

Island Senior Resources

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

A Place I Belong

“There’s no place like home.” It’s not just what Dorothy says in *The Wizard of Oz*; it’s a truth central to our lives.

“Home” has a meaning that reaches into our souls. When we are “at home,” we feel safe, comfortable, cared for, and at ease. It’s a place to live and grow and gather, often in joy, and sometimes in sadness. Home is not just a house; it’s a feeling created by the people sharing their lives. *Home* is where we know we belong.

I grew up in a small town, with a close-knit family that ate dinner together every night and gathered with other families on weekends at church activities and school sports. We were not simply folks living down the street from each other. We knew each other and were a part of each other’s lives. We understood life’s challenges and celebrated our successes. We *belonged* to one another in a safe and reassuring way. I cherished the feeling that my community was my “home.”

As I grew older, the time came to move on and start the next chapter of my life. I arrived in a new town where I knew no one, and moved into a house shared by nine people ages 18–52. There was one house rule: we cooked and ate together every Thursday night. Around the table, we debated, teased, laughed, and cried. We became more

than just people sharing a house. Those Thursday night dinners soon wrapped me in the same sense of belonging that made my childhood so rich. We didn’t know then that those dinners would transform our lives.

As time passed, we began to include next-door neighbors into our Thursday gatherings. Over time, they brought a few friends to join in and new and broader bonds formed. It wasn’t until we had a summer block party and 200 friends were dancing together in the street that I realized my home was, once again, an entire *community* where I belonged.

One day stands out more than others. That was the day our house caught fire. Neighbors took us in, fed us, and gave us places to sleep. A few days later, we got the devastating news that insurance wouldn’t begin to cover it all. In a crisis, not knowing what to do, our lives took another surprising turn.

It was a Saturday. One family down the street who ran a carpet business, showed up to scrub our walls and floors to remove the smoke. A neighbor who was a carpenter came and built us a new front door and two friends of his (who we didn’t even know) fixed the roof. Someone else with



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a truck hauled away the debris. One of our neighbors had the idea and organized it all. People from the next block over brought food to feed the workers, and two firefighters, who had put out the blaze, came by to wish us well.

A week later, another neighbor got his church members to hold a rummage sale in our front yard to help us; that made \$459. A few weeks later, two high schoolers on our street worked with a service club to organize a day they called “Phoenix Day.” Everyone on the block helped each other with yard work or construction projects that made our whole street look nicer. Like the Phoenix bird, hope rose out of the ashes. People who might not have otherwise interacted, came together around a common purpose — and it didn’t stop there.

The next summer, our block party had grown to become a summer celebration that extended across six square blocks, organized by (guess who?) the same neighbor who had organized our clean up. By autumn, a neighbor led the start-up of an after-school program for lonely latchkey kids. Older folks welcomed them with a place to do homework until their parents came home.

All this started with gathering for simple Thursday night suppers. It transformed where we lived and *how* we lived. A few committed leaders brought people together in new ways around a common vision of people helping people. They helped us build the place we all lived, into a *community*, where we all belonged. Ultimately, it became *home* for all of us.

In his book, “*Community*,” Peter Block shares, “The future is created one room at a time, one gathering at a time. Each gathering needs to become an example of the future we want to create. The group is where transformation takes place.” Every gathering is an opportunity to nurture new ways of being, acting, interacting, and cooperating. It is in coming together where possibilities begin.

**“Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.”**

— Henry Ford

These days, there’s a lot of “buzz” about *community building*. I have a shelf full of books with examples of communities coming together and blossoming. A thread is woven throughout all the success stories — community building requires a shift to believing we are a community of possibilities, not a community of problems. Problems are symptoms of a challenged community. The question is, *how do we become a community focused on possibilities of who we can be?*

One answer begins with changing our language from the language of problems to one of collective possibilities; from finding fault, to finding the gifts we can each bring to the table; from expressing scarcity, to celebrating abundance; from hearing the few, to hearing everyone. When we believe each person and each organization brings a gift to the table that can be part of our collective future, we begin building a community of belonging where everyone joins together and forms

the fabric of our lives that wraps around us all. That’s *home*, and you can create it wherever you are.

From the carpet cleaner who gave our floors a scrubbing, to the latch-key boy who found a new “grandpa” down the block who taught him to play ball after school, to the neighbors who joined in the neighborhood clean-up, community building is the transformation of lives and deepening of our connections to each other, one gift at a time.

Dorothy is right: “There’s no place like *home*.”

