



**Pick up your quarterly Hello Neighbor at local businesses!**

Hello Neighbor Newsletter is a collaborative effort. Mt. Baker Community Coalition's mission is to strategically build a strong community that offers well-being to all by focusing on youth and families through substance misuse/abuse prevention strategies and mental health promotion. We work together to provide education, resources, eliminate risks, increase protective factors, and leverage community strengths and assets.

Wa'Lynn Sheridan, CPP Coalition Coordinator  
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Funded by: State Opioid Response Grant US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, WA Health Care Authority, and Whatcom County Health Deptment.

### Early Head Start and Preschool

Early Head Start program consists of weekly home visits that focus on developmentally appropriate play, establishing a family goal, and two socialization experiences per month. Prenatal to age 3.

Preschool classes are offered four days a week including quarterly home visits and school conferences to establish child and family goals. Ages 3 to 5.

All families welcome!  
Apply online at [oppco.org](http://oppco.org)  
There is no charge to participate in these programs.

Questions? **360-734-8396**

Design and lay out of the Hello Neighbor Newsletter is provided by the Mt. Baker Chamber of Commerce.



Visit us in the Visitor Center in the Maple Falls Town Hall at the crossroads of Mt. Baker Hwy., and Silver Lake Rd., Thursday through Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm

## Neighborhood Watch Dogs Group

Lisa McOmber, Community Member

We are neighbors just like you, who live in the Columbia Valley area who are working together to improve our environment and provide a safe, healthy place to live. Together, we want to restore pride and unity to our neighborhoods. The group was formed this summer in August 2020, when residents expressed a desire to become more actively involved in proactive crime prevention after the Kendall Watch Group dissolved. We take a non-violent, inclusive approach, working with local law enforcement to prevent crime and improve safety in our community. We are the eyes and ears of Columbia Valley!

Recently, the Watch Dogs started an "ADOPT A BLOCK" program, partnering with our local Whatcom County Health Department and Public Works. The Health Dept. has agreed to donate safety supplies and a dumpster to support the Neighborhood Watch Dogs in our efforts to keep our neighborhoods clean and reduce the amount of garbage on our streets in our community.

Anyone interested in joining our amazing group can contact us on FACEBOOK at: [facebook.com/groups/718686472042194/](https://facebook.com/groups/718686472042194/) or Join us on NEXTDOOR!

We meet monthly on ZOOM. Watch for our meeting invitations on Facebook and Nextdoor. Volunteers are needed, everyone is invited. Come share concerns, ideas and fill and important role in our community.

### The Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center Trainings:

#### November

Wednesday, 18, 1-3 pm, free:  
Managing Conflict as a Co-Parent  
Thursday, 19, 5:30-6:15 pm, free:  
Understanding Conflict for Kids

#### December

Wednesday, 9, 2-5 pm:  
Understanding Conflict (Adults)  
Tuesday, 15 2-4 pm:  
Tools for Tough Conversation  
Wednesday, 16, 2-5 pm:  
Understanding Conflict (Adults)  
Thursday, 17, 5:30-6:15 pm, free:  
Understanding Conflict for Kids

Those who are interested can register on our website: [whatcomdrc.org](http://whatcomdrc.org)

### EWRRC Services & Hours

#### On the Grounds:

- Bus stop
- Community Garden (pregistration necessary for a space)
- Grassy fields for playing, picnics & dog walking
- Picnic Tables
- Wifi hot spots with posted information at both buildings
- If indicated by incident command the EWRRC may become an emergency shelter

#### Community Opportunities:

- Mobile Food Pantry 1st Saturday & 3rd Friday
- Pet Food Bank 1st Saturday Mobile Food Pantry (when available)
- Teen Time D&D Fridays at 4:30 pm on Zoom
- Foothills Foodbank Drive Through Distribution and other services Tuesdays 9-11:30 am

#### Grab and Go Help

- Community Flyers
- Copies
- Faxes
- Masks and other health items
- Courtesy Phone
- Little Free Library quick picks via email or phone
- Clothing/household items
- job search & resume help
- Employment Hot Sheet with current local job openings
- Resource Information Sheets and brochures

#### Over the Phone Support

- Community Information sharing online, by flyer, and on 102.5 KAVZ.org
- Health insurance support
- Basic Food EBT application support
- Homeless Housing applications
- Energy assistance information
- Employment support
- Free FAX services
- Information on resources available in Whatcom County such as: food banks, Youth Services, DVSA, legal clinics, elder resources and more

#### In Building Services

- Exchange program: clothes, books & household items
- Computer use
- Phone
- Notary
- Homeless Housing Applications

Appointments are 30 minutes or less and conditions apply. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 9 am - 12 pm & 1 - 4 pm for grab and go services and in building appointments. Call **360-599-3944** to make an appointment. Please feel free to leave a message with the best way to get in touch with you. We will return your call as soon as possible.



Nov/Dec 2020

# Hello Neighbor!

Brought to you by partners of Mt. Baker Community Coalition  
Pick up your quarterly newsletter at community locations

## Beauty All Around Us

Susan Sloan, Community Member

We live in one of the most beautiful places on the planet. Blessed with amazing geological variation, a temperate climate, and abundant wildlife, there's no limit to the beauty we can enjoy each and every day. We have it all. In the words of the Romantic era poet, John Keats, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, -that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know".

Think of your favorite outdoor experiences and the cares of the world disappear from view. Some of my favorites are watching river otters thrashing

around for hours as they play in a local lake, watching eagles on the Nooksack River in December, kayaking on a sunny autumn day, enjoying a walk along a community path that someone or some bird had strewn with sunflower seeds now in bloom, and watching noisy trumpeter swans coming in from British Columbia to winter over here in our community.

And as the trees turn and eventually lose their gorgeous foliage, we begin to feel the icy approach of another dark and damp winter. We wonder—will this

be an easy winter or one of great challenges? And most importantly—will the slopes of Mt. Baker be covered in white powder or will snow be sparse?

Ironically, in the deepest winter the days begin to lengthen. It is such a comforting thought that just three days after the Winter Solstice—December 21st this year— we begin to perceive the days lengthening. But for a time we can rest in the beauty and truth and charms of winter here in our amazing foothill community.

## Foothills Community Alliance

Lisa McOmber, Community Member

Help make a difference! The Foothills Community Alliance is seeking Community Members to represent our diverse community.

Who are we? We are your neighbors! We are moms, dads, retirees, grandparents, students, and people of all walks of life. As an underserved population in Whatcom County, Columbia Valley residents were offered an generous grant from the Mt. Baker Foundation in 2019. Our goal is to build a stronger community alliance to support projects that will improve the lives of all of

the residents in our community. The Alliance is seeking individuals who have a passion for making a difference and bringing about meaningful change in our neighborhoods and our lives.

Projects we need help with:

- Local Healthcare
- Local Food Resources
- Public Safety
- Community Clean-up and Beautification
- Local Parks and Recreation
- And more!

Everyone is invited to join us! There is plenty of work for us all. Bring your ideas and passion for your community to our public meetings each month!

For more information or to get involved, please contact:  
[info@foothillscommunityalliance.com](mailto:info@foothillscommunityalliance.com)

Please join us on Facebook and Nextdoor and watch for Zoom Meeting Invitations!

# Foothills Community Alliance

The Voice of Change for Columbia Valley

[foothillscommunityalliance.com](http://foothillscommunityalliance.com)

## Supporting our Elders

Jessica Bee, Community Neighbor & EWRRRC staff

I hope this Hello Neighbor finds you well in our challenging times. This fall season I am especially thinking of our community elders. Our East Whatcom Elders have contributed to the betterment of our communities for decades, whether by taking care of their families, in the workforce, in the military, or through volunteer work. There is no question in my mind our community has strength because of these caring folks.

However, to be frank, I have often over the years worried and wondered about our community of elders. I worry about isolation, a struggle for the basic needs of food, healthcare, shelter and companionship along with ways to access these needs such as transportation from our outlying communities.

## Medicare Open Enrollment and SHIBA

Summer Starr, Opportunity Council

Open Enrollment for Medicare is October 15-Dec 7. Find out what's new in Medicare for 2021 by speaking with a SHIBA (State-wide Health Information Benefits Advisor) representative. SHIBA is sponsored locally by the Opportunity Council and by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner. SHIBA offers free, confidential, and impartial counseling services by specially trained Volunteer Advisors who can help you determine what your best healthcare options are for 2021.

To schedule a phone appointment with a SHIBA Advisor, please contact the SHIBA Office located at the Opportunity Council by calling (360) 788-2725 or by emailing [shiba@oppco.org](mailto:shiba@oppco.org).

This year we are happy to have a local Maple Falls resident, Rochelle Hollowell, stationed in East Whatcom to answer your Medicare questions. You will find her on Tuesdays at the EWRRRC Food Bank. She will be passing out Medicare information as well as scheduling phone appointments for residents who are seeking counseling on their Medicare insurance for 2021.

To schedule a phone appointment with Rochelle call SHIBA number above.

However, with the enormous difficulty of our recent months of work to shift and adapt for the pandemic, I have seen our community more and more show up for community elders. Senior Meals on Wheels, Foothills Foodbank, Whatcom Unified Command, along with the YMCA have worked to create food security in East Whatcom for those who have to stay in for their safety. We have stories of community members doing chores at a distance to keep their elder neighbors supported. And, as schools have been remote learning, we see the quiet no-school-bus roads and know this has meant the young and healthy have stayed in to limit their interaction with each-other and the world at large: no small feat!

## Increased Need for Food Bank Volunteers

Noelle Beecroft, Foothills Food Bank

Since the onset of COVID-19, food banks across the nation have been struggling to keep up with the increased demand. Here at Foothills Food Bank we have gone from serving 150 households a week to serving over 250 each week. We have also seen a decrease in our volunteer participation which has left us feeling overwhelmed most days. We are really hoping to get the word out about our need for some more helping hands before the holiday season starts. Our neighbors should not go hungry this season. With help from the community, they won't... but we need helping hands to accomplish this. Every household in the foothills should feel confident that they will be able to sit at the table with their family and have a holiday meal together.

Interested in volunteering? You can use this link to sign up: [bit.ly/ffbv2020](https://bit.ly/ffbv2020). If you want to get into the spirit of service for the holidays, donating food or volunteer-

ing at your local food bank is a great way to help your neighbors and yourself create meaningful holiday memories.

At the EWRRRC, Opportunity Council Office we have for the first year ever been able to support our elders and disabled who qualify for Medicare to receive unbiased SHIBA support from Rochelle Hollowell so they may choose a best-fit plan during Medicare Open Enrollment, October 15th through December 7th. These changes we have made together help me know deeply how valued and honored our elders are here in the Foothills Community.

\*If you would like to get involved or have suggestions for more support for our community of elders (especially, if you yourself are an elder!) please don't hesitate to reach out to the folks at the EWRRRC by calling [360-599-3944](tel:360-599-3944). We would love to connect with you.

If you are unable to volunteer, we are asking for **holiday food donations** such as:

If you are unable to volunteer, we are asking for **holiday food donations** such as:

- Instant Potatoes
- Corn (canned)
- Stuffing mix
- Cranberry sauce
- Pumpkin Pies
- Dinner rolls
- Green beans (canned)
- Canned pumpkin
- Sweet potatoes
- Gravy packets
- Holiday spices (cinnamon, clove, etc.)

Thank you to those who have been volunteering with us. We could not do it without you!

### Where will the EWRRRC Teen Time D&D campaign take you?

Join us for Teen Time ONLINE, register at

[bit.ly/TeenTimeDD](https://bit.ly/TeenTimeDD)

(Please note, capitals and lowercase matter for bit.ly links.)

September 4 through December 30. Every Friday from 4:30 to 6:30 pm.

No Teen Time November 27 or December 26.

Questions?

Please call the EWRRRC [360-599-3944](tel:360-599-3944) or email [kat\\_wingerter@oppco.org](mailto:kat_wingerter@oppco.org) or [jessica\\_bee@oppco.org](mailto:jessica_bee@oppco.org)

## Lock Up Your Meds

Protect loved ones from opioid misuse

Whether you realize it or not, the pain reliever medications sitting on your shelf or countertop could be putting your family and friends at risk of opioid misuse.

Many of today's household medicine cabinets contain prescription opioid medications. Legal prescription opioids commonly prescribed by doctors to reduce pain after surgery or injury include oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine and morphine.<sup>1</sup>

While opioid pain medications are generally safe when taken for a short time and as prescribed by a doctor<sup>1</sup>, the highly addictive drugs are being misused at a shocking rate. In fact, opioids are now one of the leading causes of injury-related deaths in Washington state. More people die from overdose than from car crashes.<sup>2</sup>

## Nutrition and Wellness Programs

Jennifer Moon, Communications and Public Relations Associate, Unity Care NW

We know during times of stress and uncertainty, it can be a struggle to take good care of yourself. It's at times like this, however, that self-care is more important than ever. Eating well, staying active, and finding ways to unwind can make a big difference. To help patients and non-patients alike, Unity Care NW offers a variety nutrition and wellness programs. Some of these resources are available to all community members on our website. We also offer behavioral health, wellness, and nutrition classes to Unity Care NW patients.

