

Experience *in* Action!

King County RSVP's news for people 55 & older

Volume 33 | Number 2 | Fall 2019



The joy of teaching ... 'The lightbulb of understanding'

By Peter Langmaid

Cooking Matters is a Solid Ground Community Food Education program providing 6-week class series on healthy cooking skills, nutrition education, and food budgeting for people living on low incomes. With multiple host sites, Cooking Matters effectively brings the necessary training to interested volunteers.

Each class is planned and supported by three trained volunteers – a cooking facilitator, a nutritionist, and an assistant. Before each class, the teacher sends an email to their team describing what will happen. Each class has a theme (e.g.,

meats and fats, dairy, vegetables), and together, volunteers and students prepare a meal, develop cooking skills, and learn about nutrition in the process. Classes are designed to be fun, interactive, and informative. Hygiene is stressed throughout.

As of this writing, Arlene Hing-Loh is in the midst of her first assignment as a Class Assistant, and she's loving it! Her chores include setup, helping participants (e.g., safe chopping techniques), and cleanup. For Arlene, the classes get better and better as she gets to know both her teammates and the participants.



Arlene Hing-Loh on her first day assisting a Cooking Matters class at Martin Court (photo courtesy of Arlene Hing-Loh)

Solid Ground
RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program)
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Seattle, WA 98103-6708

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Born in Guyana, Arlene and her family moved to the US for school when she was 16. She earned an undergraduate degree to be a medical lab tech and a Master's degree in Microbiology.

Family is important to Arlene, and family is what brought Arlene and her family to the Seattle area. She has one sister, three brothers, and their families in the area – and though they're all busy, they find time to get together for special occasions, like Thanksgiving.

Married with two children (girls), Arlene inaccurately describes herself as a "stay-at-home mom." She didn't exactly stay at home while her kids were in school, though. She got involved with the school system as a tutor and later as a teacher's assistant (TA). She "loves" teaching and tutoring, especially kids, and her reward is the thrill of watching the lightbulb of understanding shine on the faces

of students she tutors. She calls it "watching someone learn" in real time. Arlene tutored reading and math at the elementary level and worked as a music TA at the middle school level. Arlene loves music and enjoys playing guitar, piano, and ukulele, but is "too shy" to perform.

Arlene loves to cook (especially curry dishes), hikes in the summer, cross country skis in the winter, maintains a flower and vegetable garden, and reads, mainly nonfiction (she last read Michele Obama's book *Becoming*, which she loved).

Motivated by a strong sense of community participation, Arlene also feels great personal joy when she makes people she's working with happy and successful, and she's grateful for the opportunity to do so.

For more info on volunteering with Cooking Matters, please contact Megan Wildhood at meganw@solid-ground.org.

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Fall brings a fresh start

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Speaking Directly
by Megan Wildhood, RSVP Coordinator

Introducing the new
Volunteer Services team

While Jen and Maya have been with Solid Ground for a number of years now, Lily and Megan started this year. This means that half our team is new, so we wanted to introduce ourselves to you and give you some background on the people who make up Solid Ground's Volunteer Services Team.

Maya Hemachandra,
Resource Development
Director

Maya has been with Solid Ground for over three years. She came to us from United Way of Snohomish County, where she oversaw both Resource Development and the County's Volunteer Center. She is excited to look at all the ways we engage members of our community to solve poverty together.

What brought you to Solid Ground?

In my previous role, we were addressing poverty at the 30,000-foot level. It felt good to be part of big conceptual discussions, but it was often hard to see the actual impact we were making. Being at Solid Ground is amazing because I can see the results of our work every single day. I love that my job supports meeting basic needs while we are spreading change by advocating for policy change across the state!

What are you excited about for the coming year?

There are major demographic shifts happening within King County right now. Our team is looking at how we can do a better job engaging recent retirees that are making up a growing portion of our community.

What's one strength of our team?

This team has great energy and is willing to learn and try new things. I think that's a recipe for success!

How do you enjoy Seattle's sun?

I've really gotten into kayaking this summer – rain or shine. Most weekends you can find me on the slough!

Jen Gahagan, Volunteer
Services Manager

Jen has worked with RSVP and Solid Ground in various capacities for 14 years.

What brought you to Solid Ground?

Over 15 years ago, I started as a Solid Ground VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) with the goal to make an impact toward solving poverty. VISTA is a sister National Service program to RSVP. Both programs fall under the umbrella of the Corporation for National and Community Service, engaging volunteers in meeting critical community needs. I enjoyed working with the passionate Solid Ground and RSVP volunteers so much that I decided to stay.

What are you excited about in the coming year?

I am so excited to be working with Maya, Megan, and Lily over the next year to engage RSVP ambassadors and volunteers in meeting critical community needs. There are so many exciting volunteer opportunities to share. If you have not been to one of our recruitment events yet and you are thinking about more ways to get involved, please join us and meet the team! (See pp. 3 & 6 for upcoming events.)

What's one strength of our team?

It is an honor to be a part of such an amazing team that is passionate about engaging volunteers and supporting their work in the community.

How do you enjoy Seattle's sun?

I enjoy walking to work every day and taking longer walks on the weekends. It is a great way to get my exercise, soak up vitamin D, and even catch up with a friend!

Lily King, Solid Ground
Volunteer Coordinator

Lily joined the team in March 2019. For over 14 years, Lily has been an active and committed employee or volunteer at both local, national, and international nonprofit, arts, political, and social service organizations such as the Bellevue



The Volunteer Services team (l to r): Maya, Megan, Jen, Lily (photo by Liz Reed Hawk)

Arts Museum, Seattle University and Pike Market Food Bank. Lily recently earned her Master in Art Leadership from Seattle University where she focused on volunteer management and community engagement.

What brought you to Solid Ground?

As a Seattle native, local culture as well as equality and social justice have always been important to me. I have always sought out opportunities to be part of the conversation, seeking education and experiences that instilled in me a deep appreciation for a diversity of experiences, cultures, and ages.

What are you excited about for the coming year?

I am excited to be part of a team of women leaders who are engaged in working with RSVP volunteers. I look forward to spending more time getting to know our RSVP ambassadors and volunteers through events and meetings.

What's one strength of our team?

Our passion, creativity, and empathy.

How do you enjoy Seattle's sun?

I play on a kickball team and will also never miss a chance to take my kayak out or jump in one of our many Seattle lakes!

Megan Wildhood,
RSVP Coordinator

Megan, the newest team member, started in June 2019. Her background is in case management, crisis work, and writing. She grew up in Colorado – so still misses the year-round opportunities to see the sun and is still enthralled by all of Seattle's water. She has a BA from Seattle

Pacific University and a goal to earn a Master of Social Work in the near future.

What brought you to Solid Ground?

I have admired Solid Ground's work since I've lived in Seattle (13 years), so when an opportunity to be a part of this work came up, I was excited to take it. What resonates most with me about Solid Ground's mission is the belief that poverty is solvable. I'm especially excited to work with RSVP, because I get to help volunteers in their later years find meaningful opportunities meeting community needs – and connect with others in meaningful work that makes a difference.

What are you excited about for the coming year?

Getting to produce and publish Experience in Action is at the top of a long list of things I'm looking forward to. I've been writing since I learned where books came from at age four. Getting to put a lifelong passion of mine to use on behalf of and alongside volunteers who care about making their communities stronger is an honor.

What's one strength of our team?

We are all clear communicators and have a desire to create and maintain a strong, healthy team dynamic.

How do you enjoy Seattle's sun?

When I'm not sitting outside reading or writing (I just finished the manuscript of a novel!), I'm either paddle boarding on one of the many beautiful bodies of water around Seattle, walking near the water with friends, hiking, and having dinner parties with friends on various rooftops throughout the city. ●



It Seems to Me...
by Peter Langmaid

Two types of people

We have a small group of friends we made as a result of our now-adult children going through grade school, middle school, and high school together. We get together a few times a year, and a major topic of conversation is our kids. Predictably, some are zooming ahead in life while others are struggling to find their way.

At this point in the conversation, I step up on my soap box and expound on my theory that, when it comes to work and careers, there are, in general, two types of people: those who have always known what they want to do (e.g., my wife) and those who never quite figured it out, like me. (This is not to say I didn't have a successful and rewarding career, but I never got to the point where work was so absorbing I couldn't wait to get up in the morning and go.)

