

Island Senior Resources

Serving Seniors, Adults with Disabilities, and those who care for them

Let's put *Neighbor* back in the *Neighborhood*

Nearly 30 years ago, I lived in a neighborhood where the folks from the block sat on my front porch steps every afternoon. Each day, I came home to one lady in her kerchief shelling peas or topping beans, another knitting a scarf for her grandson, three other ladies just there to chat, and two gentlemen balancing a backgammon board on their laps shouting and whooping when the dice rolled in their favor. They'd sat on those steps every afternoon for close to 50 years. They were neighbors; they were friends. In years gone by, whether in small towns or urban neighborhoods across America, sitting on the stoop or chatting with neighbors over the backyard fence was a natural part of everyday life.

Fast forward to 2019. Homes that were once built around a central common space where folks gathered, are lined up side-by-side down long streets. People build tall fences between houses, and value privacy. People who used to spend time outdoors, seeing people and gathering stories that wove their lives together, now work inside and engage with their screens, seldom talking with each other. Many of us are strangers to those who live nearby. You may have a hundred "friends" on Facebook, but what does that mean? Are any of those "friends" neighbors in the full sense of the word? Having online "friends" is an indicator that we still want to share our lives, be known, and know others. Even though we

live complex lives, and cozy porch conversations are a dim memory, what we crave is connection. Being a neighbor may mean my house is near yours and we'll care and watch out for each other within the limits of our mutual privacy boundaries. Our neighbors may also be people we see in town each week, at church, or at the gym. Our neighbor is anyone with whom we are *neighborly*.



You know how "being neighborly" feels. It's being friendly, helpful, and responsible for each other, not just in times of crisis, but every day. It's time spent together in conversation. Neighborliness is the gift you receive by giving and one of the most rewarding gifts you can receive. When we share our lives, we strengthen our bonds of community.

Do you know your neighbors' rhythms enough to recognize when something is out of the ordinary? Or, think about the older gentleman two doors away who is served by Meals on Wheels at lunch. Can you bring him a few cookies next time you make a batch? Little things make everyone feel cared for, and that is the root of neighborliness. Your neighbors are the ones you invite to join you for holidays, to come to a tea party or a 4th of July BBQ, or to build an emergency preparedness team. My grandmother and her

Let's put Neighbor back in the Neighborhood cont'd from page 1

neighbor across town checked in on each other every day. No matter what the weather, they saw each other at least twice a week. Each would do anything to help the other. Grandma called it part of having “good old-fashioned values.” “Being neighborly matters,” she’d say. What was true nearly 100 years ago is still true today. Remember.

For some, this can be a lonely world. There is a slope toward loneliness and isolation in aging, particularly for those who live by themselves. According to Peter Lovenheim, author of the book, *In the Neighborhood*, more than a quarter of all US households now consist of a home of one. That’s almost 30 million people with no one to go home to at night. For seniors, after a life of giving to others, being left out in their later years leads to serious issues for health and emotional wellbeing. Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said in *A Simple Path*, “The biggest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for.” What can *you* do? Keep your eyes out for who needs a bit of neighborliness. Replace the chats over the backyard fence of yester-year with invitations to have someone join you for supper or a walk in the woods. Conversation and connection help people feel included, wanted, and needed. It doesn’t require much money or time to make someone feel appreciated. Their gratitude is a priceless reward.

Neighborliness has no age range; it bridges generations. The single mother with three young kids, a grandmother she drives to the store, and a lawn that needs clearing of all the branches that came down in our winter windstorms needs you to invite her to share a cup of tea, so she has someone to talk with. The elderly man who lives alone, standing at the window, watching children playing in the street, remembering when his own children were small and missing those times long-gone, needs you. He too will treasure a cup of tea and someone to talk with.

When you spend time with someone, you *both* get the gift of time shared. As your friendship grows, you’ll have someone to turn to when suddenly you have a roof leak and can’t climb a ladder to put up a tarp, or someone to feed and walk your dog when you’re away. Your neighbor, in turn, will reach out to you when they need a hand and an arm to lean on. Christina Baldwin, on our Board of Directors, has set a theme for 2019 in our monthly publication, *Island Times*: “Ask for what you need and offer what you can.” It’s the heart of our community.

