

The Foothills Outlook

Connecting Foothills community members with vital resources, organizations and events



Just Push for Access

Issue 2, no. 20
June 2026

by Melonie Ancheta

For years, we've been told that the world is now accessible to disabled people. Cities proudly describe themselves as welcoming and inclusive; hotels, public buildings, and even technology platforms claim to be accessible. Parks departments promote accessible trails and recreational spaces, and schools, clinics, doctor's offices, and other public buildings are described as accessible to everyone. But for thousands of disabled and neurodivergent people, these claims rarely match reality.



Reality vs Myth

Most disabled people have learned the hard way that they must call ahead to find out what "accessible" actually means at institutions, hotels, parks, businesses, and even doctor's offices. They know they must do extra homework and plan ahead for a wide range of situations they may encounter. They must arrange support, request accommodations, and still are often unable to fully participate in everyday tasks and activities.

Across the country, disabled people encounter public buildings with no access buttons, doors that are too heavy to manage, or doors that close as they try to pass through. Steep ramps, broken or missing elevators, absent curb cuts, inaccessible trails, restrooms that are too small or used as storage, and digital systems that can't be navigated are not rare exceptions—they are everyday experiences for disabled and temporarily disabled people.

In the U.S., accessibility is supposed to be a legal and civil right, but when people must call ahead and ask for it, that right is not functioning as a right at all. Accessibility isn't just about getting in the door—it's about being able to stay in the room. Despite ADA laws, a multilayered burden forces disabled people to expend significant time, physical energy, and money just to navigate daily life. This exclusion limits economic opportunities, diminishes independence, and creates severe social and emotional strain.

Disability Inequities



For example, the infographic here highlights disparities between disabled and non-disabled people.

The Social Determinants of Health Raise the Stakes

Last month, I discussed the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) and Upstream Health. As one of the most critical elements of SDoH and illness prevention, unequal opportunity to engage in daily life deeply affects disabled people. In fact, disabled people are represented in every category of SDoH. Accessibility isn't just about ramps and captions, it's about being able to participate in daily life on the same level as non-disabled people.

Accessibility also affects entire communities, influencing economic conditions, social structures, politics, and more. Inaccessibility limits the ability of those who are disabled to be autonomous. This lack of autonomy—the inability to make choices about one's own actions and future—causes severe psychological, professional, and physical distress. It often leads to deep feelings of helplessness, chronic stress, and declining health.

At the same time, poverty, inaccessible transportation, limited housing, and discrimination compound the challenges disabled people face and further worsen health outcomes.

Disability is defined as any impairment of the body or mind that limits a person's ability to participate in daily activities and social interactions within their environment (Scheer & Groce, 1988). Even in health and well-being, disabled people face some of the largest inequities in the country, not because of their bodies or brains, but because of the environments and systems in which they must live. Disabled people experience significant health disparities driven by unfavorable social determinants of health.

The Hidden World of Disability

But what about people whose disabilities are not visible or physical? It's important to remember that not all disability is visible, and even people with physical disabilities may also have cognitive or medical conditions that are not apparent. About 10% of Americans have a medical condition that could be considered an invisible disability. 36% or roughly one third of Americans have cognitive or medical conditions that are not visible. This often puts people with invisible disabilities in situations where they are harassed, judged, mistaken for being lazy, forced to justify their needs, or simply disbelieved.

Being disabled alone can lead to chronic stress, isolation, and systemic barriers that significantly affect mental health and make daily life harder to manage. For people with hidden disabilities, these problems are amplified by how others treat them.

While some effort is made to provide access for people with physical disabilities, accessibility must also address sensory and cognitive needs. This means reducing sensory overload, removing cognitive barriers, and offering flexible communication that does not penalize people for needing time, clarity, or alternative ways to express themselves.

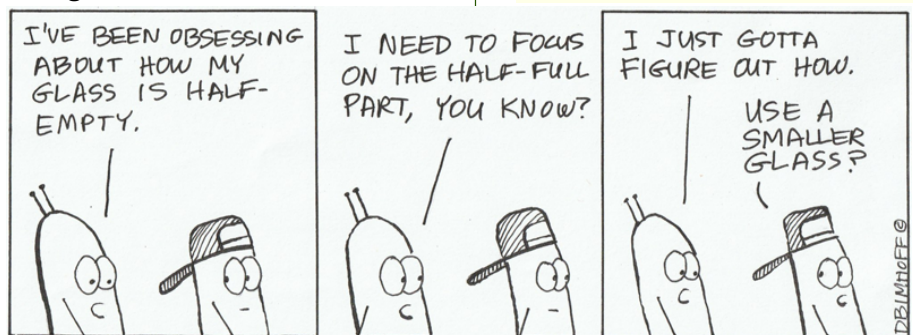
Schools, in particular, operate on a strict one-size-fits-all model that severely limits disabled students' ability to receive a meaningful education. Neurodivergent and mentally ill people are expected—and often explicitly told—to mask, fit in, and endure environments that exhaust them or make them ill. When they cannot, they are stigmatized, punished, rejected, and treated as if they are misbehaving.

Yet our society refuses to implement solutions like Universal Design for Learning—an evidence-based framework grounded in cognitive neuroscience that proactively designs learning experiences to meet the needs of all learners. Despite its strong evidence base, it is not even a rare educational practice—let alone a common one. In addition, trauma-informed practices and sensory-friendly design—both well-researched, widely available, and often easy to implement—are ignored or dismissed as too costly. But what is the real cost of not improving the health determinants of more than a quarter of the nation's population?

Who is Affected by Disability?

In the U.S., roughly one-quarter of the population lives with some form of disability. Mobility and ambulation limitations affect roughly 13% of adults. About 6% experience hearing or vision loss. Cognitive difficulties, such as challenges with concentration, memory, or decision-making, affect roughly 10% to 12% of adults. One in five adults, about 23.4% of the population, lives with a mental illness. Among them, about 14.6 million adults (5.6%) live with a serious

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Free

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BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR

If you are a resource provider, belong to an organization, or have a local event, and wish to be included in our listings, please contact us at info@foothillsinfo.com or go to foothillsinfo.com to request an account.

Submissions Deadline: 15th of each month

You can find our [Submission Guidelines](#) under Contributor Information on our website at foothillsinfo.com

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bugwalla by Doug Imhoff

COMMUNITY SCENE

Just Push for Access, cont

that significantly interferes with daily life.

More than 32% of adults with physical disabilities frequently report experiencing mental distress, a rate nearly five times higher than that of adults without physical disabilities. Experiencing mental health issues or cognitive impairments greatly increases the risk of developing chronic physical diseases.

While the disabled person is directly affected, others around them are impacted as well. Millions of non-disabled people serve as informal caregivers for family members. This role can create significant physical and financial strain, often referred to as caregiver burden. Caregiving responsibilities often require people to balance care with employment and may force them to reduce work hours or leave the workforce entirely.

Additionally:

- People with disabilities are far less likely to be employed, which puts financial strain on families and often leads to reliance on state assistance.

In 2017, only 35.5% of disabled adults ages 18 to 64 were employed, compared to 76.5% of adults without disabilities—more than double the rate.

- Adults with disabilities are less likely to have completed high school than their non-disabled peers (22.3% compared to 10.1%). This limits their ability to compete for employment, reduces income and benefits, and places them at much higher risk of poverty.

- People with disabilities are far more likely to have incomes below \$15,000 (22.3% compared to 7.3%), placing many well within the poverty level.

- Children with disabilities are nearly four times more likely to experience violence than children without disabilities.

However, with proper accessibility, disabled people can obtain an education, compete for career opportunities, feel safe in their communities, contribute their skills and ideas, and be treated as valued members of society.

They also do not have to be relegated to low-paying jobs or forced to rely on state assistance for housing, medical care, or basic needs. With appropriate accessibility measures, they can participate in life as fully as those without disabilities.

Special Treatment

For roughly one-quarter of the U.S. population, accessibility is not a luxury, a favor, or a special feature, and it should not be considered “special treatment.” The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 clearly defines disability, outlines which spaces must comply with ADA requirements, and sets the standards for accessibility. Yet too many places ignore the law altogether, “comply” inadequately, or claim accessibility without ever testing whether their version actually works for disabled people. And while disabled individuals or groups can file complaints, there is currently little enforcement of ADA laws.

We need to stop treating accessibility as a niche issue; it benefits a parent carrying a baby and managing a toddler, or anyone with their arms full, just as much as someone who struggles to breathe.

We should also expand our thinking to consider how accessibility improves the lives of everyone in a community, disabled or not. Even people without disabilities can struggle in environments that are loud, confusing, or poorly designed. A shopping mall with no windows, blaring music, and a disorienting layout can overwhelm anyone. Having elevators in multistory buildings is helpful not just for disabled people, but also everyone who works there. By improving accessibility for disabled people, we are creating more accessibility for everyone.

If we are going to be a truly inclusive and accessible society, we must stop treating accessibility as a slogan and start treating it as a standard. This means businesses and other public spaces accurately describing their accessibility as well as all public spaces complying fully with ADA laws. It also means proactive enforcement of ADA laws to ensure everyone has a level playing field.

And, perhaps most important, we need to include disabled, mentally ill, and neurodivergent people in the design and development of public spaces; make accessible tools available for the full spectrum of human abilities; and, most importantly, prioritize accessibility as essential infrastructure, not an afterthought.

For more information on ADA laws: <https://www.usa.gov/disability-rights>

To file a complaint: <https://www.ada.gov/file-a-complaint/>

Tips for a Safer Summer

June is National Safety Month so here are some tips to make your summer safer and healthier.

Stay safe this summer by actively protecting your skin from UV rays, preventing heat-related illnesses, and taking precautions against bug bites. The most essential guidelines to keep you and your family out of the emergency room include:

☀ Sun Protection

- **Apply the Right Sunscreen:** Use a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Apply 30 minutes before heading outdoors and reapply every two hours (or immediately after swimming).

- **Avoid Peak Sun:** The sun's UV rays are strongest between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.. Plan outdoor activities for the early morning or late afternoon when possible.

- **Gear Up:** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing, wide-brimmed hats, and 100% UV-blocking sunglasses.

🌡 Heat & Hydration

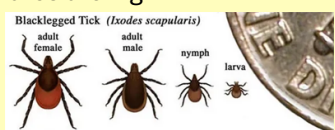
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day, even before you feel thirsty.

- **Recognize Heat Illness:** Know the signs of heat exhaustion (dizziness, nausea, heavy sweating) and heatstroke (confusion, slurred speech, body temperature over 103°F).

- **Find the Shade:** Take frequent breaks in air-conditioned spaces or shaded areas when temperatures are high.

🐛 Bug Bite Prevention

- **Use Approved Repellent:** Apply insect repellent containing DEET for effective protection against mosquitoes and ticks.



- **Dress for Protection:** When hiking or in grassy areas, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and tuck your pants into your socks.

- **Check for Ticks:** Carefully inspect your body—especially the scalp and back of the neck—after spending time outdoors.

🚗 Water & Road Safety

- **Supervise Closely:** Never leave children unattended near water, and designate an undistracted “water watcher” for young swimmers.

- **Wear Life Jackets:** Ensure everyone uses properly fitted life jackets when boating or participating in open water activities.

- **Protect Heads:** Make sure kids wear properly fitted helmets when riding bicycles or electric scooters.



VAN ZANDT HALL JUNE 2026 HAPPENINGS

There is something for everyone from music to food to speeches, yoga, Friends over Fifty and history, Van Zandt Hall is a place to connect and grow community. Take a look below!

- Third Place Coffeehouse – Sundays, 10am to 2pm

- Foothills Seniors Gathering – Tuesdays from noon to 2pm

- **Everybody's Market – 2 Saturdays a month, June 13th & 27th from 10am to 3pm**

This twice-monthly market features local art, handicrafts, tasty treats, herbal remedies, and a lot more.

- **Foothills Entrepreneurs Collective – Wednesday, June 17 from 5pm to 7pm**

- Potluck and Open Mic – 3rd Thursdays, June 18th from 6pm to 9pm

Gratitude Sharing: A huge thank you to all of our partners, including community organizations, neighbors, Whatcom County and Washington electeds and councils, artists, historians and more for caring for the Van Zandt Hall so we can look forward to the next hundred years.

This month one entity we would like to highlight is WTA and their contribution to ADA accessibility. Here is a bit from Hayden Richardson:

“The improvements are part of a larger Van Zandt Community Hall renovation project, but the TAF specific project included a fully ADA compliant access between the community hall and the existing WTA bus stop. Specific improvements include new sidewalk, concrete sidewalk ramp, and an access ramp with land and handrails.

The goal of WTA's Transit Access Fund is to expand the multi-modal transportation network by improving access to bus stops throughout Whatcom County. The fund is made possible through Transit Support Grants, authorized by the 2023 Washington State Legislature's Move Ahead Washington transportation package. Move Ahead Washington is funded by Washington's Climate Commitment Act.”

Van Zandt Stewards

The Van Zandt Stewards are a small, all-volunteer group focused on managing, maintaining and improving the historic Van Zandt Hall, building community, and sharing information of interest to residents of the Mt. Baker Foothills. Learn more about upcoming Stewards events and programs at VZstewards.org or facebook.com/vanzandtstewards.

