A Void Without Volunteers

By Carly Larson
Program Coordinator, City of Oak Harbor Senior Services

Since the day I started, a little over three years ago, I valued, appreciated, and saw the need for volunteers at The Center in Oak Harbor. I noticed immediately The Center could not operate at the caliber we did without volunteers. I looked forward to our monthly volunteer meetings, enjoyed getting to know more about each one of the volunteers, and was excited to train new volunteers. But it wasn’t until last March when COVID-19 changed our everyday lives, prevented us from being open for in-person programming and The Center was left empty I realized the void without our volunteers.

Although we were unable to do in-person programming, we still had phone calls, people at the door, and we shifted our programming to a virtual platform. This left Liz and me trying to manage our workloads while also answering phones and the needs of the community. It was at that point I saw the value of our volunteers to the fullest extent possible and felt a strong void without them. Even though I had an appreciation and saw the need for volunteers at The Center from the day I started working at The Center, I did not have the extent of value I do now after working without them for an extended amount of time.

Realizing the strong void without volunteers confirmed the fact The Center could not operate at the capacity we do without our amazing volunteers. As the summer went on and we started doing more virtual programming and drive through events, a few of our volunteers who felt comfortable helped us manage the front desk. Volunteers took their time to make check-in calls to our members. Many volunteers helped us with various folding projects over the past several months. And again, the world felt right having the support of the volunteers. I always want to work in a position alongside volunteers!

There are times when the value of the work volunteers do is overlooked or under appreciated. The month of April is National Volunteer Month and the...
Don’t Have Access to the Internet? Vaccine Booking Assistance

Staff at The Center in Oak Harbor have helped hundreds of residents who don’t have access to the internet book appointments with Island Drug and WhidbeyHealth to receive their COVID-19 vaccines. We know many older adults do not have access to the internet, email addresses, or cell phones, which have prevented them from getting a vaccine appointment online. The Center in Oak Harbor staff have worked with the Island County Health Department, WhidbeyHealth and other community partners, to identify ways to remove barriers our older adults are experiencing in getting appointments. If you do not yet have an appointment for the vaccine and do not have access to the internet, please call us at 360-279-4580 and we will work with you to get you an appointment.

Whidbey Island Genealogical Searchers (WIGS)

Tuesday, April 20
1 p.m. on Zoom
(sign in 10 mins. early)

All are invited to join us. Non-WIGS members wishing to attend should send an email to whidbeygensearchers.org no later than April 18.

Canadian Genealogist Dave Obee – “Decoding the Dash - Build the Stories of their Lives”

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At The Center in Oak Harbor

**BRUNCH BOXES**

Brunch Boxes are still available the second Thursday of April. The cost is $15 per box for center members and $20 for non-members. We ask you to please pre-order your brunch box by the Friday prior. Brunch boxes will contain an assortment of commercially prepared items hand-picked by Liz and Carly.

Delivery is available within City of Oak Harbor limits for a $5 delivery fee per box. Pick-up time is 9:30-11 a.m. Call 360-279-4580 to order your brunch box!

**FREE BOOK TABLE**

Every Tuesday and Thursday, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., there is a table outside the front door of The Center with free books, magazines, and puzzles. Please feel free to take as many as you would like, and feel free to leave a few when you are finished with them. The book table will continue through the spring but may not be out on days of inclement weather.

**THE CENTER IS NOW A RENEW ACTIVE SITE**

The Center is excited to announce, in partnership with UnitedHealthcare, we are now a Renew Active site, which means with most UnitedHealthcare Medicare plans, you can participate in our group exercise classes including EnhanceFitness and Yoga at no cost. If you think you are eligible, please contact Carly Larson at clarson@oakharbor.org or 360-279-4583 for more information.

**VIRTUAL ENHANCE FITNESS AND YOGA CLASS**

Virtual EnhanceFitness is offered Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. Virtual Yoga with Maria is offered Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. The cost is $25 month for members and $30 for non-members or the drop-in rate is $5 members/$7 for non-members per class. Silver & Fit and some Kaiser and United Health Care insurance plans will reimburse the cost. Please inquire with Carly Larson, 360-279-4583, if you believe you have an eligible insurance plan. To sign up for either EnhanceFitness or Yoga, please call us at 360-279-4580. We can take payment over the phone, by mail, or arrange a drop off time. Once you have enrolled in the class and signed the waiver, we will email you the login information.

