

Island Times

Look for Island Times the LAST Thursday of each month
FEB. 2021

MONTHLY NEWSPAPER OF ISLAND SENIOR RESOURCES AND THE CENTER IN OAK HARBOR

Volume 4 • Issue 10

“The Good I’ve Found”

By Jessica Karpilo, Outreach Associate

Dorothy Bell, who has, at times, been both an Island Senior Resources’ volunteer and client, is no stranger to interviews. You may remember reading about when she jumped out of an airplane at 81, the class of students she knits hats for every year, or her joyful, curious approach to life that we can all learn from. So, when she tried to think of a way to thank her entire community for rallying around her in her time of need, sharing her story in the paper just made sense.

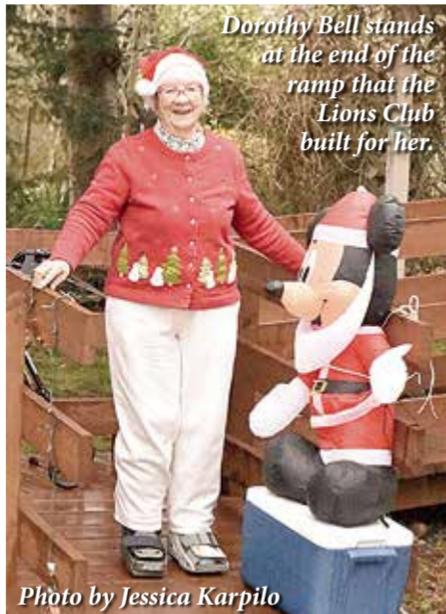
One year ago, Dorothy was in a car accident. She woke up in the hospital and discovered that, among other bumps, bruises, and breaks, her foot needed to be entirely rebuilt. Relieved and grateful to be alive, but with a long road to recovery ahead of her, the hospital, then a rehab center, would be her home for several months.

Meanwhile, everyone in the world was adjusting to life with COVID-19, practicing new habits, and, in many cases, dealing with loss of jobs, loss of life, and loss of any sense of normalcy. But, as we all have seen, none of this could stop us from caring for each other and our communities.

It is often when things seem the worst that people show up for us in unexpected ways; Dorothy will attest to this because Dorothy’s people showed up.

Her neighbors and friends did everything they could to make sure that Dorothy could come home. The Lions Club built a wheelchair ramp, friends reorganized her entire home, even removing the interior doors so that she could navigate with her wheelchair. Others made food and froze it in small containers, ensuring that she would have plenty of meals waiting for her. Neighbors and friends maintained her garden, which she, a master gardener, refers to as her “treasure” and what keeps her going. Someone from the Navy base even came down to trim her fruit trees.

Because of all of this, Dorothy was able to come home last July.



Dorothy Bell stands at the end of the ramp that the Lions Club built for her.

Photo by Jessica Karpilo

“Through my life I’ve decided that if anything bad happens, you have to look for the good.”

~Dorothy Bell

GOOD continued on page 8

Aging Mastery Program – Take the Steps Today Toward Positive Aging

By Carly Larson

Program Coordinator, City of Oak Harbor Senior Services

The Center In Oak Harbor is proud to partner with the National Council on Aging to offer you the Aging Mastery Starter Kit. The Starter Kit will inspire you to take steps toward positive aging across six dimensions and help you build your own playbook for aging well. Each dimension has specific guideposts, or actions, that you are encouraged to incorporate in your daily life. Each week

will have a RingCentral (Powered by Zoom) meeting with the group and a guest speaker to discuss the chapter and apply what we have learned. You can join the meeting by either calling in or using a device to connect to the video chat. This is a great time to make new connections, engage in lifelong learning, and start to master aging well.

AGING continued on page 2



The May/June AMP class participating in group discussion with guest speaker Jeffery Pleet

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHAT 1-5 WORDS EXPRESS WHAT YOU HOPE FOR 2021?

