



MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

HELP. HOPE. CHANGE.



True Stories

2021 SPRING/SUMMER NEWSLETTER

COMMUNITY HELPING COMMUNITY

Make a slam dunk against poverty during March Matchness!



Double your impact when you donate to MSC in March! All donations will be matched up to a total of \$10,000 thanks to the Winton Charitable Trust!

Don't miss this opportunity to have your donation matched and make a slam dunk against poverty in our community!

MAKE A DONATION TODAY:

Online: www.mschehelps.org/donate

Phone: 253.838.6810

By Mail: PO Box 23699,
Federal Way, WA 98093



2021 PREMIER BUSINESS PARTNERS

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MSC CRAB FEED & AUCTION

Online Auction

June 1 - June 5, 2021

Virtual Event

June 5, 2021



More info
available

online at:
[www.mschehelps.org/
getinvolved/crabfeed/](http://www.mschehelps.org/getinvolved/crabfeed/)

**SAVE THE
DATE!** | **MSC Helps Luncheon**
Thursday, October 21, 2021
11:30am-1pm

CONTACT US

For services

253.838.6810 | WA Relay 711

www.mschehelps.org

To volunteer

253.835.7678, ext. 149

www.mschehelps.org

To donate

253.835.7678, ext. 104

www.mschehelps.org

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MISSION

MSC is building a future without poverty by creating pathways to help, hope, and dignity for our neighbors.

VISION

Empowered individuals. Thriving communities.

VALUES

TEAMWORK

PASSION

RESPECT

INTEGRITY

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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MAKING ENDS MEET

Desiree had her first child at the age of 19 and is now the proud mother of six and grandmother of one. “My kids are my everything,” says Desiree. However, raising six kids is not always easy.

Desiree’s first relationship was a difficult one. “I knew my girls were looking at me for the standard on how they should be treated. I was the example,” shares Desiree. She knew she wanted something different for them and left the relationship.

Her family stepped in to help where they could, caring for the children as Desiree balanced three part-time jobs. Recognizing that she needed to build her marketable skills in order to better support her family, Desiree added school to an already busy parenting and work schedule and eventually earned an accounting degree.

Even with help and hard work, it’s not always easy to make ends meet. There were times that Desiree had to choose between paying her bills and feeding her kids. “Sometimes to buy coats in the winter, I would have to buy one a month and take that money from the power bill payment I was going to make,” she shares. During this time, Desiree counted on MSC’s energy assistance program and the food bank to get her through. “It was a relief to know I had MSC to rely on to help me. I knew I’d be okay.”

As Desiree earned her degree and gained experience, her income steadily rose. However, as happens with many families, each increase in income resulted in a decrease in benefits. A wage increase would result in an almost equal decrease in housing support. And just when she began to earn enough that she no longer qualified for the state health insurance, she was diagnosed with cancer.

Once again, she was faced with difficult choices. Paying her bills or purchasing

medication. MSC’s energy department was there to help her once again, providing the assistance she needed during a time when no one should have to face financial challenges

In 2019, Desiree joined the MSC staff as the payroll and GL accountant. “I had always wanted to work at MSC,” she shares. Several years ago when she participated in DSHS’s WorkFirst program, she spent some time at MSC helping to set up the computer lab. “At that time I remember thinking it was amazing to see how much was actually being done to help people, and how much actually goes into providing services to people every day,” she shares.

Being a role model to her children has been the driving force behind what Desiree has been able to accomplish. “Being a mom is the most important thing I’ll ever do,” she shares. Each day at MSC, she knows she is supporting other mothers who are facing the same challenges that she once did.





CONNECTING RESIDENTS

When COVID19 first made headlines with its arrival in the United States, it was in our backyard at a long-term care facility in Kirkland. The impact of the pandemic on long-term care residents has been significant. MSC's Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has been a vital partner in addressing this impact.

Long-Term Care Ombuds advocate for residents of nursing homes, adult family homes, and assisted living facilities. Their purpose is to protect and promote the rights guaranteed these residents under Federal and State law and regulations. One of these resident rights includes the right to communicate and interact with their community.

"We've seen that isolation has had significant impact on residents in long-term care facilities," shares Vicki Elting, Assistant State Long-Term Care Ombuds. "Isolation is tragic to the psyche, depression rates are up. Some have shared that they no longer want to live."

Some residents went from family members visiting every day to no contact at all, even with other residents, as facilities were under strict social distancing guidelines. A University of

Washington report found that social isolation creates a "double pandemic" that disrupts care and exacerbates the difficulties of dementia, depression, suicide risk, chronic health conditions, and other challenges faced by long-term care residents.

"We soon discovered that many residents didn't have access to a phone, even a landline, on any sort of regular basis. Often there was only access to a community phone that was shared by multiple residents," shares Vicki. "Residents were not able to call out and family members were unable to call in, increasing the isolation even further."

The Ombuds responded to this by providing resources and advocating for change at the legislative level. Through a grant, the Ombuds have purchased around 800 tablets and distributed them in facilities throughout Washington State, with more on the way. On the legislative level, Ombuds were integral in advocating for the introduction of HB 1218 for improving the health, safety, and quality of life for residents in long-term care facilities to address this need, among other needs. The bill specifically calls for individual phone connections for residents be made available.

