



Members enjoy our NEW Euchre Group at the Olympia Senior Center



Brian's View

A Message From the Executive Director

Recently we received a donation that asked that we spend their money on direct services and not on administration. **As a veteran nonprofit employee, and donor**, I understand the impulse to do this. I believe it is important to know about the administrative overhead of any nonprofit organization when donating. However, let me assure you that **at Senior Services for South Sound, we do not employ anyone extraneous to the performance of our mission.**

One way to evaluate the amount of administrative expense in an organization is to consider what is commonly called their **admin overhead rate**. This is usually presented as a percentage. Depending on who you ask, this percentage is best somewhere between 10-15%. As a guideline, this is telling you that this percentage goes toward people who are not directly themselves providing programming. Instead, the people and expenses in this grouping are in fact administrative, or supportive.

Who falls into that category?

Here, it's me, the Executive Director; our Finance Director; our Development Director, our HR Director; and a few others **whose work is to support everyone else!** Now, you may be skeptical about the value I provide — and that's fair! — but bear with me. I would suggest that you consider how everyone else here would perform their jobs without being paid a fair wage? How would our contracts be managed and our books be accurate so that funders are willing to fund us? That's our Finance Director. Whose job is to raise more than a million dollars each year so we can fulfill our mission? That's our Development Director. We may not get excited about our donations paying for development, but nonprofits require professional staff to put on the parties, put on events and manage the complex world of donation processing and acknowledgment. Every penny of administration here goes toward facilitating the work of everyone else. **And we do it in a highly cost-effective and efficient way.**

My point is that no one is "extra" at Senior Services. **Everyone, every person here, performs vital functions to ensure that our mission shines and seniors thrive.** What's our admin overhead rate, you ask? About 13%. That compares favorably to other nonprofits. We celebrate our shared role in performing the mission we all love.



Brian Windrope, Executive Director

Raising Awareness with Ribbons

By Senior Services Staff

At Senior Services for South Sound, **we remain committed to combating isolation and loneliness** while fostering inclusivity and celebrating diversity within our community. As part of these efforts, we're excited to announce the launch of our **2025 Ribbon Campaign**—a meaningful initiative designed to spark awareness, encourage conversations and bring people together.

Throughout the year, we'll highlight different causes and observances, each connected to themes that resonate with our mission and values. These monthly awareness efforts will **allow us to engage as a community** while promoting education and understanding.

Our first awareness month will begin this month with **American Heart Health Month**. Heart health is essential for overall well-being and by bringing attention to this critical topic, we aim to support our seniors and their families in making informed decisions about their health.

At the reception counters in both the Olympia and Lacey centers, ribbons representing the month's awareness will be available for everyone — volunteers, visitors, members and staff alike. These complimentary ribbons are a symbol of participation and connection, providing an easy way to show support and spark conversations. Participation is entirely optional, and everyone is welcome to take part in a way that feels comfortable to them.

We believe that curiosity and conversation are the first steps toward positive change. By wearing a ribbon, you're not just raising awareness — you're creating opportunities to

learn from one another and share experiences. Whether it's through a simple conversation at the coffee bar, attending an awareness event or taking a ribbon home as a reminder, every small act contributes to building a stronger, more connected community.

In the months ahead, we'll explore a wide range of important topics, from health and wellness to cultural awareness and advocacy. **Each ribbon will represent a cause that encourages us to pause, reflect and engage meaningfully with those around us.**

We look forward to sharing this journey with you and hope the Ribbon Campaign becomes a source of inspiration and connection. Together, we can continue to build a vibrant, inclusive community that thrives on mutual respect, understanding and support.

Looking Ahead:

March: Gender Equality Awareness

April: National Minority Health Month

May: High Blood Pressure

June: World Elder Abuse

July: Senior Services

August: Have an idea? Email hr@southsoundseniors.org

September: Suicide Prevention

October: Hunger Awareness

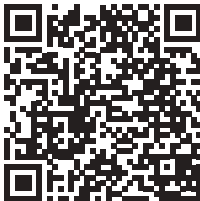
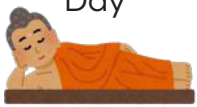
November: National Family Caregiver Month