Sue Wagner
Oak Harbor
“Peace”

Sarah MacDougall
Freeland
“Taking care of all beings”

Karen Rudge
Oak Harbor
“Unity”

Jonathan Cluts
Sammamish
“Health, rationality, empathy, and peace”

Helen Richards
Denver
“Healing”

Nancy Ross
Oak Harbor
“Normalcy”

Harlan Bixby
Whidbey Island
“Neighbors, we are in this together”

Julia Dietz
Oak Harbor
“Hope and peace”



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The Center in Oak Harbor

51 SE Jerome St.,
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Front Desk: 360-279-4580

**TEMPORARILY CLOSED FOR
IN-PERSON PROGRAMMING**

Passport services & photos
available by appointment

Normal Business Hours:

Mon-Fri, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Additional evening and
weekend classes and events
as scheduled

Yearly Membership Dues: \$40

Available for anyone 50+ years

Liz Lange • 360-279-4581

Senior Services Administrator

Carly Larson • 360-279-4583

Program Coordinator

Send comments and suggestions
to clarson@oakharbor.org

How the Month of February and Haiku's are Alike

By Carly Larson

Program Coordinator, City of Oak Harbor Senior Services

Did you know February is national Haiku month? I didn't, but after learning it is, I felt like it made sense because February is the shortest month and Haiku's are one of the shortest forms of poetry. Haiku's are typically short, three-line poems that follow a 5-7-5 syllable pattern and usually don't rhyme, however, there are different varieties and variations. Haiku's originate from the Japanese culture, and it is said they can be tracked as far back as the 9th century. They are also viewed as more than just a poem, but also a way to look at nature around you and see something deeper. They are also meant to inspire and leave a strong impression. The Haiku poem written by Matsuo Basho, "The Old Pond" has always left an impression on me. It reminds me that sometimes what seems to be still, old, and nothing anymore still has life and makes a splash.



You can write your own Haiku poem following the traditional format:

Line 1 – 5 syllables

Line 2 – 7 syllables

Line 3 – 5 syllables

If you wish to share your Haiku please submit it to Carly Larson by email at clarson@oakharbor.org or by phone at 360-279-4583 or by mail: The Center In Oak Harbor, Attention: Carly Larson, 51 SE Jerome Street, Oak Harbor WA 98277.

Remember that just because a Haiku is short like the month of February doesn't mean it can't make a large impact. Happy February and national Haiku month!

Whidbey Island Genealogical Searchers (WIGS)

Tuesday, Feb. 16
1 p.m. on Zoom

(sign in 10 mins. early)

presents **Lisa Oberg** – **"FINDING YOUR FEMALE ANCESTORS"**
on Zoom

Identifying maiden names is a key objective,
but understanding how they lived is equally as important.



All are invited to join us. Non-WIGS members wishing to attend should send an email to whidbeygensearchers.org no later than Feb. 14.



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CLASSES and EVENTS at The Center in Oak Harbor

BRUNCH BOXES AT THE CENTER IN OAK HARBOR



December Brunch Box Example

Due to high demand and many requests, Brunch Boxes are back! The second Thursday of February, March, and April we will have Brunch Boxes available and the cost is \$15 per box for center members and \$20 for non-members. If you pre-order all three boxes before the February box deadline you get a discounted rate of \$40. Please pre-order your brunch box by

the Friday prior. Brunch boxes will contain an assortment of commercially prepared items handpicked 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 boxes!

SINGLE MINGLE

Friday, Feb. 12 • 3 p.m.

\$5 for center members
\$10 for non-members

This year's Single Mingle is going virtual! If you are single and looking to spark up some new conversations, this is for you. This will be a great opportunity to meet new people in a very comfortable setting, without leaving your home. Singles from Whidbey Island, Anacortes and surrounding areas are being invited to join. Center staff will have conversation starters and will facilitate the event by virtually placing participants into "breakout groups" and then rotating participants throughout the event. Must pre-register by Thursday, Feb. 11.

If you would like to participate and are new to using a virtual platform like Zoom or RingCentral, we would be happy to schedule a time to introduce you to the platform prior to the event. Please contact staff at 360-279-4580 to schedule an intro to Ring Central. If your computer does not have a camera or microphone, please call to check one out for the event.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY LUNCH

Wednesday, March 17
10:30 a.m. - noon

\$15 for center members
\$20 for non-members

Event Sponsor: Village Concepts of Oak Harbor – Harbor Tower Village

Wear some green and celebrate like the Irish this St. Patrick's Day as we serve up a to-go classic lunch including corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, and Irish soda bread. Please sign up by Friday, March 5 to reserve your spot as there is limited quantity available.