EnhanceFitness
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
9:45 a.m.
Instructor: Bernice Manglona-Charlton
Yoga
Tuesdays and Thursdays • 8:30 a.m.
Instructor: Maria McGee

**CLASSES and EVENTS**

**YOGA**
Instructor: Bernice Manglona-Charlton
Tuesdays and Thursdays • 8:30 a.m. Virtual Yoga with Maria is offered Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. The cost is $25 month for members and $30 for non-members or the drop-in rate is $5 members/$7 for non-members per class. Silver & Fit and some Kaiser and United Health Care insurance plans will reimburse the cost. Please inquire with Carly Larson, 360-279-4583, if you believe you have an eligible insurance plan. To sign up for either EnhanceFitness or Yoga, please call us at 360-279-4580. We can take payment over the phone, by mail, or arrange a drop off time. Once you have enrolled in the class and signed the waiver, we will email you the login information.

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Instructor: Bernice Manglona-Charlton

**Yoga**

Tuesdays and Thursdays • 8:30 a.m.
Instructor: Maria McGee

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**End of Life Ready: Advance Directives Free Class**

Tuesday, June 8 • 1-2 pm

This introductory presentation by End of Life Washington will provide an overview of your end-of-life choices and options. We will introduce the End of Life Washington Advance Directives (a combined Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care and Health Care Directive). Filling out Advance Directives for Health Care is important for making your choices and values known in the event you are unable to speak for yourself or make healthcare decisions.

This presentation will provide you with tools and resources to complete your own Advance Directives for Health Care and a better understanding of the importance of these documents.

End of Life Washington is a statewide non-profit organization that supports people preparing for their final days. They advocate for the right to a peaceful death.

For more information or to register, please call 360-321-1600 ext. 0 or email: reception@islandseniorservices.org.

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**Learn the Basics of Social Security**

- How and when to apply for benefits
- Types of benefits you may qualify for
- Your Social Security rights
- Benefits based on earnings, spousal earnings (current and former)
- Survivor benefits for widow(er)s

This Island Senior Resources workshop will be presented via Zoom by Annette Barca who has been conducting pre-retirement seminars for 15 years. Free. Pre-registration required. For more information call 360-321-1600 ext 0.

**Meals on Wheels America**

**APRIL**

**16 Suggested donation for meals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>WEEK 2</th>
<th>WEEK 3</th>
<th>WEEK 4</th>
<th>WEEK 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri 2</td>
<td>Mon 5</td>
<td>Mon 12</td>
<td>Mon 19</td>
<td>Mon 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fish w/Alyeska White Sauce</td>
<td>Navy Bean Soup w/Ham &amp; Veggies</td>
<td>Turkey Rice Soup w/Vegetables</td>
<td>French Onion Soup and Half Sandwich</td>
<td>Chicken Satay and Miso Soup</td>
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<td>Wed 7</td>
<td>Wed 14</td>
<td>Wed 16</td>
<td>Wed 21</td>
<td>Wed 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiesta Casserole w/Beef, Chiles, Salsa</td>
<td>Chicken Broccoli Casserole</td>
<td>Pulled Pork Slider on Brioche Bun</td>
<td>BBQ Chicken Legs</td>
<td>Spaghetti and Meatballs</td>
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<td>Fri 9</td>
<td>Fri 16</td>
<td>Fri 23</td>
<td>Fri 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lemon Braised Chicken Tenders</td>
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<td>Hot Turkey Sandwich w/Mashed Potatoes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Braised Chicken Thighs and Polenta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Getting Ready For Medicare!**

If you are going on Medicare in the next six months and/or are wanting to know more about Medicare, attend a “Getting Ready for Medicare” seminar on Zoom, offered by SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) volunteers. Counselors will answer brief questions following the seminars. Seminars run 1 -1.5 hours.

Information will be provided about:
- “Basic” Medicare benefits
- Changes for 2021 (covered in the Medicare 2021 classes)
- Options for additional insurance(s)
- Medicare parts A and B
- The differences between “Medigap” (supplemental) insurance and Advantage plans
- Benefits and rates
- Prescription drug plans (if you want help with your drug plan, we will tell you how to get it).

**Individual Consultations:** For more in-depth information, advisors are available for individual consultations by phone or zoom, call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373 ext 0.

To obtain a Zoom link for any class, go to www.senior-resources.org/shiba and can click on the link for each date/time. Pre-registration is required.