December: Isolation & Loneliness Awareness

Senior Services for South Sound



Celebrating *Diversity* February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Monthly Observances: - Black History Month - Heart Month - Cancer Prevention Month			 For more information and resources, scan or visit our blog at southsoundseniors.org/news			
2 Groundhog Day 	3 	4 Rosa Parks Day World Cancer Day 	5	6	7 National Wear Red Day 	8
9	10	11	12	13 Tu B'Shevat 	14 Valentines Day	15 Parinirvana Day 
16	17 CLOSED Presidents Day 	18	19 	20 World Day of Social Justice International Mother Language Day	21 	22
23	24	25 Maha Shivaratri (-26) 	26	27	28 Ramadan (- March 19) 	

Shared Homes, Renewed Hope

*By Rebecca Hutchinson,
Home Share Program
Manager*

As we face the ongoing challenges of affordable housing in our community, many seniors are forced to make difficult decisions. Take the story of Marc and Jane, for example.

Marc is a former business owner and barber with a monthly income of less than \$1,500 and the high cost of living makes it impossible for him to afford his own apartment. To meet the recommended guideline of spending no more than one-third of his income on rent, **he would need to find housing for under \$433 per month.** Yet, even the most subsidized apartments in Thurston County start at **\$1,099 per month.**

“ Sadly, Marc’s situation is far from unique. Many seniors in our community are struggling to live independently, torn between paying for housing and covering basic needs like food and medications.”

Jane moved to Washington to be closer to her adult children and began renting a home with her son’s assistance. However, she soon found the home more isolating than she had anticipated, and **her limited monthly income of under \$1,600 made it difficult to make ends meet.** After learning about the **Home Share Program** from a Senior Services member, she decided to give it a try.

Through the program, Jane was matched with Marc, and they discovered they both shared a love for minimalism and a passion for keeping things tidy. Over time, they built a friendship, and now Jane is able to afford her rental home more comfortably. She also has a companion in her home, which helps ease the feelings of loneliness and isolation she had been experiencing.

At Senior Services, our hearts go out to Marc, Jane, and the countless seniors like them who face not only financial struggles but also the emotional toll of loneliness and isolation. We are encouraged,

however, by the progress we are making in addressing these challenges. **Our Home Share Program, which connects seniors with affordable housing options, has seen tremendous growth and success.** In 2024 alone, we received 226 program inquiries, processed 80 Seeker applications and reviewed 20 Provider applications, leading to 20 individuals successfully finding or maintaining housing through Home Share living arrangements with an average rent of \$526 per month.

These numbers go beyond statistics — they represent **real people who have found safe, affordable, and supportive homes.** We are committed to continuing this important work and exploring new ways to bring people together and provide meaningful support. Together, we can ensure that our seniors have a dignified, connected and secure place to live.

Find more information, applications and stories of successful Home Share matches at southsoundseniors.org

**Home
Share**

360.586.6181 ext. 136



Trips & Tours

Find Your Next Adventure!



Extended Travel: Spotlight on the French Riviera September 4 — 12, 2025 **Hurry, discount ends February 26!**

Time is running out to save your spot and lock in a \$550 discount on this once-in-a-lifetime trip where you'll uncover the chic resorts, sun-soaked beaches and elegant allure that attracts the rich and famous to the exquisite French Riviera!

Unpack for a leisurely multi-night stay, embracing the luxury and breathtaking beauty of the French Riviera, or Côte d'Azur. Spend time in the fairy-tale principality of Monaco. Discover the opulence of Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild and Gardens. Get a glimpse into the lives of the rich and famous in Cannes. Watch artisans create fragrant perfumes. Enjoy leisure time to explore on your own. It's time you lived a little bit of the good life.

Double Occupancy: \$4,999 per person

Single Occupancy: \$6,599 per person

(Price valid until February 26)

Includes round-trip air, transfers, baggage handling, 8 nights lodging, 12 meals, sightseeing, tastings, tours, and more!



NEW! Extended Travel: Tropical Costa Rica

November 17 — 25, 2025

Hurry, discount ends February 26!

Lush forests and stunning waterfalls... rumbling volcanoes and endless coastlines... Costa Rica is a paradise teeming with exotic plants and incredible animals. Enjoy the tranquil views of Arenal Volcano from your hotel. Explore part of the 20,000-acre nature preserve of Cano Negro on a riverboat adventure. Spend two nights in Monteverde's lush cloud forest. Experience the forest canopy on your choice of a hanging bridges nature walk or an exhilarating zip-lining tour. Luxuriate at a resort for two nights at Playa Carrillo, Guanacaste, known for its breathtaking beauty and fine sandy beaches. You will find a slice of paradise and so much more.