I would apply this same theory to retirement: there are people who know what they want to do in retirement (call them the lucky ones) and the rest of us (call us the unprepared ones who blindly assumed retirement would reveal itself when we got there).

My friend Paul, who recently retired, is one of the lucky ones. Paul is a prolific wood carver, specializing in water fowl. He

is a consummate artist by anyone's standards, and I am more than a bit jealous of the apparent ease with which he has embraced his retirement.

I, on the other hand, have yet to find my post-work passion, though not for lack of effort. Since exiting the workforce, I have tried to become a short story writer, taken a yearlong course in editing, cared for a man my age suffering from ALS, tutored middle school students, worked at my local food bank, and written for this publication. Though I have enjoyed all that I've tried, I've never found that all-consuming passion that I could devote myself to.

More than anything, retirement is an opportunity to hit the restart button and become the master of your destiny. If you're like Paul, congratulations and best of luck. If you're like me, let me suggest volunteering through an organization such as RSVP, which is connected to a virtual smorgasbord of vetted volunteering opportunities. And within their network, as with a smorgasbord, there is something for everyone to choose from.

You've been dreaming abstractly all your working life about retirement, and the last thing you want to admit



to your friends when they ask you what you're doing with yourself in retirement is "not much." Rather, you'd like to rattle off an impressive list of volunteer programs in which you participate.

Volunteering is liberating, not constricting. Volunteering, like travel, is an opportunity to expand your horizons by experiencing new communities. Volunteering gets you out of the house to make new friends. Volunteering makes you feel good about yourself. Volunteering is an opportunity to help fulfill a need that's not being met.

And, most of all, as in my case, volunteering is fun! It doesn't hurt, you can do as much or as little as suits your schedule, and it gives you something to brag about to your friends. The best thing about retirement is that you have no boss other than yourself!

Every day is an opportunity for a fresh start, so GET STARTED! ●

Peter Langmaid is a semi-retired businessman, RSVP Ambassador, and longtime EIA contributor.

RSVP



The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a nonprofit National Senior Corps program sponsored locally by Solid Ground. RSVP meets critical community needs by encouraging and supporting volunteerism in King County for people 55 and older.



At Solid Ground, we believe poverty is solvable. Our approach combines direct services with community-based advocacy. We support individuals while working to undo racism and other oppressions that create barriers – so everyone can achieve their full potential.

EIA

Experience in Action! (EIA) is published by King County RSVP and distributed to 3,500 RSVP members, senior volunteers and friends. EIA is dedicated to providing news, information and opportunities about senior volunteerism. Articles express writers' opinions, which are not necessarily the views of RSVP or EIA. We reserve the right to refuse any material deemed unsuitable. Articles may be edited to meet technical and editorial policy guidelines.

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Calling Volunteer Home Helpers 55 & Older!

We need YOU to help elder neighbors remain independent in their homes! Join the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for a discussion with Catholic Community Services (CCS) on...

Wednesday, October 30, 2019 | 11am – 1pm

First Congregational Church, Bellevue (11061 NE 2nd St, Bellevue, WA 98004)



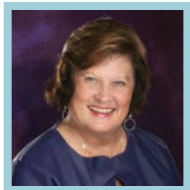
You'll learn about...

- ▶ The critical needs of low-income, isolated seniors in your neighborhood.
- ▶ What is being done to assist them.
- ▶ The impacts volunteers are making.
- ▶ How you can provide companionship, support, services, and/or transportation.

All are welcome! Complimentary light lunch will be served!

To reserve your space...

Call 206.694.6786 or visit www.solid-ground.org/homehelpers-10-30-19.



Aging with Wisdom

by Carol Scott-Kassner

Open to whatever is next

I know that January 1 is the official beginning of the New Year, but I always feel that my new year begins with the start of the school year in the fall. I was conditioned to feel that from years as a student as well as a teacher.

As a child, it meant back-to-school shopping, anticipating seeing friends I'd missed during the summer, and the excitement of having a new teacher. As a professor, it meant endless faculty meetings, preparing course syllabi, and getting to know new students. Those events had mostly positive emotional content to them and left a deep mark on me; I still feel excited in the fall. Perhaps that is the same for you.

As we negotiate the years of our lives after the age of 65, we often find ourselves in new territory having to enter aspects of living that are unfamiliar to us. In some sense, this time of life unfolds like a mystery. We ask ourselves questions such as: "What will I do now that I'm

retired to bring meaning to my life?" "How will I maintain my health for as long as possible?" "How do I live with feelings of the loss of so many loved ones?" "How do I live with my own physical and sometimes mental decline?" "Who do I want to continue to be in relationship with and who do I need to let go of because they no longer nourish me?" "What have I always wanted to learn to do that I never had time for before?" "What do I need to do to prepare for the end of my life?" Most of these questions are complex and don't have easy answers. Many of them we might want to put off because we don't want to think of them.

A dear friend of mine once said to me, "Carol, it's not what happens to you that counts, it's what you do with it that counts." So, as we encounter these challenging questions and necessary tasks of aging, our invitation is to decide how we are going to answer them. Will it be with a sense of curiosity,

openness, and grace or a sense of fear, avoidance, and frustration?

The following poem by the great 13th century Sufi poet, Jellaludin Rumi, has been extremely helpful to me as I face the challenges as well as the opportunities for growth as I age. Perhaps you already know this poem. If so, greet it like an old friend. If it is new to you, I hope that you will enjoy it and find it helpful.

May this season of your life be filled with many surprises and delights along with the inevitable losses and sorrows. May you find deep pleasure in something or someone each day. May your inner light touch others with its beauty. May you find strength in yourself to sustain you through whatever difficult times occur. May you learn from whatever feelings you have and invite them in to get to know their source. May you remember that the experience of great joy is heightened by experiencing great sorrow. Blessings to you in this journey of aging. ●

Carol Scott-Kassner is a spiritual director and a Certified Sage-ing Leader in Sage-ing International. To find out more about what Sage-ing offers, go to: www.sage-ing.org.



THE GUEST HOUSE

This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival.

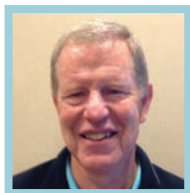
A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all! Even if they're a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still, treat each guest honorably. He may be clearing you out for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.

~Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks



Financial Planning

by Bill Pharr

Downsizing... Paring down while staying sane

A popular topic these days in Seattle is how to easily and properly downsize. I have been through my own downsizing recently, and I have helped two older family members in the last 10 years. Two vital lessons I've learned are **1)** do not wait too long to make the decision to move, and **2)** hire people to do the lifting and save your back!

The most important task is to plan ahead. The less planning you put into the move, the bigger of a disaster your downsizing will be. The logical first step is to take stock of the size of your current residence as compared to your new place.

If you live in a three-bedroom home now and your new place has two bedrooms, you have a bedroom's worth of belongings to get rid of. The same principle applies for cabinet, closet, and yard space. It may seem unnecessary, but things like arranging all the items you plan to take to your new place on an accurate floor plan – and measuring to make sure the items can fit in the doors and down the hallways of your new place – can reduce stress and provide peace of mind.

Before you start packing, gather an adequate supply of boxes, packing material, and tape, and develop a method to track your

possessions. Spreadsheets are a great tool, but a simple piece of paper works as well. List all the contents of each box on its outside and/or in the spreadsheet. I was guilty on our last move of throwing miscellaneous items into a box thinking I could remember which box held these items. (Needless to say, my memory failed.) Additionally, each box should have the specific room this box will be moved into clearly marked on the box. This will make it easy to only move each box once and cut down on the chances of your movers having to ask where boxes should end up.

When you start packing, the first items you select are what you need to get rid of! The goal is to purge what you don't need and keep the things you will need. Garage sales are a great strategy. Listing items on your neighborhood information site is another way to rehome unwanted items. There are also places like Assistance League of Seattle that will take your items, sell them, and put the money back into the community.

A final tip as you're going through your belongings that saves a lot of space: digitize whenever and whatever you can.

