


A Circle of Gratitude

Meet the seniors whose lives are touched every day, and see how your support keeps the circle turning.

It's 8:30 a.m. at the [Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center](#), and the day begins with the comforting hum of community. The smell of coffee mingles with the sweetness of a home-baked treat as friends gather around familiar tables. From the auditorium comes the rhythmic pulse of Zumba® music and laughter rises as early risers stretch, sway and shake off the morning chill.

Down the road, at the [Olympia Senior Center](#), ovens come to life in the kitchen as staff and volunteers with the [Senior Nutrition Program](#) begin preparing hundreds of meals. Dina stirs a simmering pot while others pack up trays bound for [Community Dining](#) sites and [Meals on Wheels](#) routes. By lunchtime, the aroma of roasted vegetables and a hearty fall soup will fill the [Tumwater Towne Center](#), where seniors gather to share good food, friendship and stories from the week.

Meanwhile, in Mason County, a [Transportation Program](#) volunteer starts the day's route helping a senior get to a medical appointment in Seattle. Another volunteer makes her first [Well-Check](#) call, ensuring an isolated neighbor hears a friendly voice and a kind word before noon.



*Volunteer and client
Adlene visits the Olympia
Senior Center.*

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LIFE IS BETTER SHARED

Back at Lacey, at the [Brighter Days Program](#), participants settle in for painting and games. Tobin strums his guitar in the background as caregivers take a much-needed moment of rest, grateful for a place where their loved ones are cared for with warmth and dignity.

At the same time, in a quiet home in Yelm, two people matched through the [Home Share Program](#) enjoy breakfast together, one relieved to have help with rent, the other thankful for companionship after years of living alone.

Later that afternoon, a [SHIBA](#) volunteer sits down with a senior to navigate the complexities of Medicare open enrollment. The paperwork is thick, but the relief on his face as she realizes he can afford his prescriptions this year makes every minute worthwhile.

As the day winds down, doors close and lights dim, but the circle continues. [The gratitude of one person becomes the kindness of another](#), and together they form something lasting: **a community where no one is forgotten, and everyone has something to give.**

Every call made, every meal delivered, every class taught and every smile shared is part of this circle — [a reflection of generosity, connection and care that reaches across counties and into countless lives.](#)

And at the heart of it all is [you](#), the donors, supporters and friends who make this circle possible. Your generosity keeps the ovens warm, the vans running and the lights on in the places where laughter and hope still gather.

As you read the words of seniors throughout these pages — their gratitude, their stories, their moments of joy — [know that each one is, in some way, a thank-you note to you.](#)

Because here at Senior Services for South Sound, every story of gratitude begins, and continues, with you.



Larry (right) and David, a Brighter Days Program participant, share a hug and a laugh during lunch at the Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center.



Gratitude Matters

Simple words,
lasting impact.

Today I'd like to reflect on how and whether we show gratitude, on the assumption we know it's important to do things that generate it. **Of what benefit is being grateful if we don't show it?** How is our community impacted by our choice to show it? Worthwhile questions, to me at least.

It's my view that acts of generosity and kindness are more widespread than is perceived. Certainly in our national media, it doesn't bleed so it doesn't lead. We denigrate heartwarming stories of gratitude with Hallmark portrayals that are saccharine-sweet and worthy of gentle mockery. We show mindless acts of violence and murder to ourselves and children through various media, but show little interest in stories of healthy relationships, kindness and generosity.

So I don't know what is bred as error into the bones of my fellow humans, but we have some work to do to overcome the apparent gravitational pull toward dystopian stories of anarchy and senseless destruction of life.

My life is improved when I recognize things to be grateful for, and take the

next and harder step of showing it by telling people (or hugging that amazing tree). That's a risk I'm willing to take.

Here at Senior Services for South Sound, we witness countless daily acts of kindness, generosity, compassion and courage that make our mission shine and that are worthy of praise.

While we praise our volunteers for obvious reasons, and deservedly so, I also recognize that our staff perform at times beyond the strict requirements of their position descriptions and paychecks. In my role as Executive Director, I'm afraid I make mistakes far too often. One mistake I try to never make is failing to let our volunteers and staff know how much they are appreciated and needed.

We need to show gratitude more often, we really do, as well as doing things that generate gratitude in others. **Your support of our mission helps volunteers and staff create better days for hundreds of folks each week,** and the gratitude circle of that makes our whole community better.

Brian Windrope
Executive Director

Voices of Gratitude

At Senior Services for South Sound, **gratitude doesn't just come once a year**, it's shared daily through laughter, friendship and the simple joy of being together. Across our centers, you'll find people who show that thankfulness isn't just a feeling — **it's a way of life**.



Lu shares lunch, laughter and gratitude at the Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center.