Triple Occupancy: \$2,969 per person

Double Occupancy: \$2,999 per person

Single Occupancy: \$3,499 per person

Round Trip Air from Seattle Tacoma Intl Airport, Air Taxes and Fees/Surcharges, Hotel Transfers



New Catalog Out Now!

Scan Here



Get yours today at our reception desks, or
visitsouthsoundseniors.org/trips-tours

About SHIBA

Every month our SHIBA program (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) trained volunteers are available to help you understand the Medicare program.

If you are new to Medicare or have been on Medicare for some time, feel free to contact us at our message line at 360.586.6181 ext. 134 and a volunteer advisor will return your call, usually within two business days, or sooner.

SHIBA presentations in February

(For presentations via Zoom, please register with our office at 360.586.6181 ext. 134)

CLASS	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Medicare - Getting Started	February 5	11:00 am to 1:00 pm	ZOOM
Medicare - Getting Started	February 12	11:00 am to 1:00 pm	Olympia Senior Center
Medicare - Getting Started	February 20	11:00 am to 3:00 pm	Mason County Senior Activities Center
Medicare - Getting Started	February 20	10:00 am to 2:00 pm	ZOOM
Medicare - Getting Started	February 26	6:30 to 8:00 pm	ZOOM

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment & Prescription Drug Savings: Important Updates for 2025

By Kelly Hudson, SHIBA Program Manager

As we kick off the new year, it's time to review important changes that can impact your healthcare plan and prescription drug costs. Two key updates for Medicare recipients are in effect now—changes to the Medicare Advantage open enrollment period and a cap on prescription drug costs. Here's everything you need to know:

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment: Time to Make Changes

The annual Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment period is underway! If you're already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, now is the time to make any changes to your coverage. Whether you're looking for a plan that better suits your health needs or simply want to explore new options, you can make changes from January 1 to March 31. Any changes you make during this period will take effect the first day of the following month after you enroll.



What Can You Do?

- **Switch Plans:** If you're unhappy with your current plan, this is the perfect time to look at alternatives. Be sure to check if your doctor is included in the new plan's network and confirm that your prescription drugs are covered.
- **Consider Your Options:** You can either call 1-800-MEDICARE, use the Medicare Plan Finder tool online, or reach out directly to your insurance company to enroll. Your old plan will be automatically canceled when you switch.

Who Can Make Changes?

If you were enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan in 2024, you can make changes. However, this open enrollment period doesn't apply to:

- People with Medicare Advantage plans through a former employer.
- Those whose Medicare Advantage plan was discontinued in December.
- Individuals with Medicaid coverage.

A New Era of Prescription Drug Savings

Starting January 1, 2025, there's a game-changing benefit for Medicare recipients—a \$2,000 cap on prescription drug costs. This new cap, passed as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, promises to save millions of seniors thousands of dollars on their medications. This move comes after years of rising prescription drug costs that have made it increasingly difficult for families to afford necessary treatments. With this cap, those on Medicare Part D can now budget more easily, knowing they won't pay more than \$2,000 for their medications each year. But that's not all—insulin costs are now capped at \$35 per month for Medicare recipients, making life-saving medications far more accessible. Additionally, for the first time ever, Medicare will negotiate lower prices for certain prescription drugs, and the results are already being felt. Medicare has already negotiated lower prices for 10 drugs, and in the coming years, 15-20 more drugs will be added to this list.

A Bright Future for Medicare Recipients

To take advantage of these opportunities, make sure you review your current Medicare Advantage plan before March 31, and explore your prescription drug options now that the \$2,000 cap is in place. This is a step toward ensuring that your healthcare costs are more manageable and that you can focus on what truly matters—your health. Take action today and make the most of these exciting new benefits! As always, call your local SHIBA volunteer line if you have any questions: 360-586-6181, ext. 134.