The Center would like to extend a thank you to Harbor Tower Village for sponsoring the St. Patrick's Day Lunch. Harbor Tower Village is a retirement community located on Whidbey Avenue that offers beautiful common areas, apartment style rooms, and opportunities for community involvement, learning events, and cultural outings.

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 winter but may not be out on days of inclement weather.

THE CENTER IS NOW A RENEW ACTIVE SITE



The Center is excited to announce that 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. The cost is \$25 month for members and \$30 for non-members. We are now excepting drop-in fees at this time: \$5 members, \$7 for non-members. Silver and Fit and some Kaiser insurance plans will reimburse the cost. Please inquire with Carly Larson, 360-279-4583, if you believe you have an eligible insurance plan.

We are continuing to offer virtual Yoga with Maria Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. The cost is \$25 month for members and \$30 for non-members. We are now excepting drop in fees at this time: \$5 members, \$7 for non-members.

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

NEW MEMBERSHIP DATABASE SOFTWARE

As part of our efforts to return to in-person programming, we received CARES grant funding for a new membership software, CivicRec, which will allow for online payments and reservations. Center staff are working to get the new software program set up and active, and input center members' information into the new software system. If you are a current member, watch for more information to come about how to log in to your account and set up a password.

AGING continued from page 1

Virtual Group Discussion Dates and Topics:

- March 9 - Welcome & Introduction
- March 16 - Gratitude & Mindfulness
- March 23 - Health & Well-being
- March 30 - Finances & Future Planning
- April 6 - Connections & Community
- April 13 - Creativity & Learning
- April 20 - Legacy & Purpose

What Participants are Saying About the AMP Class:

"It was good to focus on various aspects of living well as we travel though this journey of aging. I was surprised how much I enjoyed not only the facilitators, but the

participants themselves. I ended each session with thoughtful ideas and a chuckle or two." - Ivy B.

"Thank you for organizing the Aging Mastery Program.

It was well done and the speakers were good. I think spreading it over the 3 weeks was excellent as it takes time to process and incorporate suggestions. Meeting new 'friends' on line was fun and I am finally mastering zoom." - Sue S.

To register for the Aging Mastery Program and get your Starter Kit please contact Carly Larson at 360-279-4583 or clarson@oakharbor.org by Friday, Feb. 23.

Are you interested in the material, but not the Virtual presentations? You can still request your free kit and go through the materials at your own pace.

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Support Group Meetings now available online

"I'm tired, I don't want to do this any longer.....I thought of driving into a tree..... I didn't know there was a place that held other people with my experiences.....who get it.....these meetings saved my life." (Support Group Participant)

To receive information about joining any one of these groups, or to request additional support group meetings, contact Mel at mel@islandseniorservices.org.

TIME TOGETHER @ HOME ZOOM SUPPORT GROUP

Mondays except public holidays 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Facilitated by Time Together director Mel Watson. 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.

Time Together@ Home is an online Zoom event. To register for Time Together @ Home click here to fill out the participation form or email mel@islandseniorservices.org for further information. Once we receive your completed registration information, we will send you instructions for joining the weekly online events.

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesdays, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Facilitated by Mel Watson. 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.

Contact mel@islandseniorservices.org to receive Zoom information to join the group.

ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesdays, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Facilitated by Mel Watson. 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.

Contact mel@islandseniorservices.org to receive Zoom information to join the group.

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 Levier <https://leverier.com/> "Living well with Parkinson's" is hosted by Mel Watson. 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!

To join on Zoom go to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/393691440>

CARE RECEIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Alternating Thursdays 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Facilitated by Mel Watson. This online



Zoom group is for people living with Parkinson's Disease, or any other challenging condition, and who receive support and care from a family caregiver. This is a safe place to discuss challenges and share experiences.

Contact mel@islandseniorservices.org to receive Zoom information to join the group.

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.

GET MOVING

by Jessica Karpilo, Outreach Associate & Debbie Metz, Nutrition Director

As plants go dormant and the winter season fills our island, it can be easy to find yourself becoming

more dormant and sedentary too. This is especially difficult this year as we face this time in the

depths of a pandemic, but every little bit of movement helps. Start slowly and build movement into

your day. Whatever you do, just get moving!