What will you do today to put *neighbor* back in the *neighborhood*?

— Robin Bush, Outreach Director

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD...



Host weekly “evenings on the front porch” for neighbors to gather.
Have a summer potluck block party.



Have lunch with a friend, regularly.
Start a walking group.



Do group springtime yard cleanup.
Pick up the phone. You can’t hear the tone of someone’s voice in a text or an email. Listen for what they need.



Have a neighborhood garage sale, and invite your “neighbors” in town to participate.



Put together a shopping carpool; why should everyone drive to the grocery alone?



Take time to chat when you see a familiar person at the grocery. Suggest a time to get together.



Give someone a ride to an event at Island Senior Resources and have some fun together.



Create an emergency preparedness phone tree and gather everyone’s phone numbers, resources, and needs.

Reach out and ask for help when you need it; offer it to others when you can.

Island Senior Resources: We're Here for You!



Nutrition
Program



Medical
Transportation



Time Together
Adult Day Services



Senior
Thrift



Aging & Disability
Resources



Family Caregiver
Support



Statewide
Health Insurance
Benefits Advisors



Developmental
Disabilities

Volunteering is Good for Your Health... It's true!

A recent study from UnitedHealthcare, of 2,705 volunteers, age 18 and older showed 75% of them said volunteering made them feel healthier. And, a University of Michigan Health and Retirement study with 64,000 participants 60 and older, found results that suggested *volunteering 100 hours a year improves cognitive scores. It's true.* Why? It's largely due to the sense of well-being and positive feelings that volunteers experience from helping people. Physical, social, and mental stimulation improves cognitive performance. Getting out to volunteer provides a routine and gives you a reason to "get up and go" in the morning when you know your help is an essential part of being neighborly.

Just like those "over-the-backyard-fence" conversations of a bygone era, the volunteering ethic of yesteryear has become less of a focus for many in today's world. What would our community look like if everyone of *all ages*, stepped forward, as part of being neighborly, and dedicated just a few hours each week to making a difference? It begins with each of us, youth, middle-somethings, and seniors, all helping, together. Please give us a call today at (360) 321-1600 or (360) 678-3373. Reach out, have a conversation, lend a hand, and enjoy the glow of knowing you did something today that matters. Our programs depend on volunteers. We need you to stand shoulder to shoulder with us to meet the needs of seniors, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them.

*"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can."*

— John Wesley

Tell us what you'd like to do and when you'd like to do it.
There's a place for everyone with us.

Hey neighbor! Let's help each other! What do you like to do?

Do you like to lend a hand to others?

- Drive to medical appointments (priority ferry boarding and mileage reimbursement).
- Laugh, paint, sing, and share stories with participants in Time Together in Freeland and Oak Harbor.
- Help in the Meals on Wheels kitchens in Bayview, Oak Harbor, or Camano, or deliver meals.

Do you like to work with a team of people?

- Join the crew at Senior Thrift.

Are you an organizer?

- Help with fundraising and outreach events.

Do you like to work "behind the scenes?"

- Help Aging & Disability Resources and Family Caregiver Support programs with administrative projects.

Do you like to help your community prosper?

- Join our board of directors.

Do you want to get out and be active while your loved one is being cared for?

- *Let us know what you like to do.*



You Spoke, We Listened

On the road to our Strategic Plan 2019–2021

In 2018, we gathered the insights, observations, and “lived experiences” from members of our Island communities to serve as the foundation of our strategic planning process. We fanned out across the county to understand the needs of our community and design the best use of our resources in the years ahead. Here is the first part of the story — what we learned. Look for the details of our strategic plan in our fall 2019 newsletter.

— Cheryn Weiser, Executive Director



You are important to us.

Island Senior Resources recognizes that the people of Island County need to be at the center of our services and planning.