**GETTING READY FOR MEDICARE:**

**Tuesday, April 6, 1 p.m.**

**Tuesday, May 4, 1 p.m.**

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) offer unbiased, confidential advising for Medicare benefits and insurance options.
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Support Groups Meet Online
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TIME TOGETHER @ HOME
ZOOM SUPPORT GROUP
Mondays except public holidays, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
The program is designed to engage participants with discussions, group puzzles, and games in a friendly and supportive environment. This program is great for those who are isolated and have developmental disabilities or those with cognitive challenges who enjoy being with people and making friends.

PARKINSON’S
SUPPORT GROUP
Tuesdays, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
This online Zoom group is for people living with Parkinson’s and their family caregivers to share experiences, knowledge, and support. Friendships are formed and connections are made to help those living with this challenging condition.

ALZHEIMER’S
AND DEMENTIA CAREGIVERS
SUPPORT GROUP
Wednesdays, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
This online Zoom group is for people who are caring for someone who has a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s, other dementias, or any other challenging condition to share experiences, knowledge and support. Friendships are formed and connections are made to help those who are caring for someone diagnosed with this challenging condition.

YOGA FOR THOSE LIVING WITH PARKINSON’S, THEIR CAREGIVERS, AND OTHERS WITH COGNITIVE OR MOVEMENT CHALLENGES
Thursdays, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Facilitated by Renee Lever https://leever-ner.com/ “Living well with Parkinson’s”. This group is for people who want to improve their physical and mental well-being through yoga. Renee says, “If you can breathe you can do yoga.” This is a place to come together and practice techniques to improve movement and balance. Everyone welcome!

GRIEVE SUPPORT GROUP
1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, 1 p.m.
This online Zoom group is for people experiencing grief and loss. This is a safe place to discuss challenges, share experiences and move towards a place of healing.

CONNECTING IN DIFFICULT TIMES
Hosted by Island County Human Services
Thursdays, 11 a.m. – noon
A place where individuals can feel comfortable about sharing any struggles they are experiencing in response to the Covid-19 safety recommendations. If you are interested please call 360-678-8293 or fill out the form by clicking here.

Bittersweet and Remembered
By Susan Holman
Alzheimer’s is a long terminal illness that tears families apart. You struggle with thoughts of loss of his old self filled with bravado and funny, funny stories. Now it’s all a memory that is bittersweet and remembered.

Do you have a loved one with Dementia or Alzheimer’s and need help?
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New Dietary Guidelines for Americans

By Debbie Metz, Nutrition Director

New U.S. Dietary Guidelines 2020 – 2025 encourage people to “Make Every Bite Count.” The US Department of Agriculture, USDA, and the Department of Health and Human Services, HHS, jointly published the new Dietary Guidelines for 2020-2025. They collaborated with a team of medical professionals, dietitians, and policymakers to review, update, and add new recommendations. The guidelines were first published in 1980, and they are updated every five years. The Dietary Guidelines are evidence-based, supported by science, and focus on healthy eating at every life stage. They stress the importance of healthy dietary patterns to reduce disease risk and improve health outcomes. They also provide a framework that allows people with different backgrounds, preferences, beliefs, traditions, and economic situations to customize their diet in a healthy way to make every bite count.

We make the bite “count” by ensuring the foods and beverages we consume are nutrient-dense. Nutrient-dense means they contain important vitamins, minerals, fiber, phytochemicals, and other necessary nutrients and stay within calorie limits while limiting those higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium.

For example, if you choose an orange instead of an orange soda, you’ll get vitamin C, fiber, vitamin A, calcium, and other nutrients. If you choose an orange soda, you add sugars without any beneficial nutrients. Another example: instead of eating a bag of chips, try a few avocado slices as a treat or a handful of nuts. You limit the “empty calories” and increase nutrient-rich foods, which is especially important as we age.


This is why choosing foods that promote health and prevent chronic conditions is especially important as we age. Nutrient-dense foods and beverages and staying within calorie limits will help you “Make Every Bite Count!” You can learn more about the Dietary Guidelines for 2020-2025 at https://dietaryguidelines.gov.

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These are the major guidelines:

- Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage.
- Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budget considerations.
- Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages and staying within calorie limits.

- Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages.