Ways to Move More:

- Schedule a daily phone call with a friend or loved one and go for a walk around the neighborhood while you chat.
- Clean the house or organize the closet.
- Instead of sitting on the couch, stretch, or exercise while you watch your favorite shows.
- Play like a kid— jump in the pile of leaves you just raked or splash through a puddle.
- Exercise along with a workout video (YouTube is full off free ones for all ability levels)
- Turn on your favorite song, and dance. Move your body however it feels good.
- Stretch.
- Pull weeds in the yard or garden.
- Join ISR's yoga group every Thursday. (Visit www.senior-resources.org/calendar to join).
- If you feel ready, try brisk walking, biking, or swimming.
- Be intentional about making active choices in your day. Take the stairs instead elevator or park a little further away at the grocery store.
- Try something new. Take up biking, dancing, martial arts, gardening, or playing catch. Try things until you find something you love.

Cut out this daily activity tracker and use it to help make movement a habit.

My Physical Activity Diary

Week: _____ Month: _____

Monday		
Time of Day	Description of Activity (Type and Intensity Level)	Duration

Tuesday		
Time of Day	Description of Activity (Type and Intensity Level)	Duration

Wednesday		
Time of Day	Description of Activity (Type and Intensity Level)	Duration

Thursday		
Time of Day	Description of Activity (Type and Intensity Level)	Duration

Friday		
Time of Day	Description of Activity (Type and Intensity Level)	Duration

Saturday		
Time of Day	Description of Activity (Type and Intensity Level)	Duration

Sunday		
Time of Day	Description of Activity (Type and Intensity Level)	Duration

Notes:

ALL PROGRAMMING AND CLASSES ARE ONLINE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Free Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class on Zoom

SIX WEEKS:
Thursdays • March 18 – April 22 • 1–3 p.m.

This class is designed to:

- Help caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend
- Develop a wealth of self-care tools to reduce personal stress, prioritize, self-care, manage emotions, increase confidence, and set goals for yourself.

Pre-registration required. Go to www.senior-resources.org/calendar and click on March 18 to register. For more information contact Finn Lambourn reception@islandseniorservices.org or call 360.321.1600 or 360-678-3373, Ext 0.

Books for the class can be purchased online at www.powerfultoolsforcaregivers.org/product-category/caregiver-helpbook/ or borrowed for the duration of the class from Island Senior Resources (Bayview) or the Camano Center. Please call for more information.

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.

Monday, March 15, 1 p.m.

To pre-register, go to www.senior-resources.org/calendar and click on the date of the event. For more information call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373.

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:

Wednesday, Feb. 17 • 1 p.m. Thursday, Mar. 4 • 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Mar. 23 • 1 p.m.

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) offer unbiased, confidential advising for Medicare benefits and insurance options.



FEBRUARY

\$6 Suggested donation for meals

WEEK 1		
Mon	1	Potato Soup w/Ham
Wed	3	Mushroom Herb Chicken
Fri	5	Beef Lasagna
WEEK 2		
Mon	8	Turkey Tortellinin
Wed	10	Beef Enchilada Bake
Fri	12	Balsamic Marinated Pork Chop
WEEK 3		
Mon	15	PRESIDENT'S DAY - CLOSED
Wed	17	Beef w/Barley and Vegetables Soup
Fri	19	Lemon Artichoke Chicken
WEEK 4		
Mon	22	Chili Con Carne
Wed	24	Pork Tenderloin w/Apples & Carrots
Fri	26	Chicken and Dumplings

CLOSED TUESDAY AND THURSDAYS



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Challenging Our Resilience and Finding Hope

By Cheryn Weiser, Executive Director, Island Senior Resources

"They say beauty comes from a spirit that has weathered many hardships in life and somehow continues with resilience. Grace can be found in a soul that ages softly, even amid the tempest.

I think the loveliest by far is the one whose gentle heart bears a hundred scars from caring, yet still finds its way to pick up the lamp, one more time, to light the way for love." ~Susan Frybort

In these dark, wet, winter days, we are asked to be resilient, to find hope amid the darkness. As 2020 passed, I found cause to look for hope and find paths to resilience. My search brought me to the Susan Frybort poem above. Each of us has experienced hardships, offered grace, and cared deeply. I find her poem a beacon amid the storm of life in early 2021, prompting me to find hope.

Perhaps each of us should light a candle or a lamp during this time, staring into the glowing light, allowing ourselves hope. Looking into the light of the candle, I find hope in knowing I live on Whidbey where our island life is a little gentler. I find hope in my grandchildren filled with wonder about the world in ways that make me both laugh and cry. I find hope in the passion and dedication of all of the volunteers and staff that make the programs and services at Island Senior Resources happen each day. I find hope in the daffodils that rise in pots outside my home or the birds that return for their annual nest building in the nearby trees and bushes.

In this year, 2021, as we seek respite from the dark and wet. Look for all that is hopeful around you, be they small or large. Spring and summer will come. And, once again, we are resilient.

THE PATHWAY TO EMPATHY

By Charles LaFond, author, engager, ISR staff member

Some say this is a time for sympathy as people around us suffer in various ways. Others say this is a time for compassion as people around us suffer in various ways. And both are correct. However, I think the word toward which we must attempt to strive is "empathy."

And the reason is simple. It comes first. Empathy must precede both sympathy and compassion the way the bubbling yeast must precede bread dough's rising and then baking.

Before 2019, we all felt able to manage alone. We went about our business and tut-tutted about the bad news in our papers. Many judged the "less fortunate" for their poor planning. A house fire here, a car accident there, an octogenarian who died in their sleep were "others." They were people "over there" to which horrible things had happened. And

we just kept shopping and eating and watching the news behind closed doors. But now, in February 2021, for the first time since the world wars, we live in a planetary reality of "we" and not of "they." Old and young, rich and poor, every race, color, creed, and orientation, we are an entire population of people going through COVID together.

It used to be that we had sympathy for "others" in a challenging situation, taking part in their situation by feeling sorry for them. And then some of the most generous among us were compassionate to others by giving to others in a challenging situation, taking part in their situation by feeling with them, remotely.

What COVID has begun to teach us is that first, we must place ourselves in the shoes of others and try to understand their feelings as if there were our feelings. This takes a lot of internal effort. An international pandemic can do that

– force us all into one planetary awareness of suffering – invite us into higher emotional intelligence.

My hope is that we are no longer feeling for others and that we are no longer donating to others, but that we are finally feeling with others – as a species and no longer as groups. Because it is then, and only then, that real generosity will emerge from our gratitude for simply being alive and with a planet of 7.8 billion other Homo sapiens sapiens. This name (Homo sapiens sapiens) is what scientists call humans. It is a subset of "Homo sapiens," which we often call the caveman or cavewoman. The words "Homo sapiens sapiens" means "human wise and extra wise."

As I watch the nightly news, I am not yet convinced that we are so very wise a species. But as a fundraiser, watching people donate to help people, I am more and more optimistic.

HOW TO REACH ISLAND SENIOR RESOURCES

For all departments and all staff call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373

Nutrition/Meals on Wheels
Aging & Disability Resources
Family Caregiver Support
Time Together @ Home
Medicaid In-Home Care/
Case Management
Medical Transportation/
Volunteer Services
SHIBA

Senior Thrift
360-321-1600
or 360-678-3373

Oak Harbor Aging & Disability Resources
360-675-0311

For more information, visit
www.senior-resources.org

OUR LOCATIONS

Island Senior Resources
14594
Langley
The Center
(in collaboration with... Center)
5...
Oak Harbor
(in collaboration with... Center)
... Rd
... WA 98282
Senior Thrift
... dard Ave
... WA 98249
For more information call:
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ISLAND SENIOR RESOURCES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Executive Director: Cheryn Weiser
Please contact Island Senior Resources
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Island Senior Resources eNews!

Join our email list and receive our monthly eNews the last Friday of every month. It's full of updates for the month ahead: sales at Senior Thrift, special events, classes, menus, and links to great articles. Sign up online at www.senior-resources.org.



Thursday- Saturday
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Now there will finally be a place for all those items you cleaned out of your closets during quarantine!

