Brian’s View

Dear friends and colleagues,

Our nation and region are rocked by three simultaneous crises, each the worst in a long time, even in the memory of many seniors. We face the worst pandemic since the 1918 flu, the worst economic crisis since the Depression, and civil unrest unlike anything since the 60’s. Seniors help us have perspective on historical events, and those I speak with are upset and worried.

As a white male, I am well aware of the privilege I carry with me every day. With this recognition of privilege comes a responsibility to action. I cannot be silent about the racial injustice faced by African Americans or other non-white citizens. The killing of George Floyd is just the latest in a long line of such atrocities going back centuries. Think of the seniors in our community who have faced lifetimes of racism, fear for their children, and barriers to opportunity. I think of the added courage, ability, patience, perseverance and forbearance they have, beyond what I have had to show.

It is the mission of our beloved organization to improve the quality of life for people as they age. This means we care about all people, regardless of skin color, gender or any other categorization. We care about, care for, and even love, the seniors in our community, and while each person has a life of struggles and joys, there are unique challenges faced by our African American and other non-white seniors, and our organization stands closely with them during these challenging times.

W.H. Auden said: “All I have is a voice to undo the folded lie”. I add my voice to others who are calling for social justice, racial justice, equity and peace. Threats to the liberty of one person are threats to all our liberty. The folded injustices of our history are now ours to correct. I know I can speak for our board and staff when I say we are dedicated to the proposition that all people deserve an equal opportunity to live long and fulfilling lives.

Thank you to our agency partner: Kaiser Permanente.
Estate Planning Webinar

Estate Planning Webinar with Attorney June Weppler

June 29, 10:00 - 11:30 am
Attend via Zoom webinar

Learn how to create a plan to reflect your goals and dreams. Free to members and supporters. Space is limited, registration required.

Learn why estate planning is important to protect your legacy, provide for those you care about and give you peace of mind. Local Estate Planning and Elder Law attorney June Weppler will share information about wills, trusts, probate, power of attorney, tax considerations, choosing beneficiaries, health care directives, long term care planning and more. We offer this webinar as a free service to our members and supporters. Participants will receive a complimentary Estate Planning Guide after the webinar. Space is limited and registration is required. Click here to sign up for the webinar. Questions? Email Pam Toal at ptoal@southsoundseniors.org.

Giving Back, One Home Sale at a Time

By: Pam Toal

When Michelle Burke moved to Olympia in 2014 to attend The Evergreen State College, she was also moving to make a new home. A daughter had attended Evergreen, and Michelle loved the local community and its arts loving culture. She’d been a single mom for 18 years in California, and along the way had owned a coffee shop, a child care business, and became a potter, a woodworker, and a real estate broker.

Helping clients sell their homes was satisfying, but one day Michelle had an epiphany: Why not donate 20 percent of each home sale commission to a local nonprofit? Her client would choose the nonprofit, and Michelle would make a personal donation.

Senior Services recently became the beneficiary of Michelle’s generosity. When I called to thank her for her gift, she told me her client is a fan of our agency. She was happy to learn about our services and support us, and honor her client as well.

I asked Michelle if she’d grown up in a philanthropic family. “Not really, but I love to help people. I’d given back by volunteering at my kids’ schools, making quilts for their teachers, things like that. And I realized I could do more,” she said. “I love what I do, to help people get where they want to be, to help them with their dreams. It’s a huge blessing to help people. And home is where your heart is.”

On the back of her Blue Summit Realty business card she included these words: “If you use me for your real estate transaction, I donate 20 percent of my commission.” This year alone she’s donated more than $5,000 to local nonprofits.

Philanthropists come in many forms, sometimes as potters, woodworkers, and real estate brokers (Michelle is all three). We thank Michelle for her generous heart, and for showing us what making a home can do for others.
Mac and Cheese Drive

We are doing a food drive exclusively for Mac and Cheese to support one of our valued community partners, the Thurston County Food Bank. During this time, the Thurston County Food Bank is overwhelmed with need for donations and working with limited volunteers and staff.

We will be accepting packaged boxes and containers of Mac and Cheese to donate, at the Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Center (6757 Pacific Ave SE, Lacey, WA 98503) during the following times.