You shared valuable stories, comments, and ideas. We are using that information to improve our programs and services to meet the needs of our community.



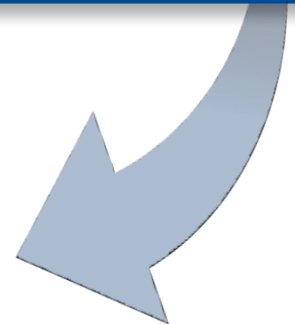
Gained understanding about the needs and ideas of 186 community members & groups.



Received valuable insight from 45 professionals in Health Care and Human Services.



Sought information from 23 elected officials.



What We Learned From You



What you need to live your best life...



“Underlying needs are the same for all people: safety, happiness, making a difference, being valued and affirmed, family, and meaningful community.”

These are things that motivate each of us to move forward each day and enjoy life – in a way that is meaningful.

Important Resources...

- Affordable housing
- Accessible housing
- Food & nutrition
- Activities & social opportunities
- Support & companionship
- Access to information
- Navigation assistance
- Home maintenance
- In-home care, respite
- Transportation



What is missing?

- Affordable housing
- Home share program
- Free/volunteer care
- Volunteer chore & home maintenance
- Volunteer well-checks
- Friendly visit program
- Transportation to social activities
- Internet training
- More outreach to isolated individuals

Your Power to Change

“Dorothy” sits alone. Her husband is gone now; her old dog is her only companion. She has two sweaters on; her cold legs are wrapped in an afghan. She hasn’t left the house in days; it’s dirty, but she doesn’t have the strength to clean it like she used to. She doesn’t recall when she took her medications and decides not to take them; it saves money if she skips them now and then. For dinner she eats soup straight from the can; it’s too hard to cook. She needs to go to the eye doctor but can’t see well enough to drive; she can’t afford the appointment. She listens to the howling wind and hopes the power won’t fail; she gets so cold when the heat goes out.

***It doesn't have to be this way.
You can change “Dorothy’s” life by
supporting Island Senior Resources.
With your help, she'll be well fed,
cared for, and not alone.***

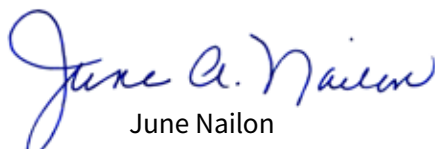


Your gift today will help our nutrition program bring “Dorothy” three hot meals and four frozen meals every week delivered by a caring, friendly Island Senior Resources’ Meals on Wheels volunteer who will visit with her and be sure she’s OK. You will make it possible for our Aging & Disability Resources staff to visit her in her home to sign her up for support services that will provide a caregiver, find ways to help defray costs of her medications, and help her be added to the EMS list of vulnerable adults so she is helped in an emergency like a long power outage. You will help SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) volunteers help “Dorothy” save thousands on medical costs by signing her up for a better Medicare supplement plan at less money. You will connect her to ISR’s Medical Transportation whenever she needs a ride to the doctor. You will help her be picked up three times a week by our Ridelink van so she can attend our Time Together Adult Day Program where she can socialize, be happy, well fed, warm, and cared for. *You will change “Dorothy’s” life. That’s the difference you make when you donate to Island Senior Resources.*

“Dorothy” needs you today. Your gift to Island Senior Resources will make it possible for us to help her and over 10,000 seniors and their families, adults with disabilities, and caregivers, throughout Island County. “Dorothy” could be just like someone you know, or even be you, someday. One in every eight people in our county is helped each year by neighbors like you who give generously to Island Senior Resources. It’s important that we stand together in our community and support essential services for seniors, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them.

Nothing feels better than when you reach out and help your neighbor. Please give generously to help “Dorothy.” Please don’t think, “I don’t need to because someone else will.” Your participation is critical. ***Please send your donation to Island Senior Resources today. Join your committed neighbors in making a difference.*** Our community grows stronger when each of us helps our neighbors.