Donations will be accepted Sundays only
9-11 a.m. or until capacity is reached.

360-321-1600 • 360-678-3373

Health precautions will be in place, masks will be required, customer flow will be limited, restrooms and dressing rooms will be closed, the store will be sanitized throughout each day, and donated items will be quarantined for 3 days prior to reaching the sales floor.

Every Thursday is Treasure Hunt Thursday: one item your choice, 15% off
Every Friday: books 25% off

ALL FEBRUARY: Red tags, 25% off • White tags, 50% off

DATE	DAY	ITEM	SPECIAL
Feb. 6	Saturday	JEWELRY SALE	25% off
Feb. 7	Sunday	Sporting	15% off
Feb. 13	Saturday	Furniture and Vases	15% off
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Issues That Matter: Pandemic Pressures

By Sno-Isle Libraries

After months of coronavirus-related shutdowns, restrictions on travel and gatherings, mask mandates, rising infections, and a growing sense of loss, everyone feels the stress and strain. No matter whether you're grieving the death of a relative or friend to coronavirus, or if you've been in a multi-generational household, an essential worker who faces the public, a caregiver to someone with vulnerabilities, or you simply miss being with people during isolation, the pandemic has been hard on mental health.

Sno-Isle Libraries recognizes that.

The library district is offering a new Issues That Matter series, Pandemic Pressures: Supporting Community and Family Mental Health. The series focuses on the profound effects the coronavirus pandemic has had on everyone's emo-

tional well-being with events aimed to help individuals and families of all ages.

All Issues That Matter events are being held online as Zoom webinars.

"We're all in a pressure cooker," Sno-Isle Libraries Programming Coordinator Anne Murphy said. "We'll focus on reducing the stress, not on what's causing the stress."

Sno-Isle Libraries staff worked with public health officials in Snohomish and Island counties to identify issues, develop event topics, recruit panelists, and provide current mental-health resources.

Organizers are planning to schedule several Pandemic Pressure events in early 2021 based on the wide range of topics they identified that affect all ages – everyone from families with young children to seniors.

The first Issues That Matter event, Well-



ness in Uncertainty, was held on Jan. 14. Panelists helped individuals and families learn if their feelings are normal or if they're a sign to seek help, how to identify warning signs in themselves

and loved ones, and shared information about available community resources.

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Strategies for Well-being: Part 5

Prioritizing Effective Sleep

By Betsy Griffith, LMHC, Island County Human Services

Sleep is potentially the most impactful building block of wellbeing. When sleep is disrupted, all of our other systems suffer. Poor sleep is linked to difficulty concentrating, memory issues, mood changes, clumsiness, compromised immunity, increased risk of heart disease, weight gain, and more. Sleep disturbance can be a couple of disrupted nights or regular ineffective sleep.

Our first step should be with our doctor for evaluation of underlying conditions. The next step is sleep hygiene. On paper, it's easy to work on better sleep, but it's a commitment to overall wellbeing.

First, make a schedule and stick to it. Go to bed at the same time every day. Wake up at the same time every day. Schedule 7-9 hours of sleep every night.

The steps you take throughout the day will impact your sleep. Physical activity during the day is associated with better sleep at night. Avoid naps. Don't eat a heavy meal close to bedtime.

Next, avoid substances that disrupt sleep. Caffeine has a half-life of 4-5 hours. So that cup of coffee in the afternoon can still impact sleep. Try to cut out caffeine six hours before bedtime, but a noon cutoff is better. Alcohol can increase drowsiness but interferes with REM. Moderate use of alcohol (one serving per day for women; two servings per day for men) has been connected to 24% reduction in sleep quality.

Develop a calming bedtime routine: take a warm shower, brush your teeth, keep lighting dim, shut off technology at least an hour before bedtime and leave it out of the bedroom if possible. If you need to keep phones nearby, set them to quiet or night mode so that dings and vibrations don't disrupt your sleep. Some calming stretches and slow calming breaths can help too.

Set the room for sleep. Cooler temperatures are associated with better sleep (65 degrees). Lower light before bed helps to cue your body to sleep. Eliminate light during sleep by turning off any devices and using light-blocking curtains. Earplugs can help to muffle noise disruptions.

