



We hope this newsletter finds you doing well and enjoying the start of summer! It has been quite a 2022 for Senior Services for South Sound, and we are delighted to share news of our activities

and events. With an organization as broad and diverse as ours, it's always a serious challenge to convey our scale. Truth is, we are a highly unusual senior-serving nonprofit. I think of us as a bit of a unicorn in how many programs and services we offer. Look around these pages and you may come to share my appreciation for this beautiful mission.

We like to say that we are staff led and volunteer driven, because at any one moment we have about 35 full time equivalent staff members, and around 200 volunteers! We engage volunteers in myriad ways and from all walks of life. Some drive seniors to medical appointments, some explain the intricacies of Medicare, and some work at the coffee bar. If you consider the combination of staff and volunteers, we are a very large organization performing these vital services to seniors all over Thurston and Mason Counties.

What you cannot see in these pages is the blood, sweat and tears that my colleagues put into their work. Whether paid or not, our people put the best of themselves into helping seniors thrive. It is a beautiful thing to behold. And humbling. We feel so fortunate to work with each other, among such great human beings, doing such wonderful work. You'd have to come into the centers and into the offices to pick up on the camaraderie and esprit de corps that typify our days. No matter what we are doing, we do it better because we do it together.

We do it together with you, our community, our donors, our seniors. We are like one big family of people caring for each other and doing what we can to make our little part of the world a better place. Isn't that what the bumper sticker says, to "Think globally and act locally"? Well, here in South Sound we are working together to help all seniors have a higher quality of life, and this newsletter is but a snapshot of all the ways this is happening. Thank you for whatever you do, and keep giving back as it feels so deeply good to help others. After all, helping others is also helping ourselves.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Windrope". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brian Windrope
Executive Director

Bingo is Back!

There are few things more exciting to yell out in a crowded room than “Bingo!” Five letters, one word, and a whole lot of fun.

This year has seen the return of our popular themed bingo nights, with Alice in Bingoland kicking things off in April. Alternating between our Olympia and Lacey locations, our monthly bingo nights help raise funds for Senior Services while also building community.

“Many of the people who come are not folks we see on a regular basis,” says Candy Braillard, Olympia Program Coordinator. “Many of them are not even members; many of them are too young to be members.” One group of women in their thirties, who met as college freshmen, have been coming to bingo for a dozen years. “Every time we have a bingo night,” says Candy, “we’re pulling people in from all walks of life, from Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, or even further away. It builds a community. And it’s really fun!”

Adding to the fun is bingo caller Elizabeth Lord, local theater personality and professional storyteller. Her colorful costumes and exuberant character keep things entertaining even when the bingo balls aren’t falling your way.

This year there will be two bingo nights held in August: Spaghetti Western Bingo at the Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center on August 5; and Let it Be-atles Bingo at the Olympia Senior

Center on August 27. Attendance at this year’s bingo nights has been gradually increasing, as people find themselves coming back after two years away. “It’s the equivalent of going out for dinner the first time back after the pandemic,” says Candy. “People go, ‘Oh, I remember what this is like!’”



Meals That Matter: Making a Difference

Thank you to everyone who supported our Meals That Matter and Other Essential Services fundraiser! This year, we tried something new. Instead of an event, it was a ten-day online campaign. And it was a great success!

Your commitment to sharing our campaign with friends and family helped us surpass our goal of \$50,000 and reach a grand total of \$68,051! Over 300 people supported our campaign, with 95 first-time donors! During the campaign we had a total of 27 individual fundraising pages from staff, volunteers, friends and board members that were shared through social media and email. These pages accounted for nearly a third of our total! You proved that we can accomplish so much more when we all come together.

The \$68,051 raised will help change the lives of so many seniors in our community and make an impact in areas like hunger and food insecurity, housing and caregiving. Of course, the need doesn't simply end there. Senior Services for South Sound relies on over \$1 million in donations and grants each year to fund our programs. As always, we appreciate your continued support and are incredibly grateful to you for helping to further our mission of improving the quality of life for people as they age.



“We rely on over \$1 million in donations and grants each year to fund our programs.”



**We have served
8,265 hot meals
through community dining**



**Through our Meals
on Wheels program
we have delivered
27,844 meals in 2022**

Home Share: Helping Seniors with Housing

Two or three times a week, Inge and Patti head to the Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center for lunch. Making plans isn't difficult for the two friends because they live together. Matched as housemates by our Home Share Program, Inge has resided in Patti's home for more than two years.

With home prices skyrocketing and affordable rentals hard to come by, housing is at the forefront of issues impacting Thurston County. For seniors, many of whom are on a fixed income, the housing crisis is especially serious. Our Home Share Program addresses the need by connecting people looking for housing (Seekers) with homeowners or renters (Providers) needing financial or other assistance.

