



Seattle Department of Neighborhoods  
Bernie Agor Matsuno, Director

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **Celebration held for graduates of People's Academy for Community Engagement** *Deputy Mayor Smith congratulates the 28 graduates of the city's pilot program*

**October 26, 2012** (Seattle, WA) – On Thursday night, 28 up-and-coming community leaders celebrated their graduation from the People's Academy for Community Engagement, a program of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. Known as PACE, the 7-month program provides leadership training in community involvement, empowerment, and civic engagement to emerging leaders interested in serving their community. More than 100 family members, friends, civic leaders, and city staff attended the celebration at Montlake Community Center.

"Since April the participants have been learning about community organizing, outreach techniques, and community building from some of the leading experts in the city," said Deputy Mayor Darryl Smith. "After participating in PACE's intensive program and learning from the best in the field, we know great things will come from these new leaders. I look forward to partnering with them as they work to improve our city's neighborhoods and the community at-large."

In addition to attending classes, the participants had monthly homework assignments and worked as teams on community –based projects which were presented at the celebration. The 2012 class represents all sectors of the city and more than half are from historically underrepresented communities.

The participants also learned techniques on how to involve and include all community members so that cultural and ethnic communities have the opportunity to participate in the civic process. "Engaging all communities is important to the city and the role of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods," said Bernie Matsuno, director of the department. "When these graduates work in the community and apply the skills that they've learned through PACE, I know they'll ensure that **all** voices are heard. I look forward to seeing them in action." At the ceremony the graduates received congratulations from Deputy Mayor Darryl Smith, along with civic leaders Chas Redmond, Citywide Neighborhood Council chair, and Ben Hunter, Community Arts Create executive director. One of the graduates, Bridgett McGinnis from the South Park Neighborhood Association, spoke at the ceremony on how PACE has affected her and its influence on her community work. She stated, "I plan to apply the skills that I learned in PACE to communities around Seattle, encouraging emerging leaders to learn to stay involved. "

Details about the PACE program in 2013 will be available later this year. People interested in learning more can contact Wendy Watson at 206.684.0719.

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## 2012 PACE Graduating Class

<b>PACE Graduate</b>	<b>Organization/Community Group</b>	<b>Area of Interest</b>
Abdullahi Hussein	Techno-Formation Vocational Services	Lake City
Phillip Duggan	North District Council	Pinehurst
Annette Heide-Jessen	Lake City Chamber	Lake City
Janet Arkills	Lake City Neighborhood Alliance	Lake City
Diana Bohn	Work It Out	Central District
Felicia Nitu	Capitol Hill Community Council	Capitol Hill
Mekdes Gessesse	Horn of Africa Services	Rainier Valley
Stephen Hall	Friends of the Conservatory	Capitol Hill
Shurvon Haynes	Goodwill Learning Center	Chinatown International District
Anthony Davis	Bethel Christian Church	Central District
Brett Paulson	Belltown Citizens on Patrol	Belltown
Quynh Pham	Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation Development Authority	Chinatown International District
Riisa Conklin	Freeway Park Neighborhood Association	Downtown
Aaron Hayden	Sustainable Path Foundation	Belltown
Michael Kahrs	Central Ballard Residents Association	Ballard
Lauren Balter	Magnolia/Interbay/Queen Anne Emergency Preparedness Committee	Queen Anne
Daniel Cardozo	Queen Anne Community Council	Queen Anne
Tyson Paxton	Sustainable Magnolia	Magnolia
Nafiso Samatar	Community and Parents for Public Schools	
Dereje Zewdie Negassa	Horn of Africa Services	Rainier Valley
Issa Ulo	Oromo Community Organization of Seattle and King County	Southeast Seattle
Bridgett McGuinnis	South Park Neighborhood Association	South Park
Devor Barton	North Beacon Hill Community Council	Beacon Hill
Analia Bertoni	Community and Parents for Public Schools	
Hiawatha Davis	R.O.Y.A.L. (Raising Our Youth as Leaders)	
Kim Camara	Native Kulturz	
Sonia Palma	Seattle Choral Company Board of Directors	
Amanda Leonard	North Delridge Neighborhood Council	Delridge