Here are some additional ways to make each bite count:

- Shift from refined to whole grains (have oatmeal for breakfast or switch from white bread to whole-wheat bread).
- Add more vegetables to favorite foods (add vegetables to an omelet).
- Get to know beans, peas, and lentils (eat an all-bean chili or add more beans to your chili).
- Eat seafood twice a week (seafood is delicious and nutrient-dense, and remember, if all those changes look overwhelming, remember to take one step at a time; just get started. Small steps can lead to lifestyle changes and better health. It’s never too late to start eating to make every bite count! You can learn more about the new Dietary Guidelines at https://dietaryguidelines.gov.

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Strategies for Well-being: Part 7
Our Collective Grief Process

Betsy Griffin, LMHC, Island County Haven’s Services

Grief has been present for many of us through the past year. Struggles in coming to terms with losses and changes have impacted our ability to respond in resilient ways. Some of us have been impacted in the hardest ways: suffering damage to your health or that of a loved one, losing a loved one to this pandemic. Isolation makes it difficult to grieve in traditional and helpful ways.

Another experience of grief through this pandemic is a less traditionally understood: the grief that comes from living through a time of being terrified about what could happen, the reality of mortality, and the fragility of life.

We have struggled with disruptions to our lives and our resiliency supports. We have faced concerns over job losses or concerns about employment stability. We have faced concerns about housing stability. We have lost routines and access to traditional social supports. We have missed gatherings at restaurants, friends’ homes, and places of worship. We have had to change the ways we practice traditions and holidays. Our children have missed the normalcy of school and all the milestones attached. Our friends’ homes, and places of worship.

We have faced concerns about housing stability. We have lost routines and access to traditional social supports. We have missed gatherings at restaurants, friends’ homes, and places of worship. We have had to change the ways we practice traditions and holidays. Our children have missed the normalcy of school and all the milestones attached to it.

We have felt denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (the five recognized processes of grief). We have felt guilt, and hopelessness. We will also see long-term responses with increased rates of trauma, depression, anxiety, and substance use. But we have an opportunity to build something positive. Over the past six months, the articles in this series have focused on ways to overcome emotional hardships as we navigate the pandemic. Take a moment to reflect on how you are doing as you move through this year. Talk to your loved ones about how they are feeling. If you are lucky to have someone in your bubble, hug them for at least twenty seconds to get the impact of oxytocin release and stress reduction. If you are distancing alone, try weighted blankets or self-massage. Even yoga can mimic the effects of a hug.

Make gratitude part of your routine. Put it on your calendar. Hang a reminder on your fridge. Making a habit of positivity helps to displace negative thoughts and gives you more control over your inner narrative and ability to cope. Practice kindness and support to yourself. Treat yourself as you would someone you care about. Recognize that you are going through something difficult and are deserving of kindness.

Silver Kite Inspires Retirees

By Sno-Isle Libraries

The coronavirus pandemic has delivered some silver linings during the past year. One silver lining has been Silver Kite arts and crafts classes offered by Sno-Isle Libraries. These free classes began in July 2020. Word spread, and the community quickly fell in love with them. Jeanne Bartlett, a retired teacher, discovered Silver Kite classes and became a big fan.

“I would like to thank the library for bringing us Silver Kite classes during COVID. It has been such a positive resource for so many people—children to seniors,” Bartlett belongs to Pilchuck WEA-Retired, the local chapter of retired Washington Education Association members.

“Pilchuck WEA-Retired has always participated in a give-back event in December,” Bartlett said. “We knew we wanted to focus on seniors who were isolated by COVID-19 or a lack of family connections. We also wanted to keep our members safe while providing a way to work together on an activity that would help alleviate loneliness and isolation for seniors in our community.”

The group decided to make pop-up cards to go with Meals on Wheels holiday dinners for isolated seniors. Recalling her Sno-Isle Silver Kite class, Bartlett contacted Silver Kite to lead a special zoom class for Pilchuck WEA-Retired, and invited other WEA-Retired chapters around the state to join the project.

“What fun we all had as we learned some cardmaking techniques,” she said. “With much laughter, collaboration, conviviality, and a little frustration, we cut and folded paper to make these holiday-themed cards.”

The retired teachers made dozens of cards, Homage (Senior Services of Snohomish County) received many of the cards to hand out with holiday meals.

“WeA-Retired members across the state donated time, materials, labor, outstanding creativity, and perseverance so that dozens and dozens of pop-up cards were delivered in these meals,” Bartlett said.

She said some WEA-Retired members elsewhere in the state delivered cards to their local Meals on Wheels programs or donated their cards to other local senior facilities.

“Creating these one-of-a-kind cards was a wonderful way to work together and provide seniors a cheerful connection during the holiday season,” Bartlett said.

All Silver Kite workshops offered through Sno-Isle Libraries have been recorded and are available to view at silverkite.us/sno-isle. The password is sil2020. Scroll to the bottom of the page to see what’s available.

The recordings include everything from painting, drawing, writing, and acting, to making Indian sweets and Bollywood dance,” said Sno-Isle Libraries Programming Services Coordinator Anne Murphy. There are also several dementia-friendly offerings.

“With the Silver Kite recordings online, people can access them at a time that’s convenient for them, 24/7,” Murphy said.
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Volume 4 Issue 12

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SUPPORT continued from page 1
something else? That’s where participation in a support group like the one ISR facilitates really proves its value. It gives you access to a community of people who will share the kind of practical experience that helps you to better understand and cope with your dis- ease. The kind of knowledge that there’s simply no substitute for! —Steve Burr

The meetings have saved my life, literally and figuratively. . . I didn’t know there was a place that held other people with my experiences who didn’t need lengthy explanations in order to get it, who didn’t fuzz out if I tried to explain how I really was. —Sharron Gray

The support group has helped me not feel alone, isolated, or robbed of a portion of my life. Instead, it has provided me with more understanding, compassion, empathy, and patience. —RTH

These weekly meetings are like touchstones for many folks and we have found that this has given the opportunity for an increase in meaningful conversation. The other benefits are that there are no borders on Zoom, so we have some folks who live off-island, out-of- state, and even long-distance caregivers for family members overseas, able to connect and be a part of this extraordinary space. It has been a very special opportunity that has made things a little less isolating for those who attend, including myself.

—Mel Watson, Support Group Facilitator & ISR Volunteer Coordinator

According to Mayo Clinic, benefits of participating in a support group may include:

- Feeling less lonely, isolated, or judged
- Reducing distress, depression, anxiety, or fatigue
- Talking openly and honestly about your feelings
- Improving skills to cope with challenges
- Staying motivated to manage chronic conditions or stick to treatment plans
- Gaining a sense of empowerment, control, or hope
- Improving understanding of a disease and your own experience with it
- Getting practical feedback about treatment options
- Learning about health, economic or social resources

Find the right group for you or a loved one—one more info on page 5.

What to Do if Fraud/Identity Theft Happens to You

By Tony Leaky, Consumer Education and Training Services (CENTS) Executive Director

Scammers can be very convincing. They can get your information by tricking you or stealing your information from another source. Here are steps to take if you are a victim of fraud or a scam:

1. Stop communicating with the scammer.
2. Do not make any more payments to the scammer.
3. Contact the bank, credit card, or service the money was taken from, or sent through, to notify them of the scam.
4. File a Police Report. The police report may be required later to show there was fraud. File a report and keep a record of it.
5. Contact the agency involved to notify them of the scam. i.e., if someone filed a fraudulent tax return in your name, contact the IRS.
6. Contact the three major credit bureaus:
- Obtain your free credit reports from Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion at www.annualcreditreport.com or by calling 1-877-322-8228.
- Have a "fraud alert" placed on your credit report. This will require companies to verify your identity before granting new credit. It’s free and lasts for one year. If you set this up at one of the major bureaus, that bureau must inform the other two bureaus.
- A "credit freeze" limits anyone, including you, from opening up new accounts until the freeze is lifted.

7. Contact the FTC and IRS:
- Go to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) identity theft website for great resources on monitoring and reporting. www.identitytheft.gov
- Go to atg.wa.gov/recovering-identity-theft-or-fraud for additional tips from the Washington State Attorney General
- Consider setting up an IRS account. If you create an account with your Social Security number, it will better prevent criminals from creating an account using your identity. Go to: https://sa ww4.irs.gov/ eauth/pub/es__general.jsp
- Another option is to lock your Social Security number. www.e-ver ify.gov/mye-verify/self-lock

8. Contact your Post Office:
- Check with your post office to make sure your mail has not been redirected to a different address without your permission.

9. Learn how to identify and avoid scams: www.SeniorMoneyProject.org
10. Talk about the scam. Sharing your story helps others avoid it.

CENTS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people to improve their financial health by developing educational and legal resources to help prevent or overcome financial challenges. Their Senior Money project is a free consumer education program for seniors.