

Island Senior Resources

Island Senior Resources is the trade name of Senior Services of Island County

Helping Others Can... Help Yourself!

Last week I enjoyed a day in my kitchen by preparing a special meal for dear friends to celebrate our years together. Each dish was abundant, richly flavored, and brimming with the love I feel for each of them as I placed the food on the table. There have been times when each of us needed help, and the others were always there to listen, comfort, and guide. We've shared a lifetime of joys, sorrows, successes, and distressing failures. There have been births, deaths, graduations, reunions, and departures; we helped each other through all of it, reaching out when we needed, the others always stepping in to lighten the load. And so, as I lit the candles and began to pass the food, I smiled and said, "Help yourself." To give them this meal was what I wanted, and needed, to do. Their smiles were a gift back to me, fulfilling my joy in giving.

"Help Yourself!" It's what we say as we pass the dishes around the table. We mean, "Have as much as you need; take as much as you would enjoy... it's there for you." Joe Wilner, psychologist and life coach advises, "Want to feel better? Do something kind for someone else." The recipient is deeply rewarded by receiving the gift; the giver is equally rewarded by the act of giving. That, in turn, fulfills the giver. It's life's giving circle. It's our compassionate connection to each other and ourselves.



"Kelly" walked into our offices a few weeks ago. She told us her story. She's a single mom of three young boys. Her father has Alzheimer's and lives with them. She can't leave him alone or he will wander off. Grocery shopping takes much longer with him at her side. He smiles and says, "Thank you" whenever she helps him but he no longer remembers her name. She has cared for him, full-time, for two years. She's missing her boys' baseball games and can't help in their classrooms. She can't chaperone field trips or make cookies for bake sales. There just isn't time. She needs to reclaim her life while being sure her father is well cared for. But how? She came to us to for help.



"Kelly" said she didn't know where to turn, except to us. "I have always been so self-sufficient. I've never asked for help." So, we shared a story with her, too. We told her about a young girl in third grade, who asked her mother for help learning the state capitals. Then, years later, she reached out for help to care for her young children so she could be by her brother's bedside when he needed her. And recently, she leaned on her best friends for guidance when her teenage daughter was testing the rules. We asked, "Put yourself in her shoes, can you remember similar times in your life?" She nodded, "Oh, yes, my older sisters helped

Here When You Need Us

Cheryn Weiser,
Executive Director,
Island Senior Resources



Getting older can take you by surprise. Whether you're dealing with chronic issues that no longer seem to stay in the background like an old foot injury or a back that gets angry with you more often, the reality is we are all getting older. Some of us find our family members facing a major illness when just the week before they were fine, enjoying retirement or working, and spending time with their grandchildren. It's at these times that we, our friends, and family members can turn to Island Senior Resources for help. Let me share a personal story...

I am blessed with a lively, extended family on Whidbey. Some of us are in our 60s, 70s, and 80s, yet none of us have made routine use of Island Senior Resources, until now. Recently, one of us in our 60s was airlifted from WhidbeyHealth to Providence in Everett, in critical condition. Her husband, in his 80s, was by her side almost full-time at

the hospital. He shared with me his deep concern for how they were going to handle things when she arrived home since she has been in charge of a lot in their life together.

I immediately suggested that we meet with Beth Rahi, Family Caregiver Support Specialist at Island Senior Resources (Bayview). The Family Caregiver Support Program provides various options for support for in-home caregivers. Beth suggested Lifeline and similar programs that allow immediate access to medical help if it is needed. It was a relief for him to learn the many support channels available.

We often don't know what is available until we face a new situation that requires us to seek help. Island Senior Resources is here to provide answers whether you are a family caregiver or someone who needs transportation to a medical appointment, nourishing food through Meals on Wheels, lunch and social time at one of seven community meal sites, advice on Medicare and Medicare supplemental insurance, a caring place for a loved one in our Time Together Adult Day Services, or an item from our health care supply lending closet.

I invite you to get to know us. You never know when we may be the resource you need.

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with my homework; I used to ask a neighbor to stay with my boys so I could spend time with my grandmother, and my mother's best friend helped me get my first job."

"This isn't any different," we said. "Donors give money to support us, so we in turn can help you. You receive assistance, which fulfills us and accomplishes our mission; our gratitude to our donors fulfills them. It's OK to need help and to ask for it. It's important to remember that in doing so, we can then give a special gift to those who gave to us."



We introduced "Kelly" to our Time Together Adult Day Services. Her father now attends every day. He is happy, safe, well cared for, and surrounded by new friends. She has time to herself now and can spend precious moments with her boys. By asking us for help, she gave us the gift of helping her, and our donors the gift of knowing they changed lives for the better.

