Brian’s View

Dear friends and colleagues,

It seems I can’t take a step without being asked about how we are doing, what we are doing, and when we might open! So let me try and answer these questions for you all as I do my best to keep our community together and well informed.

We are doing better than many fear, but still struggling financially. I’ve had to furlough most of our staff again as we received and now have exhausted the Federal Payroll Protection Program funds. To preserve our essential current programs and make it through what appears to be an extended closure lasting several more months, we have had to reduce expenses to a bit more than half of our normal. Ongoing and generous support from individual donors is the only thing that keeps us operational, and every donation is therefore a gift of greater importance than normal. Thank you!

Through it all we continue to provide our greatly expanded Meals on Wheels for seniors. With your help there is no reason for any senior in our community to go hungry! We have been getting the word out about our new program aptly titled Do you know a senior in need? as we endeavor to help any senior needing groceries, prescriptions, companionship or puzzles. The stories I hear about seniors being helped by this program are heart wrenching. We are also putting our weekly lecture series online, and continue to link caregivers with clients through our Care Connection program. Essentially, we are doing everything we can to fulfill our mission while keeping seniors safe.

And finally, the big one, when will we open? The most honest and concise answer is that we don’t know. What I can tell you is that our entire organization, and a dedicated Task Force, are wrestling with this question. For now, we are closed through July and we will keep you updated through this newsletter and our website.

My best to you all,

Brian Windrope
Executive Director

Thank you to our agency partner:
New! Virtual Aging Mastery Program

Weekly Friday mornings • 10 - 11:30 am • Six Weeks starting August 7
Class Dates (class dates: 8/7, 8/14, 8/21, 8/28, 9/4, 9/11) • $10 Members/$20 Non-Members

We are pleased to announce that we will be offering a virtual version of the Aging Mastery Program (AMP), in partnership with the National Council on Aging.

AMP is a fun, innovative, and person-centered education program that empowers participants to embrace their gift of longevity by spending more time each day doing things that are good for themselves and for others. The program encourages mastery—developing sustainable behaviors across many dimensions that lead to improved health, stronger economic security, enhanced well-being, and increased societal participation. The class size is limited to 20 participants, so early registration is recommended. Once registered, we will send out a starter kit to you. The kit includes the text we will be using, called the “Aging Mastery Playbook”, two DVDS (Tai Chi Easy and Eccentrics Stretch Workouts), along with a deck of Aging Mastery activity cards and a notepad. The cost of this class is $10 for members, $20 for non-members, and scholarships are available. Registration ends July 30.

Questions? Attend an informational Zoom meeting Monday, July 6, 11:30 am, by typing this in your address bar: https://zoom.us/j/97004601657, or email chris@SouthSoundSeniors.org if you would like the link emailed to you.

Just to be clear, this class meets on the internet, via ZOOM, NOT at the Senior Center.

Happy 4th of July!

Wishing everyone a happy and safe 4th of July! For those who are able, don’t forget to register to vote for this year’s upcoming elections. Click here to register.

Not sure if you’re registered to vote? Click here to check your registration status. Your vote matters!

For more resources and information about how to request an absentee ballot, get election reminders, fill out your 2020 census form, you can visit the vote.org website.

Senior Services for South Sound • 222 Columbia St NW • SouthSoundSeniors.org • 360.586.6181
Virtual Speaker Series

Speaker Series talks are free and open to the public. Click here to visit our website to learn more about our speakers, and get access to the Zoom links.

**Thailand Traditions and Transformations with Lesley Klenk**  
Wednesday, July 1 @ 10:00 am • Zoom

Please join local published writer and teacher Leslie Klenk, PhD for a presentation of photos, facts, examples, and anecdotes regarding a November 2019 trip to five parts of Thailand. The presentation will show how a traditional Thailand is evolving into a youthful and energized vacation spot. She’ll share information about Khao Sok National Park, a pristine jungle area with elephants, Cheow Lan Lake, a man-made lake home to tourist floating camps, and Krabi, a beach town in the south and much more.

**Travels to Venice, Italy with Lou MacMillan**  
Wednesday, July 15 @ 10:00 am • Zoom

Lou MacMillan, a renowned photographer in the Olympia area, will discuss his travels to Venice as shown in his stunning photography. His phenomenal professional pictures will highlight the historical canals, remarkable architecture, and elegant Italian life. See an extraordinary part of the world through the eyes of a photographer that honors the beauty of Italian life.

**Theatre in Dark Times with The Heartsparkle Players**  
Wednesday, July 22 @ 10:00 am • Zoom

The Heartsparkle Players have been performing since 1991. Members of the theatre group, Debe Edden, Sara Rucker Thiessen, and Bob McKenzieSullivan will lead participants in a demonstration of Playback Theatre and a discussion about Theatre in Dark Times. The Heartsparkle Player members use Playback theatre as a tool for community building, education, and social change. The troupe aims to empower audiences by providing a forum for their stories to be shared, heard, and honored. Please join them for an experience of hope and connection through personal stories and conversation.

