



MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

HELP. HOPE. CHANGE.

2025 SPRING/SUMMER NEWSLETTER



COMMUNITY HELPING COMMUNITY



SPRING INTO ACTION

DINNER AND AUCTION

Presenting Sponsor


Kidney Care

Saturday, June 7, 2025, 5:30-9pm

Muckleshoot Casino Resort Event Center

Uplift communities by increasing equitable access to advocacy, opportunities and well-being while enjoying fun activities, delicious food, and great company!

Tickets on sale now!!



mschelps.org/sia25tix

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Premier Business Partners are businesses that support MSC with a gift of \$2,500 or more annually.

SAVE THE DATE!


LUNCHEON

OCTOBER 16, 2025

11:30-1PM

FEDERAL WAY PERFORMING
ARTS & EVENTS CENTER

CONTACT US

For services

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To support

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MISSION

MSC uplifts communities by increasing equitable access to advocacy, opportunities, and well being.

VISION

Thriving communities rooted in equity and justice where we all experience joy and belonging.

VALUES

EQUITY
CONNECTION
DIVERSITY

INTEGRITY
BELONGING

HUNGER ON THE RISE

No one should face hunger or the anxiety of not knowing where their next meal will come from. Yet, in King County, food insecurity continues to rise.

At MSC's Federal Way Food Bank, the number of households receiving food assistance has increased by 20%. The impacts of this crisis are also disproportionately felt by King County's BIPOC communities, where 32% of Black adults and 26% of Latino adults experience food insecurity compared to just 7% of white adults. (Source: United Way of King County)

The impacts of food insecurity can be long-lasting. Food insecure individuals are more likely to experience physical and mental health issues, including chronic illness. Food insecurity affects one's ability to attend school, participate in the workforce, and overall well-being.

Seniors are a growing population facing food insecurity as well. Last year, 22% of those receiving food from MSC were 55 years of age or older, an increase of 5% over the last five years. MSC is working to fulfill this growing need by providing easier access to food for seniors through their mobile food banks at senior living facilities. One senior who benefited from this shared, "We are all on fixed incomes now and the food is such a blessing as we all worry about

keeping a roof over our heads as rents can always go up."

And, while food insecurity rises, statewide funding for food banks is decreasing. Funding is not only needed for food, but also to support the staff and facilities needed to distribute this food in the community.

Over the last few years, MSC has seen a decrease of 42% in food bank funding. Additional significant decreases are looming as the State works to reduce its budget.

Feeding our neighbors is something we can all get behind. You may be asking yourself what you can do to help? Here are some ideas:

- Advocate for funding for food banks and food distribution in the state of Washington with your legislative representatives and other funding organizations.
- Volunteer at your local food bank or host a food drive.
- Support your local food bank with monetary gifts. Join MSC's #hungersquad where with as little as \$5 a month, you can help fight food insecurity or sign up for a sponsorship or donor tree gift for our new Food Bank at Redondo Heights.

No family, child, or individual should be without a meal each day. Working together, we can make sure that every member of our community has food on their table.



REDONDO HEIGHTS

MSC celebrated the grand opening of Redondo Heights in February!

Redondo Heights brings 334 units of affordable housing to the North Federal Way area. This community offers workforce housing and is targeted primarily to individuals and households who are working but simply do not have enough income to afford housing in the area. More information about living at Redondo Heights can be found at redondoheightscollection.com.

A cornerstone of this new community is an onsite Food Bank and the ability to provide services and support to residents and the nearby community in navigating resources to help them meet their individual goals.

The Food Bank offers market style shopping for customers and features an adjoining café where guests can grab a hot cup of coffee or a ready to go meal to take with them or enjoy onsite. Stay tuned for information on the opening of the Food Bank in the coming months!

Want to support the Food Bank at Redondo Heights?

Sponsorship opportunities and donor recognition is available! Scan the QR code or visit mschelps.org/supportredondo to learn more.

Questions? Please contact Sarah McNiesh at (253) 681-6151 or sarahm@mschelps.org.

**JOIN THE #HUNGERSQUAD
WITH A MONTHLY GIFT AT
MSCHELPS.ORG/HS**





A PLACE TO PLAY AND SLEEP

“I was afraid, but I didn’t want Andreas to feel fear,” shares Loma.

Loma lost her job at a private school when the COVID pandemic began. Soon after she found herself unable to pay her rent. “I am not one to not pay my bills. I knew I wouldn’t be able to pay my rent so I notified my landlord that I would be moving out.” At that time, Loma was not aware of protections put in place to keep people housed during the pandemic.

Loma and her great-grandson Andreas, who was two at the time, spent the next year living in their car. “I would park the car in hidden spots because I knew I was at risk of my car getting repossessed. After about a year of living in my car, it happened. My car was repossessed, and Andreas and I were out on the curb.”

They spent the next year moving around to different spots, trying to find safe places to sleep at night and sometimes riding busses just to stay warm. “I was afraid, but I didn’t want Andreas to feel fear. I didn’t want him to be traumatized. I felt so bad this was happening to him. I tried to make it sound as fun as possible, talking

about how we were having a great time camping.”

Loma, who is 80 years old, has had custody of Andreas, who is now five years old, since the day he was born. She was at the hospital during his birth and knew that her granddaughter who struggled with addiction would be unable to care for him. Andreas calls Loma mom.

“Even through all this, he has been the most sweet and considerate boy,” shares Loma. “One time he had a bag of potato chips and even though he was very hungry, he gave them to another boy who was also hungry. He also will hand bottles of water to people he thinks are thirsty.”

It was difficult for Loma to navigate and find potential resources. “We weren’t victims of domestic violence, I’m not addicted, and I’m not pregnant. I was finding I didn’t qualify for anything,” she shares. Eventually, she got connected to some organizations that were able to provide support through hotel/motel vouchers and they spent the next year bouncing between motels and “camping.”

These organizations also helped connect her to MSC, where she was

able to complete her assessment for Coordinated Entry for All (CEA). CEA is the main point of entry for the vast majority of unhoused individuals and families seeking to find permanent, stable housing. It does not provide immediate housing, however, and wait times can be months or years.

During this wait time, MSC staff diligently watched and waited for potential placements for Loma and Andreas while providing support and check-ins to help Loma navigate potential resources for their other needs. Finally, a spot opened up and MSC staff advocated for Loma and Andreas to be selected.

Last November, Loma and Andreas moved into their new home. MSC was able to help connect them to resources for furniture and well as help with some of their move-in costs. Now retired and living on a fixed income, Loma’s focus is to maintain their stability and stay healthy so she and Andreas can do things together they enjoy like roller skating!

“We are stable,” says Loma. “I have a place to cook and make meals that Andreas enjoys. We have a place for him to play, a place to sleep, and a place for him to be warm.”

SEEING MY OWN DESTINY

“It is a hands-on experience. I get to see the results of my work. The outcome may not always be what is desired, but I can see the impact you can have for someone just by being there for them,” shares Marilyn.

“It is a hands-on experience. I get to see the results of my work. The outcome may not always be what is desired, but I can see the impact you can have for someone just by being there for them,” shares Marilyn.

Marilyn has been volunteering with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) for three and a half years. She learned about the program when she was participating in MSC’s online auction fundraiser during COVID.

Marilyn had retired from a career as a middle school teacher in 2019, right before the start of the COVID pandemic. When she saw the opportunity with LTCOP it made her think about her family members’ experience in facilities, “Some of it was phenomenal, and some was not,” she shares.

With Marilyn’s background in education, she saw clearly how many underserved groups there are in our population, seniors being one of these groups. “Seniors are often dismissed and forgotten, I wanted to volunteer doing something that was needed but not maybe the most popular volunteer opportunity like working with kids.”

As a LTCOP volunteer, Marilyn spends about four hours a week visiting the two facilities she is assigned to including attending resident council meetings and town halls, as well as monitoring and responding to complaints at more than 100 adult family homes in her zip code.

She visits the two larger facilities about twice a month each. Her consistent presence over the last several years has helped her to build trusting relationships with both the residents and the staff, making residents more likely to come to her with concerns and improving communications and resolution with staff.

“The variety is wonderful. There is a continuum of needs that people need help advocating for and I get to meet people from different backgrounds and

hear their life stories.”

Marilyn’s goal is to get residents to advocate for themselves first. If they are fearful or not in a place to do so, or have tried and haven’t gotten anywhere, Marilyn can step in and advocate for them with their permission. When she does this, she is advocating for what they want, not what she feels would be best for them.

“Our goal is to allow residents to live life with as much dignity as possible and with as much similarity as if they were living in their own home,” says Marilyn, “Their decisions should be respected. If they want to eat breakfast at 10am instead of 7am they should be able to do so.”

“It is like seeing my own destiny. I am happy I am not in a long-term care facility, but if I have to be, I hope there is someone to advocate for me.”

April is volunteer appreciation month and Marilyn is one of the close to 600 volunteers that help MSC directly serve the community through programs like LTCOP and our food bank. We truly appreciate our volunteers and couldn’t do it without you!





MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

1200 S. 336th St.
Federal Way, WA 98003

MSC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency that uplifts communities through support and resources in education, employment, housing, energy assistance, and food. 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 on social media @mschehelps

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Thriving communities rooted in equity and justice
where we all experience joy and belonging.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends,

The start of 2025 has brought incredible amounts of uncertainty in our community, in our federal and state funding streams, as well as for our clients living in poverty.

Where do we see our future and how do we navigate such uncertain times?

We continue to center ourselves in what we know to be true. MSC has been around nearly 55 years serving the community based on the needs of those we serve. Every three years, we solicit feedback through surveys of partners, funders, community members, and focus groups to determine how the needs are shifting and where we put our focus for the best interest of those we serve.

We will keep serving our community – keep centering folks we serve.

Our service delivery might look different, and could be reduced as funding is targeted federally and in

the state budget deficit. However, with our donors, volunteers, partners, foundations, and folks like you contributing to our work, we can keep meeting the needs.

We see ourselves continuing to center our mission, vision, and values. And, hearing from our community to shape our future in the best interest of those we serve.

Thank you for your continued support in our work. It means we can continue to meet the changing needs of our community and deliver excellent client service with our programming.

In community,

Kirsten York
CEO