— Robin Bush, Outreach Manager

*** The details of this portrait have been changed to protect privacy; the essentials remain true to community need.*

Reaching for Help

A true story of one of the thousands of seniors we serve

In May, I received an email from a woman desperately seeking help. Due to her learning disability, the email was extremely difficult to read. She said she is isolated, with no phone or vehicle, wheelchair bound, and needs immediate help with caregiving and food. Her roommate had left for a month without providing adequate food or arranging for help. Her email only included a fragment of her name and no home address. She did make a reference to the road she lives on. I immediately responded to her email, offering my assistance:

"I am so glad you were able to contact me. It certainly sounds like you could use some help! I am happy to sign you up for Meals on Wheels and help you arrange for a new caregiver. Since you don't have a phone, I can come by your house to talk. Can you send me your address? If you send me your address today, I could bring you a few meals and we could discuss services for you. Please let me know: your full name, birthdate, and address. I look forward to meeting with you!"

I did not receive a response and began to worry for her safety and well-being. There was not enough information to request a wellness check from law enforcement so I searched the internet hoping to locate her, but had no luck. Without any other options, I filed a report with Adult Protective Services. They were able to use a state database to locate her and her case was assigned to an investigator.

The woman never responded to my email but with her address from Adult Protective Services, I was able to make two attempted home visits. She wouldn't

open the door until my third attempt when I was accompanied by the APS investigator. We discovered she has no use of her left leg and relies on a wheelchair for mobility. She lives outside the paratransit service borders and is very isolated. She has a history of trauma, and a very hard time accepting help. It turns out she did not respond to my emails because, even though she had sent an email asking for help, she felt she wasn't "truly deserving" of it. It took us almost two hours of gentle discussion before she was willing to accept the help we could provide.

"Accepting help is the road toward independence rather than dependence."

— Chasity Smith, Director of Aging & Disability Resources

In the end, she agreed to let me help her apply for Medicaid In-Home Care services on her behalf. I have been working with the Department of Social and Health Services staff and the woman has received her assessment. Due to her history of

trauma, I was present during the assessment so she would feel more comfortable and I could help her advocate for her personal care needs. Within a week, the assessor told her she was eligible for 55 hours of no cost in-home care per month. Her case manager and I worked with her to set a caregiving plan and schedule. Her roommate has also returned and is enrolling in state approved training so he can become a good, effective caregiver.

Her life has changed for the better in so many ways, and she is deeply grateful. She has learned she deserves a good quality of life. She's learned to speak up for her needs and that accepting help is the road toward independence rather than dependence.

— Chasity Smith, Director of Aging & Disability Resources



Transforming Lives

Your Donation is a Vital Part of the Solution

One of the most heartwarming aspects of life is knowing you have helped someone when they needed you. **We need you.** Please help us today. You will be helping us help others each and every day.

For those of you who have been with us throughout many of our 45 years, your unwavering support and generosity is an inspiration. For those of you who are just finding us and choosing to support us, “paying it forward” ensures we are here when you need us.

Your support today will provide critical assistance to thousands of seniors and adults with disabilities, their families, and caregivers throughout Island County. We are grateful to you for understanding our value. Your gift will open opportunities for seniors and adults with disabilities to remain in their homes, have companionship, eat nutritious food, receive necessary services, and be safe. Your gift will transform lives.

The current turbulent political climate threatens our future. We need your donation to meet the challenge of uncertain government funding and assure the continuity of our integrated programs.

What is the easiest way for you to give?

- You can donate online at www.senior-resources.org/donate. There you can also become a “Sustaining Silver Beacon” and join our monthly giving program. \$30/month (just a dollar a day) will provide six home delivered meals to a senior, or 70 miles of medical transportation.
- You can mail your gift today in the attached envelope to:
Island Senior Resources, P.O. Box 939, Freeland, WA 98249
- You can make a donation in person at:
Island Senior Resources, 14594 SR 525, Langley, WA 98260

Please call us if you need more information about our resources and programs, or stop by and visit us. See the difference you make.

In gratitude,



Wendy Gilbert

Board of Directors President



Cheryn Weiser

Executive Director



"I'm Elizabeth, and I thank you!"



"I'm Gary, and I thank you!"



"I'm Pete, and I thank you!"



"We're Nadine and Neil, and we thank you!"

The Ripple Effect

Compounding Interest... in Helping

Robin Bush, Outreach Manager,
Island Senior Resources

On more than one occasion this year, the effectiveness of Island Senior Resources' programs became models for other communities. When other organizations seek improvement of their programs for seniors by learning from us, it compounds the interest our community has in helping us support seniors in Island County. Our community's help is shared forward as it ripples out into the greater "community."

Members of the Anacortes Noon Kiwanis Club came to visit Senior Thrift earlier this year to see first-hand how a large thrift store operates and learn how they can expand their own Anacortes thrift store, "Kiwanis Shop." Cheryn Weiser, ISR's Executive Director, and

"The conversations and the laughter brought me joy. I took with me the lesson of just having conversation and letting the residents lead conversations. I have [since] had many conversations with the residents here in our home and I cannot believe how engaged the residents have become... I thank you so much for the opportunity to watch such a fabulous program."

— Laurie Avalos, Life Enrichment Director,
Garden Square, Greeley, Colorado

Cindi Quigley, Senior Thrift Manager, gave a presentation to them demonstrating how our store works so well, from design efficiencies, to processing donations and utilizing volunteers.

Laurie Avalos, the Activities Director from Garden Square Memory Care Unit came all the way from Greeley, Colorado, to observe our Time Together Adult Day Services. One of their clients had been a long-time participant in our program. Laurie spent a day with our Bayview program and a day with the Oak Harbor group observing the Teepa Snow Positive Approach to Care model we use for meaningful engagement and person-centered care. Laurie returned to Colorado inspired, and filled with new ideas to bring to her staff and residents.

When we share our success in order to help others, and they learn from us, they become part of the ripple effect, expanding waves of improving services for others across the oceans of need that connect us all.



*"When I was younger so much younger than today
I never needed anybody's help in any way
But now these days are gone and
I'm not so self-assured
Now I find I've changed my mind,
I've opened up the doors.
Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being 'round
Help me get my feet back on the ground
Won't you please, please help me?"*

The Beatles. "Help." 1965.

Help is Here for You!

Island Senior Resources

(360) 321-1600 or (360) 678-3373

Programs and Services:

- Meals on Wheels and Community Meals, Ensure Liquid Nutrition Program
- Aging & Disability Resources
- Family Caregiver Support Program
- Medical Transportation and Volunteer Services
- Support Groups
- Time Together Adult Day Services (Bayview & Oak Harbor)
- Case Management for Medicaid In-Home Care
- CamBey HUD Apartments for Seniors and Adults with Disabilities
- SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefit Advisors)
- Tax and Legal Consultations
- Resource Library
- Foot Care Clinic

Community Education:

- Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Classes
- Diabetes Self-Management Classes
- Living Well with Pain Classes
- Lunch & Learn Presentations in Bayview, Coupeville, and Oak Harbor (in association with Oak Harbor Senior Center)
- Medicare Seminars
- Social Security Seminars

Social Opportunities:

- Music, Dance, Theater, Bingo, Dominoes, Bridge, Mahjong, Quilters, Exercise Classes, Walking Groups, Local Travel

Other:

- Senior Thrift Store
- Lending closet for mobility devices

Island Senior Resources media:

www.senior-resources.org

- Descriptions of programs, services, calendars of activities
- Library of articles on health and well-being

Island Times:

- Our monthly newspaper of information, schedules, and events

The Poetry of Time Together

Joni Takanikos, Activity Coordinator,
Time Together Adult Day Services

I am fortunate to be a member of the Time Together Adult Day Services team. Time Together gives respite to family caregivers of those with physical or cognitive challenges. We begin our mornings sharing beverages, toast, and fruit in an atmosphere of easy camaraderie. The smiles and laughter shared around the table are plentiful, as are the wisdom and experience that flow from the rich lives of our participants. Through group discussions of love, work, family, and history, a tapestry of individual stories emerges.

I like to pick a theme for our day together such as friendship, travel, music, etc., and plan our day around it. I look for inspirational quotes, stories, and poems that participants may read aloud to provide a touchstone for our theme. One touchstone I love to use is the exercise of writing a poem together. I provide some structure that we build the poem upon, such as a repeating line, and everyone contributes a word or words at the end. Here is a recent poem by Time Together participants:

Moonlight

Moonlight on the water reminds me of reflection.

The full moon brings us shadows.

Moonlight on the water reminds me of love.

The full moon brings us crying wolves.

Moonlight on the water reminds me of paradise.

The full moon brings us peace on earth.

Moonlight on the water reminds me of Whidbey Island.

The full moon brings us werewolves.

Moonlight on the water reminds me of diamonds

The full moon brings us love.

Moon light on the water, it's calling me.

The full moon brings us two lovers.

Moonlight on the water reminds me of snowy glitter.

The full moon brings us crazy nights.

Moonlight on the water reminds me of love and relaxation.

