engagement Team, The Foster Powell
  Community Shelter Engagement Project
•Impact NW, Parent Leadership Project
•Passion Impact, Spring Volunteer Fair
•Street Books, A Library for Everyone: Celebrating Community Through Books
•Transition Projects, Art with Heart: Art Classes for the Willamette Center
•Voz Workers’ Rights Education Project, Developing High-Level Day Laborer
  Leadership

Fiscal Sponsorship Program: SE Uplift currently provides fiscal sponsorship service to 15
neighborhoods and 3 community groups with approximately 55 distinct projects throughout the
year. With several recent “graduates” from fiscal sponsorship who have become their own
501(c)3 organizations, we are proud to have opened the door for new sponsorees. Projects
range from enormous community picnics for National Night Out to street painting to community
gardens.
Community Clean-up Events: The CCE Program is a partnership between district coalitions, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and Metro. Four SEUL coalition area neighborhoods hosted clean-up during this reporting period. Three of these were in the fall and totaled approximately 290 households being served. 52 neighborhood volunteers from Creston-Kenilworth, Eastmoreland and Montavilla worked hard to coordinate the Community Cleanup events, unload cars, greet neighbors and pick-up litter from streets. Over 15 tons (30,000 lbs.) of garbage and debris were removed from neighborhood streets and households. This year also included Creston-Kenilworth's 3-day neighborhood wide yard sale and recycling event in partnership with Community Warehouse. 17 households held reuse events in their yard with a neighborhood Cleanup as the finale.

![FALL CLEANUP RESULTS](image)

Land Use and Transportation Program: Monthly meetings with educational speakers are planned by SEUL staff to increase the ability of local people to take positive action in their communities related to land use and transportation issues. These monthly events draw approximately 30 people—chairs of neighborhood association land use committees and others wanting to better understand the many development changes happening in our area. Part of the programming during the reporting period included an important pilot project in partnership with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. “The ABCs of Land Use” is a training that offered by
BPS, however in conjunction with SE Uplift, a second part was added: “The Ds and Es: Design and Equity.” The addition of design and equity components were identified as needs by SE Uplift based on requests from neighbors and discussion with other coalitions. This new curriculum was an exciting addition to the training and an excellent example of the supportive partnership between BPS and SE Uplift. “Urban Planning Priorities” is an example of educational material created by SEUL staff published in our newsletter to help demystify land use process.

Neighborhood Association Support: SE Uplift staff support the city-wide Neighborhood Association System through allocating staff time to each of the 20 neighborhood associations in our coalition area. Each neighborhood association has a staff assigned as their liaison who is available to provide a variety of support. SE Uplift earmarks funds from our City grant to reimburse neighborhoods for designated amounts of outreach and communication. A training for new neighborhood association board members was held in November. SEUL supported several associations with fall election processes and facilitated planning retreats for two neighborhood associations. SEUL provides extensive and much-used insurance coverage for all 20 neighborhood associations board of directors and their events. The well-known Peacock Lane holiday lights display and National Night Out parties are examples of how this insurance coverage is put into use.

Community Meeting Space: SE Uplift has community meeting space that is made available to community members at little to no cost and we strive to invite folks of all identities to utilize this resource. We host a wide variety of groups. Users of SE meeting rooms space during this reporting period include Write Around Portland, National Alliance for Mental Illness, Rose City Rollers, Sunnyside Neighborhood Emergency Team, Jewish Voices for Peace, OSU Master Beekeepers, Portland Underground Graduate School, Raphael House, Big Tent Air Coalition, Portland Public Schools, Americorps, Forth, Americans United for Palestinian Peace, Freedom to Thrive (formerly Enlace), and others. Current building residents are Oregon Prison Project, Portland Refugee Support Organization, and Disability Art and Culture Project.

SE Uplift Board of Directors Advocacy: The SE Uplift Board of Directors wrote formal letters of advocacy on a variety of subjects over the first 6 months of this contract cycle. The following can
be read on the Board of Director’s Advocacy page on the SEUL website: Endorsement of CCIM (Central City in Motion) from November 2018, 82nd Ave Inclusion Into the RTP from July 2018, Reedway Overpass from July 2018, and Voz Supporting the Dream from December 2018.

6. Special Events

SEUL 50th Anniversary Celebration: SE Uplift celebrated 50 years since our first incarnation began in 1968. A party was held in August 2018 at SEUL. Staff and volunteers sifted through organizational archives and put together a history exhibit and timeline chronicling key events in SEUL’s past. We planned an awards ceremony to recognize the vast contributions of long-time volunteers, and past chairs of the SE Uplift Board of Directors were honored. The Office of Community and Civic Life, and the offices of Commissioners Eudaly and Fritz were represented. Commissioner Fritz did the honor of cutting our fabulous vegan chocolate cake from Blackstreet Bakery (a non-profit bakery working directly with historically marginalized people), and we made a video registry of those in attendance. Footage of the event can be found in the article “Thank You: Celebrating 50 Years of Community Collaboration” and pictures from decades earlier can be seen on the event invitation.
“We The People Web-series Screening at Clinton Theater: SE Uplift partnered with “We The People” creator and director, Swati Ali, to host the first screening of the web-series at Clinton Street Theater in August. “We The People” is a human and humor focused web series that highlights stories of immigrants to the United States with a focus on the positive, light-hearted and relatable nuances of making a new place their home. The documentary web series explores themes of language, identity, stereotypes, life changes, loss and many others – challenges that are a part of life for any immigrant in a new land. SE Uplift coordinated with the theater to host the screening and invited community members to be the first viewers of the series.

PARK(ing) Day: SE Uplift participated in PBOT’s PARK(ing) Day through partnering with Metro Boutique on Hawthorne to create and facilitate a small park on Hawthorne Blvd. We set up an interactive display and several short surveys to engage pedestrians on one of the busiest strips in the SE Portland area. We asked the question “Do you contribute more than half your income to rent?” The event was a community-building effort to use public space in interactive ways.
Land Use and Transportation Learning & Networking Event at Lagunitas Brewery: On November 27th, 2018, approximately 90 land use and transportation volunteers, advocates, and professionals from seven coalitions gathered to make new connections, share experiences and expertise, and discuss issues important to them and their neighborhoods. The event took place at a local brewery’s community room with pizza, beer, and cider. Five topic-specific discussion tables were hosted by community experts on themes of housing, transportation, advocacy tips, current projects, and design. Representatives from City bureaus and BPS liaisons were in attendance to support the table discussions and meet community members. With the intent of building community capacity for land use and transportation policy and engagement, and appreciating volunteers, this was the first cross-coalition, city-wide land use and transportation event in over 3 years. SEUL’s Neighborhood Planning Program Manager was an integral part of creating and producing this event, taking the lead on event coordination.

7. Other Notable Activities

SEUL staff were engaged in many other activities, some of which are briefly described in this section.


SEUL staff supported cross-issue organizing through attending and participating in events such as the Enlace Gala, Educate Ya Annual Gala, Voz Gala, Muslim Educational Trust Awards
Ceremony, and South Asian Voices for Change and Hate Crimes Presentation with Oregon Department of Justice at United Oregon, Hispanic Heritage Month, Sunshine Division, and Walk with Immigrants and Refugees.

Left: SEUL staff volunteering with Sunshine Division Food Bank

Right: SEUL hosted a potluck lunch with Crime Prevention and Disability Art and Culture Project

Below: SEUL staff in the August Walk With Immigrants and Refugees