Olympia Senior Center Weekly Activities

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00 to 10:00 Advanced Enhancefitness	10:00 to 1:00 Tech Help w/ Adam	9:00 to 10:00 Advanced EnhanceFitness® \$	10:00 to 11:00 Gentle Yoga \$	8:30 to 11:00 Woodcarving
10:30 to 1:00 Tech Help w/ Melinda	10:00 to 11:00 Gentle Yoga \$	10:00 to 1:00 Tech Help w/ Adam	12:30 Pinochle	9:00 to 10:00 Advanced EnhanceFitness® \$
10:30 to 11:30 Gentle Yoga \$	10:00 to 11:30 Current Issues	10:00 to 12:00 Parkinson's Disease Support Group	12:30 to 2:00 Music Mends Minds	10:00 to 1:00 Tech Help w/ Adam
12:00 to 3:00 Table Games	10:00 to 11:30 Rock Painting with Inclusion	10:00 to 12:00 Beginning Mah Jongg \$	1:00 to 2:00 Adaptive Creative Dance \$	10:30 to 11:30 Tai Ji Quan \$
12:00 to 4:00 Cribbage	10:30 to 11:30 Tai Ji Quan \$	10:30 to 11:30 Gentle Yoga	2:00 to 3:45 Beginning and Intermediate Ukulele Part II \$	12:00 to 3:00 Table Games
12:00 to 1:30 World Geography: Come Explore!	12:00 to 4:00 Reader's Theater Rehearsals	12:00 to 3:00 Table Games	2:00 to 4:00 Yarn Magic	1:30 to 2:30 Beginning EnhanceFitness® \$
1:00 to 3:00 Party Bridge	1:00 to 2:00 Zentangle \$	12:30 to 2:00 Euchre	BOLD = Senior Services for South Sound membership required to participate \$ = Class Fee associated with activity. Read full class description on our website at southsoundseniors.org/activities or in the Lifelong Learning Catalog Dates and times are subject to change, call the appropriate center if you have questions about your activity. Olympia: 360.586.6181 or Lacey: 360.407.3967	
1:30 to 2:30 Beginning EnhanceFitness® \$	12:45 to 1:45 Drop-In Meditation	1:00 to 4:00 Mah Jongg		
	1:00 to 2:00 Chair Yoga \$	1:30 to 2:30 Beginning EnhanceFitness® \$		

Check out the Lifelong Learning Catalog for class descriptions and more!

Olympia Senior Center Monthly Activities

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
3 10:00 - 11:30 Mothers with Adult Estranged Children Support Group 1:00 - 2:00 Reader's Theater Group Meeting	4	5 10:00 - 11:00 Low Vision Support Group 10:00 - 2:00 Bus Buddies 10:00 am - 3:00 Haircuts (by appointment only) 12:00 - 2:00 Read a Play, Engage and Have Fun	6	7 10:00 am - 3:00 Haircuts (by appointment only)
10 1:00 - 3:00 Reader's Theater Script Readings and Discussion	11 11:00 am - 1:00 ALS Support Group 11:45 LGBTQ+ Lunch Bunch	12 2:00 - 4:00 Death Cafe	13 10:00 - 11:00 Explore Olympia Walkabout 5:00 pm *Dine Out @ Asahi Sushi	14 10:30 Unforgettable Art with Maureen Wells
17 CLOSED (Presidents Day) 	18	19 10:00 - 3:00 Haircuts (by appointment only) 12:00 - 2:00 Read a Play, Engage and Have Fun	20 10:00 - 12:00 Tech Help with Rich 10:00 Senior Reads Book Club: <i>The Life We Bury</i>, by Allen Eskens	21 10:00 - 3:00 Haircuts (by appointment only) 10:30 - 11:30 Food Bank
24 1:00 - 3:00 Reader's Theater Script Readings and Discussion	25	26	27	28 2:00 - 3:00 Bereavement Support Group: Life After Loss (via ZOOM)
*Secure your spot for Dine Out by Monday, February 10 by calling the Olympia Senior Center at 360.586.6181				

Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center Weekly Activities

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:30 to 9:30 EnhanceFitness® \$	8:30 to 11:00 Woodcarving	8:30 to 9:30 Enhancefitness® \$	9:00 to 10:00 Gentle Yoga \$	8:30 to 9:30 Enhancefitness® \$
9:45 to 10:45 EnhanceFitness® \$	9:00 am to 12:00 Mah Jongg for Beginners	9:00 am to 12:00 Double Deck Pinochle	9:30 to 11:00 Coffee and Conversation	9:00 am to 12:00 Pinochle
10:30 to 11:30 Beginning French	9:30 to 10:15 ZUMBA® Gold \$	9:30 am to 1:15 Korean Elders	10:00 am to 12:00 Tech Help	9:15 to 11:00 Daytime Bingo
11:00 am to 12:00 Chair Yoga \$	10:00 to 11:00 Tech Help	9:30 Wednesday Walkers	9:00 to 11:30 Rock Painting with Inclusion	9:45 to 10:45 Enhancefitness® \$
11:30 am to 12:30 Intermediate French	11:00 am to 12:00 Gentle Yoga \$	9:45 to 10:45 Enhancefitness® \$	10:00 to 12:00 Tech Help	10:00 to 12:00 Memoir Writing Class
12:30 to 2:30 Advanced French	12:30 to 2:15 Needlecraft/ Tatting Group	11:00 to 11:45 Chair ZUMBA® \$	10:30 to 11:30 Beginning Tai Ji Quan® \$	12:30 to 1:30 Intermediate Line Dancing \$
12:30 to 1:15 Beginner Line Dancing \$	12:30 to 3:30 Pinochle	12:30 to 3:30 Table Games	3:00 to 4:00 Advanced Tai Ji Quan® \$	1:00 to 4:00 Mah Jongg
1:00 to 3:00 Watercolor Group	1:30 to 3:30 Dance Socials \$	12:45 to 3:00 Fly Tying	5:30 to 6:30 ZUMBA® After Hours \$	1:00 to 2:00 Sing Along with Brighter Days
1:15 to 2:15 Beginner Advanced Line Dancing \$	1:00 to 3:30 Art Mixed Media	1:00 to 3:00 Chess Essentials	6:30 to 9:00 Ukulele Ohana	2:30 to 4:00 Writing for Your Life
2:30 to 3:30 Beginning Tai Ji Quan® \$	2:00 to 3:00 Conversaciones en Espanol	1:30 to 3:00 Intermediate Line Dancing \$		
3:30 to 4:30 Advanced Tai Ji Quan® \$	5:30 to 6:30 ZUMBA® After Hours \$			
5:00 to 6:00 Tai Chi				

Check out the Lifelong Learning Catalog for class descriptions and more!

BOLD = Senior Services for South Sound membership required to participate

\$ = Class Fee associated with activity. Read full class description on our website at southsoundseniors.org/activities or in the Lifelong Learning Catalog

Dates and times are subject to change, call the appropriate center if you have questions about your activity. Olympia: 360.586.6181 or Lacey: 360.407.3967

Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center Monthly Activities

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
3 12:30 - 3:30 Haircuts <i>(by appointment only)</i> 12:30 - 2:00 Dementia Caregivers Support Group	4 10:00 - 12:00 Mothers with Adult Estranged Children Support Group 6:00 - 8:00 Brain Injury Alliance of WA	5 1:30 - 3:00 Owning the Age I Am 6:00 - 7:00 Veteran's Support Group	6 1:00 - 3:00 NW Gardening Group	7 12:30 - 2:00 Dementia Caregivers Support Group
10 8:30 - 3:30 55+ Senior Driving Workshop	11 4:30 Dine Out @ Fortune Casino 10:30 - 11:30 Be a Mentor <i>pg 14</i>	12 10:00 - 2:00 Bus Buddies	13	14 2:00 - 3:30 Bereavement Support Group: Life After Loss 12:30 Valentine Pie & Cake Bake Jubilee <i>pg 14</i>
17 CLOSED (Presidents Day) 	18 10:00 - 12:00 Mothers with Adult Estranged Children Support Group 9:00 - 11:30 Bunny Therapy <i>pg 14</i>	19 2:00 - 3:00 Open Book Club 6:00 - 7:00 Veteran's Support Group	20 11:30 - 12:50 Death Journaling 12:30 Safe & Savvy: Preventing Scams Together <i>pg 14</i> 1:00 - 3:00 NW Gardening Group	21
24	25 11:45 LGBTQ+ Lunch Bunch	26	27 2:00 - 4:00 Death Cafe 12:30 Olympia Amateur Radio Society (OARS) <i>pg 14</i>	28 12:30 - 2:00 TED Talks+ Dating - Then and Now: The Catastrophic Difference
southsoundseniors.org • 360.586.6181				13.



Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center Activity Spotlights

Be A Mentor!

Tuesday, February 11

10:30 am to 11:30 pm – Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center

Meet with Courtney and make a difference in a student's life. Kids are K – 8th in the NTP Schools. Just one hour a week. Find out more!