### Dietitian Kitchen

Interested in improving your cooking skills and health? Unity Care NW's Registered Dietitian, Antrim Caskey, has the tips you need to eat healthy, tasty meals on a budget. You can find Dietitian Kitchen On-Demand on our website at [UnityCareNW.org/Wellness](https://UnityCareNW.org/Wellness). This is a video series providing nutritional information and cooking tips that you can watch at your convenience. For Unity Care NW patients, a live class (on Zoom) version of Dietitian Kitchen is starting soon.

We will be adding more content to Dietitian Kitchen On Demand, so watch our website for the latest editions.

Opioid misuse affects people of all ages, but it is an increasingly concerning problem among Washington's young people. According to the Healthy Youth Survey, almost 11 percent of teens surveyed reported using a painkiller to get high in the past 30 days.<sup>3</sup> This is one of the highest rates in the country.

These teens are likely getting the drugs from someone they know — 75 percent of opioid misuse starts with people using medication that wasn't prescribed for them, usually taken from a friend or family member.<sup>4</sup>

It's an alarming fact. But one simple step — such as locking up medications — could help stop your prescription opioid pills from being misused by a family member or home visitor.

### Whatcom Family YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program

Unity Care NW is partnering with Whatcom Family YMCA to offer a Diabetes Prevention Program to our patients. If you aren't a Unity Care NW patient, you can still participate through the YMCA. The program helps those who are at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes to make lifestyle changes to prevent diabetes. The year-long class (26 sessions) comes with a YMCA membership. To learn more, go to [whatcomymca.org/ymca-diabetes-prevention-program](https://whatcomymca.org/ymca-diabetes-prevention-program) or visit our website at [UnityCareNW.org](https://UnityCareNW.org).

### Veggie Rx

Unity Care NW's Veggie Rx Program helps food-insecure individuals who are living with Type 2 diabetes add more fresh produce to their diet. Participants receive a \$40 voucher every month for a year to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at the Community Food Co-ops of Bellingham. Improve your health and manage your blood sugar levels! If you are a Unity Care NW patient and are interested in enrolling in this program, visit [UnityCareNW.org/Wellness](https://UnityCareNW.org/Wellness) for details.

Mt. Baker Community Coalition strongly encourages all households to **lock up medications and substances** such as marijuana and THC products, and vaping products.

To Request a free locking bag, contact Wa'Lynn Sheridan, [mbcoalition@wfcn.org](mailto:mbcoalition@wfcn.org)

Protect your loved ones and lock up the opioids in a safe, locked cabinet, medicine lockbox or other secure container. Be sure to keep pills in the original packaging to prevent confusion with other medications. And, finally, never share your prescription medication with others.

When you're no longer taking the medication, promptly remove unused opioid prescriptions from your home and safely dispose of the leftover pills at a permanent take back location. Find one near you at:

[Med-project.org](https://Med-project.org) - National  
[TakeBackYourMeds.org](https://TakeBackYourMeds.org) - State  
[Whatcomhope.org](https://Whatcomhope.org) - Whatcom County

Opioid misuse is a statewide problem, but we all can play a role in the solution. Lock up your medications to help protect your teens and other loved ones from opioid misuse. Visit [GetTheFactsRx.com](https://GetTheFactsRx.com) for more information.

Sources:

<sup>1</sup>National Institute on Drug Abuse, <sup>2</sup>Washington State Department of Health, <sup>3</sup>Healthy Youth Survey (2016), <sup>4</sup>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

### Poetry (Virtually) Cafe

Welcome one and all to the South Fork Valley's annual celebration of the rhyme and reason of the written, spoken, (and sung!) word... A community fundraiser for Friends of the Deming Library and the South Fork Community Association. Saturday, November 21 at 7 pm on Zoom:

[us02web.zoom.us/j/82589170863](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82589170863)

Admission is free, but donations are welcome: [southforkvalley.org](https://southforkvalley.org).

Bringing the community together to share and appreciate local talent and creativity.

- Loads of beloved local poets, storytellers and minstrels
- Share a groovy time with your far out and funky friends and neighbors
- Be the coolest cat on your block!

Contact Erin Suda, Deming Library:

[esuda22@yahoo.com](mailto:esuda22@yahoo.com) or  
Matthew Thuney, SFVCA:  
[southforkvalley@aol.com](mailto:southforkvalley@aol.com)