



HELP. HOPE. CHANGE.

2021 FALL/WINTER NEWSLETTER



MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

COMMUNITY HELPING COMMUNITY



LUNCHEON

Thursday, October 21, 2021

11:30am-1pm

@ the Federal Way PAEC

streaming option available

Register at:

mschelps.org/mschelps2021

Help, Hope, Change Awardees:

Dan Bogart and Dennis Hulse

Keynote: Omari Amali



PRESENTED BY:



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SAVE THE DATE!

MSC Crab Feed & Auction

Saturday, June 4, 2022

Hyatt Regency Southport

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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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A SIGNIFICANT LEGACY

“It was really the lack of access to services,” shares Elizabeth (Liz) Johnson when asked how the Multi-Service Center came to be.

In 1971, Liz was the Lead Head Start teacher in Federal Way and had three young children. Her husband, Preston, was just a year out of law school, having attended on the GI Bill after serving in the Army.

“I did an experiment,” shares Liz. “I went with a Head Start mom and her preschooler by bus to downtown Seattle to access the services she needed. It took us all day to complete the trip and about three hours each way on the bus with a young child.”

The creation of the Multi-Service Center, known then as the South King County Multi-Service Center, was truly about community supporting community. Liz,

along with other local Head Start parents from Federal Way and Kent, Harold Trumbull, Ken Kussman, Scott Shutte, and Bill Slettevold, formed the founding Board of Directors of MSC, and Liz served as board secretary for three years.

Preston was able to use his newly acquired skills as an attorney to help incorporate MSC as a non-profit and file all the proper paperwork. Members of the Federal Way Community Council helped advocate for funding. In the beginning, the board of directors did a lot of the day-to-day work, with the support of many volunteers who helped to provide services, and one staff member.

Multi-Service Center truly was a center where people could easily access multiple services all under one roof. Families throughout South King County could come for help with needs such as food stamps, credit counseling, childcare, medical and dental services, education, unemployment benefits, employment

referrals, and elder counseling. Many of these programs were offered in partnership with other organizations such as King County Public Health that provided an immunization clinic for babies and the Lions Club that provided eye glasses.

As needs and resources changed in the community, the services at MSC also changed. When MSC moved out of its first location at the Stone House and to Mark Twain Elementary in 1975, a food bank was added. Shortly thereafter, MSC started offering more health services and energy assistance. And then, in 1980, MSC had the opportunity to acquire the status of a Community Action Agency, which would bring additional funding to provide services through the Community Services Block Grant, planting the seeds for the tremendous growth that would come in the years to follow.

Alisa, one of Liz and Preston’s children, remembers going to the Stone House

Continued on next page



WHAT WAS THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL?

CLINIC ON WHEELS

Back in November of 1971, Lu Joslin Lester saw an advertisement about volunteers needed for a walk-in clinic for new mothers and babies. The clinic was at MSC, and Lu answered the call. She and another volunteer, Mary Lou Holland, weighed and measured babies, and helped the part-time nurse practitioner from Public Health, Peggy Shepard, provide immunizations and exams to babies and toddlers.

With limited space, Lu's green Gran Terino Station Wagon became their clinic on wheels, storing most of their supplies. "It was great to see the parents smiling and the kids playing," shares Lu. "We were able to help provide prevention through immunizations, but also instruct parents on nutrition and other things."

Lu was also active with the Community Council in Federal Way

and helped advocate for more services in South King County. Eventually, more funding was secured and they were able to start a larger clinic. Lu's work at MSC, and with Peggy, inspired her to develop a career in the Nurse Practitioner field.

"It was great to see the moms get services without worrying about how they were going to travel somewhere," shares Lu. "And, we were able to help them connect to other services. It truly was a collaboration to help those in the community who needed it."

While MSC no longer provides direct medical or dental services, we do still help provide access to these services by partnering and referring to organizations that can help. Over this last year, MSC has joined forces with several partners to offer free pop-up COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

LEGACY CONT.

(MSC's original location on Pacific Highway) and standing outside waiting for her mom. "I learned at a young age that a small group of passionate people can get things done," she shares.

The original five founding board members probably did not imagine that what they started with a budget of \$30,000 in 1971, would grow into an organization serving over 40,000

people a year with a budget of over \$20 million.

