

JEFFERSON COUNTY good works

B
SECTION
Wednesday
November 17, 2021

GIVE JEFFERSON



Students at CedarRoot Folk School learn to respect nature and delight in the outdoors as an extension of the classroom. Photo courtesy of CedarRoot Folk School

UNITED FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Addressing a 'larger landscape of need'

LAURA JEAN SCHNEIDER
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It's a long-standing tradition of lending a helping hand.

What started as a simple collaboration between the Port Townsend Paper Mill, The Port Townsend and Jefferson County Leader newspaper, and the city council in 1957 has morphed into Give Jefferson, United Good Neighbors of Jefferson County. In 2017, the nonprofit became a field of interest fund of Jefferson Community Foundation, started in 2005 as way to collectively streamline charitable donations to appropriate avenues.

The Give Jefferson campaign is an annual event held by the Community Foundation that emphasizes giving back to the organizations that support Jefferson County. And there's a lot to be grateful for, especially during an international crisis that has impacted the financial stability and viability of countless local businesses. After forming a pandemic-specific Response & Recovery Fund, the foundation grants committee undertook the daunting task of reviewing requests from more than 140 applicants representing 61 organizations.

Ultimately, more than \$700,000 from 1,100 separate financial gifts was awarded to 34 different business who felt the impact of COVID most.

But the generosity didn't stop there.

Last year's 2020 United Good Neighbor Give Jefferson donations totaled more than \$365,000.

"Last year the community really showed up," said Megan Claffin, campaign coordinator.

This year, 32 businesses are eligible to receive donations through Give Jefferson, easily done at givejefferson.org.

Nonprofits are asking for amounts ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000 to enable them to keep on paying it forward to the community in myriad ways. "UGN's goal is to raise at least \$300,000 so that every organizations' requests can be fulfilled," Claffin added.

This year, the fundraiser opened Nov. 12 and runs through Dec. 31. A "stories of impact" film at givejefferson.org and paper mailers will provide more information about the campaign and the ways that it helps benefit individuals in the community.

Neighbors, seniors, grocery baggers, and baristas are just a few of the faces in the county who might be less fortunate. Supporting Give Jefferson sustains the "larger landscape of need in our community," she said.

Here are just a handful of the unsung heroes that make Jefferson County feel like home.

Small differences, big results

The CedarRoot Folk School, while offering adult classes, also focuses on the younger members of this organism called Jefferson County. Participants can learn animal



Two volunteers at the ReCyclery work on a child's bike together. The nonprofit empowers folks to learn the skills necessary to maintain their own cycles, among many other outreach programs. Photo courtesy of the ReCyclery

tracking, wilderness survival skills, water harvesting, edible plant harvesting, and general all-around outdoor and group skills.

This year, the school, based on Marrowstone Island, celebrated 21 years of teaching children a holistic approach to education and the outdoors. In today's climate, it's paramount to raise the next generation with an awareness for the earth.

Help on the margins

One of the best ways to help homeless and disadvantaged residents of this community is by providing healthcare. Whether or not you subscribe to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, health and well-being is critically linked to longevity and quality of life. Jefferson County Medical and Advocacy Headquarters (JC MASH), has actually been doing that in Port Townsend since 1994. Folks are treated pro-bono by medical professionals and volunteers, and all are welcome regardless of insurance status, medical benefits, housing, mental health concerns or other conditions that challenge mainstream treatment.



Jefferson County Farmers Markets continue to expand their services, recently adding a BIPOC Start-up Business Fund to help Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in the community to create new businesses. Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Farmers Markets

the board is seeking new members to help face COVID-era challenges and brainstorm about the future of the free clinic. More at jcmash.org/home/get-involved.

Healthy soil, healthy bodies

A grassroots-movement that continues to grow, Jefferson County Farmers Markets will celebrate 30 years of fresh food and fast friends in 2022. Hand-in-hand with a healthy and vibrant community is a network that connects on a level from biomes to broccoli, a network of services as diverse as their purveyors. And the diversity doesn't stop there.

Contributions this season will help the farmers market fund their second season of the new Black Indigenous People of Color

(BIPOC) Start-up Business Fund.

Paired with the market's new equity committee, staff intend to be part of an anti-racist training program being supported by Jefferson Land Trust and the Jefferson Community Foundation. How's that for growth?

Continuing the cycle

Keeping the wheels of people large and small in motion, the ReCyclery has been a nonprofit since 2012. At the program's heart was always helping others, when it started as a bi-monthly bike repair shop in an alley by the old Boiler Room, off of Water Street.

The Port Townsend community seems more aware than most of how swapping out four wheels for two can make a difference to the environment. A shop like this keeps people of all ages and income brackets supplied with new and used biking gear, from bike racks to gloves. The spirit of the business is thoroughly indicative of local values, promoting a do-it-yourself attitude through bike repair workshops and education programs in Blue Heron Middle School and Quilcene Middle School.

The 2020 annual report reflected 1,896 volunteer hours donated by 238 individuals. Sales and services bring in the bulk of the income, with the largest expense being employee wages. Along with volunteering, supporting this community hub financially contributes to a low-carbon footprint, healthier citizens, and empowers folks through training and education.

Phlush

Sanitation might not seem high on the priority list of nonprofit work, but in 2015, the United Nations actually declared that it's a basic human right. Access to a toilet is a big deal for many people in the county, and Claffin said that PHLUSH, the acronym for "Public hygiene lets us stay human," works with the city and county to help provide alternative solutions to traditional sanitation models, including working with the homeless encampment and Good Man Sanitation.

Additionally, the nonprofit helps provide information on safe sanitation during disasters and emergencies. More at www.phlush.org.