"It's a really good program," says Patti. "It gave me Inge!" Having become good friends, these two seniors are a wonderful Home Share success story. For Patti, sharing her home has eased a financial strain and given her companionship. "I don't have to worry as much about expenses," she says. Inge, 6 years younger than her housemate, concurs. "It has lessened a financial burden," she says. "I have a comfortable place and Patti and I get along

well and I'm close to my son, about two miles from here. So that's all very positive."

Program Manager Rebecca Hutchinson explains that Home Share "is a solution for someone who can't afford to rent or buy a home on their own". Sharing expenses means participants like Inge and Patti can have housing that is more affordable and easier to maintain.

Anyone 18 or older can apply to be a Seeker or Provider, with at least one person from each match required to be a senior. Home Share is not emergency housing but is meant to be a semi-permanent arrangement, with matches staying together for months or, ideally, years. "Making matches takes time," explains Rebecca. "If someone is currently or imminently homeless, we encourage them to come up with an emergency plan." She notes that more people are applying to be Seekers and that there is currently a greater need for more Providers.

Some Providers will lower the rent in exchange for services provided by the Seeker, such as help with household maintenance, meal prep or pet care. "We want them to be pretty specific about what they need and how often," says



\$1521 is the median rental rate in Thurston County



The average Social Security check is \$1,430 per month



Rebecca. "Being really clear helps to eliminate issues in the future."

Before matches are made, reference and background checks are conducted and lengthy interviews are held. "These help me get to know every applicant really well," Rebecca explains. Once matched, Providers and Seekers must spend time getting to know each other. "We met each other three times before we agreed," recalls Patti of her matching process with Inge. Conversation guides are provided to facilitate open communication. Rebecca's rule of thumb for matches is that worldviews don't have to be

completely aligned, but shouldn't be in conflict.

For Patti and Inge, their living arrangement has blossomed into a real friendship. Besides lunch at the senior center, the pair have brunch weekly at Patti's daughter's house and spend time at the park and playing cards with other friends. Perhaps not every match will lead to a friendship like this one, but the Home Share Program is making it possible for people to find affordable housing at a time when that can't be taken for granted.

Interested in applying for or learning more about the Home Share program? Visit our website to fill out a Provider or Seeker application or learn more. Alternatively, you can contact Rebecca Hutchinson, Home Share Program Manager, at 360.586.6181 ext. 111, or via email at rhutchinson@southsoundseniors.org.



**Nearly 1/3
of seniors
live alone**

Transportation Volunteers Needed in Mason County



460 rides provided so far in 2022

Our Transportation Program added Mason County to our volunteer transportation services. This is the first time our volunteers have provided rides

outside of Thurston County in the 17-year history of the program! The key to the success of our program is our volunteers. They have always been heroes to our isolated seniors, even more so during the pandemic. Seniors without access to public transportation, or help from a family member or caregiver, rely on the Transportation Program for getting to medical appointments and other essential errands.

An important piece of expanding this wonderful program into Mason County is bringing Mason County volunteer drivers onto the team. If you know of a Mason County resident who is interested in helping out seniors in their community, please have them contact our volunteer manager, Theresa Ziniewicz, via email theresaz@southsoundseniors.org or call 360.586.6181 ext. 120 to get started.

27,738 miles have been driven by volunteers so far this year

Volunteer Spotlight: Nora Jordin



Nora Jordin has been a volunteer for about five years. She started with our Trips & Tours program, as both a Tour Leader and in the office, and now also volunteers in the

Budd Bay Bargains thrift store. "I've always volunteered," says Nora. "Even when I worked. Before I ever worked, when I was really young." When she retired and asked herself what she wanted to do now, the answer was obvious. "I'll do what I've always done – volunteer!"

Nora's bubbly personality, great organizational skills, and boundless energy have made her one of our most popular Tour Leaders. She plans and organizes day trips and always goes the extra mile for our travelers. Nora leads many of our outdoor/nature tours and often puts together a special picnic lunch which always gets rave reviews.

"One of my favorite things," she says, "is breaking through the stereotypes of seniors. I love when we do one of our trips and come off a long hike and people say to us, 'You did what?'"

Nora has exceptional customer service skills, is creative in solving problems that may occur on a trip, and always has a back up plan. We are so pleased to recognize her as an indispensable member of our volunteer team!

Scenes from Our Centers





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PERMIT #625

222 Columbia St NW
Olympia, WA 98501

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Fall Fundraiser

**October 15, 2022
5:00 pm**

What Can My Donation Do?

\$100

Helps connect 1 senior to
local housing resources.

\$500

Helps 50 rural seniors get
to essential appointments
via Senior Transportation.

\$1,000

Helps provide 1 week of meals
for 30 homebound seniors in
Mason and Thurston Counties.

**Thank you to our
Local Partner:**



**Thank you to our
Business Sponsor:**



222 Columbia St NW, Olympia, WA 98501 • 360.586.6181 • www.southsoundseniors.org

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE AS THEY AGE.