The full moon brings us illumination.



A Tale of Two Umbrellas



Bruce DeBoskey

The approaching holidays offer an opportunity to reflect on giving and how the act of giving and helping others is a gift to ourselves as well. “The Tale of Two Umbrellas,” written by Bruce DeBoskey, is re-printed in part below. To read the entire story, visit his website: <http://deboskeygroup.com>.

“It had been raining hard for days. Reports of hundred-year floods were coming out of Boulder ... [Colorado]. A colleague and I were walking a few blocks to a nearby restaurant for a breakfast meeting. As we walked, [we came across] a man who appeared to be homeless ... drenched from head to toe. Looking at both of us, he asked, “May I have your umbrella?”

Our reactions were startlingly different. I grabbed the handle of my umbrella more tightly and tried to frame my response. In the very same instant, my colleague handed her umbrella to the stranger — who thanked her politely. We walked on, sharing one umbrella, and entered the restaurant for our meeting.

As we looked out the window, dry and cozy, we saw the man making his way slowly down the street in a wheelchair. My colleague’s umbrella was providing him with shelter from the deluge — at least for the time being.

I was stunned by my colleague’s instinctive generosity — her willingness to expose herself to the elements in order to provide protection for a complete stranger. I thought that I had witnessed true philanthropy, a term that derives from the Greek “philos - anthropos,” or, love of humanity.

At the same time, I was disappointed with my own instinctive response. After all, philanthropy is my profession. I regularly donate money, food and clothing to homeless shelters and food banks but, in that moment — where the stranger asked

for precisely what he needed, and I had the capacity to help — should I have said yes to his direct request?

In sharing this experience, I’ve received a wide range of responses. Some say my colleague’s generosity reflects true philanthropy. Others say that my instinct to keep myself dry and to provide for the disadvantaged in more thoughtful, strategic ways is the better approach and ultimately helps more people.

Upon reflection, I’ve concluded that both approaches are equally correct. One provides a short-term solution to an immediate problem for one person. The other provides broader solutions for a community of people in need. Aspects of each approach may well produce the best outcomes.”

— Bruce DeBoskey

At Island Senior Resources, we do both. We address immediate needs by providing direct assistance through Meals on Wheels, Aging & Disability Resources, Family Caregiver Support, Time Together Adult Day Services, Medical Transportation, and Case Management for Medicaid In-Home Care. We are also actively involved in strategic long-term planning, bringing together funding sources, government agencies, political and church leaders, local and regional service providers, and volunteers from our community.



It takes one other element to build and strengthen our community; at this special time of year, we can ask ourselves: “What can I give and do that will make a difference? How can I be kinder, gentler, and improve the lives of others? How can I help, so others can help those I can’t reach personally?” The future will glow brighter for each of us when we care, act, give, and reach out to help.

May you find many ways to bring joy to the world in the new year!

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Island Senior Resources
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Langley, WA 98260
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Contact Us

Website:

www.senior-resources.org

Facebook:

facebook.com/islandseniors

Email:

reception@islandseniorservices.org

Phone:

(360) 321-1600
or (360) 678-3373

Our Locations

Island Senior Resources (Bayview)

14594 SR 525, Langley, WA 98260
(Just south of Bayview Road)

Senior Thrift

5518 Woodard Rd., Freeland, WA 98249
(Just north of Main Street)

CamBey Apartments

50 N. Main St., Coupeville, WA 98239
(Opposite WhidbeyHealth)

Oak Harbor Senior Center

51 SE Jerome St., Oak Harbor, WA 98277
(Opposite OH Elementary School)
(in collaboration with OH Senior Center)

Camano Center

606 Arrowhead Rd.,
Camano Island, WA 98282
(Near Utsalady Elementary School)
(in collaboration with Camano Center)

12 Days of Whidbey Raffle

A Fundraiser for Island Senior Resources | December 1-12 | Amazing prizes each day!

Each \$5 ticket enters you in all 12 separate raffle drawings. Daily raffle drawings worth \$200+ each.

Each prize has a different theme and contains multiple items:

- Art Escape
- Caffeinated Whidbey
- Beautify for Winter
- Wandering Whidbey
- Chocolate-Covered Island
- Brewing Up a Good Time
- A Night on the Town
- Garden Dreaming
- Sports Whidbey Style
- Tech Support Whidbey Style
- Trips and Tips
- Dogs and Kids

Raffle tickets are available for purchase at **Island Senior Resources (Bayview)** and **Senior Thrift (weekends only)**.

Watch our Facebook page and website for additional ticket sales locations.

**Every ticket supports our programs and helps others in the community.
Buy as many tickets as you can!**