A level of generosity

As winter holidays approach, what better time could there be to reassess finances, restructure priorities, and ensure that by helping others, the whole community benefits.

"The greatest motivator for me for Give Jefferson is that you get to see your impact as a donor right here in your community," Claffin said. "We have a lot of folks who live very comfortably in Jefferson County," she added.

"Thankfully, we have a very mindful and very generous community."

"A high tide raises all boats," she added.



For 65 years, donors in Jefferson County have provided for the basic human needs of vulnerable individuals and families by supporting United Good Neighbors' Give Jefferson campaign.

UGN serves as the United Way of Jefferson County and every dollar raised stays local to support safety-net services that deliver **food, shelter, healthcare, education, and hope** to those most in need.

As many COVID-19 response programs and safeguards are ending, our community faces new challenges. Now, more than ever, friends and neighbors need your generosity to weather uncertainty and recover from crisis.

2021 UGN Partner Organizations

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bayside Housing & Services | First Step Family Support Center | Olympic Neighbors |
| Catholic Community Services | Habitat for Humanity of East JeffCo | Olympic Pride |
| Cedarbrook Early Learning Center | JC MASH | PHLUSH |
| CedarRoot Folk School | JeffCo Vamonos | Real World Readiness |
| Clallam Jefferson Pro Bono Lawyers | Jefferson County Farmers Markets | St. Vincent de Paul of East JeffCo |
| COAST Shelter | Jefferson County Food Banks | Skillmation |
| Community Boat Project | JCIRA | The Benji Project |
| Community Wellness Project | Jefferson Teen Center | The Recyclery |
| Concerned Citizens | Kiwanis Backpacks for Kids PT | Weekend Nutrition Program |
| Dove House Advocacy Services | Olympic Angels | YMCA of Jefferson County |
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UNITED GOOD NEIGHBORS

Community building is key for many

By **LESLIE KELLY**
SPECIAL TO THE LEADER

While their causes may differ, their goal is the same. Those who work with marginalized populations say they're striving toward being accepted, having a sense of place, and feeling safe here in Jefferson County.

Olympic Pride

Ellen Caldwell, president of the board of Olympic Pride, said strides have been made, but there's always more work to do.

Olympic Pride, which was formerly Jefferson County Pride, supports the LGBTQ+ community on the Olympic Peninsula through awareness, education, and community engagement.

That engagement this year included having a booth at the Port Townsend Farmers Market.

"We got right out there and met people," Caldwell said. "And we absolutely loved it."

The focus of that and of their work is to build intimate, authentic relationships in the community.

"What we're finding is that those who are not LGBTQ support us," she said. "We had so many people come up to us and tell us that."

While there are no strong, hard numbers that tell how many residents of Jefferson County identify as LGBTQ+, statistically, it would be about 10 percent of the county's population.

That may be upward of 3,000 individuals. Olympic Pride is trying to re-establish itself post-pandemic, and Caldwell said she knows it can reach out to more people who might feel a need to be a part of the group.

"By and large, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community feels accepted and feels safe in this community,"



Members of Olympic Pride were joined by supporters from throughout the community for the Pride Line this summer in Port Townsend. Photo courtesy of Olympic Pride

Caldwell said. "But we have work to do where the trans (sexual) and intersexual populations are concerned."

As a gay woman, Caldwell said she never feels worried to walk down the street in Port Townsend holding hands with her wife. But she said there's always an opportunity to be kinder and more inclusive.

"I think we saw with our Pride Line this summer that we have support," she said. "We had nearly 200 people join us."

The Pride Line was done this past summer when a Gay Pride parade and festival couldn't be held due to COVID-19 restrictions. People stood side by side at a 6-foot COVID-safe distance and the line ran from McDonald's to the Food

Co-op, on both sides of the street.

Another visual program of Olympic Pride is their "Pride Rocks." Rocks are gathered and painted by volunteers and hidden throughout the town.

"Each rock has a message of empowerment and acceptance," Caldwell said. "We had the rocks at the farmers market and anyone could paint one and they were very popular. We've had people

from all over take a Pride Rock home with them."

Work that still needs to be done includes finding a physical location that is suitable for a youth center. And finding funding for it. Youth has met in the basement of the community center, prior to COVID, but now they are searching for a more visible location.

The program began as the "Rainbow Center," but with the reorganization, Olympic

Pride plans to allow the youth participants to name the program.

"We need a great physical location right in the center of things that the youth can easily get to," she said.

"We want them to choose a name that represents the youth, not just something that adults have picked," Caldwell said. "Right now, there is a very limited number of participants and we hope by having the youth

run the program there will be more interest."

Another focus is working with older adults who before recently, felt they couldn't let their true identity be known. They desire to network with others.

"We need to build a sense of community for the entire gay community," she said. "Anyone of any age should feel like they can be who they are in Port Townsend."

Finally, it is their goal to be able to again sponsor a Pride Day like they did prior to COVID.

"We need to expand our influence in the community and this is one way we can do that," Caldwell said.

Jefferson Teen Center

When it comes to youth in Jefferson County, the Jefferson Teen Center is one place where they can go to feel a part of something.

Shayann Hoffer-Pauley, director of the center, said the center operates as an after-school program, giving students ages 12 to 18 somewhere to go for a couple of hours after school.

"Lately our numbers are about 10 students a day," she said. "Before COVID we had more like 20 to 25." Transportation is sometimes an issue but now they have a second bus to bring teens to the center.

The center's adult volunteers see it as a place that they hope will empower

see **KEY**, Page B4

Food Bank Farm & Gardens



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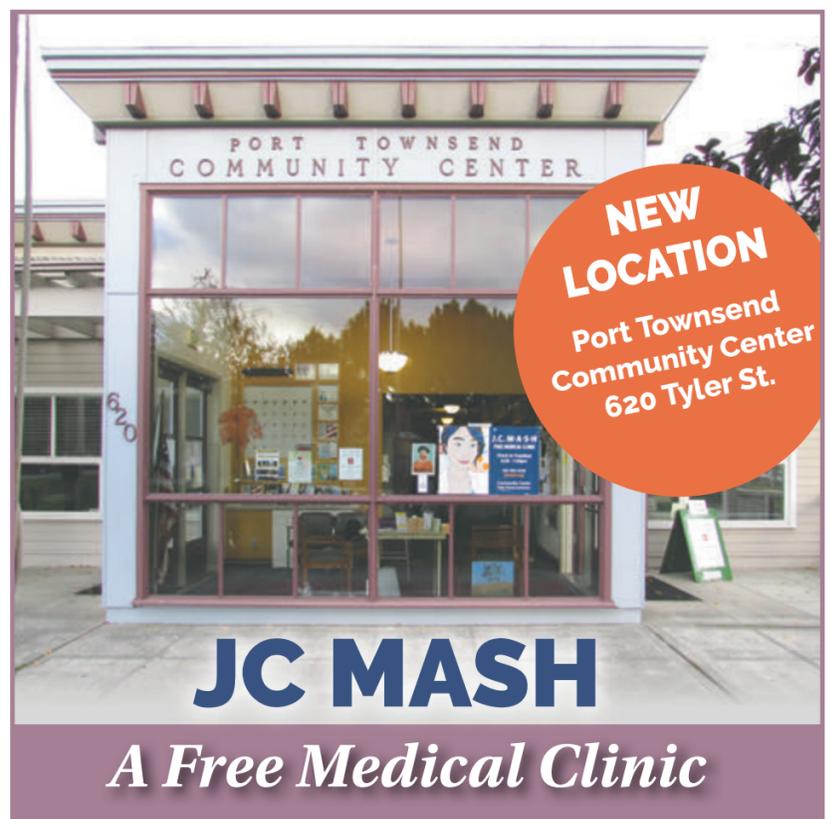
- **In August The City of Port Townsend** joined the international Mayors for Peace Organization. Mayors for Peace was founded in Hiroshima Japan with a clear goal that Never Again will nuclear weapons be used to destroy a city. Currently over 8000 cities in 165 countries have become members, including eight cities in Washington state. The organization focuses on building support for the recent UN Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons and cultivating peace consciousness in civil society by promoting "a culture of peace", in which each citizen thinks about and acts for peace in their daily lives. It also sponsors Children's Art Competitions. The theme this year is "Peaceful Towns 2021" for children 6 to 15.

Artwork by Negar Gheibi from Bandar Abbas, Iran (8 years old)



- **Mayors for Peace** has been working with the United States Conference on Mayors, which recently adopted a resolution calling on the United States to "Welcome the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to Act Now to Prevent Nuclear War and Eliminate Nuclear Weapons" https://legacy.usmayors.org/resolutions/89th_Conference/proposed-review-list-full-print-committee-individual.asp?resid=a0F4N00000PTLP3UAP
- **Local Quakers** working with the Friends Committee on National Legislation occasionally meet with our nationally elected officials and their staff to lobby for strengthening the tools of peace and ending the 2 authorizations to use military force passed by Congress 20 years ago, which have been used by 4 Presidents.
 - <https://www.fcni.org/updates/2021-09/focusing-and-acting-peace>
- **Washington Against Nuclear Weapons (WANW)** is a statewide coalition that aims to reduce and eliminate all components of the 1.7 trillion dollars rebuild of the US nuclear weapons arsenal. Our ultimate goal is to prevent nuclear war and abolish nuclear weapons worldwide. <https://www.wanwcoalition.org/>
- **Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action (GZ)** offers the opportunity to explore the meaning and practice of nonviolence from the perspective of deep spiritual reflection, providing a means for witnessing to and resisting all nuclear weapons, especially Trident. GZ is located in Poulsbo, Washington, next to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, the largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the United States and home to eight of the US Navy's Trident ballistic missile submarines. <https://actionnetwork.org/groups/gznonviolence-e-news>

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HOW YOU CAN HELP:

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- ▶ Donate funds to JC MASH, a licensed non-profit (mailing address: 2023 E. Sims Way, #261, Port Townsend, WA 98368).
- ▶ Participate in the Give Jefferson campaign, our largest source of funding.

Please send inquiries to info@jcmash.org

Your donations support these vital community organizations

Thank you for generously supporting these essential organizations. Donations can be directed to any one of our 2021 Partner Organizations, however to ensure your gift is matched, and your impact amplified by All in WA, you must donate through Give Jefferson. www.givejefferson.org

Kiwanis Backpacks for Kids Port Townsend
Weekend meals for Port Townsend students

Bayside Housing and Services
Interim housing leading to jobs and long-term housing
Catholic Community Services
Maintaining independence for low-income seniors in south Jefferson County

Cedarbrook Early Learning Center
Year-round childcare for working families

CedarRoot Folk School
Building relationships with nature

through outdoor learning

Clallam Jefferson Pro Bono Law
Low-income legal aid program

Community Boat Project
Job and life skills for youth with adult mentors

Community Wellness Project
Wellness through food and farm programs in schools

Concerned Citizens
Intervention services for children from birth to age three

Dove House Advocacy Services
Services for survivors of crime, abuse, and trauma

ECHHO
Medical transportation and assistance

First Step Family Support Center
Building positive caregiver interactions, child development and social support

Habitat for Humanity
Bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope

JC MASH
Free medical and advocacy services

JeffCo Vamonos
Experiential learning field trips for youth

Jefferson County Shelter (COAST)
Year-round shelter for single, homeless adults

Jefferson County Farmers Market Association
Nutritious, local food for all through farmers market food access

Jefferson County Association of Food Banks
Providing food to those in need

Jefferson County Immigrant Rights Advocates (JCIRA)
Helping immigrants with support and education

Jefferson Teen Center
Providing Tri-Area youth with education and opportunities

Olympic Angels
Providing community to foster families

Olympic Community Action Programs
Supporting low-income and fixed-income people in crisis

Olympic Neighbors
Home and community for people with developmental disabilities

Olympic Pride
Serving the LGBTQ+ community

PHLUSH (Public Hygiene)
Advocating for the right to sustainable toilet systems

Northwest Maritime Center
Real World Readiness: Breaking cyclical incarceration through maritime education

Saint Vincent de Paul

Providing emergency help to those in need

Skillmation
Connecting students with mentors & subject coaches

The Benji Project
Mindfulness and self-compassion tools for youth and families

The Recycler
Bike safety and education for youth

Weekend Nutrition Program
Take home weekend food program for Quilcene and Brinnon students

YMCA
Building healthy spirit

Key: Helping all who live in JeffCo feel welcome

continued from Page B3

teens. They are working with another group, the Empower Teens Coalition at the county level.

“We see kids that want to be a part of something,” she said. “We try to provide that and what we see are kids who

are so grateful to be teens and have fun.”

A mural project has been among the projects the youth have completed. Each participant was given a panel and could create whatever they wanted. Then the panels were put together to form a patchwork mural.

They also took part in the

Rhody Parade carrying signs and rattling noise makers.

“Teens do feel a part of this community and they want to support it,” she said. “They want to connect with others and feel a part of decision making for the future.”

The center has been able to operate on donations and it received a Port Townsend Rotary grant, which was used to upgrade their space.

“Despite everything, we’ve been able to have healthy snacks for the kids and provide them with the materials they need for their projects,” Hoffer-Pauley said.

Individualism is sometimes the key to success.

“We try to embody all of the students and honor where they are at as individuals,” she said.

Olympic Neighbors

An important part of the work of Olympic Neighbors is the interaction of their residents with others in the community, said Claudia Coppola, director of Olympic Neighbors.

“Our mission is to support those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and see that they have access to anything and everything



The nonprofit organization Olympic Neighbors supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and hosts monthly community meetings open to all. Photo courtesy of Olympic Neighbors

that anyone else would have,” Coppola said. “The community has been very open and supportive.”

There are six residents in Olympic Neighbors who live in a home where they can learn skills and eventually be able to live on their own. Residents range in age

from late 20s to 60s. Some, however, will not be able to live independently without oversight.

Residents are able to explore their interests, learn new things, and gain skills so that they can be employed.

“One of our major goals is to integrate our residents with the community,” Coppola said. “We host monthly community events that are free and open to all.”

Coppola said Olympic Neighbors’ residents are valued as a part of the community.

“I’ve never heard of any of them having a negative experience with anyone in this community,” she said.

“In fact, many of our volunteers and donors come to us because they’ve had a favorable interaction with one of our residents.”

COVID and the months of having to be isolated from the public and even their families were very difficult for the

residents, Coppola said.

“But the staff worked hard to keep them busy. Just like all of us, they learned what Zoom is,” she said. “We offered FaceTime so they could see their family members on the computer. We had online exercise classes and virtual Bingo. Once it was safe, we got a large tent and heaters and had visits with family members outdoors.”

Inclusion also means things like going to Mariners games, going out to eat, or going to festivals in Port Townsend.

“All of the interactions we’ve had with community members have been good,” Coppola said.

“I think part of that is because we (Olympic Neighbors) have a great reputation in the community. We work hard to see that our residents with special needs aren’t just housed, but that they will thrive as part of this community.”

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On behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, the Port Townsend Kiwanis Club and Jefferson Transit will be collecting new, unwrapped toys

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A heartfelt thank you to the many individuals, organizations, and businesses that support our services and are helping our whole community to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

You are the reason we can continue to provide the resources that truly make a difference for families building safe, healthy, and meaningful lives.

Local groups advocate for vulnerable populations

BY LESLIE KELLY
SPECIAL TO THE LEADER

There's no question that housing in Jefferson County is expensive. And finding affordable places for vulnerable populations — victims of domestic violence, immigrants, and others — likely will grow harder as pandemic funding and moratoriums on evictions happen.

Dove House Advocacy Services

If Beulah Kingsolver had a magic wand, she'd create more affordable housing for single mothers and others in need.

Kingsolver is the executive director for Dove House Advocacy Services, a non-profit that helps those who are recovering from domestic violence, homelessness, sexual assault, mental illness, addiction, crime, and other sources of trauma. Housing is one service that they provide.

"In order to afford housing in the Port Townsend area, a person needs to make \$26 an hour," Kingsolver said. "Every victim of domestic violence that we are helping to find safe, affordable housing is competing with retirees, couples with no children, and people with perfect credit."

Landlords are more apt to rent to those individuals than a single mother with children, she said. And it takes about \$5,000 to move into a rental because landlords want first and last month's rent, plus a security deposit.

In the past year, the Dove House has helped 59 clients with domestic violence issues by housing them in a shelter that can handle 18 to 20 individuals or families. They've had to turn away 146 persons who need shelter. The organization has seen 298 new clients and taken another 309 crisis calls.