"I can't take credit for something that has continued for so many years. It was day-by-day in the beginning, and unclear if we would survive," shares Liz. "But, to know that I did something this important with my life, that Multi-Service Center is still here, that is significant."

Federal Way was unincorporated until 1990, which meant no real elected representation existed for the growing community other than through the King County Council. Local citizens had formed a Community Council to lobby the King County Council to ensure that the unincorporated city got both the resources it needed in the community and to ensure that future development was done in a way that would protect and preserve the area.

Jim Burbidge and Bill Feldt were both members of the Community Council around the time MSC was formed. Bill served as President in 1971, and Jim served as President in 1972. From Jim's recollection, the council consisted of up to two representatives selected from each elementary school service area. Both Bill and Jim both remember how important getting human services locally was to the council. Bill shared that there were many people who were trying to do the right thing for the growing community, and establishing MSC was important to that end.

The council had no legal authority, but could provide advocacy, which they did. Not only did the Community Council help lobby the King County Council for funds to start MSC, they also successfully lobbied for funds to hire a social worker to further develop MSC's programs and services in the mid 1970's. The Community Council was also instrumental in eventually getting the City of Federal Way incorporated, bringing St. Francis hospital to the area, and preserving critical areas from development.



LIFTED UP

"I started using drugs at 11 years old," shares Linda. Linda is now 58 years old with three grown children.

In 2007 and just out of rehab, Linda moved into Titusville in Kent, MSC's housing for women in recovery. Linda lived there for about a year. "It was hard. I had to focus with tunnel vision on my recovery in order to survive," she shares. "Titusville was my stepping stone."

In 2008, Linda met Robin Corak, MSC's current CEO, who at that time was an employment counselor at MSC. "Robin lifted me up. My self-esteem at that point was very low, and she made me feel worthy," shares Linda.

With Robin's help, Linda started volunteering for St. Francis hospital. Eventually this led to employment, which helped Linda to move out of Titusville and into more permanent housing. Throughout the years, Linda has also been able to benefit from MSC's energy assistance program and visiting the food bank.

Linda stayed in touch with Robin, and in 2009, joined the MSC Board of Directors as a client representative. "I can remember the CEO at the time, Dini, giving me rides. And Michael, another board member would drop me off after the meeting and we'd have conversations. All the board members were so welcoming and helped to make sure I was comfortable."

"Being on the board helped me give back after so much was given to me," shares Linda. Without MSC I would still be struggling, they gave me that hope. Everybody needs that pick-me-up once in a while."

"It's amazing to see how MSC has grown, just in the time since I was on the board," she says. "Doing more outreach and engaging with the community."

"I would love to be able to contribute on the board again someday," says Linda. Linda served on the MSC board until 2017 when she needed to focus on finishing her schooling to become certified in medical billing and coding.

FULL TABLE

"My younger brother and I had moved across the country to live with our aunt in Federal Way in the nineties," shares Shannel. "In that year, my aunt's household went from one adult and two children to two adults and five children, surviving on one adult's working-class income."

Shannel remembers her first visit to MSC during the nineties, "One day she wrangled up the five of us kids and we went to the Federal Way food bank. I recall her receiving paper bags with the number of household members written on the outside of the bag, and we slowly went through the line with everyone else, stopping at each station to receive our allotment of different types of food. Even though I was a young teenager, to us as kids it wasn't much different than grocery shopping."

"MSC helped keep food on the table of a suddenly-expanded family, and was especially helpful during the summer months when we couldn't get lunch at school," shares Shannel. "I'm proud to work for MSC today, and see families encountering hard times able to get that same assistance thirty years later."

Shannel joined the MSC staff in 2015 as MSC's Annual Giving Manager and oversees our Hope Builders Club for monthly donors.



ONE OF OUR OWN

“It makes me feel good to do something,” shares Eric. Eric has been volunteering at MSC’s William J. Wood Veteran House (WJW) for the last two years.

After college, Eric joined the U.S. Army. Stationed at Ft. Lewis for most of the time, he was in military intelligence and his last assignment was at University of Washington as an Assistant Professor of Military Science. After ten years, getting married and adding a son to his family, Eric felt it was time to transition careers and entered the technology field in the private sector.

