

# Community Connections

ORCAS COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024

## Pea Patch Project *A Collaborative Campus*

Together, we're creating a dynamic space for our island community including OPAL affordable housing and permanent homes for the Orcas Community Resource Center & the Orcas Island Food Bank.

The Pea Patch Steering Committee recently hosted a series workshops to gather project design input from community partners, adjoining neighbors, people with lived experience, and the community as a whole.

Suzanne Olson has rejoined the OPAL team as Pea Patch Project Lead to foster inclusive community engagement. Tracey Smith, as Project Coordinator for the Food Bank and the Resource Center, will work with Jeanne Beck, OPAL's long-time Construction Project Manager, on site planning and construction components.

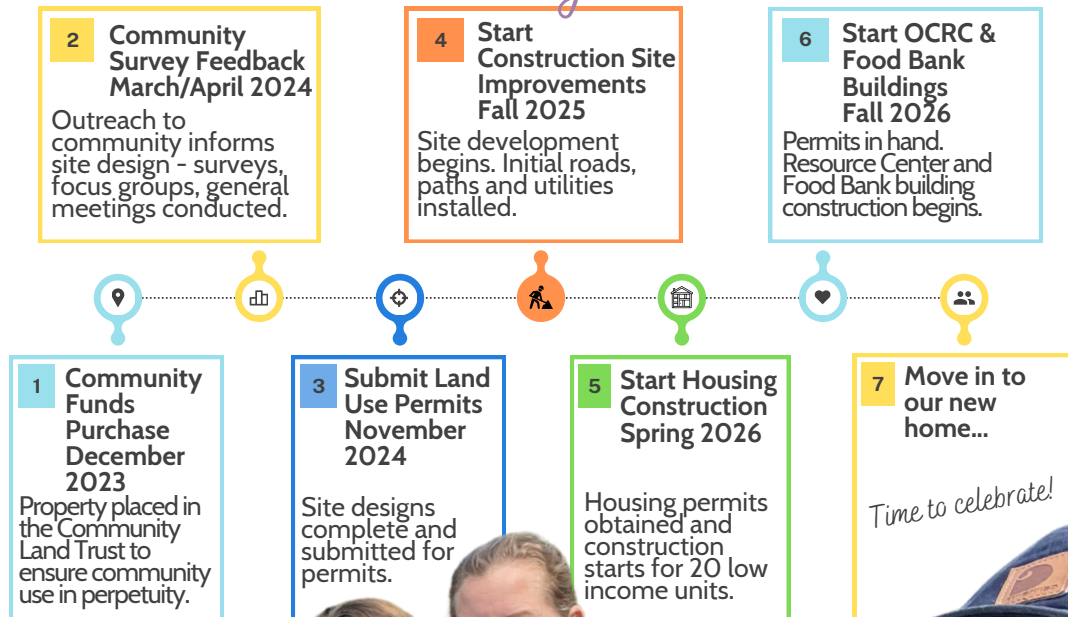
We are grateful to the Orcas Island Community Foundation, North Sound Accountable Community of Health (ACH) & individual donors for helping move us forward!



Left: Disability advocate, Grace Grantham, attended one of our design workshops to share her expertise. Right: Steering Committee member Lisa Steckley explains site layout options.



## Pea Patch Project Timeline



Resource Center staff members take a walking tour of the future building site!

# Orcas Money Smart Program

## *A Proactive Approach to Financial Wellness*



2024 OMS Mentors: Nick Johns, Bonnie Burg & Brett Lensing

The Resource Center is excited to share that with help from OICF GiveOrcas campaign funding, our Orcas Money Smart (OMS) financial literacy program has completed its second round of classes!

Throughout this 9 month program, participants collaborate with volunteer mentors to grow their understanding of personal finance topics such as budgeting, savings, banking, housing decisions, debt, credit, and more.

Previous participants shared that they were motivated to join OMS for personal growth and community

involvement. They saw the program as an opportunity to learn how to deal with financial challenges and better provide for their families.

*"Thank you SO much for hosting this opportunity for our island community!"*

*-Program graduate*

100% of participants from our last group reported enhanced financial knowledge, improved ability to manage their finances, and high satisfaction with the program's mentorship and curriculum.

*"Money skills have positive ripple effects for our local economy. Our program participants will be able to share their knowledge and success with family, friends, & fellows."*

*-Nick Johns, OMS Mentor*

OMS students accomplished many goals including paying off taxes, obtaining health insurance, determining credit-enhancing strategies, and building an emergency fund.

We are actively seeking participants and mentors for the start of our next round in September. If you're interested in being a part of Orcas Money Smart, please contact us!

Take an in-depth look at the Resource Center



Watch our video now!

## *Heartfelt Recognition*

As the Resource Center reflects on our journey of growth and impact, there are individuals whose unwavering dedication and leadership stand out as pillars of strength. Among them, Hugh Grant has been a guiding force for the past 9 years, leaving an indelible mark on our organization's success.

When Hugh first joined our board, he brought a wealth of experience and a passion for our mission that has inspired us all. Throughout his tenure, Hugh has served on our programs committee while demonstrating exemplary leadership, integrity, and compassion.



Departing OCRC Board Vice Chair  
Hugh Grant

Hugh's collaborative spirit, humility, and genuine concern for others have earned him the respect and appreciation of both colleagues and staff members. Though Hugh is leaving his role on our board, his legacy of service and dedication will continue to inspire us for years to come.

We are immensely grateful for the time, energy, and expertise he has generously shared with us, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

Please join us in expressing our heartfelt thanks to Hugh for 9 incredible years of service, leadership, and friendship.



## Trauma Informed Care Mental Health Matters

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is guided by the knowledge that traumatic experiences can profoundly alter an individual's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. Providing trauma informed care is beneficial to anyone who has experienced life-threatening or life-altering experiences.

The journey to deepen our understanding of the effects of trauma guides us to create a sense of safety, recognize everyone's unique strengths, and facilitate healing. This work holds significance as it prevents re-traumatization and strengthens our ability to provide exceptional care and support.

The Resource Center's TIC Implementation Team has recently taken three exciting steps towards integrating trauma informed principles to better serve our community.

First, staff, board, and committee members participated in a workshop and an agency self assessment to learn about the impact trauma can have on health and life success.

There is hope.



**988** SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE



*"Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start."*

*-Neido Qubein*

Next, we identified areas of achievement and opportunities for growth including staff development, fostering a safe environment, empowering clients to participate in shaping our programming, and community engagement.

Lastly, we've prioritized the integration of trauma informed principles in planning our new Pea Patch facility. Our intent is to create spaces that provide a sense of safety, respect, community, and dignity. Approaching this work through a trauma-informed lens shapes our values and standards of operations.

Our commitment is enhanced through a generous grant awarded by North Sound ACH. We're grateful for this opportunity to cultivate a more trauma-aware environment at the Resource Center.

## Vital Services Provider of the Year!

At this year's Orcas Island Chamber of Commerce annual meeting, the Orcas Community Resource Center was selected as the Vital Services Provider of the Year - recognizing a member that goes above and beyond in service to the community by providing a necessary service otherwise unavailable to islanders, addressing an emergent need in the community, or uniquely impacting the community in a positive way.

Carey Eskridge, Executive Director of the Orcas Island Chamber of Commerce, has this to say about his recent tour of the Resource Center.

*"The Resource Center was one of the very first member non-profit organizations I visited. Their dedication was obvious as soon as I walked through the door. The positive impact of their passion for service to the community was immediately clear."*

*The importance of the Resource Center's mission cannot be overstated. Their work provides a critical service to community members across the island."*



Carey Eskridge and Erin O'Dell



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## Resource Center Youth Events Spark Connection *Día de Los Niños & Kindergarten Transition*



Above: kids patiently wait for Bilingual Community Health Worker, Tony Andrade, to raise the piñata.  
 Below: teachers guide guests through activities.

Working to bring cultural events to the community, our LatinX Advisory Group, a branch of our Community Health Worker services funded by North Sound ACH, organized a festive Día de Los Niños celebration held at The Funhouse Commons. Over 150 kids participated in activities such as sack races, a bouncy house and piñatas.

Delicious dinner plates were provided by Johanna's Catering for both Día de Los Niños and Kindergarten Transition.

Preparing little learners for big adventures! In partnership with ECEAP and a generous local donor, the Resource Center joyfully hosted Kindergarten Transition, honoring children as they prepare to embark on their educational journey.

Surrounded by familiar faces and new friends, parents and upcoming kindergarteners attended the special evening. Preschool and kindergarten teachers led learning activities focused on reading, math, art, writing, and motor skills inspiring families to practice educational concepts at home.



*"Thanks for a wonderful event! My timid daughter came home buzzing with excitement for kindergarten in the fall."*

-Anika Shaw, parent

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