"It's a social network," says Lu, a longtime guest of our **Community Dining program**. "As we get older, socialization is really important, just as important as having good food."

He sits with a few friends, patting one on the back as he laughs at a joke. "When I come here, **I look forward** to talking with these guys, having food and then I take a meal home to my wife."

It's a simple moment — a meal shared, a connection made — but **it's also the essence of what the centers are about**: nourishment for both body and spirit.

"It does make a difference. We thank you for all your donations and kindness."

Meals that Make a Difference

Numbers as of October 2025



64,196

Meals on Wheels delivered



60,331

Community Dining meals shared



1,993

Seniors served so far in 2025

THANKFUL FOR YOU



LaDoris (left) and her husband, Jim, have lunch together at the Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center.

At another table, **Jim and LaDoris**, married 60 years, share lunch together.

"I don't have to cook!" Jim laughs, shaking his head. "But we also get to **get out of the house and see other people, meet different people.** It's always something to look forward to."

For them, the senior center isn't just a place to eat, **it's a reason to get dressed up, leave the house and connect.**

In a quieter corner of the **Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center**, a circle of knitters trades patterns and tips.

Charlyne, pausing from the scarf she's knitting, says, "**Comraderie. The diversification. That's what makes this place special.**"

Across the table, Eddi nods in agreement. "People here have a lot of the same likes and dislikes as you," she says. "There aren't those generational gaps you have to fill in. **We really need to have this as a community center because a lot of people our age are living by themselves.** This way, they have someplace to go to socialize. It's, mentally, very important."

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The Needlecraft/Tatting group in Lacey brings seniors together through creativity and camaraderie.



SENIOR VOICES



At the Olympia Senior Center, **Mark** greets everyone who passes through the lobby with a grin and a joke. He spends most days volunteering, chatting with members and using the computers.

When asked why he loves the center, he echoes so many others, **"All of the social interaction."**

"It's an excellent place, especially for handicapped seniors like me. It's better than sitting at home."

Behind his humor is quiet strength, the kind that inspires others. Mark's days at the center **give him purpose and connection, and in return, he gives back that same energy tenfold.**

Mark, a longtime volunteer at the Olympia Senior Center, is always ready with a joke and a smile.

Adlene, one of our **Transportation Program** clients — and a regular shopper at Budd Bay Bargains, our boutique thrift store — puts it simply: "By being able to get rides to things like doctor's appointments, **it keeps me somewhat independent.** I don't have to ask someone else to do it."

Adlene gives back whenever she can, **volunteering at our annual Fall Gala** and sometimes with monetary gifts.

"Even I have donated," she says. "I don't have a whole lot of money, but at least I can give something. **If everybody gives a little, we'll have a lot.**"

Adlene shops at Budd Bay Bargains at the Olympia Senior Center.



YOUR GIFT MATTERS!

Why Your Gift Matters

The circle isn't complete without YOU!

What Does Donating Do?

When you give to Senior Services for South Sound, you do more than fund programs, you build community. Your support helps us:

- Serve nourishing meals at home and around community dining tables where friendships grow.
- Offer meaningful classes, fitness programs and creative activities that keep seniors learning, laughing and moving.
- Respond flexibly to emergencies, rising food costs or a sudden loss of federal support
- And so much more!



Lyn Madden not only volunteers at the Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center by helping in the kitchen, she also bakes delicious homemade treats to share at the coffee bar.

The Need is Growing!

More seniors are calling, more families are stretched thin, and more neighbors are searching for connection. But thanks to you, we can say "yes" when help is needed.

Your gift ensures that no senior has to go hungry, feel isolated, or face aging alone. You make it possible for our centers to remain the place where everyone belongs!

Ways to Give

Consider mailing a check using the envelope included with this newsletter. You can also give online or by calling us at 360.586.6181. Want to make an even bigger impact? Join our Sustainers Club with a monthly gift that supports seniors all year long. You can also leave a lasting legacy through planned giving, such as a bequest in your will or trust. To learn more about your giving options, follow the QR code or reach out to our Development Team at 360.586.6181 ext. 110.



Learn about your giving options

southsoundseniors.org/give

Senior Services

FOR SOUTH SOUND

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Rollover Your IRA for Good

By taking a distribution from your IRA this year, you will likely pay more in taxes and may even reach a higher tax bracket. Rolling over part of your IRA's "required minimum distribution" or "RMD" to an organization like ours can help reduce your tax bill while supporting our cause.

Double the Benefits!

An IRA charitable rollover gift can benefit both you and our mission! Contact your IRA administrator to get started with your gift. While you will not receive an income tax deduction, you will not pay taxes on any distributions made to us.

Please also inform us of your plans so that we use your gift for the causes that mean the most to you.



YOU CAN
DIRECT UP TO
108,000

70½
OR OLDER