Then, the September 11 attacks happened. Eric felt pulled back and joined the U.S. Army Reserve.

Eric continued to serve in the U.S. Army Reserve for 20 years. Then, one day while lifting weights in his garage, Eric suffered a stroke. He was in the hospital for six weeks and was in intense rehabilitation therapy for a year and a half. In November, it will be five years since his stroke and Eric still sometimes struggles with communication and reading.

No longer able to work, Eric was looking for something meaningful to do with his time and a Veterans Affairs staff member suggested he look into volunteering with MSC at WJW. Now Eric fills his time by helping the veterans and their families at WJW.

“I’ve been through some of the same experiences so we have a connection,” shares Eric. Eric volunteers about 15 hours each week and spends a lot of

that time driving veterans and their families to the food bank or on other excursions. He also staffs the front desk and has worked in the computer lab.

“WJW helps veterans by giving them a chance, a roof over their head, and a lot of opportunities if they want to take advantage of them,” shares Eric.

“Eric is a great asset to us here at WJW. To have someone of his military rank (Colonel) here helping us is an honor and a privilege,” shares Alan Clapper, services coordinator at WJW. “I admire his stability with our veterans and his compassion towards them. Eric is always quick to have a serious conversation or to just joke around like he’s always been here. We are very blessed to have Eric here and he’s become one of our own.”





FIFTY YEARS OF HELP, HOPE, AND CHANGE

1971

MSC opens its doors at the Stone House on Pacific Highway, offering several services under one roof.

MSC opens its first affordable housing property for seniors, adds the PSE Helps program, and partners with other local food banks to establish the South King County Food Bank Coalition.

2002

1973

MSC starts public transportation for the elderly and disabled which was later called Dial-A-Ride, and is now ACCESS.

MSC helps create the Alliance Center in Kent which houses several non-profits providing services to the community.

2004

1979

MSC starts to offer energy assistance through the LIHEAP program.

MSC starts the THRIVE employment program, providing unhoused individuals with training and paid internships.

2007

1980

During the 1980's MSC begins to offer emergency shelter, case management, GED preparation, adult basic education, and English language learning.

MSC begins providing programs directly for youth, including GED programs, job training, and assistance with enrolling in post-secondary programs.

2008

1989

MSC successfully receives the contract to house the Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

MSC partners with United Way to provide summer meals in the Federal Way area.

2013

1990

MSC leases 15 former military houses in Kent for emergency family shelter.

MSC's Positive Outcomes Program launches to work directly with youth either involved or likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

2017

1991

MSC starts a transitional housing program in Kent called Titusville for women in recovery.

MSC opens the William J. Wood Veterans House providing supportive permanent housing to veterans and their families.

2016

1994

MSC makes its first purchase of an affordable housing property with Maple Lane Court and Estates in Kent.

MSC starts assisting households with filing applications for Basic Food Assistance.

2018

1996

MSC starts transitional housing for men in recovery and introduces adult employment programs.

MSC serves over 40,000 individuals annually throughout South King County and beyond with basic needs and support.

2021



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.



CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF HELP, HOPE, & CHANGE

Dear Friends,

We are so thankful to be celebrating fifty years of providing help, hope, and change! In this edition of our newsletter, we share stories throughout the last five decades of those involved in our work. From our founders, to our volunteers and staff today, every single person that has been involved with MSC throughout the years has made an impact on creating a future without poverty for our community.

As the pandemic continues much longer than anyone thought it would, we continue to be amazed and inspired by the support of our community. We also continue to see increasing need in some of our programs providing for basic needs.

Over our last fiscal year, our Federal Way food bank saw an 11% increase in households needing food assistance. Our energy assistance program also saw an 11% increase in households needing assistance than the prior year. In our housing stability programs, which includes rent assistance, we had an 88% increase in households served.

We were able to provide services to these individuals and families because of increased funding opportunities through the CARES Act and donations from community members like you, so thank you!

We are truly a community action agency and our anniversary is not just about celebrating MSC, it's about celebrating you as well. Community is the heart of MSC, involved not only in developing our services, but also delivering them through your donation of both time and treasure.

Thank you for being a caring and supportive community. We couldn't provide help, hope, and change without you!



Best wishes,

Robin R. Corak
Chief Executive Officer