**From Homer to #hashtags: Our Changing Language with Christine Hemp**  
Wednesday, July 29 @ 10:00 am • Zoom

Christine Hemp explores these new forms of communication, while connecting them with the language of the past. Some might argue that language has been diminished, but just as Homer’s epic Odyssey made sense of ancient Greece, a tweet can distill a feeling, a thought, or an idea. How do changes in language affect the way we think about our world, our history, and ourselves? Christine Hemp is an author, poet, essayist and art critic. She is also the recipient of a Washington State Artist Trust Fellowship for Literature.
Soup Sisters

Is this the time a year when you eat soup? Well, the ‘Soup Sisters’ think so. Janey Koester and eleven other women in the community have traditionally met twice a month to eat soup, talk about their lives, and discuss charities in the area. They rotate homes, and the hostess makes a big pot of soup. Over dessert they discuss various needs in the community. The focal point of their efforts includes combating food insecurity and homelessness. They also support women’s issues and education.

This past month they met on Zoom. They talked about the increased needs in the community while people are sheltering in place. In their discussion they focused in on Senior Services, having learned about the growing need to feed and deliver essential commodities to elders in our community.

They’ve been meeting for over fifteen years. Each time they meet, they combine resources giving back to the greater community and to the local work that is being done to help make the south sound region a better region. Thank you ‘Soup Sisters’ for believing in us and supporting our mission to improve the quality of life for people as they age. As the days get hotter perhaps gazpacho will be on the menu!

For more information about how your group or organization can make a lasting impact please contact Maria Masse, Development Manager at 360.586.6181 ext. 110 or email her at maria@southsoundseniors.org.

Maria Masse, Development Manager
Reaching Out to a Senior Who Needed Help

On June 1st we received a message from a woman, we'll call her Jane*. Her voice was quiet, slow and shaky, and she was in need of help with shopping. I called her back several times the following morning and finally reached her late afternoon. It was after this conversation that I discovered Jane was disoriented and had only been eating once per day due to her inability to buy groceries. Jane explained that she is extremely frightened to go out due to COVID-19, and struggles to stretch the monthly funds delivered from her church through the entire month. With her hunger only abating with sleep, she explained that she takes more sleeping pills to subside her roaring stomach.

The next day, I arranged for Jane to receive groceries. It was heartbreaking to think of her situation. I brought her two bags of canned goods and other nonperishables and assured her we would get her started with meal deliveries. I referred her to Stephanie Penland, Assistant Director of Senior Nutrition Program/ Lead Assessor who immediately assisted in setting up her meal delivery service.

Last week I checked in with Jane to see how the meals were going and she absolutely loves them. Jane mentioned she wasn’t taking any more extra sleeping pills and was feeling more energetic. This weekend one of our volunteers, Laura, delivered at Jane’s direction and with her payment, a bag of toiletries, some fresh berries from my garden, some puzzle books, as well as a few Walmart gift cards to enable her to order dog food and other vital necessities. Laura plans to call her new phone pal, Jane, twice weekly to chat and check in with her, and Jane could not be more happy and appreciative of the service.

I honestly believe Jane was slipping into a dangerous downward spiral, growing weaker and more depressed with each passing day at home. I am extremely thankful she reached out to Senior Services for help and am reassured to know that she is feeling so much better, both in body and spirit.

*Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

If you or someone you know could benefit from delivery services please contact Sky Myers at 360.586.6181 ext. 136 or email her at SeniorNeed@SouthSoundSeniors.org.

Sky Myers, Do You Know A Senior In Need Initiative, Program Manager
Heartwarming Community Support

As we continue to operate our organization through unprecedented times and support our senior community, we celebrate and thank the organizations, businesses and local community members who have given us the resources to continue our mission work.

Clair Ferris, Founder/Lead Pre-Planning Specialist of Funeral Alternatives, in addition to being an agency sponsor, recently donated 400 N95 surgical masks to Senior Services. When Covid-19 hit, Ferris ordered extra masks and as soon as he figured out what the needs were for his team, he turned to our community to do the same. “We figured there would be an increased need for meals and meal delivery, and with that, there might be some issues where seniors aren’t able to get out. Many might not have access to PPE’s (Personal Protective Equipment), both drivers and recipients. With that in mind, we thought, let’s provide extra masks for programs like these, so seniors are able to get to their essential appointments, and tend to their daily needs.” Ferris said.