Valentine Pie & Cake Bake Jubilee

Friday, February 14

8:30 am to 12:30 pm – Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center

You're invited to a Valentine's Day Pie & Cake Bake Jubilee at our Coffee Café! Experience the warmth of laughter and the joy of community on this special day. All Bakers are welcome to share their favorites!

Bunny Therapy

Tuesday, February 18

9:00 to 11:30 am – Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center

Hare B&B Bunny Rescue will be helping us all de-stress with a few of their warm furry bunnies here to enjoy.

Safe & Savvy: Preventing Scams Together

Thursday, February 20

12:30 pm – Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center

Stay ahead of the scammers by increasing your awareness of the many insidious ways they use to bilk your bank accounts, steal your ID and mess with your credit cards. Facilitator Teresa Glidden is a new member of Senior Services who recently retired from Consumer Protection Washington.

Olympia Amateur Radio Society (OARS)

Thursday, February 27

12:30 pm – Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center

Calling all who ever wanted to get into HAM or Amateur Radio, OARS is coming here! They are dedicated to promoting and supporting Amateur Radio in the Olympia Washington area, as well as all of Thurston County. Come find out about this fun and incredibly useful form of communication, especially in emergency situations!

Olympia Senior Center Activity Spotlights



NEW! Beginning Mah Jongg

Wednesdays, February 5 — 26

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

\$5 card fee payable to instructor

Olympia Senior Center

Members Only

Join our wonderful volunteer Peggy as she teaches people the basics of Mah Jongg in this four-week session! Limited to 12 people.

Speaker Series: Monica Anney from Wild Grief

Wednesday, February 5

10:00 am

Olympia Senior Center

Wild Grief provides free peer support programs in nature to grieving youth, families and people of all ages. We combine peer based grief support with the healing power of nature. We are a nonprofit based in Olympia, Washington. We serve people from around the region who are grieving the death of someone close to them. When we take a break from routine, and connect as a group in nature we see that death is a normal part of the cycle of life all around us. The rugged beauty of wild spaces can hold our diverse untamed emotions. When we go through it together, on the other side of we find resilience. That is why our motto is Go Outside. Go Together. Go Through it.

Speaker Series: Hands-on Collage with Daisye Orr

Wednesday, February 19

10:00 am

Olympia Senior Center

Join Daisye Orr for a morning of collage! Collage is a no-pressure, imaginative form of art that allows you to play with images, textures and colors to create new pictures. No experience is necessary and all materials are provided. All images will be pre-cut so no need to worry if fine motor skills are difficult. This session will start with a brief introduction and discussion about materials and then participants can create on their own with guidance and coaching from the instructor.

Daisye is a self-taught artist who enjoys working with natural mediums and reusable materials. She believes in the healing and self-care benefits of art and focuses on the process of creating rather than the product. She has previously taught watercolor, collage and zine-making classes at Senior Services for South Sound.



Volunteer Spotlight: Greg Turner

By Scott Schoengarth

Greg Turner has found the two volunteer jobs that are perfect for someone with his background. He has always liked to talk, so he spends one day a week delivering **Meals on Wheels**, visiting and chatting with about ten people each trip. As a former elementary school teacher, he enjoys assisting with the **Brighter Days Adult Day Program**, where he sits and listens to whoever shows up that day.

When I strolled through the doors of the Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center to interview Greg, he immediately recognized me. Turns out **he taught first grade at Woodland Elementary School for 30 years** (plus time at Mountain View Elementary and Lacey Elementary), before retiring in 2010. Some 25 years ago, I used to pop into Mr. Turner's classroom at Woodland to have lunch with my grandson, Alek. What a small world it is, and what a great memory Greg has!

More than 50 years ago, Greg's mom had dementia and didn't recognize any of her eight children. The nursing home assistants helped her tremendously, and he's always wanted to pay them back for their kindness. Now he's doing the same for other folks, and he finds it very rewarding. Greg remembers all the children he taught over the years, and how many pairs of shoelaces he tied; often the kids could tie their own shoes, but they enjoyed the personal attention Mr. Turner gave them. The same holds true with the Brighter Days Program – people like the one-on-one attention he gives them.

Greg's three daughters are all doing great things in Seattle, Port Orchard and Tacoma. Besides talking and listening, **Greg loves to work in handicrafts**. He makes things, has crafted full villages out of woodwork, collects coins from all over the world and has diary tokens and disabled veteran tokens, even Australian ferry tags. Best of all he can tell stories about all of these things. He's never at a loss for words.