Tuesday, June 9 and Thursday, June 11
10:00 am – Noon

Thank You, Kaiser Permanente

Thank You to our Agency Partner: Kaiser Permanente®

We would like to take this moment to present and recognize our agency partner, Kaiser Permanente (KP). KP has committed to partner with Senior Services for South Sound as an organization, and specifically, to expand our Meals on Wheels program. This campaign will support seniors in our community through health and wellness education, program support and health related resources from Kaiser Permanente.

This partnership comes at a significant time for Senior Services, as the need for meal delivery has skyrocketed due to COVID-19. We appreciate Kaiser

Permanente’s belief in our senior community and our mission “to improve the quality of life for people as they age”, We look forward to building our relationship with them into the future.
Virtual Speaker Series
Free and open to the public. Click here to visit our website and get access to the Zoom meeting links.

The Wonders of Costa Rica with Anna Stusser and Aaron Gilles
Wednesday, June 10 @ 10:00 am • Zoom

Back in 2016, Anna Stusser, Aaron Gilles, and a number of other staff employed by Educational Service District 113 (ESD) went on an educational journey to Costa Rica. The aim was to improve their Spanish for the sake of connecting to the Spanish Speaking population, run by the GRAVITY program. In this talk, you will learn about the GRAVITY program run out of the ESD 113, see beautiful pictures of the stunning Costa Rica landscape, and hear what Anna and her former coworker and current friend, Aaron Gilles learned and loved about their journey.

The Many Faces of Cuba with Gery Gerst
Wednesday, June 17 @ 10:00 am • Zoom

Come see various regions, towns, and ethnicities of Cuba. In this talk you will learn about Cuba’s passions, history and artifacts, music, customs, natural features, and of course, education. Gerst will detail some history, politics, religion, humor, and customs. Participants will witness the past and present together. Sample their foods, diversity, and trademarks (yes, even ‘the cars’).

Gery earned his Masters of Education from Western Washington University. He has 44 years of teaching experience from High School to University level and has been awarded four “Teacher of the Year” honors, by the Olympia School District, OHS student body, & Olympia Teachers Association, and both the Distinguished Educator Award and Distinguished Alumnus Award from Saint Martin’s College. He is also the co-author of Social Studies/History curriculum for the national Constitution project.

Sticky Subject: The History and Culture of Sugar with Julia Harrison
Wednesday, June 24 @ 10:00 am • Zoom • Thank you to our co-sponsor: Humanities Washington

Once a rare, exotic ingredient, sugar has become a dietary staple, leaving its sticky fingerprints all over the globe. Anthropologist and sweets expert Julia Harrison takes participants on a journey from ancient sugar cane plantations to modern candy factories, uncovering sugar’s economic and social significance. From slavery and mass migration to environmental changes and nutrition, the consequences of sugar’s rise are global – and not always sweet. Julia Harrison is an anthropologist and avid traveler for whom all roads lead to sweets. Her projects include a multimedia online map of bakeries, desserts, and candy-makers around Puget Sound.
Need Help Making Better Food Choices?

The Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) continues to provide meals to homebound seniors and to older adults who can’t come to senior meal sites due to covid-19 closures. All of our menus are approved by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) to ensure that they meet 1/3rd of a senior’s daily nutrient needs. In addition to approving our menus, the RDN is available to guide seniors to make better food choices during this time of sheltering at home. Our contract dietitian is Cathy Visser. You may remember her as our former SNP Director. She is now on contract with our agency to provide menu support, nutrition education, and individual nutrition consultations. If you are looking for more nutrition support, don’t hesitate to ask us for a referral. Cathy can talk to you on the phone and help you find ways to eat well on a budget, meet your general dietary needs, or manage a health issue like diabetes. For nutrition support, call 360-586-6181 and leave your contact information. Cathy will return your call within 3 business days. The Senior Nutrition Program truly is “more than a meal.”

Do You Know a Senior in Need?

Senior Services for South Sound is offering a variety of new assistance programs during the pandemic. We know many seniors are impacted by the quarantine and need assistance getting essential goods delivered. Many are also combating loneliness and struggling to maintain their quality of life. Our services include Meals on Wheels, shopping for essentials, delivery of books, movies, and puzzles, and pen pal and phone pal programs. Adults age 60 and over in Thurston and Mason counties are eligible regardless of income, and services are free of charge.

Do You Know A Senior In Need? Please reach out to Senior Services for South Sound at 360.586.6181, ext. 136. 
Click here to visit our website for more information.

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Thank you to our agency sponsor: