

Serving Seniors, Adults with Disabilities, and Those Who Care for Them

Island Senior Resources

fall & winter 2021

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

Journal

Harvest Time

Lessons from a Peach Tree

When I was seven, I loved going down to the cellar at my grandmother's house and playing with the old toys that had been my father's when he was a youngster. There was a metal mechanical bank with a lever that made a dog leap through a hoop and drop a penny in a barrel and into the bank. There was a hand-cranked "Farmer In The Dell" music box and a cast iron fire engine with wheels that moved and ladders that went up and down. One morning, immersed in that world of the past, I barely heard my grandmother call my name. Reluctant to leave, I climbed up the steep stairs out of the cellar to discover it was peach harvest day.

With buckets and a ladder, out we went to the backyard peach tree. The branches were laden with fruit. The yield that year was tremendous. We picked and ate peaches,

getting covered in sweet peach juice, then washed ourselves and all those peaches in the kitchen sink. That's when I heard the story of The Peach Tree.

When the house was built, the backyard was barren, so my grandparents planted a peach tree — just a slim stem that was barely a trunk. They patiently fertilized, watered, and weeded around the young tree, helping it grow. They persevered through one challenge after another. Three years later, a rare winter

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snowfall was so deep and the sleet so thick it nearly flattened the young tree to the ground. When the spring melt came, they carefully propped it up, and to their relief, it leafed out. Even its first blossoms appeared, and two months later, the tree had its first peach!

By late summer, that peach was so heavy the little tree bent under the weight of the golden fruit. My grandmother canned it in a little jar and kept it in the cellar for their holiday dinner dessert. The storm hadn't killed the little tree; instead, it bounced back and grew more that spring than any year since. Over the years, ice storms happened several more times; the harsher the challenges, the stronger the tree became and the more fruit it brought forth when the sun returned.

On that peach harvest day with my family, we set about canning buckets of peaches. We peeled fruit, boiled jars, made the sweet syrup, packed the half globes into the jars

with the juice, and sealed them in the giant canning pot on the stove. The long day ended with us carrying all the jars down to the cellar, with a sense of joy at our gathered crop.

Throughout history, harvest time brings people together to work and celebrate their collective purpose. By early fall, the shelves in the cellar would be filled with jars of canned tomatoes, beans, pickles, and baskets of potatoes — abundance from the garden cultivated from once barren land. Those shelves hold the promise of sustenance through the dark days of winter. The warmth of summer was captured in jars to be opened at holiday time when we would all be thankful for the year. There is so much to be grateful for, amidst the challenges.

Many years later, I still visit at peach canning time, always taking a few moments to touch the old toys, remembering that summer day when I was called to help in the harvest, and hearing the story of the little tree that never gave up.

It's a very old tree now, with branches that bend as it offers its heavy fruit. It reminds me of the towering Douglas fir trees, nearly 100 years old, that surround my northwest home. The massive trunks seem rigid until the strong winter winds arrive, and they all sway in unison, supporting each other side by side. I described them to my grandmother as we harvested the peaches. She smiled and said, "Young or old, when we bend, we don't break. Resilience in the face of challenge makes the fruit we harvest even sweeter."

... Robin Bush,
Community Education
Specialist



The Harvest Around Us

As I tend to the last of my garden's bounty

during this season, I am harvesting a life of purpose. After nearly 12 years guiding Island Senior Resources as Executive Director, I know how different life on the islands would be if ISR were not a vital community presence.

Forty-nine years ago, concerned citizens believed our community would benefit from an organization dedicated to providing resources that help us as we age. The seed of the idea was nurtured, became a reality, grew, and is now a place you can call for resources to help with *all* your needs. No matter what door you enter through, every door to all our programs swings open.

Whether you are an elder, adult with disabilities, caregiver, family member, or friend with concerns about housing, nutritional health, need for medical transportation, options for supplemental insurance, loneliness, respite, or other issues, *ISR is here for you.*

As a human service professional for nearly 50 years, I am acutely aware of how important it is for ISR to continue harvesting the resources needed to respond to community needs. One of the ancient traditions of harvesting is people helping others. When one needs help, others come to lend a hand. Likewise, ISR is growing a community "services" garden, fertilized by the generosity of others, for the benefit of all in need.

Preserving what we have grown requires weathering the changes that impact us all. During COVID, ISR pivoted in-person services to online, helping residents survive the pandemic storm. Our Aging & Disability Resource Specialists experience more and longer calls with isolated and often depressed seniors. The need for Meals on Wheels has increased. And, as we more frequently go out to the homes of isolated folks, we find many whose living conditions have deteriorated during the pandemic, and we work to find answers.

If you or someone you know might be interested in the Executive Director position, please contact amy@valtasgroup.com



*"Work that is engaged in,
not for self or for profit,
but as an act of
love and service,
these bring the doer
a harvest of blessings..."*

*"When we serve, and when we give,
we open ourselves to receive life's
richest blessings, its greatest prizes,
and its most enduring lessons."*

— Henry Thomas Hamblin

Now,
we are
preparing for
2022, our 50th year.

Despite flat federal funding for programs with increasing needs like Meals on Wheels and Aging & Disability Resources, the board, staff, and volunteers of ISR have never wavered in their dedication to resiliently adapt and ensure our resources remain available to community members.

We are a private nonprofit and are only partially supported by government resources. Increasingly, ISR relies on community members to fill the funding gap as we approach 30% of the Island County population being over 65. Our ability to continue providing needed resources depends on your partnership with us to assure a harvest of essential services necessary to meet the increasing need. We are grateful to all who generously support this work.

Resilient adaptation to change is a hallmark of ISR's past and future. This fall, the board of ISR has launched a search for a new Executive Director as I turn to a new chapter of opportunities in the spring of 2022. I have planted, cultivated, and harvested much along my path with ISR. I am grateful for the work we have done together in partnership between the board, staff, volunteers, and community to strengthen the organization's capacity and sustainability.

Join us in assuring that the resources are there when you or someone you care about needs help. What will your harvest be from the community-services garden?

••• Cheryn Weiser, Executive Director



Journal

Striking a Chord

What is *your* song? Most of us have a favorite. Music is a time machine that transports us to moments in our lives, making us dance, sing, smile, or shed tears. For others, it is healing. Did you know that our hearts synchronize with rhythms in music? At 60-70 heartbeats per minute, all internal organs and systems synchronize and function optimally, reducing anxiety and depression and helping us deal with stressors when they arise.^{1,2}

Music helps those with Alzheimer's relax at the end of the day, and for those recovering from a stroke, it can help them re-connect both physically and emotionally to the world around them. Every year, more than 795,000 people in the U.S. have a stroke. A new study at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, England, finds that taking part in music for patients recovering from a stroke can boost mood, improve concentration and brain and motor function, and help with social interaction.¹

In addition, music "increases blood flow to the brain and helps restore the blood vessels and synaptic connections damaged by stroke."² Another study was done at the University of Helsinki with stroke survivors where one-third listened to music, another third to audiobooks, and the final third did neither. The patients who listened to music daily for six months showed much-improved memory, focus, less confusion, and better mood.²



My Girl

*Ain't No Mountain
High Enough*

*I Want to Hold
Your Hand*

My Cherie Amour

Dancin' in the Street

Good Vibrations

Build Me Up Buttercup

Sweet Caroline

Twistin' the Night Away

RESPECT

Sugar Sugar

Hit the Road Jack

Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da

Return to Sender

Louie Louie

Twist and Shout

Under the Boardwalk

*The Way You Do
the Things You Do*

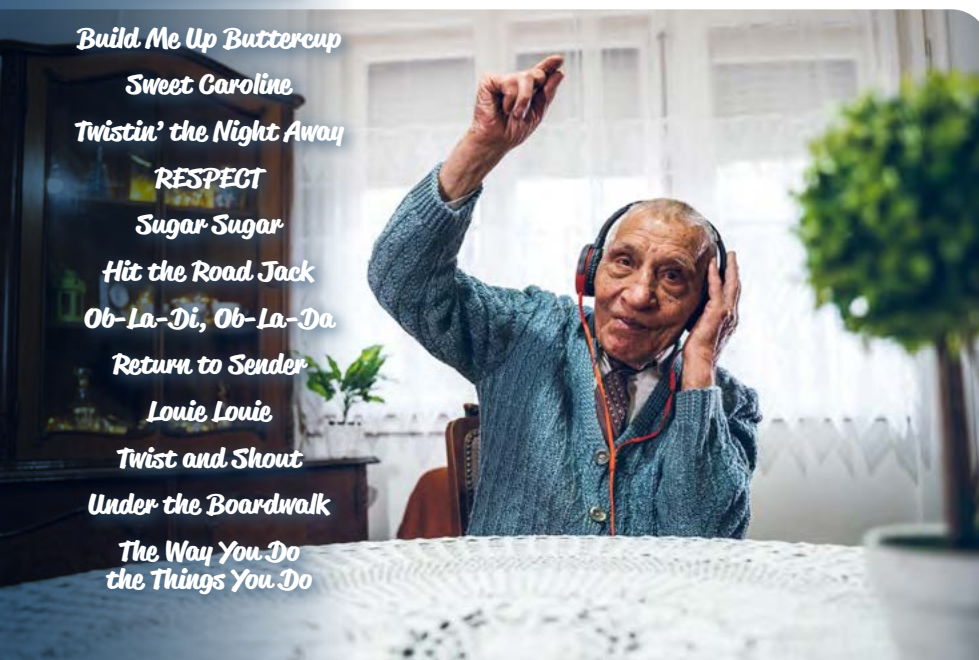
William had a stroke last year. It affected his right side, causing issues with his speech, vision, memory, and ability to read and write. Early in his recovery, his physical therapist planted the seed of an idea, "Let's try music. Music," she told him, "promotes the brain's ability to rewire itself so that some functions

impaired by a stroke may be recovered. Singing can help restore language, and playing simple instruments can help with the recovery of motor skills." William agreed to try it.

He listened to rock n' roll toe-tapping music that made him want to move with the beat.

He practiced synchronizing the movements he wanted to recover. It took countless hours, but in this type of training, the more repetitions, the more the brain registers that there is a demand for that function, and some movements can be re-learned. He also spent weeks singing along with his favorite tunes.

At first, no one could understand him, but after six months of hard work, he began to have clearer speech, his memory improved, his gait was steadier, and some of his fine motor movements returned.



His therapist said, “Your body is thriving on music. There are movements in a piece of music, the parts that come together to form the entire piece. Your body is doing the same thing — each movement is connecting to every other one. You’ve been listening to music; now, it’s time to start *playing* music.” William still had a piano in his living room that he had played when he was younger. He began with just two notes, back and forth, first with one hand then with two. He sat for hours each day in front of the piano, mastering a few notes, then a simple scale, then simple tunes. Starting with “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” he graduated to singing and playing “She’ll Be Coming ‘Round The Mountain” and “Oh Suzanna.”

Finally, when he could play a simplified version of “Stardust,” he decided to visit the assisted living facility nearby to play and sing for residents. He went every Friday afternoon all summer, and by autumn, he had a roomful of friends who moved and sang with him. It makes *him* feel good. It makes them *all* feel good; it’s their special celebration of growing, giving, and gleaning the goodness that comes from being in community.

What began simply as listening to music, grew into a passion, widened his circle of friends, and is now a gift he shares that brings joy to others. He knows he might not ever recover every ability he had before his stroke, but his mood is positive, and his quality of life is good. It started with planting the seed of an idea that music might help him recover. He nurtured it every day. And now, out of one of the most significant challenges of his life, he’s been given a chance to grow what matters most to him — having a sense of purpose and connecting with others. It is a bountiful harvest.

Note: *Music impacts each individual in stroke recovery differently. Consult a trained musical therapist if you or someone you know might benefit from this kind of therapeutic work.* Stroke support services are available through the American Stroke Association at www.stroke.org.

Island Senior Resources Connects.



The Path to Recovery

The ISR Aging & Disability Resources staff assists those returning home after a hospital visit to aid in recovery. We screen patients for eligibility for in-home care through Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. Unlike hospital home-health follow-up that comes 1–2 times a week to assist with medical care, this program helps with activities of daily living such as light housework, assuring mobility safety in the home, transportation, shopping, meal preparation, etc. We have an in-home provider list if someone is not eligible for the state assistance program. We also can provide Meals on Wheels and arrange transportation to medical appointments. Our Family Caregiver Support Program is also on-hand to assist caregivers who are family members.

One call to ISR grows into a network of support. Call us at (360) 321-1600 or (360) 678-3373.
We are here for you.

Families served by the Family Caregiver Support Program
July 2020–June 2021

60

plus individual caregivers

“The final step of healing is using what happens to you to help other people.”

—Gloria Steinem



Resources:

¹ Barry Goldstein, 60: Music as Medicine | AGEIST (weareageist.com)

² SuperAge: Live Better on Apple Podcasts (Barry Goldstein June 16, 2021) www.sciencefocus.com/news/

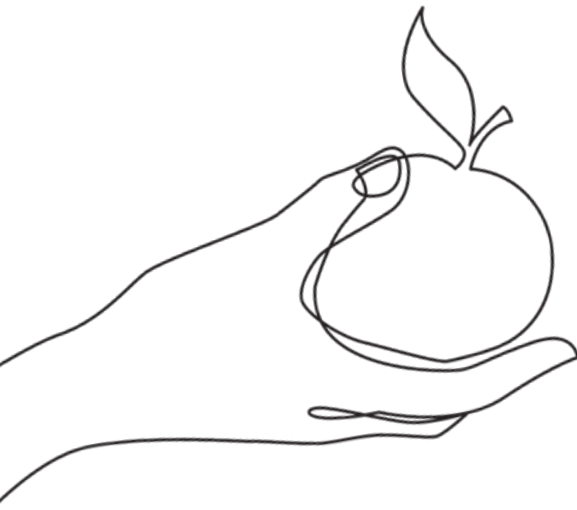
[music-therapy-for-stroke-patients-improves-brain-and-motor-function/](https://dana.org/article/different-types-of-music-may-aid-stroke-recovery/)
<https://dana.org/article/different-types-of-music-may-aid-stroke-recovery/>

www.flintrehab.com/music-therapy-for-stroke-patients/
“The Secret Language of the Heart” by Barry Goldstein

Join Us

Become a Funding Partner Today

Gleaning is an old autumn tradition. When the apple harvest comes in, farmers leave some of the apples on the trees for those who need food. These days, giving is done in different ways, but it is still done to ensure our neighbors have enough to eat, along with everything else that they need.



If you have a little extra and are willing to help others, would you please make a gift today to fund our work?
Every dollar you give will be matched.

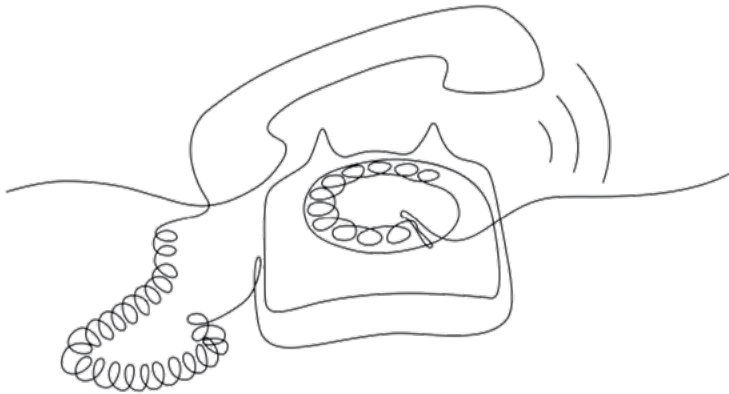
May your gift to your island neighbors through Island Senior Resources be an act of thanksgiving for all that you have and hold. Thank you.

Charles LaFond 360-210-3011 (24/7 cell)
charles@islandseniorsevice.org

www.senior-resources.org/donate to donate online or become an Evergreen Monthly Donor



During July 2020-June 2021, donors funded..

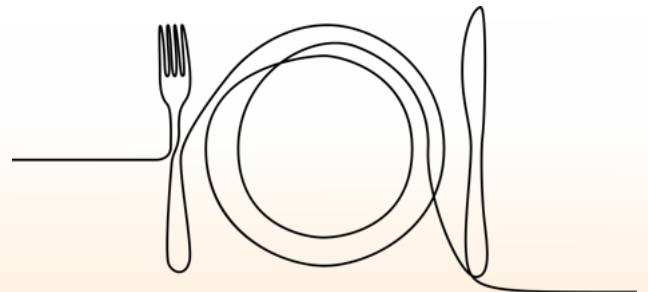


8,398 phone calls providing
Aging & Disability Resources
for **2,079** clients

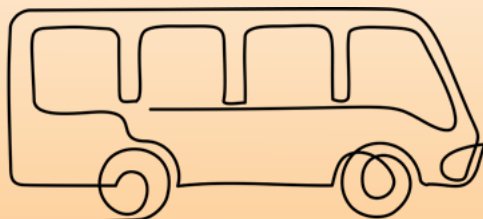
1,000+ pieces of
medical equipment provided
at no charge, for individuals to
use as long as they need,
through our Medical Equipment
Lending Library



182 online support groups,
39% more than the previous
12 months, and a **42%**
increase in attendance



79,960 meals that were
delivered to seniors in need,
35.4% more than the
previous 12 months



186,271 miles of transportation
to and from medical appointments
and meal delivery by volunteers

The Legacy Box

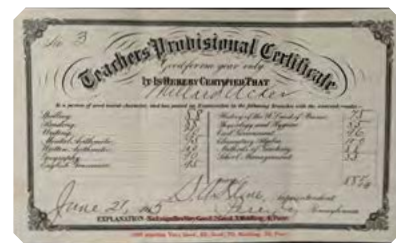
Recently, Clara received a package from her brother. In it were autobiographies her parents had written, along with papers, letters, and newspaper clippings that provided a look into the lives of her ancestors. She had old photos of them, but they'd always just been faces on paper; never were their stories attached to help her understand their lives.

Each day for a week, she opened the box, slowly unwrapping the layers in this unexpected gift. There was her grandfather's story of a driving trip he'd made in 1963 from New York to California and his discovery of an America so different from the one she knows. There were heart-stopping letters home from her father during WWII France in 1943 and one about a trip to England (a long way to go for a working-class boy). He had never been beyond New York, let alone to France or England in wartime. He sounded upbeat about the adventure, but his carefully chosen words offered insights into the realities of a young sergeant's wartime life.

There was a biography of her aunt and uncle that told of their struggles and prosperity from 1943–1993 and a series of newspaper clippings detailing the story of the hatchet murder of her great-great-great-grandfather. *That lore had never made it down through the generations!* She found fragile newspaper clippings from 1928 detailing the employment of her ancestors (men and women) who ran the county post office from 1871 to 1904. It drew a line of connection between them and her grandfather, who'd worked the postal train in the '30s. There were three generations of marriage certificates, her parents' school diplomas, a salutatory speech her mom gave in high school, and even her grandfather's 1915 teacher's certificate.

This collection told her more of her family history than her parents or grandparents had ever shared while they were alive. She wondered what other lessons they would share about what is in the box, if they could. She wanted to know what gave those moments meaning and which shaped the directions of their lives. Gathering their wisdom from across the ages, preserving connection across generations, it helps her answer the eternal questions we all wonder about: *where did I come from; who am I?*

When we decide to write our stories, they are the footprints we leave behind for those who survive us. We don't need to write the great American novel. Instead, we gather a collection of memories, a timeline, or footnotes on photos that become our DNA. It's our opportunity to record who we are and reflect on what we value and what we did to lead a purposeful life. It is a gift to share both where we succeeded and where



we failed. Stories keep us alive for generations yet to come. Our stories are the harvest of our wisdom and love, and our hopes and dreams for those yet to be born.

Think about a few things you have that you could put into a legacy box. Someday Clara's daughter will unwrap the legacy box and uncover family history. Perhaps she'll find Clara put something in the box years before that will be a clue to a choice she'd made or a lesson she'd learned that will help her daughter live her best life. The legacy box is the harvest that connects us across time, and it is bountiful.

... Robin Bush, Community Education Specialist

References:

www.postandcourier.com/columnists/aging-for-amateurs-harvesting-life-brings-completion-in-later-years/article_d773e81c-81c8-11eb-8ef8-4bd09035b449.html
 "Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story" by Christina Baldwin



"Harvesting a life means remembering, cherishing, and telling the stories of one's lifetime. Harvesting means accepting the role of elder... to gather your lifetime like a ripened crop and to offer the best of what you'd learned to the future."

— Bert Keller, Bioethicist



Island Senior Resources Connects.

Sharing connection with others helps

each of us live our best life, whatever our circumstances. In these difficult days of COVID, isolation has become a significant challenge for seniors, adults with disabilities and caregivers, leading to mental and physical health issues. **24%** of our Island County population was **65+** in 2020. In the U.S. approximately **25%** of community-dwelling older adults are considered to be socially isolated and **43%** of them report feeling lonely.

Until we can all gather again, we are bending, innovating, and adapting how we work and live to find new ways to connect. ISR is growing a virtual community on our website, offering opportunities to interact with others online in a healthful way. Our Medicare and caregiver classes are online, along with support groups. Also, there are links to Senior Planet technology classes for seniors, and to Elderwise and Momentia Seattle that offer engagement activities for those with memory loss.

Visit www.senior-resources.org/virtual-community.

When you reach out, you will find opportunities to connect. Within those connections is a well of strength that helps us all get through... together. ***Sow the seeds of resilience; soon it will be time to harvest the crops that will sustain us through the winter.***

Support groups connect.

From July 2020 to June 2021, **182** ISR support groups were offered — **39%** more than the previous year, with **42%** increase in attendance.

Volunteers connect.

Medical transportation and Meals on Wheels drivers drove **186,271** miles in the same period of time (over seven times around the world), and throughout the organization **350** volunteers gave **20,942** hours of their time to help ISR meet client needs.

July 2020–June 2021:

ISR Support Groups

182

Volunteer miles driven:
Medical Transport
& Meals on Wheels

186,271

Hours donated by
350 ISR volunteers

20,942

MOVING FORWARD

"Pull Up Your Socks"

— Twyla Tharp

We can't regain youth even though the media pushes us to try. Youth is past; time moves on, and so must we. How do we keep moving forward? That depends, both on circumstances and toward what purpose we invest our time and energy to glean the best out of life.

Twyla Tharp, premier choreographer and dancer, says, "Acknowledge you have choices. Make them. Your body will be a big part of this deal, and you will be ready and able to use it. You will be OK to re-identify yourself often along the way. Obstacles — you will meet many — go around, over, under, or through. Again often. Bounce back — yes, many, many times. Up is preferred to down. Stamina is your bailiwick. Train. Train more. Bend with the wind. *Get stronger for bending.*" Her advice is to push back and build stamina.



Push Back

Just like pushing back against obstacles, pushing back against static objects strengthens us. Most all of us can do isometric strengthening. Push any part of your body against any surface. Even the act of standing means we are pushing against the floor. "Pushing forward in the face of resistance has powerful lifelong results," Ms. Tharp says. Moving forward is your commitment to your body: you work for it so it will work for you.

"Don't accept the rumor that as the body ages, it becomes less. It becomes different."

— Twyla Tharp, age 80

Build Stamina

Do something once. Climb a set of stairs or lift your arm. Now do it twice, then three times, increasing as you are able. Feel proud of each one you do. That's how you build stamina, and stamina is your ability to endure. It's strength for when you need it most.

For many, we tend toward what the University of Pennsylvania psychologists call "learned helplessness." We avoid risk; we expect pain as we age, so we avoid activity, and then we begin to believe we are trapped in our circumstances. When we fall into that pattern, we forget our ability to bend, yield, and not break. Ms. Tharp asks, "What is the change you would like to see happen?... find what you can do for yourself and then fix it... when you find yourself grousing, my tough-love advice: pull up your socks." She dances the talk that she's advising. Through broken bones, aging as a dancer, and moments of doubt, she never stopped moving forward. Driven by her sense of purpose, sliding back meant working harder, working differently, to find a way to move forward, believing it was possible, *somehow*.

In 1908, at the beginning of his career, Matisse wrote: "My destination is always the same, but I work out different routes to get there." Matisse was driven to find joy in the world around him.

Ms. Tharp says, "Ultimately, optimism is a discipline, and it was this that steeled Matisse to work through his very last days. In his words: "There are always flowers for those who want to see them."

Pushing against obstacles, building your stamina to pull up your socks, and finding where the flowers are, means we become stronger through our efforts and better able to care for others and ourselves. Movement is life. Accept what is different and *keep moving forward!*

Resources:

"Keep it Moving" by Twyla Tharp
www.nytimes.com/2019/10/24/arts/dance/twyla-tharp-keep-it-moving-book.html
www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJ4JHKS60E

Preserving More Than Food

Nutritious food belongs on the table in all seasons. We dry, can, and freeze to preserve food so we can dip into the pantry when it is most needed, in the winter months when life is hardest. When we save the harvest, we preserve more than the fresh flavors of summer. We are reminded to be grateful to all those who play a part in the bountiful harvest.

Food nourishes our bodies just as stories nourish our lives, the same as why we stock our pantry with summer's harvest for a rainy day. What do you do when you want to pass on what you've learned that others can use in their "winters?" Do you make memory books, or write captions to photos, or work alongside younger generations? There is great wealth in your wisdom that others will find they need, someday. For them, it's like the advice you received in your teens or twenties that might have made no sense then, but years later, you discovered they were the wisest words you'd ever heard. And now, today, you can light the way for others.

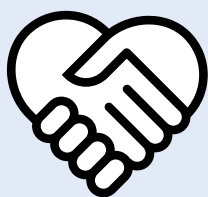
There is no "Farmer's Almanac" for living. We each create our own, made up of discoveries and stories that capture the art of living. The harvest of life is what we fill our days with, and this is an abundant table from which we feast together. *What will you serve to those you love?*

Each of us can help to share the story of Island Senior Resources into the community.

When you do, you increase the ability of people to age in their homes, safely, with quality care, and good nutrition. We rely on you to reach out to us, connect others to us, support us, and use our services when you, or those you know, need us. You help preserve the fruit of what ISR has worked for, for nearly 50 years, for those who come after us. Through dedication, support, and carrying our story forward, you are a vital part of sustaining the healthy ecosystem of our community.

Island Senior Resources Vision:

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.



Island Senior Resources connects.

Island Senior Resources is an active participant in the **Whidbey Island Food Security Consortium** alongside the Organic Farm School, Good Cheer, The Goose, Whidbey Island Nourishes, Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative (WIGC, growers throughout Whidbey), Goosefoot, and others. The goal of the consortium is creating food security throughout the island, and to promote a resilient, healthy, sustainable community for our farmers.

In summer, we offered a **Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program** for income-qualified seniors that supported 301 participants to get fresh food from local farmer's markets or Whidbey Island Grown Cooperative. In Oak Harbor, where the farmer's market was closed this year, WIGC provided produce baskets to ensure those in need received the farmer's harvest.

Our **Meals on Wheels Program** serves fresh vegetables from local growers, when available, in the meals we prepare. This connects the growers directly to those with needs for meals delivered to their homes. Our volunteer drivers connect with our clients and provide friendly safety well-checks when they deliver meals. It's about more than a meal; it's about connection with others who care.

We are here for you.

If you, or someone you know, needs Meals on Wheels, and are at least 60 years old, contact us at (360) 321-1600 or (360) 678-3373.

Meals delivered by
Meals On Wheels
July 2020–June 2021

79,960

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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

Island Senior Resources (Oak Harbor)

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

Island Senior Resources (Camano)

in collaboration with Camano Center
606 Arrowhead Rd.
Camano Island, WA 98282
By Utsalady School

Senior Thrift

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

The Journal Team

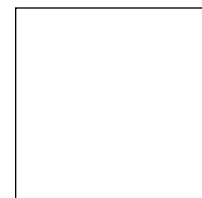
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www.senior-resources.org

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



Please support
Island Senior Resources
today with your gift.

Your caring is what sustains us!