He was originally drawn to the Meals and Wheels Program by a friend who thought he would be a natural and then segued into Brighter Days. **Greg, who uses a cane to get around, says he plans to volunteer at both until he can no longer walk.**

Are YOU recently retired or just moved here and looking for something to do? Why not sit down with Volunteer Manager Theresa Ziniewicz and find the perfect opportunity. Just a couple of hours a week volunteering can have a huge impact for many different seniors. You can call her at 360-586-6181 ext. 120 or email her at TheresaZ@southsoundseniors.org.

Scott Schoengarth is the coordinator for the Bus Buddy Program of Thurston County, a partnership between Intercity Transit, Catholic Community Services of Western Washington, Volunteer Services and Washington State Department of Transportation. He can be reached at 360.688.8832.

Drive Change, One Ride at a Time!



southsoundseniors.org/volunteer
theresaz@southsoundseniors.org

Help seniors stay connected and independent by providing essential transportation to medical appointments and essential errands such as grocery shopping or trips to the pharmacy.

- Flexible schedule based on your availability
- Make a direct impact in your community

Volunteer drivers urgently needed for seniors in Mason County



southsoundseniors.org/volunteer

Senior
Services
FOR SOUTH SOUND



PALS WEEK

**February 24
— March 2**

Pet Assistance for
Low-income Seniors

**GIVE A HELPING PAW
TO SENIORS IN NEED!**

**Your Support Keeps Seniors
and Pets Together.**

The Pet Assistance for Low-Income Seniors program helps seniors cover vet bills, saving them from the heartbreaking choice between their own health and their beloved pet's. Mark your calendars for our upcoming PALS Week to keep them by their side!





Above & Beyond Employee of the Year: Jason Cooluris

By Senior Services Staff

At Senior Services for South Sound, **our team is the heart of everything we do**, and this quarter, we are thrilled to honor Jason Cooluris as our Above & Beyond Employee. As our IT Specialist, Jason does so much more than keep our technology running smoothly — **he exemplifies the kindness, dedication, and excellence that define our organization.**

Jason's coworkers describe him as "kind," "amazing" and **"the best of how coworkers can be."** His laid back demeanor and ability to make complex IT problems seem manageable make him a joy to work with. No matter the challenge, Jason approaches his work with diligence and a genuine desire to improve processes and technology for everyone around him.

Somehow, Jason manages to provide full and a half-time support in less than halftime hours — an achievement that speaks to his commitment and efficiency. From relocating phones and computers multiple times in the SHIBA office to replacing office phones, assisting volunteers with technical issues and even attending SHIBA classes to provide IT assistance, Jason's contributions are nothing short of remarkable.

Beyond his technical skills, **Jason brings patience, kindness and an approachable spirit to every interaction.** Whether it's a small question or a major project, Jason's willingness to help never wavers. He consistently goes above and beyond, making our organization a better place for staff, volunteers and members alike.

Jason, we are so grateful for everything you do. Congratulations on being this quarter's Above & Beyond Employee (and Employee of the 4th Quarter) — an honor you have more than earned. Thank you for embodying the very best of Senior Services for South Sound!

Congratulations to our other fourth quarter nominees:

- Betty Conway, Lacey Nutrition Site Manager
- Crystal Rodriguez, Inclusion Program Coordinator
- Dan Delaney, Trips & Tours
- Jay Wallerstedt, Lacey Senior Center Coordinator
- Kelly Hudson, SHIBA Program Manager
- Stephanie Elsass, Office Coordinator

SUPERHERO BINGO

DOORS OPEN AT 6PM • GAMES AT 7PM • 21+ ONLY
\$25 CASH TO PLAY • SNACK BAR • CASH BAR
\$2 SPECIAL GAMES • 50/50 RAFFLE
COSTUME CONTEST

WITH ELIZABETH LORD

Senior
Services
FOR SOUTH SOUND



SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 22
OLYMPIA SENIOR
CENTER

JEDI BINGO

SATURDAY,
APRIL 26
VIRGIL CLARKSON
LACEY SENIOR CENTER



Centers and Administrative
Offices will be

CLOSED

February 17

for Presidents Day.



Thank you to our Local Partners:



LEWIS-MASON-THURSTON
AREA AGENCY ON AGING



SUBARU

Olympia Subaru