Planning an event or celebration? For Hall rental rates and availability, call 360-230-8176.

If you have information that would be of interest to people in the South Fork Valley and Mt. Baker Foothills, we'll share it in the South Fork Scoop. Email info@vzstewards.com or call Will at 360 393-9583.

Listen to KAVZ, your Voice of the Valley, at 102.5 FM, or online at <http://kavz.org/>



THE JUNE GARDEN

by Mo Brown

The two most important words for me in June are deadheading and watering. Deadheading is easy and consists of continuously removing spent flowers from your plants, starting now and not ending, ever. With the seed-producing flower head gone, the energy of the plant is directed toward growing more blooms and stronger stems instead of seeds. Watering, especially deciding how much and when to water, is a much debated subject.

Common advice is to provide 1” to 1.5” of water per plant per week, before 7 am. I have also heard that there is no need to water if it has rained during the week. The finger test (sticking a finger one inch into the soil around your plants to see if it is cool and moist or warm and dry) seems highly subjective. Especially because there are few plants with the root hairs that absorb water in the first inch of soil. Even newly germinated plants have root hairs deeper than one inch. I have placed many tuna cans in my beds over the years, and though they catch water, the depth doesn't seem to be consistent throughout the entire garden. What to do? I say, mulch everything as much as possible. Leaves, straw, wood chips, discarded plant trimmings and even small piles of compost all work well on the ground or in a raised bed. Mulch reduces evaporation and increases water retention in the soil. It also suppresses weeds. Mulch should be about 2” deep and two or three inches away from the stem of the plant. It should stay on top, not be dug into the soil. If you have been adding organic matter to your soil all along, such as compost or perlite, it increases the soil's ability to retain water.

Next, simple observation of your garden is essential. Does the soil outside the mulched area look dry or dusty? When did it last rain? Are there any yellowing leaves (this can be a sign of either too much or not enough water)? Are your plants perky or wilting? The results of your observations and a little common sense will help you decide if you need to water.

When I planted my bush peas in April, I soaked half of them overnight before planting because the information on the seed packet suggested this was helpful to germination. The other half were sowed directly into the soil without soaking. So far, I have not noticed any difference in either the germination or the growth between the two planting methods. Every seed seems to have sprouted and all are about the same height. So, this experiment seems to be inconclusive.

The Mason Bee (native bee) activity is basically over in my yard in June and I have a full-up nest box. Now it's time to set out the leafcutter bee cocoons. They prefer a nest box with smaller holes but if the mason bee nest is the only one available, it will attract some activity.

Happy Gardening!

At Home in the Hills



Coffee Ground Fossils

Kids will love creating their own fossils using old coffee grounds, some cold coffee for color, and of course, salt and flour. Makes: 8 fossils



Materials

1 C used coffee grounds
 ½ C cold coffee
 1 C flour
 ½ C salt
 Wax paper
 Mixing bowl

Objects to make impressions such as toy dinosaurs, sea shells, etc.

Cookie cutters

Tooth picks

String

Directions

1. For younger kids, you may want to measure out the ingredients ahead of time.
2. Stir together coffee grounds, coffee, flour, and salt, until well mixed.
3. Knead the dough and flatten on wax paper.
4. Use cookie cutters or butter knife to cut out fun shapes (you can make your fossil any size or shape you like. Try making some rock shapes!)
5. Press small objects firmly into the dough to leave imprint. Remove the object and there's your fossil! You can use a toothpick to poke a small hole near the edge of the fossil, if you want to hang it later.
6. Let the fossil dry and harden overnight (depending on how thick you make them, they could take longer).

Food Matters



In the MBSD we don't have the easy option of ordering takeout so recipes like this come in handy! A budget-friendly, quick and nutritious substitute for restaurant Chinese, these chicken meatballs will satisfy your craving for takeout.

Sesame Chicken Meatballs



Ingredients

Meatballs:

Cooking spray
 1/3 cup chopped scallions, plus more for garnish
 1 large egg, beaten
 1 1/2 tsp. garlic, minced
 1 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce

1 lb. ground chicken

1/4 cup plain breadcrumbs

2 tsp. toasted sesame oil

Black pepper

Sauce:

2 tsp. cornstarch
 2 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce
 1 1/2 tsp. ginger, minced
 1 Tbsp. unseasoned rice vinegar
 1/4 cup pure honey
 Cooked rice

1/4 cup chicken stock

1 1/2 tsp. garlic, minced

1 tsp. toasted sesame oil

Directions

Meatballs

Preheat oven to 400F. Lightly coat sheet pan with cooking spray. Combine chicken, scallions, egg, breadcrumbs, garlic, sesame oil and soy sauce in a bowl and season with pepper. By hand, blend all together until uniform. Shape into 10 meatballs and place them on the oiled sheet pan. Bake 19-20 minutes or until cooked through.

While meatballs are baking, whisk together cornstarch and 2 teaspoons water in a large saucepan. Whisk in stock, honey, soy sauce, garlic, ginger, vinegar, honey, and sesame oil. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking, until mixture bubbles and begins to thicken, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add meatballs and toss to coat. Serve over rice, with scallions and toasted sesame seeds as garnish.



Microgreens vs Sprouts:

Are They the Same?

While sprouts are quite common in most grocery stores these days, microgreens are slow in arriving. But you don't have to wait for your grocer to start stocking microgreens, you can easily grow them on a windowsill. And while sprouts grow quickly in water, microgreens take a bit more time and require soil, which is exactly what makes them so nutrient-dense and flavorful.

What's the Difference?

Sprouts and microgreens come from the same seeds, but they're harvested at different stages of growth and grown in different mediums. Sprouts are grown in water and are harvested as soon as the cotyledons appear. They never reach the stage where they photosynthesize, so all their nutrients come from the seed itself. For microgreens, seeds are planted in shallow trays of soil or other nutrient-rich growing mediums, which allows them to uptake minerals and other nutrients from the soil and they are only harvested after they develop true leaves. During this growing period they photosynthesize, deepen in color, and develop richer flavors. This difference in growing medium and timing leads to a significant difference in nutrition.

Due to low light, high humidity growing conditions, sprouts are more likely to transmit food-borne diseases such as salmonella, e coli, and Listeria.

Why Microgreens Are More Nutrient-Dense

Microgreens often contain **up to 40 times more vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants** than their mature vegetable counterparts. Because they grow in soil and undergo photosynthesis, they accumulate chlorophyll, polyphenols, and other compounds linked to reduced inflammation, improved immunity, and even anti-cancer potential.

Sprouts still offer benefits, especially enzymes and fiber, but microgreens deliver a broader and more concentrated nutrient profile.

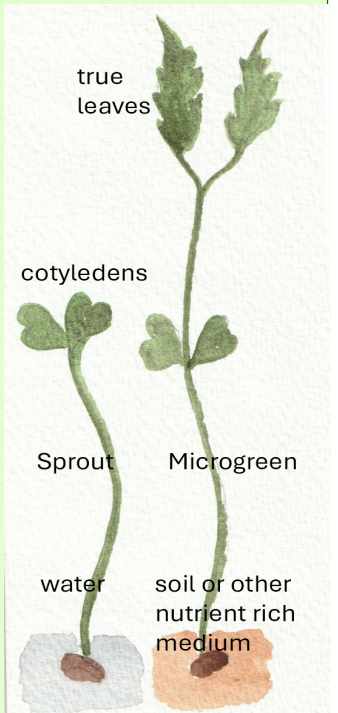
Microgreens are:

- Fast—ready in 7–14 days
- Space-friendly—grow in trays on a windowsill
- Flavorful—adds flavor to salads, sandwiches, bowls, and soups
- Incredibly nutrient-dense making them a daily health booster

And unlike sprouts, microgreens are grown in soil, which means you're cultivating a living nutrient system right in your home.

Microgreens offer one of the simplest, most rewarding ways to bring fresh nutrition into your home. They're vibrant, flavorful, and, thanks to their concentrated nutrients, one of the most powerful foods you can grow yourself (plus, kids object less to microgreens than the mature versions of the plants!).

Next month we'll talk about the types of microgreens to grow.



Cooking with your kids is a great way to teach them math, science, and creativity! Try this simple, delicious recipe and see the glow of pride on their faces when the family digs in!

HAM & CHEESE EGG MUFFINS

Prep: 10 min Cook: 25 min Total: 35 min Makes: 12 muffins

Ingredients

12 large eggs
 1/4 tsp garlic powder
 8 oz ham steak, cubed

1/2 C milk
 3/4 C shredded cheddar cheese, divided
 2 scallions, thinly sliced

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350F. Spray muffin tin with cooking spray or use silicon muffin tin. Set aside.

In a large bowl, whisk together milk, eggs, seasonings. Stir in 1/2 C cheese, all the ham and scallions. Fill muffin tins. Top with remaining 1/4 C cheese and bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the eggs pull away from the sides of the muffin tins and they are set in the middle.

Store leftovers in refrigerator for up to 4 days. To reheat, place frozen muffin on plate and cover with a bowl. Heat for 1 min at half power.

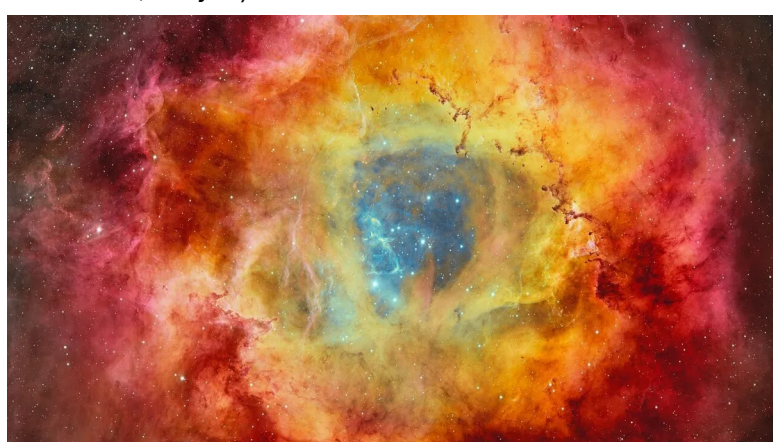
You can substitute sausage or bacon for the ham, add green peas, or for a Mexican twist, use Queso Fresco in place of the cheddar and chorizo for the meat.



A New Kind of Family Outing: Take a Virtual Field Trip

With the price of gas and no time for traveling, you can entertain and educate your kids with virtual field trips. This month take them to the Stellarium (<https://stellarium-web.org>), a website that shows which planets and stars are above your home, or anywhere else you want, in real time.

Explore the galaxy, zoom in on specific constellations and teach your kids about our solar system and astronomy, one of the oldest sciences (more than 30,000 yrs!) known to man.



The beautiful Rosette Nebula, (Image: CTIO/NOIRLab/DOE/NSF/AURA)

Stellarium shows an image of the sky in 3D, just like you'd see with the naked eye, binoculars or a telescope.

Download the app for easy access from your desktop (better yet, on your child's computer) or view online from your browser. This is a free, easy and fun activity for the whole family!

COMMUNITY SCENE

GROCERY DELIVERY POLL

If grocery delivery was available in the Foothills, is this a service you would use?

Scan the QR code to be taken to a yes/no/maybe poll.



Or go to: <https://tinyurl.com/mr2664p9>

The Book Shelf



June events at the North Fork Library

Summer Reading Kickoff
June 23rd from 10-6 - Get your summer reading game on at the library! Learn about reading and other activities this summer.

Crafting Community, Every Tuesday 6pm
Drop in with your favorite arts and crafts to spend time creating alongside other crafters. Color, stitch, hook, paint, draw — all while connecting with others every Tuesday. Some knitting supplies will be available. Coffee and tea are provided.

Neighborhood Watchdogs, First Tuesday 5pm
Group varies in size, some agencies join and report. All are welcome.

June events at the Deming Library

Summer Saturday Book Sales

The Friends of the Deming Library open their book room for self-service browsing on Saturdays in June, July and August. Books can be paid for using cash, checks, or the Give Butter donation website. Open during library hours 10am to 5pm.

Deming Library Writers' Circle

Join in for monthly drop-in meetups, hosted by writer/author Teresa Bruffey Kaufman. 2nd Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:30pm. Please register for this program at wcls.org.

Joy of Watercolor with Annika Sheck on June 13th from 11am to 1:30pm

Join local artist and instructor Annika Sheck for a guided watercolor workshop featuring an Orca painting project.

June events at the Deming Library

This workshop welcomes all skill levels — no prior experience is required. All supplies are provided, and participants will take home their completed painting and a reference guide from the artist. Space is limited; registration is required at wcls.org.

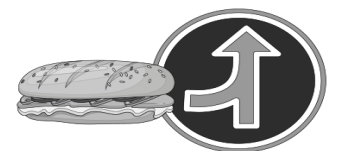
Deming Summer Reading Kickoff Party on Thursday, June 25th from 10am to 6pm

Join us all week long as we celebrate the beginning of our Summer Reading program. Collect your Summer Reading card, learn about summer programs, and connect with other readers. All youth under 18 will receive a free book to pick out and keep forever. Thanks to our sponsors, Whatcom County Library Foundation and Peoples Bank.

Whatcom Grooves Summer Music Series: The Puppy Wranglers Saturday, June 27th from 6pm to 7:30pm

Celebrate summer, music and libraries at free concerts hosted across the Whatcom County Library System. The Deming Library is pleased to host the Puppy Wranglers. The concert takes place outside in the backyard of the library. Bring a picnic, a blanket or chairs to get comfortable and enjoy a summer evening of local music. Carpooling is suggested as parking is limited and please leave your dog at home. This concert is sponsored by a generous grant from MBSD Health Equity Zone.

Rebus 1



CALL FOR VENDORS & PROVIDERS

When: 8/1/2026

4-8pm

WHERE: Kendall Elementary School
7547 Kendall Rd
Maple Falls WA

For more information, kendallsummerfest@gmail.com

To register as a vendor, scan the QR code or go to: <https://forms.gle/JsHv9RJY5fYgmdr>
There is a \$20 booth fee for vendors



To register as a provider, scan the QR code or go to: <https://forms.gle/73aoXPYSVGqJdp46>



June 23
2026
0¢

the MOUNT BAKER DANCE TEEN FEST

DJ Live Band

Food truck

Prizes

JUNE 13th

5 - 9 pm

8251 Kendall Road, Maple Falls

Primary Medical Care Services at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

Medical Care will be available on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at the EWRRC from 1-5pm. Services available will include:

- Wellness exams
- Sports physicals
- Care for non-emergency acute and chronic health concerns
- Walk-in appointments as available

Appointments can be scheduled by calling 360-230-8157

Most major insurance accepted including the following:

- Molina
- Premera
- UHC
- Lifewise, and more

If uninsured or not in our insurance network, sliding scale fees are available based on income. Patients will not be turned away for inability to pay.



Gabriel Durben, ND has been a primary care naturopathic doctor in Bellingham since 2014 and lives in rural Whatcom county. He believes that the best healthcare happens when we recognize and value our shared experience as humans.

Father's Day

In a few weeks we will be celebrating and honoring the men who have helped us become the people we are. Whether it's a father, uncle, grand father, or even a neighbor, letting these guys know we appreciate and love them is important.

The earliest known practice of honoring father's is a tradition in Southern Europe dating back to 1508, but here in the US it did not become an official holiday until President Richard Nixon signed a bill declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day in 1972

The first known Father's Day service occurred in Fairmont, West Virginia, on July 5, 1908, after the worst mining accident in U.S. history. This horrific accident killed more than 360 men and boys and left about 1,000 children fatherless. Mrs. Grace Golden Clayton wanted to honor the many fathers who had died with a Sunday service in Fairmont. Mrs. Clayton was the daughter of a dedicated reverend who had died in 1896, so she knew what it was like to lose a father.



Father's Day Gains Momentum
Although the Fairmont service was the first known to honor fathers, it did not turn into an annual event. Mrs. Sonora Smart Dodd is credited with helping Father's Day become a U.S. national holiday. Her story began when she sat listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909.

Mrs. Dodd thought that it might be nice to honor fathers as well. Mrs. Dodd's father, William Smart, had raised his SIX children alone on his farm in Washington after his wife died giving birth. Mrs. Dodd proposed to the Spokane Ministerial Association and the YMCA that they celebrate a "father's day." She chose the 5th of June because it was her father's birthday.

But it wasn't until World War II and two economic events that Father's Day was no longer viewed as too feminine and flower and became acceptable to men. During the Great Depression so many people were pinching their pennies, the economy needed reasons for people to spend money. Father's Day was promoted by struggling stores as an occasion to get fathers some of the clothing and material goods they needed. It was a way to invite people to get Dad the necktie or pair of socks that he probably would not buy for himself.

And with the onset of World War II, people wanted to support American troops and the war effort provided another reason to support and show appreciation for dads.

Despite the commercialization of Father's Day, the original intent of honoring the men who provide role modeling, teach us how to do things, and spend their lives caring for us remains strong today. Celebrate and honor the men in your life who have helped you become the person you are by telling them how much they mean to you, spend time with that special guy, and, it's not too feminine to even send him flowers!

Excerpted from: <https://www.almanac.com/content/when-fathers-day>

HEALTHY CHOICES



Dear Deb...

Answering your questions with compassion, not criticism!

Deb Shawver, LICSW



On Friday night, May 8th, our community gathered at the Deming Speedway for the Mount Baker Athletics and Academics Night. Watching the cars fly around the dirt track was a

thrilling reminder of how life operates on a fine edge. Taking a risk, like speeding tightly around a corner to pass an opponent, can lead to incredible success. Though high risks also carry high consequences, like a sudden, dramatic crash can leave a car spun out and sidelined in an instant.

Dear Deb, What are some ways to get back into having a social life after a break up or divorce? — *Paralyzed in Peaceful Valley Dear Paralyzed,*

The shock of a divorce or major breakup can completely derail your life, leaving you feeling entirely blindsided and stuck in the wreckage. It is a profound disruption that shatters your routine, your identity, and your sense of safety, making the prospect of stepping back out into the world feel utterly overwhelming.

Stepping back into a social life requires taking calculated risks, but giving in to fear only breeds more insecurity and keeps you suffering. Choosing to take a chance, whether asking for help or trying something completely new, is exactly where growth and breakthroughs happen.

There are several steady strategies that can help ease this difficult transition and move you through grief.

First, give yourself time to self-reflect and notice your own thoughts, feelings, wants, and needs. Nurture your existing relationships with family, friends, and your children. Reach out to your support network and explore your own desires, focusing on activities and hobbies that bring you joy.

It is vital to wait until you are completely ready, without question, before entering into a new romantic relationship. In the meantime, focus on being active. Say yes to community engagements, social gatherings, and fun interactions with family.

At the same time, set clear limits. Allow yourself to say yes when you truly want to, and no when you do not. Prioritize activities that make you feel confident and proud. You can also use physical cues to shift your mindset. Smile more, increase eye contact, and stand in a Power Pose during moments of self-doubt or fear to rewire your confidence.

Most importantly, practice tolerating the discomfort of the unknown. Vulnerability is a risk, but it is the only path to meaningful connection. Research consistently shows that isolation leads to deep suffering and psychological distress, which makes staying connected vital to your health. In our rural community, where distance can easily amplify loneliness, making the effort to show up at local events, volunteering, or visiting neighbors is your way of getting back on the track. There is always another loop around the course, a new heat, and a fresh opportunity to try again.

From Kristi's Desk

by Kristi Warren Slette
Director Whatcom Family & Community Network

Let's Be Kindness Warriors!

This winter, I had the honor of serving on Mount Baker School's steering committee for its upcoming strategic plan update. As the committee looked at input from students, we noticed patterns. Many students noted how the connection of community and the kindness and love they felt from those around them—parents, teachers, support staff and peers—were among the traits they valued most about attending school in our community. People and families that feel connection, a sense of belonging and acceptance—feel seen, safe and loved. This is a strength we can leverage!

In contrast, another pattern was observed. Many students reported experiencing "bullying". Conversations surfaced important facets of this topic. One was that **our community would benefit from more social connection**. When we know one another, discomforts and fears dissolve. Acceptance and belonging increase. We understand people better and grow tolerance for difference. We show up for people differently when we know one another.

Several years ago, when hosting a conversation at Mount Baker High School with students on the concept of bullying, one of our young people said, "You know, bullying isn't a kid issue. It's an adult problem." That sunk into me as true-- adults model for children how to walk in the world and how to treat one another.

Another facet of the conversation was about the legal definition of bullying that schools must abide by in order for certain interventions to occur. What I took away from the conversation was that there is a murky line between what is legal bullying and what is "unkind" behavior. It seemed that what most students are experiencing is unkind behavior from peers AND adults. It seems that **what we want more of in our community is kindness**.

The word "kind" comes from the root of "kin" or family and it denotes that we are "of a kind" or a similar group. The idea is that we are connected as family and community and we need one another! According to Dr. Tara Cousineau in her book, *"The Kindness Cure: How the Science of Compassion Can Heal Your Heart & Your World"* (2018), *"Kindness is love in action"* (p. 11) and that *"Our biological instinct for kindness comes together with our social conditioning to inform how we engage in the world. You have an instinct to care. We all do"* (p. 22).

What can we do to increase connection?

Simple acts of kindness may be one solution. Get to know your neighbors—especially those who you can see are more isolated. Invite them to meals, outings, community events. When you are out in community—make extra effort to talk to or include people in conversations that you don't already know. Smile at people. Say, "hello!" Go out of your way to be warm and welcoming. Be a "Kindness Warrior" (p. 21) and model for children in your life—that kindness is a value and verb.

Attend **Kendall Summerfest this August 1**. Set an intention to talk to strangers—community members who you have not yet met. Help weave a stronger community fabric.

We can also advocate and volunteer for empathy-building programs to be a part of our children's learning experiences. Teaching compassion and empathy within families, within our schools and communities benefit us all.

Evidence and empathy-based classroom programs like *Second Step*, *Art at the Heart*, and *Roots of Empathy* are examples familiar to Mount Baker Schools.

Roots of Empathy, currently happening at Acme and Harmony elementary schools, is a classroom program designed for children ages 5 to 13.

Volunteer families, with babies between the ages of 2-to 4-months-old, and community instructors are needed! To learn more, contact: malem@rootsofempathy.org To learn more about Roots of Empathy, visit <https://rootsofempathy.org/programs/roots-of-empathy/>.

Let's be Kindness Warriors in East Whatcom!

To Your Health

Redefining Accessibility in Everyday Care

by Rachel Culleton ND

Public conversations about accessibility often center on physical accommodations—ramps, elevators, and designated parking. While these are essential, they represent only one aspect of accessibility. In clinical practice, particularly in pediatrics, a broader and more functional definition is needed.

Disability is not always visible, nor is it always static. Many children and families navigate conditions that significantly impact daily life without outward signs—gastrointestinal disorders, sensory sensitivities, neurodevelopmental differences, chronic pain, and mental health conditions. In these cases, accessibility is not simply about entering a space, but about whether that space can be navigated without undue strain.

Families managing these conditions often engage in extensive planning: timing outings around symptoms, bringing specialized foods or supplies, identifying restrooms in advance, and preparing for the possibility of leaving early. These are not preferences—they are necessary adaptations that allow participation.

If we expand accessibility beyond infrastructure, the question shifts from "Can someone get in?" to "Can someone function here with reasonable ease?"

There are several practical ways individuals, organizations, and healthcare providers can move toward this more inclusive model:

1. Build flexibility into systems.

Offer options where possible—flexible scheduling, shorter wait times, or alternative formats for participation. In healthcare, this may look like longer appointment slots for complex needs or accommodating same-day changes when a child is unwell.

2. Create lower-stimulation environments.

Reducing noise, crowding, and unpredictability can significantly improve accessibility for children with sensory sensitivities. Even small adjustments, such as quiet hours, designated calm spaces, or clear expectations of what an environment will be like can make participation more feasible.

3. Normalize invisible needs.

Not all disabilities are apparent. Training staff and community members to respond with neutrality and respect, rather than skepticism, reduces stigma and improves access. This includes allowing flexibility around food, movement, or behavioral differences without requiring explanation.

4. Reduce the burden of planning on families.

Clear communication ahead of time is critical. Providing information about what to expect (timing, layout, food options, bathroom access) allows families to prepare appropriately and reduces last-minute barriers.

5. Design with variability in mind.

Accessibility is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Building systems that can adapt to a range of needs rather than meeting only minimum standards results in more meaningful inclusion.

From a healthcare perspective, accessibility also includes how care is delivered. Appointment structure, communication style, and clinical recommendations should reflect the realities of a family's capacity. Plans that are technically "ideal" but not feasible in daily life can inadvertently create additional barriers to care.

Ultimately, accessibility is not a static label applied to a space or service. It is an ongoing process of identifying barriers and reducing them in ways that allow individuals to participate more fully.

By shifting from a purely structural definition to a functional one, we can create environments, both clinical and community-based, that better reflect the diverse and often invisible needs of the people they serve.

Is it a Stroke?

A stroke is a medical emergency and recognizing it in yourself or someone else quickly can save a life. It's crucial to get medical treatment right away. Getting emergency medical help quickly can reduce brain damage and other stroke complications.

Stroke treatments that work best are available only if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within 3 hours of the first symptoms. Stroke patients may not be eligible for these treatments if they don't arrive at the hospital in time.

Here is what to look for if you think someone is having a stroke: look for sudden onset of symptoms. If you notice any of these signs, even if they disappear, call 911 immediately.

- Trouble speaking and understanding what others are saying. A person having a stroke may be confused, slur words or may not be able to understand speech.

- Numbness, weakness or paralysis in the face, arm or leg. This often affects just one side of the body. The person can try to raise both arms over the head. If one arm begins to fall, it may be a sign of a stroke. Also, one side of the mouth may droop when trying to smile.

- Problems seeing in one or both eyes. The person may suddenly have blurred or blackened vision in one or both eyes. Or the person may see double.

- Headache. A sudden, severe headache may be a symptom of a stroke. Vomiting, dizziness and a change in consciousness may occur with the headache.

- Trouble walking. Someone having a stroke may stumble or lose balance or coordination.

If you observe any of these signs, note the time they started and immediately call emergency services.

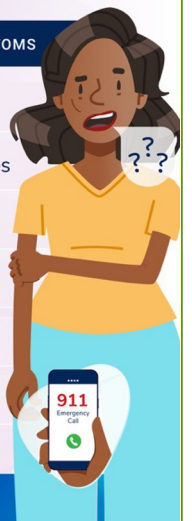
Do not drive to the hospital or let someone else drive you. Call 9-1-1 for an ambulance so that medical personnel can begin life-saving treatment on the way to the emergency room.

If the stroke symptoms go away after a few minutes, you may have had a **transient ischemic attack (TIA)**, also sometimes called a "mini-stroke." Although brief, a TIA is a sign of a serious condition that will not go away without medical help.

Unfortunately, because TIAs clear up, many people ignore them. But paying attention to a TIA can save your life. If you think you or someone you know has had a TIA, tell a health care team about the symptoms right away.

STROKE: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- B** Balance loss
- E** Eye (vision) changes
- F** Face drooping
- A** Arm weakness
- S** Speech difficulties
- T** Time to call 911



HEALTHY CHOICES

Can You Wash Off Pesticides?

By Linda Kerth

The Dirty Dozen
2026



@plantedinthekitchen

Fruits and vegetables often have toxic residues from pesticides, some of which are "forever chemicals." Can these be washed away?

The annual "Dirty Dozen" analysis from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) looks at which fruits and vegetables have the highest amount of pesticide residue based on data from the USDA.

The Dirty Dozen for 2026: 1. Spinach, 2. Kale, collards and mustard greens, 3. Strawberries, 4. Grapes, 5. Nectarines, 6. Peaches, 7. Cherries, 8. Apples, 9. Blackberries, 10. Pears, 11. Potatoes, 12. Blueberries

Fortunately, all of these are easy to clean.

These items all fall under the legal limits on pesticide exposure as set by the EPA. But more than 30% of the fruits and vegetables sampled, as found by the EWG, contained perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs). These "forever chemicals" break down very slowly over time, and have been linked to a variety of negative health effects, such as a decreased immune response, altered metabolic signaling and even an increased risk of certain types of cancer. Children may be more at risk from PFAs, as they can be more harmful to developing brains.

The EWG also lists the "clean 15" fruit and vegetables: sweet corn, asparagus, mushrooms, mangoes, kiwi, cabbage, bananas, pineapple, papaya, cauliflower, watermelon, onions, sweet peas and avocado. Despite being considered "clean", I would wash these under running water anyway.

The reigning advice is to wash *all* your produce, even if labeled organic. Put all fruit and vegetables under running water for 20 seconds, or soak in water for 15 to 20 minutes. For firmer items, such as cucumbers or melons, the FDA recommends scrubbing their surfaces with a clean produce brush.

But washing your fruit and vegetables with water is not enough to get rid of all the residue. In fact, the amount of pesticide residue found on produce from the Dirty Dozen list is measured **AFTER** they were washed! Adding baking soda or vinegar to water and soaking produce for five to ten minutes can help break down certain pesticides and may be more effective than water alone. Peeling a fruit or vegetable's skin before you eat it is another effective way to reduce pesticide residues, but peeling produce reduces nutritional value.

We all must eat fruits and vegetables for a nutritious diet. But we should be able to enjoy the benefits of having nutritious fruits and vegetables that are also free of pesticide residues. That job rests with us.

Sources: *Scientific American*, March 31, 2026, and *EWG Shopper's Guide*, 2026



Preventing Kidney Disease Begins with Public Health Action on Diabetes Education and Prevention

By Micki Jackson

Diabetes education and prevention must become a priority for Whatcom County Health and Community

Services if we are serious about reducing kidney disease and its human, economic, and environmental costs.

Chronic kidney disease, often driven by poorly controlled diabetes and high blood pressure, remains one of medicine's quietest and most consequential crises -- that's why it's called, "the silent epidemic". Coordinated public health action centered on diabetes education and prevention can not only save lives, but it could slash the staggering economic burdens on families, employers' insurance premiums, communities, and healthcare systems.

Two Whatcom County residents, Carol Ransom, a retired nurse who helped open the first dialysis unit at St. Joseph Hospital, and Dr. Chao-ying Wu, who practiced family medicine in Bellingham for over two decades, recently shared their stories after donating a kidney in January. Their decisions were rooted in compassion, but their impact reaches far beyond the operating room.

Their stories remind us that kidney health is both deeply personal and profoundly communal. When one person donates, another gets a second chance at life. When a community invests in prevention, fewer people need that lifeline in the first place.

This year's World Kidney Day theme, "Kidney Health for All: Caring for People, Protecting the Planet," underscores an often-overlooked truth: kidney health is also an environmental issue. Dialysis is lifesaving, but in-center treatment requires enormous amounts of water, energy, and single-use materials, including plastic waste. Preventing kidney failure protects not only patients but also the planet's finite resources.

Whatcom County is making real progress toward an ambitious "moonshot" goal championed by retired nephrologist Dr. Bill Lombard: eliminating the local kidney transplant waitlist by 2030. Like President Kennedy's call to put a man on the moon, this vision depends on bold thinking, cross-sector collaboration and sustained public commitment. But we will not reach it through transplantation alone. Prevention must lead.

Chronic kidney disease affects roughly one in seven U.S. adults, often without symptoms until it is advanced. Diabetes and high blood pressure remain the leading causes -- and both can be better managed, or even prevented, through early intervention. Embedding diabetes information, screening and prevention into the county's public health strategy is essential to bending this curve.

The benefits extend beyond individual health. Diabetes and kidney disease significantly increase costs for employers through higher insurance premiums, hospitalizations and lost productivity. Absenteeism and disability tied to uncontrolled diabetes affect workplaces across our community. Prevention is not just good medicine -- it is sound economic policy.

We already have models that work. Community-based programs like Ask a Nurse, operated through Health Ministries Network, bring screening and navigation directly to underserved populations. These efforts catch problems earlier and reduce downstream costs.

At the same time, living kidney donation remains a vital and inspiring part of the solution. It represents the best of who we are: neighbors helping neighbors in the most tangible way possible. For those who are able, becoming a donor is a way to save a life -- and, in a very real sense, to help "save the planet" by reducing reliance on resource-intensive dialysis.

If prevention is the foundation and donation is the lifeline, then awareness is the spark that drives both. Whatcom County has the opportunity to lead by aligning public health, clinical care, employer interests and environmental responsibility around a shared goal.

The moonshot is within reach. It begins by making diabetes education and prevention a true public health priority.

The writer is a volunteer with the Kidney Health Awareness Group, an initiative that began under the leadership of Debbie Ahl, the former executive director at the Mount Baker Foundation. The views expressed are the author's own and do not represent any organization.

Whatcom Healthy Children's Fund

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs in Whatcom County

In Whatcom County, many families are quietly doing extraordinary work every day—caring for children who need extra support to grow, learn, and thrive.

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) include those ages 0–21 who have—or are at risk for—chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions. This can look like asthma, autism, ADHD, developmental delays, or more complex medical needs. While every child's story is different, many families share a similar experience: navigating systems that can be difficult to access and hard to coordinate.

We hear from families that managing care can feel like a full-time job—balancing appointments, therapies, school supports, and daily life while trying to ensure their child's needs are met.

They're not alone. About 1 in 5 children nationally—and in Washington—has a special health care need. Here in Whatcom County, hundreds of young children are referred each year for developmental or medical concerns, reminding us how many families in our community are on this journey.

Even with strong local resources, barriers persist. Families often act as the bridge between healthcare providers, schools, and community programs that don't always communicate with one another. Insurance gaps, long wait times, and limited provider availability can delay care. For families in more rural areas, travel adds time, cost, and stress.

These challenges take a real toll on families. Many caregivers reduce work hours or leave jobs to meet their child's needs. Financial strain, time pressures, and stress are common—and often invisible.

At the same time, the professionals who support these children—teachers, therapists, healthcare providers, and caregivers—are also feeling the strain. Many are working with limited time, high demand, and growing waitlists, while doing their best to meet each child's needs. Strengthening support for families also means supporting the workforce that cares for them.

But Whatcom County is also a place where people come together to find solutions.

Whatcom Taking Action is a community partnership of families, providers, schools, and organizations working to make it easier for children with disabilities and their families to get the support they need. Together, partners are building a more coordinated, accessible system of care—one that reflects what families have been asking for.

One example is the Single Entry Access to Services (SEAS) program, created by families for families. SEAS offers a simple starting point—one place to call or connect—so families don't have to navigate complex systems alone.

We hear again and again that when systems are simpler and more connected, families can spend less time navigating and more time supporting their children.

Families in our community are resilient, resourceful, and deeply committed to their children. Their experiences highlight the importance of continuing to build systems that are coordinated, inclusive, and centered around real family needs.

Want to learn more, get connected or share your story?

Visit [Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs | Whatcom County, WA - Official Website](#)

No family should have to navigate this alone—and in Whatcom County, they don't have to.

Train Your Brain with a Pencil

by Mahalia Blue



We often spend sleepless nights stressing out and overthinking problems even though it's the middle of the night and there's nothing useful we can do at the moment.

This calls for the ability to let go.

The following technique is simple, free and effective in teaching our brains how to put things aside until we can practically deal with them again.

1. Clench a pencil or pen in your hand as tightly as possible. Feel the strain on your muscles, on the joints in your fingers and all the way up your arm to your shoulder and neck. While doing this, firmly place the problem at the front of your mind and tell your problem, "There is nothing I can do right now, so I'm letting go of you until I can do something."

2. While still gripping the pencil, create a space in your imagination, a shelf, closet, hole, where you can store problems. Then let go of the pencil and tell your problem, "Go sit on that shelf until I can do something about you." and imagine it settling there to wait for you.

3. Whenever the problem pops back into your head, and it will, tell it that it has to wait quietly until you can deal with it. Repeat as necessary.

Once your brain learns how to set things aside, it will begin doing it automatically.

Tip: You can repeat both 1 and 2 for persistent or new problems to help reinforce your brain letting things go.

My mind is like my web browser; 17 tabs are open, three are frozen, and I have no idea where the music is coming from!

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FYI



Grounding for Better Health: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Game

Grounding is a self-soothing skill to use when you are having a bad day or dealing with a lot of stress, overwhelming feelings, and/or intense anxiety. Grounding is a technique that helps keep you in the present and helps reorient you to the here-and-now and to reality. It can also serve as a distraction from the difficulties you are dealing with.

At its core, grounding is “a practical approach to anchoring oneself in the present moment” and can help reduce unwanted thoughts, stress, and mental zoning out. It’s a skill set anyone can learn and one that becomes more effective with practice.

Today I’m going to talk about five simple techniques you can use in public environments.



The 5-4-3-2-1 Game

This grounding exercise is about using all five of your senses to calm yourself by focusing on what you can see, hear, smell, touch and taste.

- Focus and name 5 things you can SEE: tree, desk, lake, shelf, etc
- Focus and name 4 things you can FEEL: fabric, rocks, hands, pets, soft blanket, the chair on your back, etc
- Focus and name 3 things you can HEAR: music, the wind in the trees, fingers tapping on the keyboard,

children laughing, etc.

- Focus and name 2 things you can SMELL: flowers, soap, food aromas, etc.
- Focus and name 1 thing you can TASTE: water, coffee, food, etc.

Grounding isn’t just for moments of crisis. When practiced regularly, it can reduce anxiety, trauma symptoms, and even intense cravings. It helps calm the nervous system, interrupt dissociation, and restore a sense of control.

Grounding techniques “offer immediate, accessible relief... by anchoring awareness in the present moment through sensory and physical exercises” and can improve focus and emotional stability.



Northwest Regional Council

(NWRC) is your local Area Agency on Aging serving Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and San Juan Counties.

We provide information

and resources for older adults, people with disabilities, and people with complex medical conditions. These services include Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT), case management and care coordination, information and referrals to various programs and local resources, dementia support, counseling, tribal outreach, and unpaid family caregiver supports.

Our Aging and Disability Resources (ADR) staff are seen as the “front door” to services at NWRC. They can provide information about community supports and services, referrals to other NWRC programs, and information about a variety of services and programs such as property tax deferrals, powers of attorney, living wills, advance directives, transportation, parking permits for people with disabilities, and much more.

The Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) program is new to NWRC and can provide funding and access to additional resources that could have a positive effect on someone’s health. At this time, those supports can include meal delivery and home adaptation devices such as temperature control units, portable power supply units, medically necessary refrigerators, or air purifiers. People who are on Medicaid (Apple Health), have a chronic health condition, and home safety concerns may be eligible for HRSN services.

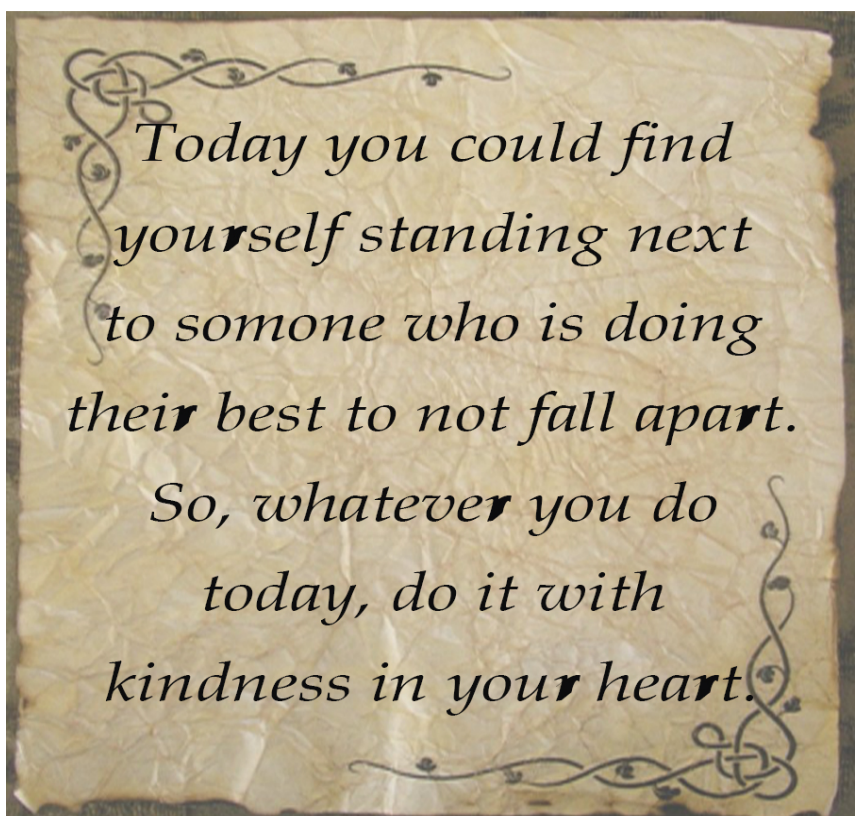
NWRC also provides information and support with the WA Cares Fund. This first-in-the-nation program is a new public long-term care insurance program that can be an affordable way for Washingtonians to access long-term care without having to spend down their life’s savings. Seven out of ten of us will need some form of long-term care support at some point in our lives. Most working Washingtonians have been contributing a small percentage (.58%) to this program through our paychecks starting July 2023. July 1, 2026, is the first time people will be able to access their benefits once they meet the qualifications. There are two qualifications to be eligible to apply for this program. One is to contribute through your paycheck through three pathways while working: 10 or more years, 3 out of the last 6 years, or pro-rated benefit amount for near retirees. The second requirement is based on needing help with at least 3 Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). ADLs include bathing, bed mobility, eating, medication management, mobility, transferring (for example, moving from bed to chair or vice versa), and toileting. When the qualifications are met, beneficiaries can apply to use the lifetime benefit amount of \$36,500, which grows with inflation each year, toward their long-term care service needs and help them stay safely in their own homes. Services like in-home caregiving, meal delivery, transportation, home modifications such as ramps and grab bars, are part of what can make this possible.

Starting May 18th, 2026, Washingtonians were able to start applying to use this benefit. If you have questions about this program or how to apply, more information can be found at www.WACaresFund.wa.gov.

For questions about any of these programs, how to access these services, application assistance for WA Cares Fund or other long-term care programs, or other community resources, please contact NWRC at 360-738-2500. Visit www.NWRCWA.org for more online resources and information about the services available at NWRC.

Smart Parenting Hacks

- The “Talking to the Wall” Technique**: Wall, I wish someone would clean up these toys! Talk to the wall about the problem to get kids to act without direct confrontation.
- Beat the Clock Timers**: Turn tasks into a game to finish before the timer goes off!
- Wearable To-Do Lists**: Write tasks on their hand to check off during the day! (Tasks: Make Bed, Read Book)
- Dinner Time Board Games**: Play games at the table to make mealtime fun!



EDDIE’S SCOREBOARD

One and Done



Barely scraping by with the 15-13 win in Orcas Island, Mount Baker claimed it's first and only win of the season.

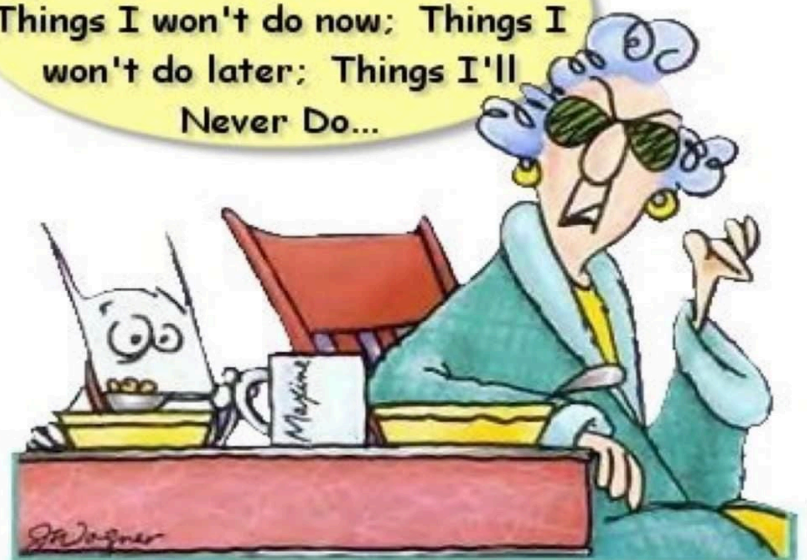
In yet another year of painstaking regressions, the Mountaineers finish with an abysmal 1-16 record. This includes the second straight year without a single victory over Northwest Conference opponents. Likewise, the team claims sole possession dead last for the second straight season as well. Not only that, but an

astonishingly low count of four games were all that the team were able to play on their own field due to excessively wet conditions this Spring. Senior Kamden Mous was the team's best performer this year throwing thirty-three strikeouts in twenty-nine total innings on the mound. On the lesser side of things, Moea claimed seven free bases after being hit by pitches.

Mount Baker and Ferndale are the lone two teams in the conference to miss out on the postseason. The Mountaineers have not made it beyond the regular season since 2019.

New Year Resolution #6

I find it helps to organize chores into categories:
Things I won't do now; Things I won't do later; Things I'll Never Do...



RESOURCES

Crisis/Emergency

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.

211 Get Connected. Get Help.™

211 helps connect you to community resources statewide.

imhurting CRISIS CHAT

24/7 Crisis Line
800.584.3578



The Kendall Fire Station (Whatcom County Fire District Station 92) is housed at the roundabout in

Kendall Washington and has fire fighters highly trained in fighting building fires as well as wild fires. They provide a number of other emergency services including medical aid, as well as offering fire safety and prevention education to our community.

Non-emergency number: (360) 599-2823

Remember: in an emergency dial 911

info@wcfcd14.org



The **Red Cross** is a registered(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing disaster relief whether it's loss of home due to fire or flood to mobilizing volunteers, supplies and services in disaster stricken regions of the world.

1 800 RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)

https://www.redcross.org



Salvation Army

For many, making ends meet is a daily challenge, forcing people to choose between things like

heating their homes and putting food on the table. We understand the stress these situations put on families and are here to help.

360-733-1410

shevaun.malone@usw.

salvationarmy.org https://

bellingham.salvationarmy.org

2912 Northwest Ave., Bellingham

DVSAS
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services

Serving individuals throughout Whatcom County, DVSAS is a volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to heal victims and end domestic and sexual assault. With client-centered, accessible housing and support services, DVSAS empowers victims and survivors while offering safe housing and the possibility of a new life. 24 HOUR HELPLINE 1.360.715.1563

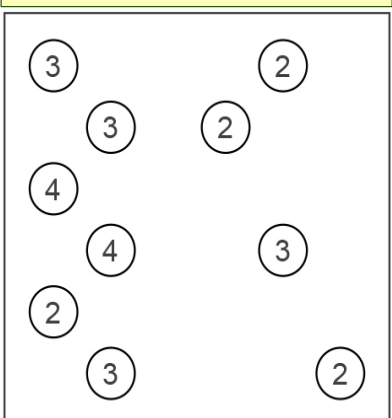
Business Line: 360.671.5714

https://www.dvsas.org



It's just one of those days!

HASHI PUZZLE: connect all the islands with straight horizontal or vertical lines (bridges) until the total number of bridges connected to each island matches its number
Solution on back page



Food

Distribution Hours



Tuesdays
8:00 am – 11:00 am
Thursdays
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Home Delivery: Tuesday mornings. Enroll on our website (<https://www.foothillsfoodbank.org/get-help>) or call 360-392-8149
Closed 12/25 and 1/1 if these dates happen to fall on a Tuesday or Thursday
8255 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA 98266
(on the campus of the EWRRRC)
Contact us at 360-392-8149 or director@foothillsfoodbank.org



St. Peter's Catholic Church Social Action

invites our community to join us every Thursday afternoon from 3:00 -5:00pm at 6210 Mt. Baker Hwy. Deming. We are happy to accept your donations of lightly used clothing and household items. Also shelf stable food items, feminine care items, paper products, body wash, and cleaning products for our community resources bank. Our friends have access to these items as inventory lasts each week.

On the last Thursday of each month each family receives 4 pack toilet paper and laundry soap.

If you are in need of a specific item let us try to help you!

River of Life Community

THE LORD'S TABLE FOOD BANK
RIVER OF LIFE CHURCH
4037 VALLEY HWY 9, VAN ZANDT, WA
360-592-2279

FOOD BANK
FOOD BANK
FOOD BANK

Questions?
Call 360-595-0430
or 360-594-1775

FOOD DISTRIBUTION:
10:00-NOON
2ND & 4TH
SATURDAYS

Low Income Health Care

Unity Care NW
Health Care for Everyone

Unity Care

NW provides affordable primary medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services for children and adults. Care NW accepts Washington Apple Health (Medicaid), Medicare, and most private insurance plans. For those who do not have insurance or who have high deductibles or co-pays, we offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program that can reduce the cost of care. Eligibility for the Sliding Fee Discount Program is based on household size and income. No one is ever denied services because of an inability to pay.
360-676-6177
<https://unitycarenw.org>

Sea Mar Community Health Center



is a community-based organization committed to providing quality, comprehensive health, human, housing, educational and cultural services to diverse communities. Sea Mar proudly serves all persons without regard to race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, or sexual orientation regardless of ability to pay for services.
360.671.3225
<https://www.seamar.org/whatcom-medical-bellingham.html>

Rebus 3



Homeless Help



Bridge 2 Services is a mobile outreach program that bridges

homeless people to the organizations and services they need. We help make connections to vital services like housing, medical assessments, substance treatment, case management, and more. Supplies we offer: basic triage supplies like water, food (sometimes hot), snacks, clothing, hygiene items. Tents, sleeping bags, tarps, blankets.
info@ferndalecs.org
Text: 813-957-4935
<https://ferndalecs.org/bridge-2-services/>

Local Healthcare



Ask-a Nurse Clinics
Health

Ministries Network volunteer nurses provide free blood pressure checks, health counsel, referral and telehealth, as well as limited screening. On the fourth Tuesday of the month, the "Ask a Nurse" program is augmented by community partners that include the Family YMCA., Baker Foundation, of Whatcom County, and Support Northwest.
8-11am—2nd and 4th Tuesday each month at EWRRRC.

DON'T FORGET!

Stop by an Ask a Nurse clinic at the EWRRRC on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of each month between 8 & 11.30 am, and get your A1C tested. It's the best way to understand your blood sugar levels and see if you're at risk for diabetes.



Whatcom Mobile Medicine

Primary care services the 1st and 3rd Monday each month from 1-5pm at East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. For an appointment, call 360.230.8157. We take non-emergency, acute and chronic health problems. Walk-in appointments are available. Sliding scale or Molina, Premera, UHC, Lifewise and more. Patients will not be refused help based on ability to pay.

Mental Health



NAMI Whatcom Mental Health

Support Group meets the 2nd Thursday of each month 10:00am -11:30AM at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, 8251 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls WA 98226.

This no-cost structured support group, facilitated by trained peers offers respect, encouragement, connection, and hope for individuals 18 and over affected by mental health conditions, including family and friends.

THERE WILL BE NO NAMI WHATCOM SUPPORT GROUP MEETING ON JANUARY 8th, 2026
GROUP WILL RESUME FEBRUARY 12, 2026

For more information visit www.namiwhatcom.org, call us at 360-671-4950 or email namiadmin@namiwhatcom.org
NAMI Whatcom Office
800 E. Chestnut St., Suite 1C
P.O. Box 5571, Bellingham, WA 98227
Phone: (360)-671-4950
Website: namiwhatcom.org

Deb Shawver, LICSW offers individual counseling sessions in-person and on telehealth for ages 13+, as well as support groups for teenagers and parents.



On the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, she will be joining the Ask-A-Nurse program from 8-11 AM. In addition, Deb is offering a free drop-in group for teenagers starting July 1st. This group will meet weekly on Tuesdays 6-7:30 PM through the summer.

Deb accepts most insurances, including Cigna (out of network) Molina, Medicare, Kaiser, Premera, Blue Cross, Regence, CHPW, Humana.

Catch-Me, LLC
360-536-1565
catchmecoachme@gmail.com
<https://www.catch-me.io>

Additional Health



SEAS is a free local resource navigation service available to families in Whatcom County. SEAS provides resource navigation for all families that have a child with a disability or developmental concern under 21. Additionally, in 2022, SEAS expanded to provide resource navigation for all families with a child under 5, and expecting families. From questions about your child's development or behaviors, to connecting to services or resources, SEAS works with you to help you get what you need so your children and family can thrive. SEAS family resource navigators are experts in Whatcom County's programs for families and children. They provide confidential, judgment-free, multi-language navigation services. Staff are multilingual and interpretive services are available.

Our goal is to help every family get connected to the resources that they need.

360-715-7485

seas@oppco.org

<https://www.seaswhatcom.org>



Center for Independence

(CFI) is a non-residential, community-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization operated by people with disabilities, serving people with disabilities ages 14 and up. We serve as a resource for individuals with disabilities to fully access and participate in the community through outreach, advocacy, and independent living skills development. We work together with participants to achieve independent living goals such as self-advocacy, self-sufficiency, and self-determination.
1-888-482-4839
info@cfi-wa.org
<https://www.cfi-wa.org>



Washington Connection

offers a fast and easy way for families and individuals to apply for a variety of services such as Food, Cash, Child Care, Long-Term Care, and Medicare Savings Programs. Individuals that are age 65 or older, blind or disabled may also apply for medical assistance.
(877) 501-2233
<https://www.washingtonconnection.org/home/>

Rebus 4



Addiction



Lifeline Connections

is a community-based behavioral health organization that specializes in providing confidential and compassionate care to individuals who experience a substance use and/or mental health condition. Dial or Text 988the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, if you or a family member is experiencing a mental health crisis. The Lifeline is available for everyone, is free, and confidential.
info@lifelineconnections.org
(800) 604-0025
<https://lifelineconnections.org>



ALANON
A part of

the Al-Anon Family Groups' fellowship for younger members whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking.
Find an Alateen meeting: <https://www.whatcomafg.org>
Find an Alanon meeting: <https://www.whatcomafg.org>

NA

Find a Meeting: <https://nwsrna.org/meetings/>
360-647-3234
Webserver@nwsrna.org

AA

Find a Meeting: <https://whatdcomaa.org/meetings>
altwebservant@district11aa.org
<https://whatcomaa.org/>
(360) 734-1688

RESOURCES

Addiction Continued

SAMHSA SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) (also known as the Treatment Referral Routing Service), or TTY: 1-800-487-4889 is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. 1-800-662-HELP (4357) <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/helplines/national-helpline>

Seniors

Whatcom Council on Aging in partnership with the people we serve, offers nutritional, health, social, recreational, and educational programs that promote lifelong independence. Vision: Lifelong empowerment through education, advocacy, and support: Independence through affordable housing, nutritious food, health care and programs that support lifetime wellness. Connections with community Senior Centers, programs and outreach. Opportunities for civic and community life engagement through education, recreation, and volunteerism. Self-respect through self-determined and independent living to prevent premature non-independent living and through opportunities for seniors to maintain autonomy. Good physical and mental health through proper nutrition, exercise, and other social activities. Community support built through advocacy for older adults and through a positive image of aging. Values: Whatcom Council on Aging engages in partnerships with agencies and community groups that support the values of Accessibility, Connectedness, Involvement, Independence, Individual Respect, Health, and Advocacy. 360-733-4030 <https://whatcomcoa.org/contact-us/>



Northwest Regional Council connects and creates new

solutions to navigate the challenges of aging and disability. NWRC provides an extensive array of services and resource to assist the elderly and disabled improve their lives with short- and long-term solutions including health care, medical transportation, in-home care, case management, resources for veterans, housing, food, a variety of support services, and much more. (360) 676-6749 <https://nwrwa.org> 600 Lakeway Drive Bellingham, WA

resources

A guide to services and resources for seniors in Whatcom County 360.344.3333 [guide@olypen.com](https://nwseiors.com/whatcom-county/) <https://nwseiors.com/whatcom-county/>

Home Owners/Utilities



Adult Protective Services (APS)

is dedicated to serving vulnerable adults. We investigate reports about abuse, abandonment, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect of vulnerable adults in Washington State. We collaborate with other agencies to offer protective services as needed. Our goal is to promote lives free of harm while respecting individual choice. **Make an APS Report: Report Online or Call 1-877-734-6277** <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/adult-protective-services>

Catholic Community Services is the largest local private provider of assistance to individuals and families struggling with poverty and the most vulnerable in our communities. (360) 676-2164 info@ccsww.org <https://ccsww.org>



Medicare.gov provides information on how to get started with Medicare, with what Medicare covers, as well as information about prescription drug/dental/vision plans, has health counseling, assists in finding a provider, and other health-related resources. 1-800-MEDICARE(1-800-633-4227) TTY users can call-877-486-2048 <https://www.medicare.gov>



Volunteer Chore Program provides volunteers to help the elderly (60 and over) and adults with functional disabilities remain independent in their own homes. The Chore Program serves as a safety net, helping those for whom other resources are unavailable. Chore assists 200+ Whatcom County residents each year. (360) 734-5121 ext. 1172 chore@whatcomvolunteer.org



Each year we provide hundreds of hours of support to caregivers in Whatcom and Skagit County through our free programs: Adult Day Programs for scheduled caregiver respite Support Groups for adults caring for those affected by dementia Adult Children Support Groups for those adults caring for a parent affected by dementia Dementia-Friendly events Art Access Classes with Allied Arts of Whatcom County Project Lifesaver (a partnering with the Whatcom County Sheriff) providing electronic technology to locate those who wander All seek to provide a support to those living with dementia as well as to those providing their care. (360) 671-3316 <https://www.dementiasupportnw.org>



Family Services

FAMILY SERVICES & PARENTING SUPPORT There are four Family Services Coordinators at Mount Baker School District. Our mission is to create partnerships between families, school, and the community. All our services are confidential. We provide support which enables children and adolescents to live in a safe and healthy environment, as well as encourages them to be present and do their best in school. We assist families with resources, information and problem solving to help their children succeed in school. We are available for confidential meetings by phone, at school, or at home. (360) 383-2000 (360) 383-2009



Kendall Elementary (360) 383-2055 <https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/kendall> 7547 Kendall Road Maple Falls, WA 98266 **Acme Elementary School** (360) 383-2045 <https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/acme> 5200 Turkington Road Acme, WA **Mt Baker Jr High School** (360) 383-2016 5100 Mitchell Road Deming, WA <https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/mbj> **Mt Baker Senior High School** (360) 383-2015 <https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/o/mbhs> 4936 Deming Road Deming, WA

PARENT TRUST Because kids don't come with instructions! The Family Help Line is free call from anywhere in Washington State, available to parents, caregivers, and anyone who has an interest in or questions about a child in their community. We can help you find resources, parenting classes, community resources and so much more. We are here to talk and problem solve with you! If you need a translator, please call and let us know – in most cases we can have a translator available in minutes! 800-932-4673 familyhelpline@parenttrust.org <https://www.parenttrust.org>



Care Connect helps pregnant and newly parenting women prepare for delivery and parenthood with a series of classes. Lessons include topics such as Understanding Pregnancy, Labor and Delivery, Postpartum, Infant Hygiene, Infant First-Aid and Getting Your Baby to Sleep. At each weekly appointment, clients will meet one-on-one with a trained peer mentor for one hour. With each lesson that is completed, clients will earn "baby bucks" for supplies such as diapers, wipes, clothing and blankets. (360)-9057 info@whatcomclinic.com <https://www.whatcomclinic.com/services/education/>



NYS offers a wide variety of programs, services and support for Whatcom County youth, including housing, health care, mental health, employment and education, gender identity support, and teen court. Youth are welcome to drop in. (360) 734-9862 hello@nwys.org <https://www.nwys.org> 1020 North State St. Bellingham,

ECEAP & Head Start ECEAP (pronounced "E-Cap") is the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program funded by Washington State for children 3 and 4 and, in some locations, infants or toddlers who are younger than 3 years old. Both ECEAP and Head Start include: Free early learning child care or preschool to support child's development and learning. In some locations, Head Start may also offer home-based services. Family support and parent involvement. Child health coordination and nutrition. Services responsive and appropriate to each child's and family's heritage and experience. Children who attend ECEAP and Head Start learn to manage their feelings, get along with others and follow classroom procedures. They build the beginning skills for reading, math and science. The programs work closely with parents to support their children's health and education and to meet family goals. They help families access medical and dental care and social services. eceap@dcyf.wa.gov for ECEAP dcyf.hsco@dcyf.wa.gov for Head Start <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/eceap-headstart>

Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) is a voluntary program serving runaway adolescents and youth who are in conflict with their families. The program targets adolescents between the ages of 12 through 17. FRS services are meant to resolve crisis situations and prevent unnecessary out-of-home placement. They are not long-term services. The services will assess and stabilize the family's situation. The goal is to return the family to a pre-crisis state and to work with the family to identify alternative methods of handling similar conflicts. If longer-term service needs are identified, FRS will help facilitate getting the youth and their family into ongoing services. If you experience any difficulties when calling to make a referral to the FRS program, contact Hannah Merley at 253-254-3473. For FRS intakes call: 1-866-363-4276 and tell the intake worker that you would like "Family Reconciliation Services" to start working with your family.

Department of Children, Youth, and Families DCYF is a cabinet-level agency focused on the well-being of children. Our vision is to ensure that "Washington state's children and youth grow up safe and healthy—thriving physically, emotionally and academically, nurtured by family and community. **Report Child Abuse and Neglect** | 1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276) <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/child-welfare-system/cps>

Rebus 5



The Parent to Parent Support Programs provide emotional support and information to families of children with developmental disabilities, delays, and special health care needs. Personal support from another parent, who has a child with similar needs, can be helpful in coping with many challenging experiences and feelings. Helping Parent volunteers have completed a training program and are available to provide support and information to other parents. All information will be kept confidential. There is no cost for this service. (360) 715-0170 p2p@arcwhatcom.org <https://www.p2pwhatcom.org/home>

Parent to Parent of Whatcom County

Veterans

Veterans Administration Serving Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, and Island counties, we offer confidential help for Veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a non-medical setting. Our services include counseling for needs such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST). We can also connect you with more support in VA and your community. 800-698-2411 <https://www.va.gov> 3800 Byron Av, Suite 124, Bellingham,



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Vet Center Serving Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, and Island counties, we offer confidential help for Veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a non-medical setting. Our services include counseling for needs such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST). We can also connect you with more support in VA and your community. 800-698-2411 Hours: 24/7 <https://www.va.gov>



"Serving Those Who Served"

Vet Center

If you're a Whatcom County veteran, we can help you or your family access local, state, and federal benefits and services. Call or visit us in person to find out how. 509 Girard Street, Lower Level, 676-6724 ext. #50700 M/W/F 12:30-5pm; information for all available

Education

ESL: English Language Learning **Whatcom Literacy Council** Opening Doors. Changing Lives. Roughly two thirds of the people we serve are immigrants who are learning English for the first time. More than half of our learners have no high school diploma or GED, and the majority have no computer at home. Our free, customized, individual tutoring and small group classes make a difference in their lives by... *Improving their basic reading, writing, math, computer, and parenting skills. *Helping them prepare for a GED test and/or further education. *Helping them attain US citizenship. *Increasing their employment opportunities. *Enabling self-sufficiency. *Enhancing the stability of their daily lives. ell@whatcomliteracy.org (360) 685-6756 <https://www.whatcomliteracy.org/english-language-learner>



Whatcom County Health and Community Services

Whatcom Literacy Council

Vocational Rehabilitation Providing vocational rehabilitation services for disabled and displaced workers. (360) 812-6610 DVRBellinghamReferral@dshs.wa.gov <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/location/dshs-dvr-bellingham> 4101 Meridian St Bellingham,



Washington State Department of Social & Health Services

Vocational Rehabilitation

RESOURCES

Education/Jobs



Evergreen Goodwill offers ESOL classes at basic and intermediate levels for people who want to develop English literacy and improve language skills for the workplace. Classes include ESOL Basic through ESOL Level 4 and Citizenship Test Preparation. **Digital Skills:** With our different Digital Skills classes, you'll learn the basics of how to operate a computer, including file management (saving), typing (keyboarding), internet, and email. Later, you can take classes in Microsoft Word and Excel to learn to create spreadsheets for organizing data and documents for writing a resume or cover letter. We also offer online job search classes and special computer classes for non-native English speakers. No previous computer knowledge or experience is required. **Wraparound Services:** Evergreen Goodwill's instructors, case managers, and employment specialists support students holistically based on their individual needs and help remove barriers to employment and education. Students can receive support for barriers like housing, transportation, legal or immigration matters, among many others. **Reentry Services:** Finding work with a conviction history can be a challenge, but Evergreen Goodwill is here to help. Initially, our Employment and Reintegration Strategies class focuses on mental and physical health, stress management, the theory of change, and goal setting exercises. The second half of the curriculum helps students plan their careers, search for jobs, and prepare for interviews. (360) 752-2080 evergreengoodwill.org

WorkSource is a statewide partnership of state, local and nonprofit agencies that provides an array of employment and training services to job seekers and employers in Washington. We also offer assistance in applying for unemployment. 888-316-5627 <https://www.worksourcewa.com>

Vocational Rehabilitation Providing vocational rehabilitation services for disabled and displaced workers. (360) 812-6610 DVRBellinghamReferral@dshs.wa.gov <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/location/dshs-dvr-bellingham> 4101 Meridian St Bellingham,



Employment Security Agency dealing with employment/unemployment issues. Apply for unemployment insurance. Paid family and medical leave. 360-890-3500 <https://www.esd.wa.gov>

Home Owners/Utilities

Washington State Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) provides individual support and federal relief funds to qualified Washington homeowners behind on their mortgage due to pandemic hardship. This program is administered by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC). Pre-Purchase Homebuyer Education Classes or Housing Counseling Down-Payment Assistance Programs or other help buying a home Foreclosure Prevention Housing Counseling Legal Aid Home Repair or Home Modification Assistance Payment Assistance Programs (Availability varies. Call for information) 877.894.4663 www.homeownership-wa.org

Are you eligible for free home weatherization?

Check it out at PSE: <https://tinyurl.com/t6ue8bt2>

Home Owners/Utilities

Bellingham & Whatcom County Housing Authorities We are a local government agency that serves thousands of residents in Whatcom County. **The Bellingham Housing Authority(BHA)& the Whatcom County Housing Authority** work together provide needed housing in our community. We serve Low-Income Families, Elderly People, Those with Disabilities, & Working Families in need of affordable housing. (360) 676-6887 ext. 1025 info@bellinghamhousing.org <https://bellinghamhousing.org>

You can be emailed important Columbia Valley Water District News and Updates by creating a login at Xpressbillpay. Go to www.cv-wd.com On the home page you will see a button that says "Pay Your Bill Online" hit that button and it will take you to Xpressbillpay.com. Create a login by providing your email address and answering a couple of questions. It's that simple! Once you have a login you will begin to receive email updates about Columbia Valley Water District activities like: Emergency Notifications and Newsletters. Although creating a login will ensure you receive email notifications - Here you can also pay your bills online, sign up for auto-pay and/or paperless billing if you choose.

All you need is an internet connection and an email address. Once you sign up for your account and start using this service, you'll wonder how you ever got along without it! It's simple to use. If you choose paperless billing, every month we'll send you a reminder email to let you know when your bill is online. Then, you just log into your account at xpressbillpay.com or use our mobile app to view your bill. You can also see two years' history of your account online, so you can compare your current bill to a previous bill. When you're ready to pay your bill, select a payment type. You can pay with a credit card, or debit card. Enter the information and you're done! It's that easy, and only takes you a few minutes each month. Or you can set up your bill on Auto Pay and have it automatically paid for you each month! 6229 Azure Way, Maple Falls, WA (360)599-1699 admin@cv-wd.com

Whatcom County Water District 13 is committed to protecting the environment and the natural habitat while supplying pristine water and reliable wastewater services to our customers. 360-599-1801 admin@wcwd13.com 532 Sprague Valley Drive, Maple Falls

Whatcom/Skagit Housing Since 1976, we have assisted over 700 families in building their own homes in Whatcom and Skagit Counties. Mutual Self-Help combines your sweat equity with technical assistance from WSH and affordable loans from USDA Rural Development. (360) 398-0223 julia@whatcomskagithousing.com <https://whatcomskagithousing.com>

Habitat for Humanity in Whatcom County provides a unique opportunity for hardworking families to help build and buy their own homes. We work closely with qualified individuals and families to build safe, decent, and affordable homes here in Whatcom. 360.715.9170 info@hfhwhatcom.org <https://www.hfhwhatcom.org>

PSE Energy Assistance Do you need help with energy costs? Apply for Energy Assistance directly through PSE now by going to: <https://www.pse.com/en/account-and-billing/assistance-programs> 1-888-225-5773

PSE's Bill Discount Rate (BDR) program provides you with ongoing help on your monthly energy bill. Depending on your household income and household size, you can save 5% to 45% a month on your bill. There is one simple application to fill out. In most cases, no proof of income is required to apply. And the application only takes a few minutes to complete online. If you've received energy assistance in the past, it's likely you qualify. 1-888-225-5773 <https://www.pse.com/en/account-and-billing/assistance-programs/bill-discount-rate>

PSE customers: Manage your energy usage online. For personalized energy-saving suggestions, complete an online home assessment to update your home's energy profile in the my usage of your online account. Measure, and monitor your home's usage. Find additional energy efficiency suggestions in our to Save library. To learn more or receive personalized advice over the phone, call an Energy Advisor 1-800-562-1482, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WHATCOM COUNTY WASHINGTON **Whatcom County Property Tax Exemption for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities** If you are a senior citizen or a person with disabilities with your residence in Washington State you may qualify for a property tax reduction under the property tax exemption for senior citizens and people with disabilities program. 360-778-5000 <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/265/Property-Tax-Exemption>

Immigrants/Refugees

WHATCOM community FOUNDATION Supporting Families of Those Detained/Deported The Whatcom Community Foundation has three funds (they established them when the last ICE raid occurred several years ago) open to support immigrant families and those detained. The Immigrant Relief Fund is set to support families in need. The Immigrant Bond Fund helps post bond for those while they are being detained. And the Immigrant Legal Defense fund helps provide funding for legal defense. 100% of donations go to those families impacted. Other organizations that are providing family support include the Immigrant Resources and Immediate Support (IRIS), school-district based family engagement specialists, and Racial Unity Now. 360.671.6463 wcf@whatcomcf.org https://wcf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1523

WHATCOM HUMAN RIGHTS TASK FORCE The Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) provides comprehensive immigration legal services and community education to advance the human rights and well-being of low-income immigrants and refugees. 360-389-3898 whatcomhrtf@gmail.com <http://www.nwirp.org/>

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services **Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Resource Tool** The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance goal is to help refugee and immigrant families and individuals succeed and thrive in Washington state. <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=8e7e2fd0641f4f1e90bbaa36a0bc232d>

IRIS Helping Immigrant Families IRIS primarily serves immigrant women and children who are survivors of violence. IRIS responds to the urgent and unmet needs of immigrants in our communities in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties in an inclusive and comprehensive manner. IRIS connects immigrants with needed resources in our communities by acting as liaisons for our recipients. IRIS also directly provides funding for items and services that are not accessible to this marginalized population. info@irisnw.org 1050 Larrabee Ave. Ste. 104 #498 Bellingham 360-935-1688 irisnw.org

WHATCOM DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER **Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center** services focus on both conflict prevention and conflict intervention and include mediation, training, facilitation, coaching, supervised visitation, and community education for youth, adults, families, organizations, and businesses throughout Whatcom County. Services are offered in-person and virtually. 206 Prospect Street, Bellingham 360/676.0122 wdr@whatcomdrc.org www.whatcomdrc.org

WASHINGTON IMMIGRANT SOLIDARITY NETWORK **Immigrant Rights Resources** WAISN-Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network At WAISN, we are committed to defending immigrant and refugee communities from deportation while advocating for meaningful, systemic change. Our work focuses on both deportation defense and pushing for policies that ensure justice for all Washingtonians. Deportation Defense Hotline (Monday-Friday; 6am-6pm) at 1-844-724-3737. info@waisn.org <https://waisn.org>

The dementia journey isn't easy. Reaching us is. You're not alone. We're here to help. 24/7 Helpline • 1.800.272.3900 Visit us online at www.alzwa.org **ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION**

Rebus 6

Septic Systems Evaluation Rebates Do you need your septic system evaluated? Washington State and local public health regulations require septic system owners to have a complete evaluation of their septic system performed one to three years (depending on the type of system) and to report the condition of their system to the local health jurisdiction. Whatcom County Health Department is offering enhanced rebates for homeowners who have senior or disability tax exemptions who need their septic system evaluated. You can learn more at: whatcomcounty.us/septicrebate, or call: 360.778.6267.

RESOURCES ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATIONS



Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District

District is a local government body serving the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area in the East Whatcom Foothills. Learn more about our commissioners and the work CVPRD is doing on our About page at cv-prd.org. We welcome the public at our meetings on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6.30 pm at 8251 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls, Rm 3. You can contact us at: cvparksandrec@gmail.com



KAVZ Radio is Your Voice of the Valley in the South Fork Nooksack Valley and East Whatcom County.

We are the only community, low-power FM radio station in East Whatcom County. Please contact us at info@kavz.org if you want to find out how you can contribute, participate and learn. You can stream music from our website 24 hours a day at: <https://foothillsinfo.com/print-and-radio/> (360) 230-8176 info@kavz.org <https://www.kavz.org>



Local community-led Watch Group focused on safety in the Columbia Valley UGA area.

Monthly meetings held the first Tuesday of each month at the North Fork Library. nwmaplefalls@gmail.com 360-933-1620 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/718686472042194>



The Foothills Community Alliance (FCA), a

501c3 organization was formed in 2020 by local community members with the purpose of funding projects aimed at improving the lives of the residents of Columbia Valley UGA. JOIN US THE 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH at the Kendall Elementary Library, 7547 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls at 5:30pm in person and via Zoom. Look for our event on our Calendar and in The Foothills Outlook and on www.foothillsinfo.com. info@foothillscommunityalliance.com 360-410-9114 foothillscommunityalliance.com



East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

The East Whatcom Regional Resource Center Information and Referral (I&R) Team serves the East Whatcom Community as a branch of the Opportunity Council. We provide the same access to services that can be found at our downtown Bellingham Opportunity Council location. 8251 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls. Or contact us at 360-599-3944. 8251 Kendall Rd (360) 599-3944 ewrrc-allstaff@oppco.org <https://www.oppco.org/ewrrc/>



Mt. Baker Chamber of Commerce

Staff and Volunteers are on hand to answer questions and provide suggestions to travelers and locals alike. Some business support services are available including printing, laminating, and notary. Stop by, Rebecca and Sonya will be happy to see you! The Chamber Board of Directors meets once per month on the second Tuesday at 6 o'clock in the Maple Falls Town Hall. Members and visitors are welcome. Contact Rebecca if you'd like to make a presentation. The Mt. Baker Visitor Center in the Maple Falls Town Hall is open daily from 10 am to 4 pm, 360-599-1518 mtbakervisitorcenter@gmail.com



Dear MBCC, Mount Baker Community Coalition's mission is to strategically build a strong community that offers well-being to all by supporting youth and families through substance use prevention and mental health promotion. This past year was a powerful reflection of that mission in action — a year defined by youth leadership, family connection, collaboration, and resilience, even in the face of significant change.

As we reflect on 2025, we are deeply grateful for the partnerships, people, and shared commitment that continue to make this work possible..

Here are a few highlights from the year:

Youth Leadership on a National Stage: In February, Shana Axelson and I had the honor of bringing four Mount Baker youth to CADCA's National Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C. These young leaders represented our community with thoughtfulness, curiosity, and courage — engaging in prevention education, advocacy, and conversations at the national level.

A Clear Roadmap for the Future: We completed and delivered MBCC's five-year strategic plan to the Washington State Health Care Authority. This plan emphasizes plain language, accessibility, and community voice, ensuring our prevention work remains understandable, inclusive, and grounded in local strengths.

Strengthening Families — en Español: We successfully implemented a round of Strengthening Families in Spanish, serving eight families. This was a powerful step toward increasing access to evidence-based prevention programming and supporting family connection, communication, and resilience.

Learn, Serve, & Earn — Year Four:

This marked the fourth consecutive year of our Summer Youth Prevention Fellowship, Learn, Serve, & Earn. We paid 10 youth to participate in six days of prevention education, community service, and pro-social engagement — learning important skills, giving back to their community, and yes... having FUN!

Peer 2 Peer Reaches New Heights: Our Junior High Peer 2 Peer leaders delivered every available prevention lesson to elementary schools across the district and broke the record for the number of presentations completed in a single school year. Their leadership, preparation, and confidence continue to inspire us.

At the same time, this year brought real challenges. MBCC experienced the loss of our federal Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant, resulting in a 50% reduction in funding. This required us to pivot quickly, rethink how we operate, and learn how to continue serving our community with literally half the resources.

Thanks to strong partnerships, committed staff, and the creativity of our coalition, we are still here — adapting, learning, and staying rooted in prevention. While the path forward looks different, our mission remains the same: to support youth, families, and the greater Mount Baker community in building well-being and resilience together.

Thank you for being part of this work — whether as a partner, supporter, youth leader, family participant, or community advocate. We couldn't do this without you.

With gratitude,

Allison Ormsby, MPA, Prevention Program Manager
Mount Baker Community Coalition
Whatcom Family & Community Network
360.375.0883
wfcn.org



Do you live in the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area? NEED A NEW WOOD STOVE? WE CAN HELP!

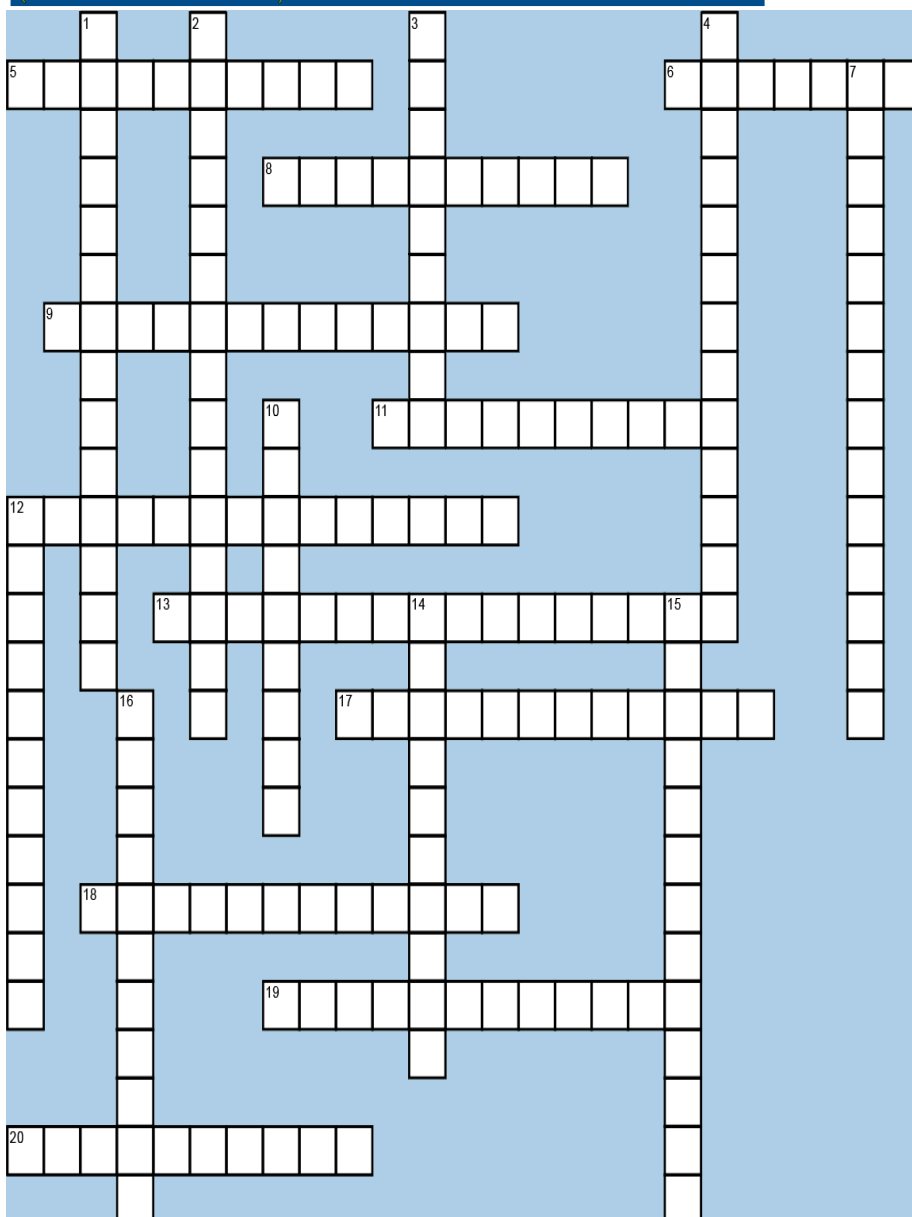
A major Northwest Clean Air Agency effort focuses on reducing wood smoke in the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area. We do this in part by helping people replace old, polluting wood stoves with new stoves and ductless heat pumps. This helps cut down on smoke during winter periods when stoves are in heavy use. To date, NWCAA has funded the replacement of nearly 200 wood stoves in Columbia Valley. For more information, check NWCAA's website: <https://nwccleanairwa.gov/resources/columbia-valley-air-quality-improvement-project/> Columbia Valley (Whatcom County) air quality improvement project - North West Clean Air

Wood stove Change-Out Program: This program helps residents in the Columbia Valley urban growth area of Whatcom County replace old wood stoves with new, certified wood or pellet stoves and/or heat pumps. It is open to Columbia Valley residents who meet certain qualifications.

JUNE CROSSWORD: BOMBSHELLS

(THINK SILVER SCREEN)

ANSWERS ON BACK PAGE



South Fork Valley

Community Association RENOVATION NEWS

Why have just one re-opening event when you can have a whole week of celebrations? The renovated Van Zandt Hall will officially open April 10-17, 2026. Details to follow. Meanwhile, the To Do list is stubbornly long, and money to do them is getting thin. You may want to rent the Hall one day for a reunion, a birthday party, a wedding, or a graduation party. When you do, you'll be proud to know you were part of making it beautiful. If you can help with a donation, please contact info@southforkvalley.org, or visit southforkvalley click on the orange DONATE button.

Save the Date: South Fork Nooksack River Fish and Flood Forum - Tuesday, January 27, 2026 from 4pm to 7pm at the Rome Grange (2821 Mt. Baker Hwy)

Join the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe for a community forum focused on the South Fork Nooksack River. This event will bring together residents, landowners, Tribes, and partner organizations for a shared conversation about the future of the river corridor—complete with refreshments, raffle prizes, and opportunities to connect.

This forum is designed to foster understanding, build trust, and support ongoing community-led discussions about the river. Please RSVP by emailing outreach@triangleassociates.com or call (206) 981-2229 ext. 102 by January 19.

SFVCA INFO

The South Fork Valley Community Association (SFVCA) is a small, all-volunteer group focused on maintaining and improving the Van Zandt Community Hall, providing opportunities to gather as a community, and sharing information of interest to the Mt. Baker Foothills area.

Planning an event or celebration? For Hall rental rates and availability, call 360-230-8176.

Learn more about upcoming SFVCA events and programs at southforkvalley.org/ or [facebook.com/southforkvalley/](https://www.facebook.com/southforkvalley/).

If you have information that would be of interest to people in the South Fork Valley and Mt. Baker Foothills, we'll share it in the South Fork Scoop. Email info@southforkvalley.org or call Will at 360 393-9583.

Listen to KAVZ, your Voice of the Valley, at 102.5 FM, or online at <http://kavz.org/>

Bombshells

These are the Hollywood nicknames for queens of the silver screen.

- Across**
5. "Platinum Blond"
 6. "Queen of Double Entendre"
 8. "World's Most Beautiful Animal"
 9. "Miss Eight Ball"
 11. "Mother of Wi-Fi"
 12. "Sex Kitten"
 13. "La Lollo"
 17. "Female Elvis"
 18. "Love Goddess"
 19. "Queen of Technicolor"
 20. "Miss Viareggio"

- Down**
1. "Smartest Dumb Blond"
 2. "Queen of Ajax"
 3. "Bronze Venus"
 4. "Brazilian Bombshell"
 7. "Titan of French Cinema"
 10. "The Original Vamp"
 12. "Million Dollar Legs"
 14. "The Sweater Girl"
 15. "Sarong Queen"
 16. "Everything I Owe to Spaghetti"



Community Events Calendar



June 2026 Calendar

*Warm breeze stirs petals, roses perfume
June air, sunbeams rise golden*

If you have an event, activity, or meeting you would like to put on our calendar, email the editor at info@foothillsinfo.com

For more information on each listing, click the title to be taken to their website.

Week 1

TUESDAY 2
6pm Crafting Community @ North Fork Library

12-2pm Foothills Seniors Gathering @ Van Zandt Hall

5-6pm Neighborhood Watchdogs @ North Fork Library

5:30-6:30 Adult Mental Health Group @ Foothills Foodbank

SATURDAY 6
10-5pm Summer Saturday Book Sales @ Deming Library

Sunday 7
3-5pm Third Place Coffeehouse @ Van Zandt Hall

Week 2

Monday 8
1pm Whatcom Mobile Medicine clinic

Tuesday 9
8am Ask-a-Nurse clinic

8-11am Foothills Food Bank (weekly on Tues)

12-2pm Foothills Seniors Gathering @ Van Zandt Hall

Wednesday 10
Storytime @ Deming Library

6pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library

Crafting Community @ North Fork Library Every Tuesday, 6pm

Thursday 11
3pm St Peter's "Thursdays with Friends"

4pm Art & Audio for Tweens @ Deming Library

4-7pm Foothills Food Bank

5.30pm Deming Library Writer's Circle

6.30-7.30pm Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District Regular Meeting

SATURDAY 12
10-5pm Summer Saturday Book Sales @ Deming Library

Sunday 13
3-5pm Third Place Coffeehouse @ Van Zandt Hall

11am to 1:30pm Joy of Watercolor with Annika Sheck @ Deming Library

5-9pm Mt Baker Teen DanceFest @ East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

Week 3

Monday 15
2.45-4.15pm Mt Baker Community Coalition Meeting

Tuesday 16
8-11am Foothills Food Bank

10.30-11.30 Digital Equity Bus @ Deming Library

12-2pm Foothills Seniors Gathering @ Van Zandt Hall

Wednesday 17
10.30-11 Storytime @ Deming Library

6-8pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library

5pm to 7pm Foothills Entrepreneurs Collective @ Van Zandt Hall

Thursday 18
3-5pm St Peter's "Thursdays with Friends" St Peter's Catholic Church

4-7pm Foothills Food Bank

4-5pm Art & Audio for Tweens @ Deming Library

5.30-6.30 Foothills Communication Hub meeting

6-9pm Potluck and Open Mic @ Van Zandt Hall

SATURDAY 20
10-5pm Summer Saturday Book Sales @ Deming Library

Sunday 21
3-5pm Third Place Coffeehouse @ Van Zandt Hall

Week 4

Monday 22
8am Ask-a-Nurse clinic @ EWRRRC

1-5pm Whatcom Mobile Medicine Clinic @ EWRRRC

Tuesday 23
8-11am Foothills Food Bank

10.30-11.30 Digital Equity Bus @ Deming Library

12-2pm Foothills Seniors Gathering @ Van Zandt Hall

Van Zandt History Enthusiasts @ Van Zandt Hall, 7-9pm

Wednesday 24
10-6pm Summer reading kickoff @ North Fork Library

10.30-11am Storytime @ Deming Library

6pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library

Thursday 25
3-5pm St Peter's "Thursdays with Friends" St Peter's Catholic Church

5.30pm Deming Library Writer's Circle

Saturday 27
10am to 3pm Everybody's Market @ Van Zandt Hall

Saturday 27
10-5pm Summer Saturday Book Sales @ Deming Library

6-7.30pm Whatcom Grooves Summer Music Series: The Puppy Wranglers @ Deming Library

Sunday 28
3-5pm Third Place Coffeehouse @ Van Zandt Hall

Week 5

Tuesday 29
8-11am Foothills Foodbank

10.30am Digital Equity Bus @ Deming Library

10.30. Storytime @ North Fork Library

12-2pm Foothills Seniors Gathering @ Van Zandt Hall

Wednesday 30
10.30am Storytime @ Deming Library

6pm Good Yarns @ Deming Library

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Crosswords

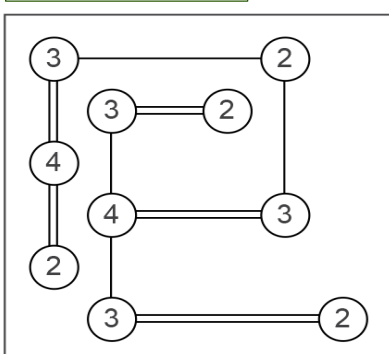
ACROSS

5. JEAN HARLOW
8. AVA GARDNER
9. MAMIE VAN DOREN
11. HEDY LAMAR
12. BRIGETTE BARDOT
13. GINA LOLLABRIGIDA
17. ANNE MARGARET
18. RITA HAYWORTH
19. MAUREEN OHARA
20. ELKE SOMMER

DOWN

1. JAYNE MANSFIELD
2. MARLENA DIETRICH
3. LENA HORNE
4. CARMEN MIRANDA
7. SIMONE SIGNORET
10. THEDA BARA
12. BETTY GRABLE
14. LANA TURNER
15. DOROTHY LAMOUR
16. SOPHIA LOREN

Hashi



Soduko

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5	1	2	8	4	6	7	3	9
6	5	1	7	2	4	9	8	3
2	3	9	1	8	5	6	7	4
4	7	8	9	6	3	2	1	5

Do you have an idea for a feature story, Helping Hands article, or an interview with someone who is making a positive difference in the Foothills communities?

Do you have photos of the area you'd like to share with the community?

Would you like to write reviews of local events and activities?

Are you interested in writing about local history, interesting sites, local geology, and more?

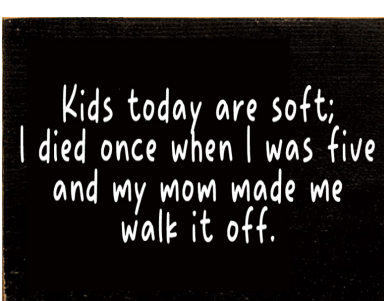
LET US KNOW!

We're always interested in what you'd like to see in the paper as well as what you'd like to share.

Contact the editor at: info@foothillsinfo.com

Rebus solutions

1. Submerge
2. Pirate
3. Halibut
4. Drinkable
5. Raisins
6. Cabinet



Do you have an upcoming event? Let us know by the 15th of the month prior and we'll help promote it. Email the editor at info@foothillsinfo.com.