If we've tried the above and we need more help? Start with a sleep diary and look for patterns in successful and disrupted sleep.

There are also some great techniques that can help. A regular mindfulness practice of as little as 10 minutes a day has been tied to so many benefits, including improved sleep and stress reduction. If you could benefit from help in developing a mindfulness practice, there are many options, and many of them are free. Smiling mind, a website and app, has many guided mindfulness activities. Calm is another option with specific sleep goals for about \$6 per month. Insight Timer is a free app that offers guided meditations to support sleep among selections like yoga nidra, calming music, and more. Are you a skeptic? Check out 10 percent happier, an app, podcast, and book, by Dan Harris of ABC news. He struggled with his belief in this practice, but found it helpful in his recovery from PTSD. Perhaps the most comprehensive option is the Veteran's Affairs App, CBT-i. This app is free to anyone and utilizes cognitive behavioral therapy principles to support improved sleep.

If you find yourself unable to fall or stay asleep due to the inability to stop worrisome thoughts, there are some great podcasts for exactly that need. Sleep with me; Sleep Whispers; Deep Energy and Dark Ambient; Nothing Much Happens; and Slow Radio are a few that can be a blank and quieting slate for your nighttime rumination.

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GOOD continued from page 1

The ramp especially made this possible—“They wouldn’t have let me come home otherwise,” she said.

Since she has been home, her best friend has helped her organize mail and medications. She even met a new neighbor whom she previously knew only through her dogs, who helped while she was away and has since become a good friend. Dorothy has a list of friends she can call if she needs anybody, but she is proud to say that she has not had to use it.

“I’m determined. I’m very determined to do things,” she said.

Challenges like finding where people put things when they rearranged or mail being delivered after dark might frustrate others, but Dorothy laughs them off, seeing them as opportunities to push herself and find creative solutions.

When asked how she is able to stay so positive, she barely hesitates before sharing, “I’ve been on my own— I left home when I was 15, and through my life I’ve decided that if anything bad happens, you have to look for the good.”

“And look at the good I’ve found! All these people that have helped me and done things for me. It brings tears to my eyes. And that’s the good I’ve found.”

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Dorothy was happy she was still able to knit hats for a classroom full of students and decorate her home (inside and out!) for Christmas, things she does every year.

“People tell me I’m doing good, but then they add ‘for your age,’” she laughs as she says this. “It doesn’t seem real. I’m 87 now. I don’t know how you’re supposed to feel when you’re 87, but I don’t feel as if I’m 87.”

Dorothy continued, saying when her physical therapist asked what she wants to be able to do when she’s better, she told them that she wanted to be able to get on her roof and clean her gutters out. She jokes that she nearly gave them a heart attack. She laughs, putting it simply, “I’ve always done it, and I still will.”

Dorothy asked me to write this article so that she could thank her friends, neighbors, and community for everything they’ve done for her, but now that it’s written, I also need to thank Dorothy.

She reminded me of something we could all use reminding of these days— you have to look for the good. You have to look for the good, because even in the midst of pain and difficulties, there’s so much good to be found.

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The health officials emphasize that it’s normal now to feel “not OK” amid the pandemic, so it’s more important than ever to destigmatize and normalize asking for help to deal with emotional and mental health needs. People don’t have to bottle up feelings of fear, grief, sadness, anger, and frustration that the pandemic has stirred up. Everyone has those feelings now, and it’s a struggle to process them.

“It’s easier to talk about the pain now because everybody is going through it,” Murphy said. “What can we do to make things better? We want to help people learn to define when to get help for themselves or others and identify the different forms of help that are available.”

Early Pandemic Pressures events are expected to focus on working families with children since the pandemic has affected them on multiple fronts with challenges for employment, day-care closures, and online learning. Organizers are developing several family-focused event topics, including how to keep scheduling norms for stability, parenting skills, and community and school resources.

“We know we need to get resources to struggling families,” Murphy said. “We know they’re hurting, and they need help.”

Additional Pandemic Pressures events will be directed at the broader community, including seniors. Among the potential topics, event organizers have identified are technology access, substance abuse, depression, self-care, the effects of long-term isolation, and coping with grief.

All upcoming Issues That Matter: Pandemic Pressures events are listed online at sno-isle.org/events.

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