For many years, Funeral Alternatives has had an ongoing relationship with Senior Services, donating valuable time and resources. “It’s a focus of where we want to help out. We recognize the extreme need in the community for senior programs. Many other organizations we support have seniors at the forefront of their missions, and that’s where we want to put most of our efforts.” Ferris explained.

Faith Addicott, Co-Owner at Confluence Consulting Northwest also recognized this need for PPE’s and immediately stepped in to take action at the local level. Formerly a Point-in-Time Coordinator with the City of Olympia and Thurston County, Addicott has always been aware of protecting our most vulnerable neighbors. She began the fast-growing Facebook group, “South Salish Mighty Masks” with the goal of creating a place where people could connect and organize so that folks who are at risk, including seniors, don’t have to put themselves at extra risk if they go out. To date, the South Salish Mighty Masks group has made 12,000 masks, and distributed to over 100 different teams and agencies, including Senior Services. “When the virus started, people were really starting to get freaked out, especially people who are older and immunocompromised,” Addicott said. “The community response has transformed how people are able to get through this.”

If you or someone you know is in need of face masks, please contact us at 360.586.6181 ext 136.

Katie Rosemond, Marketing Coordinator
Eleven Years of Enrichment

“I feel blessed to donate, and know my gifts help seniors who live on their $700 Social Security check, or who need a ride to Seattle for their cancer treatment.”

It started with a conversation with a good friend. That led to a tour of the Senior Center, and a visit with the executive director. She soon joined the Board of Directors, and now, 11 years later, Caren Rose shares how Senior Services enriched her life. “My friend is Elsa McLain, Senior Services’ founder. She was going off the Board and wanted someone to replace her that would work as hard as she did,” Caren said, laughing. “I guess I was up for the challenge.”

Caren’s first impression: How much the agency did, from offering academic classes, home care services, and delivering meals to homebound seniors. Her second impression: How much people loved and cared about each other, from volunteers, to staff, and the people the agency served. And her third impression: How little money the agency had to do what it did. Helping with special events was an easy way to get involved, along with making generous annual donations. “Everyone on our Board pitches in, and with Covid-19 impacting our world, we’re even more committed to helping seniors stay safe and connected with our programs and each other.”

Caren didn’t grow up helping people, she learned how to do it alongside her husband Russell, who died in 2015. “Russell always had his camera by his side. He loved taking pictures at our events, and he was so supportive of my involvement with Senior Services.” Staying involved continues to enrich Caren, as she enjoys life with her two dogs and 23-year old cat. “I feel blessed to donate, and know my gifts help seniors who live on their $700 Social Security check, or who need a ride to Seattle for their cancer treatment. And when I’m gone, I’ll be able to give even more. You can’t take it with you! Leaving a planned gift to Senior Services in my name and Russell’s name shows our love for each other and our wishes to help people less fortunate. What could be more enriching than that?”

For information about how you can make a difference with a planned gift, contact Pam Toal, Gift Planning Manager at 360.586.6181 ext. 106 or ptoal@southsoundseniors.org.

Pam Toal, Gift Planning Manager
Coming Soon... Virtual Senior Academy!

We are living in extraordinary times. It’s fitting for us to rise to this period in our American story with learning that deepens our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. This Fall Senior Services is launching a virtual academy of learning to meet the forces of change in our society; preparing ourselves for the year ahead. Below is a preview of offerings that we will host on Zoom.

For a complete list of class and other virtual offerings please check out our new Lifelong Learning Virtual Offerings page by clicking here. Additional listings will be included as they become available!

Registration begins by phone August 10th, 10:00 am. Please call 360.586.6181.

Classes start the week of Tuesday, September 8th, 2020.

Mindfulness in the Pandemic with Margo Benedetto
Monday 10:00 - 11:30 am • September 14 – November 2

We’re all advised to be “mindful” now, and everyone from NBA stars to corporate gurus is claiming mindfulness improves their game. Let’s cut through the talk and trendiness and study what mindfulness is, why it works and how it can be used in everyday life to improve physical, mental and emotional health -- especially during a global pandemic.

Become a Community Oral Historian with Elaine Vradenburgh
Thursday 10:00 - 12:00 pm • September 10 – October 29

Window Seat Media (WSM) and Senior Services are collaborating on an oral history project, called The Third Thirty, that gathers and shares stories from South Sound elders. Participants learn the art and practice of oral history, build their listening and interviewing skills, and consider the ethical issues of gathering and sharing other peoples’ stories.

Nutrition for Life with Mary Ellen Psaltis
Thursday 10:30 – 11:45 am • September 29 – October 27

We are living through extraordinary times. You’ll be eating for the rest of your life, so why not eat for power, pleasure and physical well-being. Use up-to-date nutrition information to create strategies for you and your life in order to add quality to your quantity.

Thank you to our agency sponsor: