

WHATCOM VOLUNTEER CENTER



"The mission of the Whatcom Volunteer Center is to be at the core of participation and service by promoting and supporting effective service in order to improve community."

Vol. 26, No. 1 January 2010

Turning Houses into Homes

By Rebecca Rayner, WVC Special Projects and Events Coordinator VISTA

On September 3, 2009, the House 2 Home Network Virtual Furniture Bank set out with its first baby steps. That was the day of the program's first furniture delivery – Rebecca Rayner, Randi McKenna and Dan Hammill of Whatcom Volunteer Center and Greg Winter of Whatcom Homeless Service Center brought three beds to a family in north Bellingham.



Randi McKenna & Rebecca Rayner deliver a bed

This family is a single mother with three children –some slept on the floor, others used lumpy mattresses with bad springs. It was an amazing experience to bring beds to a family that needed them, one that in the past three months has happened over and over again.

In addition to helping people who were recently homeless find furniture, House 2 Home is also pioneering a new style of furniture bank. It doesn't have a warehouse to store furniture in, so as donation calls and emails come in, a volunteer is sent to pick up the furniture and deliver it to the customer's new home. It is the first of its kind in the nation.

continued on page 8

ATTENTION!

CHECK OUT OUR NEW
AND IMPROVED WEB SITE!
YOU CAN EVEN ENTER
YOUR HOURS ON-LINE
NOW!

TRY OUT THE
SEARCHABLE
1-800 VOLUNTEER LINK.

GO TO WWW.
WHATCOMVOLUNTEER.ORG

Published quarterly by
Whatcom Volunteer Center
725 N. State Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360)734-3055 or
1-800-VOLUNTEER
Fax (360) 734-3215
www.whatcomvolunteer.org

The Whatcom Volunteer
Center newsletter provides
resource information for vol-
unteers and agencies served by
the Center.

Interested in submitting items
for the newsletter? Send sub-
missions via email attachment
to info@whatcomvolunteer.org

**Winter Dates to Note:****January**

* Classes are limited in size, and all require pre-registration

Events:

Jan. 1 Closed for New Year's Day

Jan. 8 Volunteer Coordinator Roundtable 9--10 AM at WVC--drop
in or call for more info: Aly 734-3055

Jan. 21 Fiber Circle 2--4 PM at WVC drop-ins welcome! *Note time change*

Jan. 29th Closed for Staff retreat

Training:

Jan. 27 Volunteers Leading Projects 1--3 PM at WVC- no fee-call
734-3055 to register

FebruaryEvents:

Feb. 5 Volunteer Coordinator Roundtable 9--10 AM at WVC--drop
in or call for more info: Aly 734-3055

Feb. 15 Closed for President's Day

Feb. 18 Fiber Circle 2--4 PM at WVC drop-ins welcome! *Note time change*

Training:

Feb. 18 Recruit and Recognize Volunteers Noon-2 PM at WVC
\$20.00 fee-- call 734-3055 to register

MarchEvents:

Mar. 4 Project Homeless Connect 9--4 PM at various downtown
locations in B'Ham--see article or call for more info: Rebecca 734-3055

Mar. 5 Volunteer Coordinator Roundtable 9--10 AM at WVC--
drop in or call for more info: Aly 734-3055

Mar. 18 Fiber Circle 2--4 PM at WVC drop-ins welcome! *Note time change*

Training:

Mar. 20 Volunteer Save-A-Life 9-4 PM at the Red Cross -no fee.

For mandatory registration after Feb. 22, call 734-3055

Mar. 24 On Board 6:30-8:30 PM at WVC-no fee-call 734-3055 to register

Plan to Volunteer for

Project Homeless Connect on March 4, 2010

Dan Hammill, WVC Volunteer Program Director

“We volunteered not knowing what to expect and wound up forgetting our own problems by helping someone else with theirs,” said Claudette and Maggie Johnson about their experience at Project Homeless Connect (PHC) 2009.



Comments like the Johnsons’ were abundant in the days following Bellingham/Whatcom’s first PHC event. Over 250 volunteers worked with their homeless neighbors, helping guests receive services, dine at a first-class lunch and receive new items of clothing.

The next Project Homeless Connect event is just around the corner, on March 4th.

People interested in volunteering should contact Whatcom Volunteer Center to

sign up for an information session at noon on January 26 or February 3 at 5:30 pm. Both info sessions will be held at St. Luke’s Health Education Center. Pre-registration is required.

Volunteers can sign up for specific volunteer roles at the info sessions.

Because of the high demand for services in 2009, Project Homeless Connect organizers have doubled the size of the event, which will be offered at six locations near the downtown Bellingham area.

This expansion also increases the amount of volunteers needed for the event.

“The thing that struck me most while volunteering at PHC was how the community was so involved,” said Ann Beck, a

2009 volunteer who was herself displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and 2006.

Organizers expect the need for up to 325 volunteers for the 2010 event.

“I felt renewed after seeing volunteers wanting to improve the lives of people who are homeless in our community,” said Beck.

For more information, contact rebeccar@whatcomvolunteer.org or randim@whatcomvolunteer.org or call 734-3055.

Whatcom Giveathon



Jodi Sipes, WVC RSVP Director

This has been a tough year for many in our community and the needs of our area residents have grown substantially. Nonprofits provide the safety net, but they've been hit hard as well. Over 700 Whatcom County Realtors answered the call to help, and partnered with Whatcom Volunteer Center, Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities, Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Whatcom Council of Nonprofits, and Northwood Hall to bring an alternative gift event to the community to support our non-profit agencies.

The first annual Whatcom Giveathon was a great success! The Realtors had a great idea just 6 weeks ago and along with their partners turned it into a big event. The Realtors wanted to make best use of the space Northwood Hall donated to them, and wanted to expose their membership and the community to the many different types of causes in our community. In all, 26 agencies were there to raise funds by providing alternative holiday gifts for donations. Each agency also received \$50.00 from the Realtors, \$25.00 from



Whidbey Island Bank, and a quarter page ad worth over \$1,300 from the Bellingham Herald! The total raised at the event has not been tallied yet, but already exceeds \$53,000!

The Herald also donated ad space for the event, and put an article in their paper before the event. Santa and the Mrs. were there, and local high school students provided music and entertainment. The proceeds from the raffle ticket sales were awarded by drawing, and went to the Alternative Humane Society. Donors had the opportunity to choose to make a gift in someone else's name and received a gift card to present to that person as their "alternative gift." We thank the Realtors Association for making this event possible and look forward doing it again next year!

Whatcom Giveathon

Event Sponsoring Partners:

Whatcom County Association of Realtors
 Whatcom Volunteer Center,
 Whatcom Council of Nonprofits
 Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities,
 Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Participating Organizations

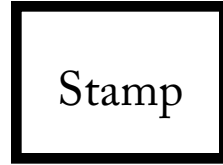
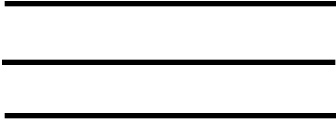
Bellingham Childcare and Learning Center
 Mother Baby Center
 Brigid Collins Family Support Center
 Lighthouse Mission
 Whatcom County Library Foundation
 Womenscare Shelter
 Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services
 Bellingham Food Bank
 Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County
 Sean Humphrey House
 Alternative Humane Society
 YWCA Bellingham

Catholic Community Services
 Hope House
 Maple Alley Inn
 Big Brothers & Sisters of NW Washington
 Lydia Place
 Max Higbee Community Recreation
 Center
 Blue Skies for Children
 His Kids Our Homes
 Appliance Depot
 Whatcom Counseling & Psychiatric Clinic
 Rebound of Whatcom County



**Celebrate the New Year and help
 Whatcom Volunteer Center!**

Please help us get the word out to all your friends and family that if they ring in the New Year at the Lakeway Inn they will be making a donation to WVC! The New York themed event includes special NY city street decor. Tickets include entrance, raffle prize entry, one drink, hor d'oeuvres, midnight toast, no-host bar & live music (DJ, band, and dancing!) All the proceeds will be donated to WVC. Tickets are \$49.00 single and \$79.00 couple. Find more details at www.firstnightbellingham.com An Audio Innovations, Eldad Efendi Photography & Derri Efendi Designs Production. We appreciate being chosen as the beneficiary of this event!



Whatcom Volunteer Center
725 North State Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

House 2 Home...continued from page 1

Since that first delivery more than three months ago, H2H has performed nearly 60 deliveries. While volunteers are often in short supply, a core group of volunteers has stepped up to the plate, sometimes doing deliveries two days in a row, or driving out to Maple Falls to deliver a bed or a couch.

While House 2 Home has been slowly gaining momentum for donations and volunteers with trucks, the big break came in a front page Bellingham Herald article on Sunday, November 22 (to read it, go to bellinghamherald.com and search for “furniture bank”). The response from the community to this article has been truly impressive – more customers have been able to enter the House 2 Home program as our donation level skyrocketed.

House 2 Home would not be possible without financial support from the economic stimulus funds through the Opportunity Council and the AmeriCorps VISTA position funded by the Serve America Act, not to mention the donors and volunteers who take time out of their busy lives to help people who were recently homeless.

House 2 Home is currently on track to beat its goal of delivering furniture to 100 households within its first year, and looks forward to being a permanent part of the community working to end homelessness in Whatcom County.

We need delivery volunteers! Call Rebecca at 224-7185 to help! You only deliver when you can-the more volunteers on the list the more the work is spread out. It is so satisfying to help!

STATE BUDGET CUTS & WVC

Sue Ellen Heflin, WVC Executive Director

You've read or heard about the proposed cuts to Human Services in the Governor's budget as submitted to the Legislature on December 9. We know that what gets passed by the legislature and signed into law will be significantly different than the Governor's current proposal; we want to share with you the effect that these cuts would have on programs at the Whatcom Volunteer Center.

This budget proposes to eliminate funding for the Volunteer Chore Program. State funding accounts for 40% of Volunteer Chore's budget. Replacing that kind of cut would be virtually impossible for the Volunteer Center. More than 200 of our valued clients would lose services that help keep them living independently in their own homes. This program would be a drastic loss to Whatcom County and some of our most vulnerable residents.

The other program slated to lose support is RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) which provides support for volunteers aged 55 and over. A cut of this magnitude (about 12% of the budget) would mean we would have to cut deeply. We don't know where we would cut, but volunteer transportation support, insurance for volunteers while on the job, and consultation with volunteers prior to and during their volunteer service are all potential cuts.

If you're interested in expressing support for Volunteer Center programs to your legislators, you can write to them or email them.

Many of our local legislators have been very supportive of these programs in the past – which we greatly appreciate. Sharing your stories may help them remain committed to supporting these programs while making the difficult decisions they face in the upcoming legislative session.

Senator Kevin Ranker, PO Box 40440,
Olympia, WA 98504-0440 ranker.kevin@leg.wa.gov

Representative Dave Quall, PO Box 40600,
Olympia, WA 98504-0600 quall_da@leg.wa.gov

Representative Jeff Morris, PO Box 40600,
Olympia, WA 98504-0600 morris_je@leg.wa.gov

Senator Dale Brandland, PO Box 40442,
Olympia, WA 98504-0442 brandlan_da@leg.wa.gov

Representative Doug Ericksen, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600 ericksen_do@leg.wa.gov

Representative Kelli Linville, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600 linville_ke@leg.wa.gov

Governor Christine Gregoire, PO Box 40002, Olympia, WA 98504-0002 <http://www.governor.wa.gov/contact/default.asp>

Contact the Gov. <http://www.governor.wa.gov/contact/default.asp>

Contact your legislators <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>

SAVE THE DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 4

Enjoy a fantastic evening of theatre without leaving town...

Join us for Bellingham Theatre Guild's production of *Inherit the Wind*, the classic American drama based on the Scopes "Monkey" Trial, and a silent auction in support of the Whatcom Volunteer Center. There will be hors d'oeuvres, wine, coffee, desserts, conversation, and a silent auction of experiences and items you'll long to take home! Tickets are \$35 per person. The evening starts at 6:30 PM. Contact the Volunteer Center at 734-3055 for tickets.