With our deepest gratitude for your kindness, compassion, and support,


June Nailon
Board President


Cheryn Weiser
Executive Director

Reflections on 2018: Lives Changed

(names have been changed to protect privacy)

Dancing for the First Time in 40 Years

I met with “Sam” and his wife, “Marsha” to discuss long-term planning because she has dementia. She’s at the early stage of forgetfulness, a time when it’s common to withdraw from friends and social events in order to hide the memory loss. I’ve been working with “Sam” for over a year. This was the first time “Marsha” was willing to talk with me — a huge success. We talked about isolation; it’s one of the largest risk factors for cognitive decline. Socialization is an important part of any wellness program. We talked about how both mental stimulation and conversation with people who do not know someone well enough to “fill in the blanks” helps maintain cognitive function. I encouraged them to try some of the free activities at Island Senior Resources: the community meals, the Lunch & Learn programs, support groups, the quilters group, and the Fun Band. They agreed to come and listen to the band on Friday. They did, and they even danced! Afterward “Sam” called to tell me they would be coming back regularly. I reminded him that the quilters group is also free, and people come in and leave as they



need to. He thought they’d try that too. Our conversation has opened up a new world for them. He put “Marsha” on the phone, and she told me, “I danced for the first time in 40 years... we got applause!”

Music, dancing, social time, and connection... a good mix. Sam said, “‘Marsha’ smiles when she dances.” It gave them a way to connect that was good for their health, and it made them both happy.

— Beth Rahi, Family Caregiver Support Specialist

A Lifeline Through the Paperwork

“Albert” is normally very upbeat, positive, and determined to be as independent and active as he can be. We’ve helped him receive in-home care through our Tailored Supports for Older Adults and know him well. He always has a smile on his face. Today he called in despair. He’d received a letter from Social Security saying that his Medicare Part B premium was now going to be deducted from his social security check. That meant that after paying rent, he’d only have \$150 a month to live on for food, electricity, gas, and all other needs. His annual Medicaid renewal had not been processed in time, and that triggered the change.

We called DSHS (Department of Social and Health Services) to get his application processed, and his Medicaid restored, conveyed the information to Social Security, and got the decision reversed. We also did a home visit and were able to bring him several items that had been donated for those

in need: two boxes of food, two bags of dog food from Freeland Skagit Farmer’s Country Store, and gift cards to Rite Aid and Payless. The generosity of others supporting ISR to help those in need brought him to tears, of gratitude. He felt he was seen and heard, and that he mattered to someone. Most of all, he had peace of mind, and his smile is back.

— Nicole Donovan, Aging & Disability Resources Manager



Reflections on 2018: Lives Changed

(names have been changed to protect privacy)

Lunch & Learn Opens a Door

“Bob,” one of the regular attendees at our Coupeville HUB Lunch & Learns returned today after being absent for three months with an illness. He shared his story with me. He can no longer drive so is using transportation services he learned about from our Lunch & Learn presentations. He has engaged someone to come in and help a few hours a day selected from the pre-screened caregivers list that Chasity Smith, our Aging & Disabilities Director provided; and he is using advice offered by our Lunch & Learn speaker Carla Jolley on Palliative Care to coordinate his care with all his physicians. He is also pursuing the accessible trails opportunity described by Maribeth Crandell from Island Transit in another Lunch & Learn. He said his attitude is good in spite of the restrictions he now faces, because, thanks to our Lunch & Learns, he’s discovered resources that make life easier. He says, *“It’s a lifesaver – real benefits for real people!”*

— Carol Molliter, HUB Lunch & Learn Coordinator



A Neighbor Reaches Out

“Eric” said that for years he could set his watch by his close friend and neighbor, “Ethel.” She’s 82, lives alone and thrives on keeping to her schedule: bedroom lights on at 7 a.m., walk to the mailbox at 10, walk the dog at 3:30, kitchen lights on at 5 to make dinner, and bedroom lights off at 9 p.m. Last month, he noticed her schedule became erratic. Some days the kitchen lights wouldn’t be turned on all day, or the bedroom light stayed on half the night. He’d stop by to check on her, and she always said with a big smile, “Everything’s fine!” but it wasn’t. She was losing weight at an alarming rate. She favored one foot when she walked. Last week when he brought her groceries, like he usually did, the food he’d brought the week before was still in the cupboard. He asked her, “Ethel, are you cooking your meals?” She shook her head and said it was too hard to stand for that long. “Eric” went home and called to ask about Meals on Wheels.

“Eric” spoke with me about “Ethel.” I’m the Aging & Disability Resources specialist in Oak Harbor. I told him, that with her permission, we could start her on Meals on Wheels. In 10 minutes, the forms could be done, and meals started in a week. In addition to “Eric” checking on her, the volunteer Meals on Wheels drivers would see her three times a week. “Eric” offered to help with some of the cost. “Ethel” agreed, and I signed her up. I also told “Eric” about our Medical Transportation and Volunteer Services program for those times when “Ethel” might need a ride to the doctor or the pharmacy. And, I mentioned we could help arrange for other resources that could help “Ethel” financially, like assistance with energy costs.

Now “Ethel” eats nutritious food every day. She saves money each month, plus Eric decided to sign up as a volunteer driver for Medical Transportation. Recently retired, he felt that would be a good way to help ISR help others like “Ethel.” He tells everyone he gives a ride to about Meals on Wheels. Thank you, “Eric” for being a good neighbor!

— Cindy Miller, Oak Harbor Aging & Disability Specialist

Reflections on 2018: Lives Changed

(names have been changed to protect privacy)

“My TV won’t talk back — I need socialization.”

Those were the first words “Penny” said when she walked in the door at Island Senior Resources. She’s 50-ish, lives independently with support, but has some challenges that make it very difficult to make friends. She was isolated and lonely. As I listened, I knew that this is why Time Together exists — to provide opportunities for isolated seniors and adults with disabilities to have social interaction. I invited her to visit Time Together to see if she might like to join. Now months later, Penny attends program twice a week and calls her new Time Together friends “my peeps, my homeys, and my family.” She attends the program through Medicaid and gets rides with the Rideline van service provided by Island Senior Resources’ partnership with Island Transit. She feels like she belongs; she’s happy.

The funds needed to support Penny, and others in similar situations, don’t only come from Medicaid. When you purchase items at Senior Thrift, or donate to any Island Senior Resources fundraiser, these funds help some of our most vulnerable and isolated folks stay engaged and connected. Did you realize the rippling effects of buying a vintage rooster salt and pepper shaker, a Pink Floyd t-shirt, or a Rock ‘em Sock ‘em Robots board game from Senior Thrift could have such a positive impact on “Penny?” Your purchases help her live a much better life.

— Mel Watson, Director
Time Together Adult Day Program



What Happens When I Shop Senior Thrift

I enter the store; I find a purse to replace the one I broke the zipper on last weekend. I find a shirt that’s just right with the skirt I found here last week. I find a book for a friend who loves to read, a gift bag to put it in, and a card that says, “Thinking of You.” Perfect. All my errands are done, all in one place.



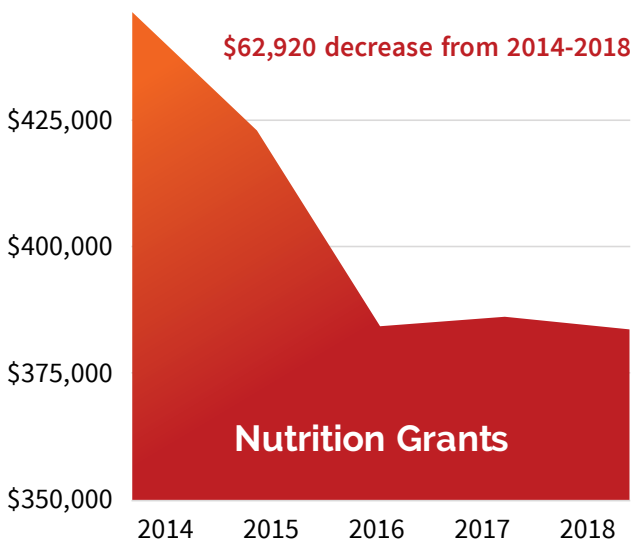
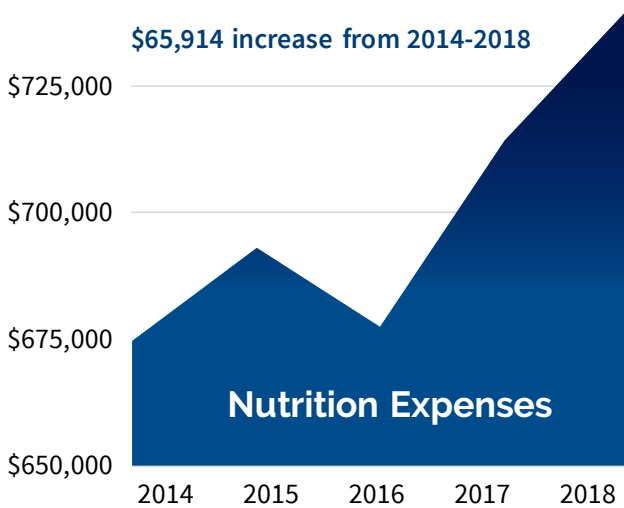
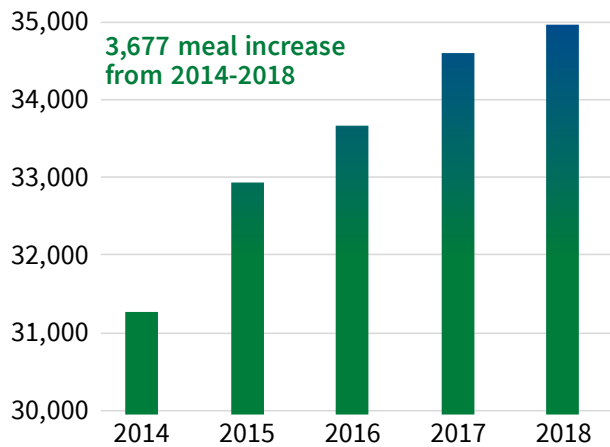
While the cashier is ringing up my “treasures” I see the monitor that tells me about events at Island Senior Resources — that’s helpful. There’s a class I could take to learn how to be a better caregiver for my dad, and about rides for seniors to medical appointments; I need that. I see an announcement for the Time Together program, a place for Dad a few hours each day. That would help me so much. There are announcements for the footcare clinic, and for the Fun Band; we could go dancing, he’d like that. There’s a list of weekly Lunch & Learns; we could have lunch in Bayview or Coupeville and then stay to learn something new. I even learn about a walk I could take with the Senior Striders to get outside, exercise, and meet new friends. I need that too, to take care of myself.

The cashier asks me if I’d like an *Island Times* or to sign up for the eNews. I do. I’m glad she asked. I don’t just *want* to stay informed; I *need* to learn how to navigate these years with Dad. “Thanks for supporting ISR,” she says as I take my package. My purchase may not be big, but I know every dollar I spend at Senior Thrift supports all the programs at Island Senior Resources. Just by shopping, I did something good. ISR helps me and helps my friends, and we help ISR by shopping. I go home feeling good. I’ll be back next week to see what I can find. Shopping is a lot more fun, and means more, when I know what I buy *makes a difference*.

— A Senior Thrift customer

Painting the Picture

Home Delivered Meals (Meals on Wheels Deliveries)



Reflections on 2018: Lives Changed

(names have been changed to protect privacy)

Over 2 Million Meals



Debbie Metz, our Nutrition Director (pictured above), has supervised the serving of over 2 million meals to Meals on Wheels recipients, and those sharing meals at our community meal sites, over the last 21 years. That would be **347 miles** of meals, if each plate was placed next to each other. That's like lining up dinner plates from Whidbey to Bend, Oregon! Thank you, Debbie, for being such a leader and keeping thousands upon thousands of seniors well fed and engaged with social dining experiences. You and your team have truly changed lives!

"I am so relieved to know my mother is now checked on by the volunteer Meals on Wheels driver three times a week, and she's getting nutritious food. I don't see her often enough as I live out of state."

— Meals on Wheels family member

"You don't know how thankful I am for these meals. I don't cook any more, and my husband needs to eat. I don't eat much, but I worry about my husband. He needs a good meal, and he loves the meals here!"

— Community meal participant

2018 Highlights

- We reached our fall goal to match a generous grant from a community member to raise **\$25,000** from new donors or donors who increased their previous donations! Thank you to all those who participated in that drive, and also to those who supported us in our **first annual one-day online drive, Together We Care**, on August 1. The need for services for seniors, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them continues to increase, and funding from government sources remains flat. We look to our community for your vital continued support in 2019.
- In November, we sold **CamBey** apartments to the Low-Income Housing Institute. It continues to serve low-income seniors and low-income adults with disabilities.
- The **Time Together South Adult Day Program** moved from Bayview into beautiful new facilities at St. Augustine's in-the-Woods church in Freeland. The program also operates out of the Oak Harbor Senior Center.
- We launched our monthly **eNews** to keep everyone informed. If you would like to be among the first to know about special events, classes, and updates, sign up on our website to receive the eNews.
- Our **Aging & Disability Resources Program** received funding from the North Sound Accountable Communities of Health to increase collaboration with community partners and improve access to resources.
- We held three successful sold-out **Not Your Grandma's Bingo** fundraising events. Special thanks to Bayview Hall and Island County Fairgrounds for their support. Watch our website for ticket sales to this year's events in May, August, and November. These fun nights are not to be missed.

Who's Walking in the Door?

59%

of the people we serve in Aging & Disability Resources are *under 60 years old*.

2018: Did You Know?

- **48%** of the people we serve are located in Oak Harbor.
- Aging & Disability Resources responded to **3,764** requests for information or assistance with **968** follow-ups.
- Family Caregiver Support responded to **1560** inquiries and provided customized case management to **71** caregivers.
- SHIBA (Statewide Benefits Insurance Benefits Advisors) served **1,112** clients needing guidance with Medicare.
- Case Management services were provided to **303** Medicaid clients and **28** TSOA clients for individuals with high care needs.
- Medical transportation volunteers drove **129,768** miles to medical appointments making **1,844** trips for **571** clients.
- Our Nutrition program served **37,658** meals through Meals on Wheels and **36,423** community meals in seven sites throughout the county.
- Time Together provided **14,696** hours of engagement and respite to **45** individuals and families of those with chronic illness and physical and developmental disabilities.
- Senior Thrift provided **27%** of our funding for programs. Please help us by only donating items that are clean, safe, and in good working order. The money it costs to dispose of items dropped off in non-saleable condition hurts our programs and our community. Please bring your quality items to Senior Thrift today! We thank you for being neighborly.

We are an open, transparent organization. Read our Guidestar platinum profile at <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/52-104944>

Island Senior Resources Board of Directors

President – June Nailon

Vice President – Kathryn Beaumont

Treasurer – Gil Montano

Secretary – Jason Pryde

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Walt Blackford

Nancy Bolin-Romanski

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Executive Director:

Cheryn Weiser

Island Senior Resources

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www.senior-resources.org



Contact Us

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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)

Oak Harbor Senior Center

51 SE Jerome St., Oak Harbor, WA 98277

(Opposite OH Elementary School)

(in collaboration with OH Senior Center)

Senior Thrift

5518 Woodard Rd., Freeland, WA 98249

(Just north of Main Street)

Camano Center

606 Arrowhead Rd.,

Camano Island, WA 98282

(Near Utsalady Elementary School)

(in collaboration with Camano Center)



Meal-a-Month Challenge

Become a monthly donor!

For just **\$8** a month you can buy a meal a month for a hungry senior in our Meals on Wheels Program.

Help us raise **\$10,000** in new monthly donor pledges **by June 15.**

To sign up, visit www.meal-a-month.org or www.senior-resources.org/meal-a-month