



Senior Transportation Driving Connections, Expanding Impact

Our Transportation Program has seen **extraordinary growth** over the past four years, reflecting the ever-growing need for essential services among seniors in Thurston and Mason counties. From 2019 to 2020 our dedicated volunteers drove 107,633 miles to connect seniors with critical resources. From 2023 to 2024, that number more than doubled to an incredible **241,819 miles**. In 2024 alone we served **221 unique clients** and provided **3,399 rides** to medical appointments, grocery stores, pharmacies, and more.

These numbers tell a powerful story of impact. **Every mile driven represents a senior regaining independence, accessing life-sustaining services**, or simply enjoying the peace of mind that comes with knowing they aren't alone.

However, with this growth comes a challenge: meeting the increasing demand. **We're actively seeking volunteer drivers** to join our mission, particularly in Mason County, where the need is especially high. Volunteering as a driver offers a flexible schedule and the opportunity to make a profound, direct impact in your community.

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TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

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"Volunteering as a driver is incredibly rewarding. You're not just providing a service, you're becoming a **lifeline to someone without any other recourse,"**

shares our Transportation Manager, David Pizzimenti, emphasizing the importance of this work.

“ These rides do more than just get seniors from one place to another; they represent **freedom, security and the ability to maintain **a sense of connection** with their community,”** - David Pizzimenti

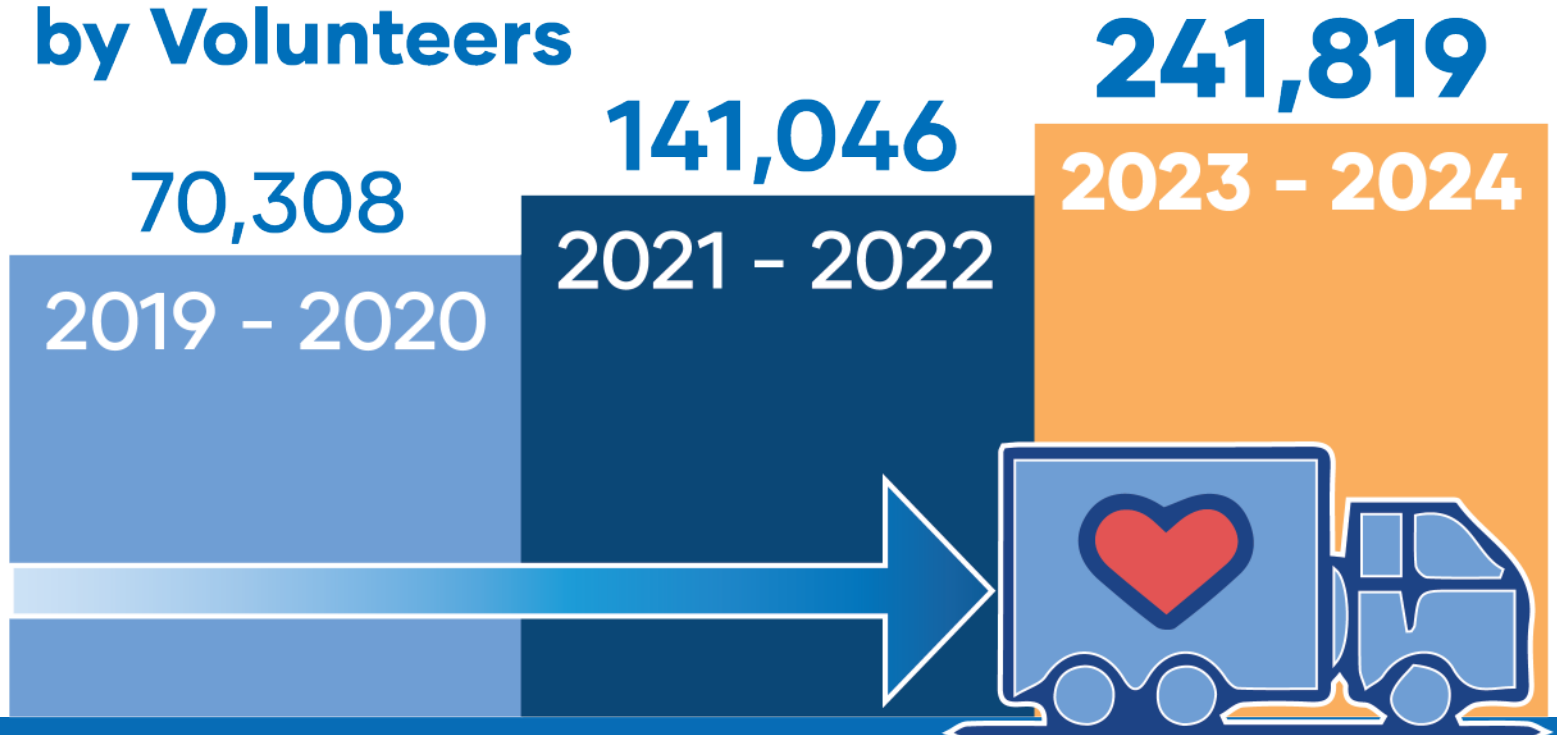
Every donation and every volunteer hour helps us **ensure no senior is left without access to the services they need.** To learn more about becoming a driver or to support this life-changing program, please visit our website at southsoundseniors.org/volunteer.

Together, we're not just driving seniors to appointments — we're driving hope, independence, and community. Thank you for helping us make every mile count!



southsoundseniors.org/volunteer

Miles Driven by Volunteers





Reflecting on 2024, Inspiring 2025

Beginnings. It's folly in many ways to entertain the notion of "beginnings" around things like years or times. After all, the sun doesn't actually move, and there have been days upon days for billions of years on this dusty planet. In the span of time on this tiny rock, not to mention our universe, the notion of a new beginning is rather absurd.

On a drive recently, my wife and I had a lengthy conversation about how every atom in our body beyond hydrogen and helium is the result of a supernova explosion that happened well before the formation of our own solar system. That is, an ancient massive star exploded in this vicinity, spewing newly formed atoms, and far later, from that material, our own solar system congealed. That happened well before our Earth formed some 4.6 billion years ago. **So we are made of stardust** that is far older than our own planet! What a liberating and enlivening consideration.

Yet, oh yet indeed, **we experience beginnings and endings.** We are mortal, after all, no matter our views of an afterlife, and experience many mortal starts and passings. My wife and I are still grieving the

loss of our pooch several months ago. We cannot help but think of things as having a start and end. **Here at Senior Services, we acknowledge the passing of time as most do, and celebrate the occasion of a new year with verve.**

I meditate on time more than others, I recognize. Serving seniors engenders such thoughts. **As we begin this new year with tremendous excitement, we look back on a 2024 that saw us achieve record performance of our mission.** We produced and served more meals than ever before. We provided more rides to seniors than ever before. We helped more seniors with transportation to vital appointments than ever before. You get the picture. It was a beautiful year of mission delivery and every single volunteer, employee and supporter should be proud of what we accomplished.

It's part of my job as Executive Director to appreciate you all. **Please take a moment if you helped make 2024 possible for us to allow yourself to feel some satisfaction of a job well done.** Donors, volunteers, employees, participants and board members should all be excited about what we can accomplish together in 2025, and what we performed in the year that is now behind us. Let's go!

Brian Windrope
Executive Director

SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAM

Breaking Records and Building Connections: 261,000 Meals Served Through Our Senior Nutrition Program in 2024.

The Senior Nutrition Program at Senior Services for South Sound had an exceptional 2024, **reaching more seniors than ever before!** In total, we served a staggering 261,619 meals — an increase of 125,114 meals from 2023. These meals nourished 2,766 unique clients, **nearly doubling the number of seniors we reached in the previous year.**

Breaking these numbers down, 105,029 meals were shared through our Community Dining program, which created opportunities for seniors to gather, connect and enjoy warm, nutritious meals together at seven different Community Dining sites in Thurston and Mason counties. Meanwhile, our Meals on Wheels program delivered 156,590 meals directly to homebound seniors, ensuring they had access to food and the invaluable connection of a friendly face at the door.

Stephanie Penland, our Senior Nutrition Program Director, says **"an unprecedented number of seniors in our area are finding that a dollar doesn't stretch as far as it used to, making getting healthy nutritious food a barrier."** But there is hope.

The need for these services has never been more evident, nor has the dedication of our staff and volunteers. From preparing meals to delivering them with care, every person involved has contributed to meeting the increasing demand.

“Because of the **kindness and unwavering generosity of our dedicated volunteers, we're able to serve such a vulnerable population.**”

Your generosity makes this success possible. Donations and volunteer efforts fuel the work that ensures seniors in our area have access to nutritious meals and social connection. Together, we're not just delivering food — we're fostering health, independence and community.



2,766



Unique clients served through Community Dining and Meals on Wheels deliveries.

261,619



Total Meals Served



bit.ly/southsoundnutrition

“With our services, we’re able to meet the needs of so many older adults, **especially those who are isolated and lonely.** We hear often that the person who delivers meals to our homebound clients is the only person they see **all day or all week.**”

- Senior Nutrition Program Director,
Stephanie Penland

PALS WEEK IS COMING!



For seniors living alone, pets provide companionship and emotional support that can ease the damaging effects of isolation and loneliness. But for low-income seniors living on limited fixed incomes, veterinary bills can be overwhelming.

That's why The PALS Fund is making a **real difference** in our community. This vital program, supported entirely by grants and donations, helps to pay vet bills for seniors who simply cannot afford the cost of healthcare for their animal companions.

In 2024, thanks to the generosity of more than **250 individual donors**, The PALS Fund raised more money for low-income pet owners than ever before, an astonishing **\$96,038**. Thanks to that support, in 2024 **we assisted 213 pets and their human companions**, and were able to immediately begin helping people in 2025.

This year, we have designated the week of **February 24 - March 2** as our PALS Week. During this seven-day fundraising campaign, we'll be sharing stories and pictures of pets and their human companions that have benefited from the PALS Fund.

But there's no need to wait. **You can make your gift right now!** Simply mail your check in the enclosed envelope, made out to Senior Services for South Sounds with "PALS Fund" on the memo line. Or scan the QR code to easily make your gift online.



southsoundseniors.org/pals



OUR ORGANIZATION



Discover All That Senior Services Has to Offer!

In this quarterly publication, we try to highlight some of the important services we provide such as Senior Nutrition, Transportation, and the PALS Fund. But there's so much more to Senior Services for South Sound!

Our two senior centers, in Olympia and Lacey, have plenty of programs and classes to keep local seniors engaged and active. From table games to learning a new skill to voyaging with our **Trips & Tours program**, there's so much to discover.

Services that we provide, beyond those mentioned in this issue, include **Brighter Days Adult Day Program**, the only day program in Thurston County for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias; our innovative **Home Share** program that's tackling the housing crisis and helping seniors age in place; and our volunteer **Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA)**, who help thousands of seniors navigate the complexities of Medicare.

Want to learn more about all that Senior Services has to offer? Visit us on the web at southsoundseniors.org or drop into our Olympia or Lacey locations!

Olympia Senior Center
222 Columbia Street NW
Olympia, WA 98501
360.586.6181

Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center
6757 Pacific Ave SE
Lacey, WA 98503
360.407.3967



southsoundseniors.org

Thank you to our Local Partners:



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Together

we can help local seniors thrive.

