



# Community Connections

ORCAS COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024



Left to Right: Dr. Jessica Dubek, DentALL Founder, Josh Culp, LSWAA, Orcas Community Resource Center Health & Family Services Specialist



New Dental Clinic space at 1286 Mt. Baker Rd. - Airport Center

## Orcas Community Dental Clinic *Bridging the Gap to Vital Care*

For countless islanders, tooth pain with little hope for relief has been a harsh reality. In May, a transformative service opened its doors: the Orcas Island Community Dental Clinic, created through collaboration between the Orcas Community Resource Center, Orcas Health Care District, Orcas Island Community Foundation, San Juan County and the DentALL practice founded by Dr. Jessica Dubeck. This clinic is more than a place for dental care—it's a lifeline, designed to provide ongoing support for those who need it most.

The Resource Center proudly serves as the 'front door' to the clinic, guiding islanders through every step of the process. Our services include:

- Assisting patients with applications
- Coordinating appointments
- Providing essential dental hygiene supplies
- Offering on-site support during clinic days
- Helping patients navigate off-island dental services for more complex treatments

The clinic's impact is profound: over 110 patients served and a lengthy waiting list, demonstrating Orcas' urgent need for this service. This vital community resource prevents serious medical issues and provides accessible dental care to Medicaid recipients and uninsured individuals.

Establishment has been a true community effort. Volunteer coordinator Marsha Waunch has provided invaluable support, while Orcas Island Fire and Rescue generously offered temporary hosting. The Resource Center team helped move equipment before and after each clinic session. In October, the clinic found its permanent home at the Airport Center, a significant step that enhances its ability to provide consistent, high-quality care to our neighbors.

This clinic embodies the spirit of Orcas Island—neighbors supporting neighbors, organizations uniting to create a healthier future.

*"Dr. Dubek and her team are fantastic! Whoever is funding this clinic is baking bread in heaven. Thank you to the Resource Center for being such an important part."*  
-Jim, Dental Clinic Participant



A bounty of festive pumpkins shared  
by Slanted Apple Farm!

# Pea Patch Community Campus

## *A Dream Taking Root*

Picture a place where the heart of our island community beats stronger than ever. That vision is blossoming into reality with the completion of the Pea Patch Community Campus site design!

Key elements of the property include:

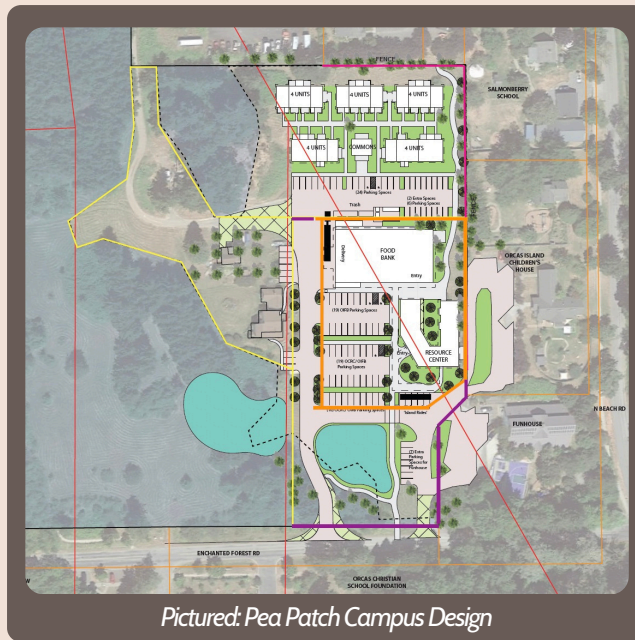
- A bustling Resource Center and Food Bank in permanent homes
- 20 units of affordable housing with on-site supportive services
- Lush green spaces and winding pathways, inviting nature into our shared sanctuary
- A potential cutting-edge solar microgrid, powering our sustainable future

Thanks to the support of islanders and the Orcas Island Community Foundation, we're transforming 11 acres into a canvas of compassion. This project, crafted through the collaboration of OPAL Community Land Trust, the Orcas Community Resource Center, and the Orcas Food Bank, will redefine community care.

The magic is in the details: shared spaces fostering connection, expanded facilities amplifying our impact, and improved designs ensuring every islander feels welcomed.



Your voices are shaping this dream, and your support will help it flourish. We're filled with gratitude for each of you who believe in cultivating a more resilient, vibrant Orcas Island. The seeds of change have been planted – watch them grow with us!



*Pictured: Pea Patch Campus Design*

*"I'm inspired by the thoughtful, stepwise approach you've taken. Addressing basic needs like food and housing in a central location has created the beginnings of a true community care campus.*

*This vision shows such a comprehensive plan. It's inspiring to see it all coming together."*

*-Laurie Gallo, Orcas Resident*

## *A Year of VISTA Impact*

Imagine a year of transformation, growth, and newfound strength for our community. That's exactly what the Resource Center has experienced, thanks to the VISTA program and our dynamic first-ever VISTA member, Sophie Timin.

When Sophie joined our team in January, she arrived with a passion for quantitative and qualitative data. Coupled with her analytical mind and a heart that beats in sync with our mission, Sophie has been a transformative force!

She's been the architect of our new volunteer program, a champion of Trauma Informed Care, and the data wizard we never knew we needed.

Sophie has also been an asset to our Orcas Money Smart financial literacy program, by developing ways to help empower our community members with crucial financial skills.

As Sophie's VISTA year draws to a close, we're not just reflecting on the past—we're looking ahead with excitement. The contributions she's made have grown into a strong foundation for our future success.

We're profoundly grateful for the VISTA program and for Sophie's incredible contributions. Here's to a meaningful year of VISTA impact!



*Sophie Timin, VISTA member*



# Building a Stable Community

## Healing, Empowering & Strengthening Lives



Pictured: "Building a Stable Community" event guests engaged in the video presentation

In October, the Orcas Community Resource Center hosted "Building a Stable Community," at the Orcas Island Public Library. This gathering united community members, local leaders, and mental health experts to discuss potential partnerships, systemic barriers to stability, and ways to enhance community resilience. The event also highlighted the Resource Center's essential services and future plans.

Ingrid Mattson, Director of the Orcas Island Library, welcomed attendees, followed by Erin O'Dell, Executive Director of the Resource Center. Erin addressed how systemic shortcomings can destabilize individuals and families, leading to housing, food, and healthcare insecurities. She described the Resource Center as a crucial first point of contact for islanders seeking support.

Erin highlighted the significant gap between the demand for mental health services on Orcas and the availability of providers, especially for psychiatric care. She also emphasized the crucial partnerships with Compass Health and San Juan County in addressing these challenges.

Psychotherapists Hugh Grant and Suzette Lamb shared insights on how mental health challenges and poverty create barriers to stability, underscoring the need for trauma-informed, holistic care that addresses the whole person.

Thank you from our entire Resource Center team to those who joined us at the event. If you have ideas for future topics you'd like us to explore, please reach out to let us know!

*"It takes a collective effort to build a strong and healthy community. It was powerful to hear about the Resource Center's holistic approach to meeting the unmet basic needs of islanders and strategies to increase access to mental health resources."*

*-Lindsay Jennings, OICF Director*



### An Island Family's Journey

A local family found themselves facing unexpected hardships after a painful separation. The newly single parent struggled to balance the needs of young children with the pressures of maintaining stable employment and housing. Emotional strain and mounting bills quickly became overwhelming.

Turning to the Resource Center for support, they secured temporary rental assistance to keep a roof over their heads, received financial planning guidance, and connected with mental health counseling to help process trauma. Medical support helped them maintain physical health, and utility assistance provided relief as they worked to regain their footing. Hope and stability are being restored, one step at a time.

Though the journey is ongoing, the family's resilience shines through. They continue moving forward, knowing they're not alone. This story serves as a powerful reminder of how community support makes a profound difference in times of crisis.

Take an in-depth look at the Resource Center



Watch our video now!



Orcas Community Resource Center  
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374 North Beach Road  
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## Commitment to Diversity & Inclusivity

### *Bilingual Community Healthworker Program*



*Pictured: Dia De Los Niños volunteers*

The Resource Center's Bilingual Community Health Worker (CHW) Program plays a transformative role in connecting Spanish-speaking residents with essential health and social services. This trusting relationship allows CHWs to bridge gaps in service, facilitate access, and advocate for high-quality, culturally competent care. The program is especially impactful within the Latinx community, which comprises 16.5% of islanders we serve—a figure that has grown significantly from last year.

CHWs empower community members to make informed, healthy choices through outreach, informal counseling, social support, and advocacy.

The program's aim is both immediate and long-term: improving individual health outcomes through direct assistance, while fostering self-sufficiency and greater health knowledge within the community. CHWs model healthy practices and serve as non-judgmental, confidential advocates, linking diverse populations to vital resources.

They actively engage in strategic projects that address health disparities. Recent wellness initiatives include dental and mammogram clinics, blood pressure monitoring, and emergency preparedness sessions—all designed to meet the community's needs.

The Bilingual Community Health Worker Program embodies the power of cultural and linguistic diversity, enriching the island's healthcare landscape. By offering services in Spanish and fostering understanding between diverse populations, the Resource Center is building a more inclusive, connected, and compassionate community where every resident feels supported. This commitment to diversity strengthens the social fabric of Orcas Island.

**HELP  
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## Contact Us!



360-376-3184



[info@orcascrc.org](mailto:info@orcascrc.org)



[orcascrc.org](http://orcascrc.org)



374 North Beach Road



PO Box 931  
Eastsound, WA 98245