— Robin Bush, Outreach Director

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Sign up to receive our monthly eNews, full of updates: sales at Senior Thrift, special events, classes, and great articles. Sign up online at www.senior-resources.org.



What's Changing

January-June 2019 vs. Same Period of Previous Year

Aging & Disability
Resources Contacts



+17%

Meals on Wheels
Deliveries



+29%

Family Caregiver
Support Clients



+32%

Volunteer Medical
Transportation
Trips Provided



+60%

At the same time, the number of
volunteer drivers has decreased 11%

98%

Residents over the
age of 60 have
accounted for 98%
of Island County
population growth
since 1990*

*2019 Economic Trends and Conditions Summary Report
Island County Planning & Development

Coming Together — The Beginning

“Betty” sits in her chair by the window, alone. She watches the neighborhood kids walk to the school bus, then waits all day to watch them come home.

“Lenny” rarely changes out of his pajamas; “What does it matter?” he thinks. He’s not going to see anyone today, or tomorrow, or even the next day.

“Francine” sits by the phone, hoping her daughter just might call today. She doesn’t want to miss the call; if she does, there won’t be another call for a week.

“Karen” hasn’t left the house in three weeks. She can’t leave her mother for whom she cares 24/7. The only people she has seen are those delivering food and prescriptions.



Isolation is one of the greatest challenges for seniors, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them. It is the root of many physical and mental illnesses. Isolation is the opposite of belonging to a community that cares. At Island Senior Resources, we are looking for every way we can improve our services. We are working with other organizations, and meeting with county and local officials to find and fund solutions. **Coming together is just the beginning; what we do is what matters.**

There is one thing we know with absolute certainty: the world is going to look different in the future from what it looks like today. The decisions and actions we take today will significantly shape that future. We understand that we can plan, but the future is not a fixed address. Once we arrive, the destination will have changed. **At Island Senior Resources, we are adapting to changing needs, all for one purpose: to transform lives for the better.**

We believe in the possibilities that come from collaboration with community partners, to create extraordinary outcomes. We are committed to teaming every day of every week with other organizations and responding with essential services. We believe in community, where all belong, one that keeps asking the right questions about how we can best care for each other.

— Cheryn Weiser, Executive Director



Taking Care

“SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I was riding home on the bus with a new co-worker, “Phil,” who suddenly jumped up and said, “I need to get off:” The bus pulled away, and I watched as he walked to an older lady in a wheelchair who was struggling to roll uphill. He simply helped push her chair. “Who was that?” I asked him at work the next day. “Just someone who needed help,” he answered. Later that day, he carried a heavy box for a co-worker, not just to the elevator, but all the way to her car in the rain. For the next few weeks, I watched him. He always found the time to do something kind for someone else. I asked him about it. “Taking care of others is how I care for myself,” he said, “It brings me joy, and after all, where would we be if we didn’t make time for joy?” “Take care,” we said to each other as we parted on the bus that day. I knew he meant it in a far deeper way than simply, “See you tomorrow.” He really meant it as a gift of his wisdom, as if to say, “Take care of others; in doing so, you will take care of yourself.””

This passage, from a letter sent by a friend, captures what it means to give to someone in need.

Every day, Island Senior Resources helps people in Island County who are in need and facing the challenges of aging and disabilities, or around-the-clock care of a loved one. Our outstretched hand joins with yours when you contribute to this life-saving work. This year, the number of people receiving Meals on Wheels is up 37%, and our “Tailored Supports for Older Adults” program has a 300% increase in participants. You can help sustain our services to meet community needs. Almost half of the funds we need come from large and small contributions from people like you.

One in eight people in Island County depend on the programs at Island Senior Resources, and yet only 56% of the cost of our programs are funded by government sources. We need to raise the rest from generous donors like you.

You might choose to make a general donation in support of all our programs, or to support Meals-on-Wheels by becoming a Meal-a-Month donor. Just an **\$8 monthly donation** provides a meal and a face-to-face house-visit for a hungry, isolated person. Or perhaps you could give four meals with a **\$32 monthly donation**. Every gift helps, whether you prefer monthly or one-time donations. It is easy and absolutely cyber-secure to give on our website: www.senior-resources.org or you can use the enclosed envelope.

Please donate today. We cannot do this without each other. Our parents and grandparents need help. You and I will need help, one day. We hope you will help us to help others today, while you are thinking about it.

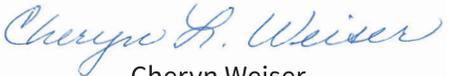
With our deepest gratitude for your kindness, compassion, and support dear neighbor, we say, “Thank you for helping us meet the tremendously increasing need in our community. Thank you for taking care of others.”

“We are not put on this earth for ourselves, but are placed here for each other. If you are there always for others, then in time of need, someone will be there for you.”

— Jeff Warner



June Nailon
Board President



Cheryn Weiser
Executive Director



Charles LaFond
Development Director



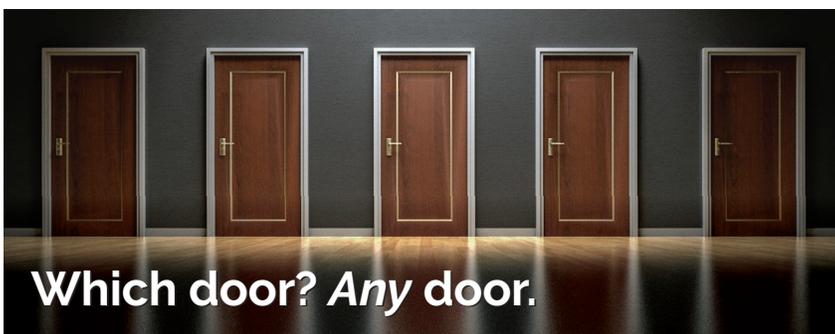
Transforming to Transform Lives

The details of these portraits have been changed to protect privacy but remain true to how we serve our community.

What we can create together

Island Senior Resources envisions strong communities where seniors, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them, are valued, heard and seen, cared for and about, afforded respect, treated with dignity, and supported to live their best life.

We are innovating to meet the changing and expanding needs of our communities and transform lives, one at a time. We are weaving our actions with those of other organizations. We are taking care of each other, building the community we call *home*.



Which door? Any door.

Meet “Pamela.” She’s 62.

She came to us needing to borrow a walker for her husband who just got out of the hospital. She was overwhelmed. “I also care for my older brother who has early-stage dementia. I don’t know what I’ll do. I can’t imagine how I’ll care for both of them.”

We introduced her to our Time Together Adult Day program where her brother could go three days a week, and we helped her apply for respite funds so she can afford for him to go. “It made such a difference, and he enjoys it so much.” Shopping and cooking, on top of the caregiving, are too much for her so we registered her for Meals on Wheels until her caregiving load eases.

“Thank you,” she said, “This all started with just coming in to borrow a walker!” We are making sure that everyone who comes through our door receives wrap-around services. **No matter which “door” someone walks through at Island Senior Resources, our programs are integrated to be sure everyone is connected to every program they need.**

Policy and Partnership

We are taking an active role in influencing policy. We presented our nine-month assessment of community needs of seniors, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them, to elected officials representing all of Island County, the mayors from each community, and the coordinator of our state funding, Northwest Regional Council. **These discussions laid the foundation for better understanding of needs, services, and the investments the county and municipalities may need to make in the future.**



Read a summary of our strategic plan at www.senior-resources.org/strategicplan

“Island Senior Resources built a strategic plan with the input of citizens and elected officials across Island County. The plan provides a compass to develop a shared vision and to work collaboratively on future policy and funding decisions.”
 — Helen Price-Johnson, Island County Commissioner



Transforming to Transform Lives

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On a roll with Island Transit

Meet “Paul.” He’s 67.

“Paul” lives in Oak Harbor. He does not drive and has very early-stage dementia. He lives alone but enjoys being with other people. He’s been coming to Island Senior Resources’ Time Together Adult Day program in Oak Harbor two days a week, but wants and needs more interaction to slow the progression of his disease. “It keeps my brain active,” he says.

Island Senior Resources has partnered with Island Transit to give greater access to Time Together participants. Island Transit provided two Ridelink vans that Island Senior Resources uses to transport people to the program who live beyond paratransit service areas. These vans travel an average of 458 miles monthly, providing over 50 rides. Because of the Ridelink van, “Paul” can also now come to Time Together on our new day, Fridays, in Oak Harbor. He is much happier, healthier, and feels the other participants are his “family.” It’s a place he feels he belongs. “One of the best things,” he says, “is we eat meals together. There’s nothing better than sharing a meal with friends. It brings us together. We’re at home here.”



Reaching Out to Central and North Whidbey

“I need to get to the doctor next week. I live north of Oak Harbor and my appointment is in Seattle. Can you help me?” That’s a call we got from “Juanita” this summer. She is 78 and lives alone. She can’t drive, has a chronic condition, and needs regular medical care. Our volunteer driver now drives “Juanita” to weekly appointments. “My appointments are now something I look forward to; they are the best part of my week. My driver ‘Maria’ is my friend. I don’t know what I’d do without her.” **70% of the calls we receive for medical transportation are from Oak Harbor. What about those who don’t know who to call for help?** As part of our research into the needs of seniors, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them, we heard from elected officials in Oak Harbor and Coupeville that the #1 need was more outreach by Island Senior Resources.

You spoke. We listened. **Miik Wells** (pronounced “Mike”) has joined our staff as Community Outreach Coordinator for Central and North Whidbey. He will be raising community awareness of the resources we offer, helping to create a community of care with those we serve, and building partnerships with other providers to assure access to services.



Meeting Growing Needs

As more and more people come to depend on Island Senior Resources for help, we ask ourselves, “What would it look like if Island Senior Resources was unable to meet the growing needs of our community?” To remain sustainable and continue to fulfill our promise to every Island County resident to be here for you when you need us, we have hired **Charles LaFond** as Development Director. Charles will engage with community members who can support Island Senior Resources and develop a gifting program that will carry us long into the future.



We are transforming Island Senior Resources to be here to serve everyone who calls and says, “Can you help me?”



Transforming to Transform Lives

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Finding Common Ground

Meet “Keith.” He’s 86.

“Keith” called our Aging & Disabilities staff on Monday, saying, “I have no food!” We signed him up immediately for Meals on Wheels and found a volunteer driver who could take him to the grocery store. When the driver arrived, he said, “No, I don’t need a ride to the grocery.” The same day he called and canceled Meals on Wheels. Friday, he called again; he was frantic. “I didn’t get my meal. I’m so hungry!” He didn’t recall he’d canceled the service; we signed him up again and got him the food he needed. This pattern repeated. We helped arrange for him to attend Time Together and for our Ridelink driver to pick him up, and when the driver arrived, he didn’t remember he’d wanted to go and stayed home. The next week the same thing happened again.

“Keith” has no family nearby to help him navigate through the services he needs, and he can’t remember which services he’s requested. Meeting



the needs of clients who require closely supervised regular support is why we have added a new staff member, Addie Schille, thanks to our partnership with the North Sound Accountable Communities of Health. Addie will be watching to be sure folks like “Keith” get the services they need to support their health and well-being.



Through important community partnerships with WhidbeyHealth and Island County, Island Senior Resources will accept referrals to coordinate resources for clients with greater needs. Thanks to the addition of Addie to our staff, **we are transforming our services to provide a higher level of assistance to our communities.**



Thank you!

We gratefully acknowledge the hard work of our board members, staff, and the members of our community who helped to create our Strategic Plan 2019–2021. The plan is a “living” set of ideas that will allow us to respond with innovations to meet changing needs in the dynamic years to come. To read a summary of the plan, go to www.senior-resources.org/strategicplan

Going forward... toward...

There is no distinct point when we can say our community is complete. We will always be in the process of appreciating how far we’ve come, then striving toward our shared vision of how far we need to go.

Imagine the possibilities. Gather with others for purpose. Bring your gifts to the table. By working together, we will always be moving toward what keeps our community a place we can all call home.

Island Senior Resources Board of Directors

Island Senior Resources
14594 SR 525
Langley, WA 98260
www.senior-resources.org

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



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***Please support Island Senior Resources today with your gift.
Your caring is what sustains us!***

Contact Us

www.senior-resources.org
(360) 321-1600 or (360) 678-3373
reception@islandseniorservices.org

facebook.com/islandseniors
facebook.com/seniorthrift
Instagram: @islandseniors

Our Locations

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

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

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

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 \$250+ each.

Each prize has a different theme and contains multiple items:

- Garden Dreaming
- Caffeinated Whidbey
- Fun on Whidbey
- Let's Go on a Picnic
- Cook It Up in the Kitchen
- Oak Harbor Giving Tree
- Snuggle Into Warmth
- Spa-Dee-Dah
- Reader's Treasury
- Sports in Style
- Northern Exposure
- That's Italian

Raffle tickets are on sale NOW at **Island Senior Resources (Bayview)** and **Senior Thrift**.

Watch our Facebook page and website for additional ticket sales locations: www.senior-resources.org

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