"We know Ombuds visits to facilities mean a lot to residents, but the pandemic has made us truly understand how vital that human connection is to residents," shares Vicki.

HELP, HOPE, CHANGE NOMINATIONS OPEN

MSC's Help, Hope, Change Award (HHC Award) celebrates a community leader or corporation that exemplifies the mission of MSC to provide pathways out of poverty for our neighbors. The award is presented annually at the MSC Helps Luncheon in October.

Nominees are eligible if they 1) live, work or make an impact within MSC's service area of South King County, 2) have made significant contributions to helping our neighbors living in poverty to find help, hope, and dignity (including but not limited to policy

change work, direct services, or significant contributions to support MSC or other organizations), and 3) are willing to attend the luncheon in October and receive the award. Nominees can be individuals, corporations, or organizations. Current MSC board members and staff are not eligible.

Nominations are open through March 31, 2021. To nominate an individual, company, or organization, or to find out more about the award, please visit www.mschehelps.org/getinvolved/hhcaward/.



2020 Honoree Jeanne Burbidge accepting her award virtually during the 2020 MSC Helps Luncheon.

HOW QUICKLY THINGS CHANGE

“We weren’t millionaires by any means, but we were doing fine. COVID hit and my life changed,” shares Sara.

Prior to the pandemic, Sara worked as a bartender four nights a week. She made a good living and was able to pay all her bills and build up her savings. Bartending gave her the flexibility to homeschool her eleven-year old son and also worked well with shared care-giving with her son’s father.

During the first shut-down of restaurants, Sara received unemployment and used some of her savings to help cover bills. “I felt a little uneasy moving through my savings so quickly, but then everyone thought it would be over soon,” she shares.

As restaurants began opening up, Sara was able to go back to work, but it was not the same. She says, “At 25% capacity and with all the new mandates, it felt like we were working just as hard, if not harder, but we weren’t making the same as what we had before. People were unsure about

going out and when they were, many were not tipping in the same way they used to. I was hoping to put money back into savings, but was really only breaking even.”

Then there was a second shutdown of restaurants. The amount Sara received from unemployment was not even close to what she had been making and she went through the rest of her savings. “By December, my economic situation had gotten extremely rocky, and there was no end in sight,” she says.

She considered supplementing her income with gig work while she looked for alternate work, but childcare was an issue and she didn’t want to bring her son with her. She remembered that when she had called 211 several years ago for referrals for dental work, they had asked her about rental assistance.

Never having needed rent assistance previously, Sara didn’t know where to turn, so she called 211 again and was referred to MSC. She filled out an online application for rent assistance and was able to get the help she needed to stay current on her rent payments. She also

learned about other ways MSC could potentially help her during this time, such as energy assistance.

“I understand the need to keep people safe, but unfortunately, that causes instability for those of us working in the restaurant industry. Bartending was lucrative for me, but that’s not an industry I can rely on now when I have so many other responsibilities. I have a kid and he wants to eat every day,” says Sara.

Sara started a new position in early January in the commercial food distribution industry. While she is making less, she feels comfortable knowing that her employment won’t be affected by any further shut-downs. She’s hoping to supplement her income with occasional bartending work.

“One thing I learned while going through this is I can live on less. It is really easy to spend money when you have it. Even though I wasn’t super frivolous, I wish I would have saved more money up even though what I had got us through almost a year,” shares Sara. “I didn’t realize how quick things could change.”





P.O. Box 23699
Federal Way, WA 98093-0699

MSC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency that offers people pathways out of poverty through support and resources in education, employment, housing, energy assistance, food, and clothing. We also provide statewide advocacy for elderly and disabled residents of long-term care facilities.

Learn More: Call 253.838.6810, online at www.mschehelps.org, or social @mschehelps

Help. Hope. Change.

Empowered individuals, thriving communities.



TRUE STORIES ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

Dear Friends,

As the pandemic stretches into year two, MSC continues to provide help, hope, and change to a growing number of our neighbors. I think we all would be hard-pressed to find someone in our circle who has not been impacted in one way or another by this global crisis.

During the first nine months of the pandemic, MSC distributed close to \$4 million in rent assistance to around 700 households. This number continues to grow and we expect to see even more need when the eviction moratorium ends.

During this same time period, we provided an additional \$1.65 million in energy assistance than the prior year.

Our Federal Way Food Bank now operates as a drive-thru model serving almost 600 households weekly, and we serve another 600 households each week through delivery partnerships for those that are home bound.

Our long-term care ombudsman have been on the front

line advocating for residents in facilities to help alleviate the devastating impacts of isolation.

And MSC has continued its journey in our external and internal work to become a more diverse and inclusive organization. We recognize that words are only as good as the actual change that happens. We must foster and build a diverse community and create an environment in which all can thrive.

Throughout this historical time, we have witnessed strength, resilience, and compassion in our community. We are thankful for all we have and hopeful that this journey will bring about the change we need to truly all become empowered individuals in a thriving community.



Best wishes,

Robin R. Corak

Robin R. Corak
Chief Executive Officer