With the goal being to get victims and their children in safe permanent housing, the pandemic has been an issue.

"People are staying put," Kingsolver said. "There aren't many rentals on the market. In one case, we had a mother with three children in the shelter for eight months before we could find her more permanent housing."

Prior to the pandemic, an average stay at the shelter was about two weeks, she said.

Due to that, Dove House counselors had to get creative with dealing with domestic violence victims.

"In some cases, we worked with couples and talked to each of them about what they needed to be safe in their own home," Kingsolver said. "We came up with totally different safety plans."

Making the situation even worse was that area jails were letting inmates go, due to overcrowding and the fear of the spread of the coronavirus.

"A lot of victims call the police and hope that their abuser will be arrested," she



Jefferson County Immigrant Rights Advocates gather to protest conditions for detainees held at the Northwest Detention Center. Photo courtesy of JCIRA

said. "But they learned that wasn't happening."

When COVID-19 first hit, numbers of those needing help actually went down, she said. Much of that was due to the fact no one was going anywhere.

But soon, the numbers went up.

"Everyone's at home, all the time," Kingsolver said. "And that leads to conflict."

The organization receives state grants, and applies for funding from private foundations, and individual donors. But one of their main sources of funding dried up during the pandemic.

"Last year, we couldn't hold any of our fundraisers," she said. "This year we did have our gold tournament because it was outdoors. Some of our supporters had small fundraisers for us. But we still were down from the normal."

Another big issue is childcare, Kingsolver said.

During the pandemic, day cares shut down. Some of their clients weren't able to work because they had nowhere to take their children.

"We even had one of our own employees have to go to part time because he didn't have childcare," she said.

In many cases the childcare costs outpace the wages that single moms or dads are making.

"And with our clients, there's no deadline for when they will be able to be on their own," Kingsolver said. "When you are in trauma, it takes a long time to move forward."

Jefferson County Immigrant Rights Advocates

Providing rental assistance is one of the things that Jefferson County Immigrant Rights Advocates (JCIRA) does for those who immigrate to this area. It works with other nonprofits to find affordable housing for new families. And then they give financial assistance.

"Since COVID began we have expended \$265,000 in assistance," said Jean Wallet, co-chair of JCIRA. "For us that's a lot. Our typical year's budget is about \$48,000."

Funding sources included

government grants, grants from Jefferson County Community Foundation, and individual donors. In all, JCIRA has given out 500 financial assistance grants since it was founded in 2017.

It's not clear whether government funding will continue past the pandemic, but JCIRA will continue helping immigrants. Besides rent assistance, they are advocates for immigrants. Supporters have protested the conditions at the Northwest Detention Center near Tacoma and have worked with state and local officials to enhance current immigration laws.

They have an English language learners' program, and through Kitsap Immigration Assistance Center, they offer legal help to those seeking green cards and other legal documents.

One important aspect of their work is knowing and making connections in the community.

"We had a client who needed a car to get to work," Wallet said. "There's another group here that works with racial issues, who had someone donate a car to them. We were able to get the car for our client."

In another case, a client wanted to begin college, but was afraid to go to enroll. JCIRA went with her and helped her get to know people at the school.

Despite the pandemic, JCIRA sponsored three asylum seekers from Central America. The individuals were given legal help and JCIRA found them housing.

"We were able to find families who were able to bring these individuals into their homes," she said. "We were focused on transwomen who were living in fear in their home countries. We have been able to create a community for them with their (sponsor) families and each other."

Because rent is so high in Jefferson County, JCIRA looks for families who can sponsor immigrants in their own homes, or who have an apartment or another dwelling on their property where clients can live as they adjust to life in America.

"That's hard to find," Wallet said. "We are so grateful for those who have

room and are able to be host families."

Clallam-Jefferson Counties Pro Bono Lawyers

It's clear to Shauna Rogers-McClain that the next few months will be unsure for a lot of people. As director of the Pro Bono Lawyers, she said they've been working for some time to anticipate the needs of those affected by the lifting of the eviction moratorium.

The moratorium has been extended several times, giving the Pro Bono Lawyers more time to plan for how to help those facing eviction.

"We've been preparing for the last year," Rogers-McClain said. "We're not quite sure what will happen."

The general work of lawyers who volunteer their time to the organization centers on cases in family law. They can only take civil cases and Rogers-McClain said Pro Bono Lawyers' cases include domestic violence, housing-related issues, employment, anything having to do with family law.

But most recently the focus has been on what's going to happen when the calls begin to come from those persons being evicted.

She said when housing is not secure, that can lead to other issues such as the loss of a job or a domestic violence situation.

"We expect to see more of all of those kinds of cases when the moratorium is lifted," Rogers-McClain said.

They've added a staff attorney who will go to the courthouse when the eviction docket is up.

"He will be available and will offer help to anyone who needs it on the spot," she said.

Their office has also been working with housing providers in Jefferson and Clallam counties to hopefully be able

to place evicted families or give them financial help to keep them in their homes.

"There's a task force working with providers like Serenity House and OlyCAP," she said. "We know many of the people who are affected have been paying month to month as they can and when

they fall behind in their rent, they need assistance to get caught up."

Because of the eviction moratorium being lifted, they feel like there will be an avalanche of evictions that they'll need to be helping.

see *ADVOCATE*, Page B7

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Despite supply chain issues, food programs continue to work

By LESLIE KELLY
SPECIAL TO THE LEADER

Even though some shelves at the neighborhood grocery store are empty, food programs throughout Jefferson County have been able to keep food on the tables of their clients during the pandemic.

Jefferson County Food Banks

According to Shirley Moss, executive director of the Jefferson County Food Banks, food supplies have held steady.

“We have eight gardens that grow for the food banks, and much of our inventory comes from Food Lifeline, which has continued to be able to supply us,” Moss said. “In fact, we were able to get the food supply from Food Lifeline at a lower cost.”

Some items may not have been available, Moss said. But the food bank still had enough food to meet the need.

“And we were able to still glean (food) from Safeway, QFC and the Co-op which has helped keep our supply where we need it,” said Moss.

Prior to COVID, clients came into the food bank and shopped for the food items they wanted or needed.

During COVID, however, bags were prepared in advanced and handed out in a drive-through assembly.

“I saw clients at the grocery store and they would tell me they were shopping there because they didn’t get the food items they wanted from us,” she said.

Numbers dropped from 350 families helped on average prior to COVID, to about 100 families coming to the food bank weekly.

“Many of them had increases in food stamps or unemployment benefits that allowed them to shop at retail food stores,” she said. “And they told me that if they didn’t spend their food stamps, they would lose them.”

But as the pandemic help programs are waning, the numbers of those showing up for food are increasing.

“Our numbers are on the rise,”



Putting her paws to work, Teddy greets visitors to the Port Townsend Food Bank from the pet food station. Leader photo by James Sloan

Moss said. “We are going to get back to where we were before the pandemic.”

Currently they are seeing 16 to 20 new families each week.

The pandemic also affected volunteers. Normally, the food bank has 111 volunteers, but that number dropped to 67 during the pandemic.

“Many of our volunteers are older and they weren’t getting out during the pandemic prior to the vaccines,” she said. “Now that we have the vaccine, and we are allowing our clients to select their own food items, our volunteers are needed and they are coming back.”

The three food banks in Jefferson County are 100 percent volunteer-run and have no paid employees.

Looking toward the future, Moss said their biggest need is for a commercial kitchen.

“We are so blessed to have the location we do,” she said. “And we have a space (elsewhere) where food can be freeze dried and processed. But if we had that commercial kitchen where we are, we could do so much more. Right now, we have to go to the Old Alcohol Plant to do

anything.”

Moss also added that the food banks are a source for pet food. She said often clients will make sure they feed their pets before they feed themselves.

“When you are homeless, a dog may be the only living thing you have,” Moss said. “Or if you are a senior, and homebound, having that cat or dog in your home is vital. We have a pet food area for just those reasons.”

Backpacks for Kids

For Steve Taylor, chairman of the Port Townsend’s Kiwanis “Backpacks for Kids program,” the past year and a half of COVID has had its ups and downs.

The program sends home backpacks filled with nutritious food with those students who are on the free and reduced lunch programs in public schools.

“These kids get good meals during the week,” Taylor said. “But on the weekends, some of them have no food in their homes.”

Despite COVID, Taylor said Kiwanis were able to keep the program going.

“We had enough food, thankfully,” he said. “Sometimes we had a bit less selection. But we’ve been able to fill the packs throughout the pandemic.”

Prior to the pandemic, they were giving out about 70 packs a week. The members get together every two weeks to fill packs. That number dropped to about 50 during the time that things were shut down for COVID.

“We are still at about 50 packs,” Taylor said. “But we expect to get back up in the range of 70 once all the parents fill out the necessary paperwork.”

Generally, the packs will include soup or beans, macaroni and cheese, (that can be prepared in the home), fruit, juice, and sometimes chips. They send home enough in each pack for both Saturday and Sunday.

“We feel we’ve been fortunate to be able to carry on with the program (during COVID),” he said.

But Taylor knows that food prices are on the rise. Most of the funding for the program comes from donations and grants. And he knows that those who have been depending on COVID relief checks,

or longer times of unemployment checks, may begin to show up in the numbers of the kids they serve.

“We always can use help, either food donations or money,” he added.

Community Wellness Project

Another program helping with food needs is Community Wellness Project. Spokeswoman Katheryn Lamka said the program that helps get healthy food in the hands of those who need it, carried on throughout the pandemic.

“We were lucky,” Lamka said. “We were able to do what we do because of our local farmers and our local connections.”

They’ve been able to get the schools in Chimacum to purchase commodities directly from local farmers, she said.

During the COVID crisis, they continued their work by delivering healthy meals to families in need. Many of the meals came from Nadine’s Kitchen.

“There’s just a lot of food insecurity in Jefferson County,” she said. “I don’t think some people are aware of that.”

The program also was able to secure funding to have school gardens and school garden educators in Chimacum who teach the students about growing nutritious food in the garden.

Because of the pandemic, Community Wellness wasn’t able to have its annual fundraising dinner last year. But this year they did by hosting it outdoors at the drive-in movie theater and having students deliver the dinners to patrons in their cars.

Program volunteers also honored teachers because of the stress they’ve been under teaching remotely for so long.

Lamka agrees with Moss, that a commercial kitchen where produce can be prepared and packaged and where local food programs can work together to meet the needs of the county’s food insecure families and individuals, is first on the list of wants and needs.

“And we need people willing to give their time to all the programs that are helping Jefferson County residents be able to eat and eat healthy,” Lamka added.

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Health services for teens and senior are available in Jefferson County

By **LESLIE KELLY**
SPECIAL TO THE LEADER

As Baby Boomers begin to hit that magical age of needing help, there's an increasing need for in-home care givers.

But very few younger people are choosing caregiving as a career.

That's what Robin Gibson faces every single day. Gibson is the service director of long-term care for Catholic Community Services of Western Washington.

"In home care services is a significant need in Jefferson County," Gibson said. "These are the people who allow seniors to remain independent and living in their own homes."

But nonprofits like Catholic Community Services are in direct competition with nursing homes, assisted living centers, physician's offices, and other private in-home care agencies for the few individuals who choose to work with the aging population.

Gibson said she could place five to six caregivers in jobs today, if she had them.

"Caregiving is a very hard job," she said. "Not everybody can do it."

In the past few months, Gibson hasn't been able to find caregivers.

"Zero," she said, referring to the placements made. "It's just a growing issue."

Gibson said she's been working with WorkSource, and other job placement agencies, to find caregivers, but hasn't been able to.



John Langdon, a volunteer with Ecumenical Christian Helping Hands Organization, ECHHO, helps client Pat Norton. Photo courtesy of ECHHO

"For some reason, the younger generation isn't interested in home care," she said. "It's not a career that young people want to do."

The job requires physical and emotional strength, Gibson said. Lifting someone into a bathtub, helping them with bathroom needs, dressing them, giving them their medications, and making sure they have nutritious meals can be part of the work.

"It's a hard job," Gibson said. "And while it pays more than fast food work, it's a job where you have to work with people, not just flip burgers."

Recruiting and maintaining caregivers who often serve an elderly population that relies on community organizations and nonprofits for care, is difficult.

"We aren't able to offer or provide as much (pay and benefits) as the private companies can, which that makes finding caregivers even that

much harder," she said.

Gibson doubts things will improve soon but hopes that younger persons and physically fit mid-career individuals will consider becoming in-home caregivers.

Another need of the aging population is transportation to medical appointments, and medical equipment that they may not be able to afford on their limited incomes.

That's where ECHHO comes in.

Ecumenical Christian Helping Hands Organization (ECHHO) is a nonprofit that helps seniors get to their medical appointments by providing rides. And it also has a lending program for medical equipment, including wheelchairs, crutches, and walkers.

"When COVID first started, the number of calls for help we got went way down," said Nancy Budd-Garvan, a board member of ECHHO. "Everybody was

hunkered down and nobody was going anywhere."

But, she said, after the vaccinations were available, seniors began seeing their doctors and scheduling their elective surgeries that had been cancelled due to the pandemic.

"We are back closer to our pre-pandemic numbers," Budd-Garvan said.

At the end of September 2021, the organization had made 1,130 trips to medical appointments. It loaded medical equipment to seniors or others who needed it 1,428 times. Volunteers had clocked 2,000 hours and had driven 35,650 miles.

Throughout the lockdown times, ECHHO was able to maintain its staff and keep its programs operating for those who did make it to medical appointments or needed equipment.

"We did lose volunteers," Budd-Garvan said. "But some of our drivers continued to drive."

The biggest change was that ECHHO put safety

protocols in place.

"Our drivers carried disinfectant cloths and wiped down everything in the vehicle between trips," she said. "Drivers and our clients wear masks, keep distance between each other and they have a window open in the vehicle. And we are keeping our precise cleaning protocols in place indefinitely."

Every piece of equipment that is loaned is cleaned and disinfected when it is returned to ECHHO, each time it is loaned.

Board of director members have gone overboard to let people know about the safety regulations, she said, and riders have to show when they were last vaccinated.

"Someone doesn't have to be vaccinated to get help," Budd-Garvan said. "But we let our volunteer drivers know and they can decide whether to sign up to take an unvaccinated rider."

The need for ECHHO services is expected to continue to grow.

"Every year when we read

our city's profile, we see an influx of seniors in our city," she said. "We have a lot of retirees and people over 65 and as they age, they are only going to need more help."

When it comes to helping youth in the community with their mental health needs, The Benji Project is one of the services available.

The Benji Project, named for a local youth Benji Kenworthy who died by suicide, offers stress management and resiliency training to teens through mindfulness and self-compassion. The curriculum "Making Friends with Yourself," is offered through the Post Townsend Public School District during health classes. It is being expanded to Chimacum schools soon.

According to Heather McRae-Woof, during the coronavirus shutdown, classes were offered virtually, but this fall students have been back in the classroom learning in person. The core format

see **HEALTH**, Page B8

Advocate: Helping vulnerable populations

continued from Page B5

"Eviction puts a strain on the entire family," Rogers-McClain said. "If we can avoid an eviction or keep them from having an eviction on their record, we will — because that will make it so they can find housing in the future."

She said if someone knows they are facing eviction, they should call the Pro Bono Lawyers group at 360-504-2422, or the Eviction Defense Hotline at 1-855-657-8387. The hotline is part of the Northwest Justice Project.

"If there's any problem call CLEAR line (Coordinated Legal Education Advice and Referral, 1-888-201-1014)

and talk to an advocate who will take information and pass it along to an attorney," Rogers-McClain said.

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AmerCorps volunteers help out at a Community Build worksite for Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County. Image courtesy of Habitat for Humanity

Nonprofits work to provide housing and shelter needs

By **LESLIE KELLY**
SPECIAL TO THE LEADER

People in just about every income bracket, except the top 5 percent, need safe, affordable housing. And several nonprofits in Jefferson County are trying hard to fill the gaps.

Bayside Housing & Services

For Bayside Housing & Services, the goal is to get their clients into permanent housing that they can afford. But in reality, it usually starts with providing shelter in larger group facilities or in tiny homes.

“Our main goal is to move them into permanent housing,” said Gary Keister, director of Bayside Housing & Services. “We have folks ready to move to permanent housing today, if we could find it.”

In the previous 45 days, Bayside has been able to place 16 clients, Keister said. He called that remarkable, but said it took getting creative.

“We were able to place a woman with her sister in Florida,” he said. “And we had a daughter move in with her mother and a mother move in with her daughter.”

Those situations, where families are reunited, help to increase the placements for Bayside. Finding housing in Jefferson County that is affordable is difficult, and families can’t even find apartments that are within the range that Bayside clients can pay.

The founders acquired the Old Alcohol Plant in 2015 and also established a nonprofit organization, Bayside Housing & Services using a creative, one-of-a-kind approach. While other organizations have converted hotels for use as homeless shelters or transitional housing, Bayside and the hotel operating in the remodeled alcohol plant, elected to retain the hotel business as part of a sustainability model.

Some of the rooms are set aside for transitional, temporary housing and some are kept as part of the hotel. Proceeds from hotel room stays, the restaurant, gallery and events help fund Bayside. Single mothers with children,

veterans, and senior women are commonly seen at Bayside.

Bayside provides meals to their residents and has case managers who work with them to find success in housing, employment, and other issues. They opened in April 2016 with six clients.

In addition to the hotel, Bayside has constructed 12 tiny houses.

These structures were built to create a housing resource and worked in collaboration with the city of Port Townsend, Jefferson County, and the Port of Port Townsend so that this housing resource might be utilized through the housing crisis. The Evangelical Bible Church graciously offered land adjacent to the church as a construction and storage site for the initial building process until such an appropriate site was found. Landing at the Community United Methodist Church, the 12 units were placed and are accompanied by a bathroom and shower unit as well as a community area for added storage and light cooking.

The second village Community Build is underway. Initial building will take place at the Evangelical Bible Church until the secured village site is ready for tiny house village placement.

Keister said the Port Townsend community understands the issue and he sees good things happening in the future.

“We really have to work together,” he said, of governments, landlords, and community organizations. “We can’t put it all on the nonprofits to solve the housing problem. It’s a Herculean issue.”

Addressing the vulnerable in the community is something that nonprofits do really well, he said.

With city and county governments helping with funding, and with private grants and donations, the housing issue can be solved, Keister added.

Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County

Despite the pandemic, Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County has been able to continue its work to provide homes for working class families.

Executive Director Jamie Maciejewski said in the past year the local Habitat for Humanity has completed and sold four houses and complete five critical home repairs.

“In addition to that, we are currently working on nine homes, those homes all in various stages,” Maciejewski said. “We’ve been able to continue working during the pandemic, only in smaller groups.”

There’s a detailed process for screening applicants to participate and receive a home through Habitat for Humanity, she said. The applicant must have a need for more secure housing, must demonstrate the ability to have income to pay the mortgage and have good credit and pay their bills, and they must be willing to put in anywhere from 250 to 400 hours of sweat equity helping build their own home.

“Some applicants may not make it through the first time,” she said. “They may have something in their credit history that they need to clear up. But often times when they re-apply, they are able to work with us.”

The need is never-ending, Maciejewski said.

“Many of these people have a good source of income, but they cannot afford housing in this community,” she said. “Even rents are higher than they can afford with their income.”

Most of them, she said, are in the working/service industry with jobs at grocery stores, restaurants, childcare, or healthcare.

“They are really hard-working people,” she said. “But even with jobs they aren’t able to afford to live here.”

The need for housing for the working class continually increases, she added.

The community seems to understand that, as more than 400 volunteers help the local Habitat each year, Maciejewski said.

“We have very dedicated volunteers,” she said. “With the pandemic, we have had to work in smaller groups, but we’ve still be able to accomplish a lot.”

Health: Providing vital help to people in need

continued from Page B7

is an eight-week class, two hours per week usually offered two to three times a year for high school students.

Also offered are youth mindfulness circle sessions during which small groups in sixth to 12th grades discover practices that offer grounding in times of stress, and comfort in times of upheaval. Meetings are in-person held outdoors in Port Townsend.

“Having classes be virtual had mixed reactions from the students,” said McRae-Woof. “I saw some students kind of like the cocooning. They liked the idea of remote classes because it allowed them to be in their safe place. The important thing is, regardless of whether it’s in a remote session or in person, the students continue to express their feelings and be kind to themselves.”

Teen years are stressful time no matter what else is going on in the world, she said. Less internal criticism and countering that critical voice with kinder words and thoughts is the goal

of many of the programs The Benji Projects offers.

Besides classes in the public schools, The Benji Project also hosts summer camps. This year those camps were held outdoors, under coronavirus protocols, for students ages 11 to 14 years of age. Another session for high school students also was added this past summer.

“We hadn’t been able to have summer camps in 2020,” McRae-Woof said. “We were really glad to have them back this year.”

The pandemic led some students to feel more isolated, she said. Some of them saw no one but family for months. And teens also were subjected to the social media focus on division and not unity.

“Teens grapple with the same social awareness of conflict that all adults are,” McRae-Woof said. “Social media seems to stress division over unity and that can be stressful.”

In a recent survey by The Benji Project of 10th-graders, few of them said they feel they have a trusted adult in their lives that they can go to. That led to The Benji Project initiating

community connections between teens and trusted adults.

“We want to create relationships between the adults and the youth in our community,” she said. “We need to listen to our youth and help them explore ways to be kind to themselves.”

McRae-Woof said adults willing to help can contact her at teachers@thebenjiproject.org.

“We also have a need for board members with development and finance backgrounds,” she said. “And to serve on the Program Advisory Committee.”

There’s a short video on the project’s website, thebenjiproject.org, in which students speak about their experiences and their feelings during the pandemic.

McRae-Woof applauded those who support the Give Jefferson campaign and the funding that The Benji Project has received.

“That is so important in developing the programs we have,” she said. “We recognize that many adults are helping us financially and that shows how they care.”