

Community Connections

ORCAS COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025

Introducing: Orcas Talks Money *New Stand-Alone Financial Literacy Classes!*

The Orcas Community Resource Center is excited to launch **Orcas Talks Money**—a new series of focused financial education workshops designed to meet islanders where they are with practical, real-world tools. Attend one, or attend them all!

Different from our longer Orcas Money Smart program, these stand-alone classes offer one-time dives into single topics to help you take meaningful steps toward financial wellness.

Upcoming class topics include:

- Credit Reports & Scores – Learn how to improve your credit score and understand your report.
- Managing Debt & Credit Cards – Take control of debt with strategies for repayment and use.
- Making Housing Decisions – Explore approaches to finding stable, affordable housing.
- Growing Assets for Your Future – Discover how to build wealth through growth and planning.
- Spending and Savings – Design a realistic budget that supports your goals and builds lasting savings.

These workshops reflect the spirit of our island—neighbors empowering neighbors, and community coming together to create a healthier, more resilient future. *Classes begin mid-August—stay tuned for dates!*

In addition to classes, the Resource Center offers free and confidential **one-on-one financial counseling**. Islanders can work to build personalized plans, track progress, and stay accountable to goals like reducing debt or saving for emergencies.

This fall, we're launching the next round of **Orcas Money Smart**, our comprehensive 7-month flagship financial literacy program. With support from dedicated volunteer mentors, participants learn budgeting, banking, housing, credit, disaster prep, and more. Each participant is paired with a mentor for individualized guidance to complete SMART goals and build lasting financial confidence.

"I loved learning about credit scores, budgeting, and what to prioritize when looking to buy a house. All of the information was given in a very easy way to understand and the facilitators were excellent."

—Anonymous, Orcas Money Smart Participant

No matter where you are on your financial journey, the Resource Center is here to support you. Together, we're building a stronger, more financially empowered Orcas Island.

Athletic Assistance Program *Helping Student-Athletes Stay in the Game*

Thanks to a strong partnership between the Resource Center and the Orcas Island Booster Club, the Athletic Assistance Fund ensures no student-athlete is sidelined due to financial barriers. For families juggling rising expenses, it's a game-changer!

During the 24-25 school year, the fund made a difference for over 30

students by covering the costs of registration fees and essential equipment such as shin guards, cleats or baseball gloves.

The Resource Center accepts program applications year-round. If you know a student who could benefit or want to support the fund, please contact the Resource Center or the Booster Club.



2024 OIHS Boys' 4x100 Relay State Champions!

Community Lunch

A Place to Belong

Every week, the Orcas Community Resource Center's Community Lunch offers more than just a meal—it's a moment of connection. For some islanders, it may be the only hot meal they enjoy that week. For others, it may be their only opportunity to experience the warmth of shared conversation around a table.

Thanks to the care, time, and dedication of our incredible volunteers—and the steady leadership of Hilary Cauty, our Community Lunch lead—this weekly gathering has blossomed into a welcoming space where neighbors share food, stories, and support. Hilary's thoughtful coordination ensures not only delicious food, but also a culture of dignity and hospitality that makes this program so special.

Volunteers often share how much the experience means to them: the joy of seeing someone smile, the comfort of meaningful conversations, the feeling of truly making a difference. From preparing hearty meals to greeting guests with warmth and kindness, every act of service elevates meal time—for those who come to eat and those who come to serve.



Some of our fabulous Community Lunch volunteers

Offering nourishment for both body and spirit, Community Lunch creates space for everyone—regardless of background or circumstance—to feel seen, included, and supported.

Serving weekly, Tuesdays 12-1:30pm, downstairs at the Orcas Island Community Church, doors are open to all community members. Come one, come all! If you'd like to be a part of the team or support this program, please email communitylunch@orcascrc.org.

Healing Within Reach!

Healing healthcare can ease stress, relieve pain, and support overall well-being—and now it's more accessible than ever. Through the Community Health Initiative (CHI), Healing Arts Center practitioners offer sliding-scale services (\$15–\$35) for eligible island residents experiencing financial or personal challenges.

Reduced-rate services include massage, acupuncture, psychotherapy, naturopathy, and more. Limited vouchers are available, and income verification is required.

Take a step toward healing—CHI is here to help!

Scan the QR code to apply or stop by the Resource Center to fill out an intake form and explore practitioner profiles in our front desk binder.



Champions of Change

Thank You for Standing With Us!

We extend our deepest gratitude to the organizations who have generously supported our work this year—whether through grants, partnerships, or other meaningful contributions. Thank you for believing in our mission and helping us make a meaningful impact.

2024-2025 PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS



Kindergarten Transition

Celebrating Young Learners



A young learner gets a helping hand at an interactive activity station.

Continuing a beloved tradition, the Orcas Community Resource Center once again joyfully hosted Orcas Island's annual Kindergarten Transition event in May—celebrating children as they prepare to embark on their educational journeys.

All kindergarten-aged children were invited to a lively and welcoming evening filled with learning, laughter, and community spirit.

Surrounded by familiar faces and new friends, over 30 families participated in a series of hands-on learning stations focused on reading, math, art, writing, and fine & gross motor skills. Preschool and kindergarten teachers led engaging activities offering families fun and practical ways to support skill-building at home.

The memorable evening took place at the Parish Hall and Labyrinth. Soon-to-be kindergarteners were greeted by the Orcas Island Library, offering the exciting opportunity to sign up for their very first library cards.

Children left with big smiles, backpacks brimming with school supplies for summer learning, and a Darvill's Bookstore gift certificate to help build their personal libraries.

A delicious taco dinner, prepared by Johanna's Salvadorian Catering, added to the festivities giving families a chance to relax and connect.

This no-cost event is made possible each year thanks to support of the Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program, the Resource Center, and a generous local donor.

*"Our son is starting kindergarten this fall.
The transition event was such a great way to celebrate
this moment—seeing all the families, preschool teachers, and
kindergarten staff in one place was really special.
And the dinner—a total win for busy parents!
Thanks for making us feel so supported as we start this next chapter."
-Tobin Rotchford, a happy parent*

YEEHAW for a Cause!



Mark your calendars for the 3rd Annual Hoedown at the Hangar, hosted by Slanted Apple Farm on September 6th. Gates open at 2, music until 10!

This upbeat community event features live music, dancing, and family-friendly fun—all in support of four island organizations: Orcas Community Resource Center, Orcas Island Children's House, Sail Orcas, and Orcas Wrestling.

Come for the music, stay for the mission—every ticket helps strengthen programs that support local families, youth, and community wellness.

"Friends & neighbors unite for a day of music, celebrating our island and supporting the incredible organizations that uplift it."

-Jennifer Walsh, Slanted Apple Farm



Don't miss this chance to kick up your boots and make a difference! Tickets are on sale—scan the QR code to buy now!

Watch our video



and see how your donations make a difference!



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Health & Wellness Fair

Bringing Community Vision to Life



Rick Doty working some massage magic

In April, the Resource Center courtyard and parking lot buzzed with energy. Over forty islanders came together for a vibrant Health & Wellness Fair—an event sparked by the ideas and leadership of our Health Focus Group (HFG).

Formed as part of the Resource Center's commitment to community-led programming, the HFG is made up of residents with lived experience in local health systems. They saw a need to connect neighbors with services in a warm, welcoming way—and made it happen.

"We always talk about the importance of coordinating health services across our island. This event saw that coordination come to life in the most meaningful way!"

-Patricia Benton, Resource Center Board Chair

The fair featured several partner booths: SJC Health & Community Services, Lions Club, Senior Center, Food Bank, and others. Attendees received blood pressure checks from Dr. Shinstrom, massages by Rick Doty & Barb Von Gunten, and a taste of community-crafted fire cider.

Everyone left with something—fresh fruit, children's books, reusable bags, and valuable wellness resources. Most importantly, they felt seen, supported, and connected.

The Resource Center extends heartfelt thanks to staff members Kyra Dyer and Josh Culp, and to HFG members Barb Garrett, Christianne Sinoo, Zanetha Matisse, Karen Johnston, Jacques Olivier, and Be Aye. Their dedication shows the power of local voices creating solutions.

This is just one of several initiatives led by the Resource Center's focus groups. Stay tuned for more from our housing, financial literacy, and Spanish-language cohorts.

**HELP
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Contact Us!



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