Biker's Fighting Cancer Distribute Gifts

We like to hear about the events our Partner Agencies have, and here is one group who spread some great holiday cheer for a hundred children in our area. On December 20th they gathered



together with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Biker's Church on Northwest Ave. to have Santa hand out the gifts they had gathered for children affected by cancer and poverty. After serving a pancake breakfast to everyone there, Santa met with each child and gave them their gift. This group is always doing something special to help, and our community really appreciates their good work! The National President, Pat Healey, is a local member and

received our 2009 Hearts and Hands Award, and they have gathered and donated over \$35,000 this year. To learn more about them visit their web site: www.bikersfightingcancer.net

**THESE BUSINESSES RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY WITH
SPECIAL REWARDS:**

PRIZE #1: FAIRHAVEN BARBER--FREE HAIRCUT

PRIZE #2: BELLINGHAM GROCERY OUTLET--\$15.00 GIFT CERTIFICATE

PRIZE #3: LASERPOINT AWARDS--PERSONALIZED GIFT ITEM

THIS QUARTER'S RECIPIENTS ARE...

#1: MATT ANDREWS

COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY

#2: ALICE JARDINE

SALVATION ARMY

#3: EILEEN MELING

BLAINE FOOD BANK

If you are requesting transportation support please turn in your timesheet by the 5th of every month. By turning in your hours you ensure that our programs can continue to be available for everyone, and you are entered into the drawing! Thanks!

**Thank you to the following Corporate and Business Donors for their support of the
Whatcom Volunteer Center and the Volunteer Chore Program for the past year:**

Alcoa Intalco Works	City of Bellingham	Northwest Regional Council
American Museum of Radio & Electricity	Human Services Dept.	Peoples Bank
BP Cherry Point Refinery	Conoco Phillips	Port of Bellingham
The Bagelry	Copies Now	Puget Sound Energy
Banner Bank	Corporation for National and Community Service	Sanitary Service Company
Bellingham Grocery Outlet	Great Harvest Bread	St. Joseph's Hospital
Bellingham Herald	Home Depot	St. Luke's Foundation
Bellingham Housing Authority	Jansen Foundation	Starbucks
Bellingham Parks Dept.	Joe's Garden	United Way of Whatcom County
Blossom Management	Kohl's	Wal-Mart
Ciao Thyme Catering	Mallard Ice Cream	Whatcom County
City of Bellingham	Medina Foundation	WECU
		Wilson Engineering

Whatcom Volunteer Center
725 N. State Street
Bellingham, WA 98225



Change Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
BELLINGHAM WA

PERMIT NO. 178

Whatcom Volunteer Center Board of Directors

President: Russ Whidbee,
Vice-President & Treasurer: Nancy
Mendelsohn
Secretary: Cheryl Collins
Immediate Past President: Noel Paus
Diana Bakkom
Louise Bjornson
Helen Moran
Tessa Rawitzer
Christina VanWingerden

Whatcom Volunteer Center Staff

Executive Director: Sue Ellen Heflin
Office Manager: Susan Porter
Volunteer Program Director: Dan Hammill
Volunteer Program Director RSVP: Jodi Sipes
Volunteer Chore Director: Aly Hoover
Finance Director: Lois Oswalt
Randi McKenna, Outreach Coordinator VISTA
Rebecca Reiner, Special Projects. VISTA

Our Office Volunteers

Ed Ackerlind ~Robbie Drabek ~ Erik (Ole)
Eriksen ~ Mary Evans ~ Rick Fulton ~ Cathie
Gerlicher ~ Barbara Green~ Ilene Green ~ Judy
Holt ~ Gerry Mitchell ~ Noel Paus ~ Brian Scott
~ Linda Scott ~ Carol Sewright ~ Gloria Smith
~ Mable Sudduth ~ Alberta Widman ~ Sharon
White ~ Vera Young ~ Zuzana Pikova