No article about downsizing should ignore the emotional side of going through your stuff. It is hard to look at items like baby clothes your oldest child wore 35 years ago or the trophy your son won for first place in an 8-and-under swim meet in 1987 and not want to keep them. At the same time, your goal is to downsize. After all, you can always collect sentimental items, drive to your family member's home at midnight and leave them on the doorstep! However you decide to handle those items with emotional value to you, good luck with your downsizing. ●

Bill Pharr is a retired business owner and financial advisor, RSVP member, and regular EIA contributor.



Magnuson Park Community Food Pantry opens

By David Thornbrugh

In Seattle, there is a two-lane street shaded by broad-trunked evergreen trees within one of the city’s largest parks. On a recent sunny morning, the voices of children playing flowed over lawns surrounding a playground, overlaying the sound of cars on nearby Sand Point Way.

To the east, broad swaths of playfields were separated from Lake Washington by dense stands of trees. And in front of a two-story brick building that once housed Naval personnel, now renamed Mercy Magnuson Place, a volunteer placed a folding sign: “**Food Pantry is open today, 11am–3pm.**”

On Wednesday, August 14, people in need gathered at a new place to obtain food for themselves and their families when a consortium of Seattle social services agencies staged the “soft opening” of the Magnuson Park Community Food Pantry. As Joe Gruber, Executive Director of the University District Food Bank told the dozen or so volunteers gathered in the newly refurbished Common Room, “We plan to run it as a pilot for about a year to find out if there is a need for a food pantry here [and] learn what people’s food needs are.”

While the initial shoppers for the new food pantry were mainly residents of the two nearby low-income housing projects, Mercy Magnuson Place – South and Solid Ground’s Sand Point Housing, anyone who meets the requirements to receive government assistance will be welcome. Both shoppers and volunteer staff are likely to throng to the historic structures of the Sand Point Community Housing Association once they have visited the building’s Common Room, a space about 60 feet long and half that in width, lit lavishly with morning sun through high, east-facing windows.

According to Kate Parker, Mercy Housing Northwest’s Regional Director of Resident Services, each of the four partners, which also includes the Seattle YMCA, brings what they do best to the project: “The goal is to provide a really good shopping experience. I tell my staff: ‘You should always want Bill Gates to walk in your place.’”

A few minutes before opening hour, volunteers in pairs and clusters wearing hygienic rubber gloves stood behind a row of folding tables that stretched from the room’s entryway to its exit, each stacked with packaged and canned goods. Carts stacked with food clicked as their wheels rolled over terracotta floor tiles. From the table nearest the entrance, the offerings started with heavy items such as canned soup and proteins, then moved on to canned tuna, chili, and peanut butter, followed by apples and bananas, lettuce, broccoli and carrots. At the end of the main table were loaves of bread, bagels, and even treats like lady fingers. A table set at a right angle off the main line offered the day’s dairy, cheese, and yogurt.

Just before opening, Joe worked to tag the tables with labels that identified the items and how much food each person could take. People entering the pantry receive a slip marked either **1**, **2**, or **3**. A single person can take one item from each food group, people shopping for two people can take two, and families can take three. As he explained, “This is a new experience for our shoppers.”

When the first excited shoppers entered the room, chatter and laughter filled the space. A woman asked, “Why are the split peas yellow instead of orange?” A man tried to pay for a can of soup with one of the food vouchers he’d been given for the Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Market and was told that it is for fresh produce at any of the city’s seven farmer’s markets.

The scent of vegetarian pasta and oven-roasted vegetables –



Andy Sharpe, Executive Director of the University Family YMCA, on opening day of the Magnuson Park Community Food Pantry (photo by Jalayna Carter)

cooked in the room’s open kitchen by Adam Reichenberger, Youth Education Educator – demonstrated what Solid Ground’s Cooking Matters class participants might learn how to make. As they exited the room, bags stuffed with cans of food, fresh produce, and tubs of yogurt, Kate Parker offered visitors tubes of sunscreen, lotion, and other hygiene products.

As with all the city’s food banks, getting food out to the people who

most need it would be impossible without the help of enthusiastic volunteers. Jack Irby of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church got involved with bringing food to Sand Point Housing residents early on. As he explained, “I would bring over boxes of tuna, macaroni and cheese, and leave them in a janitor’s closet.”

Even for someone who doesn’t enjoy shopping, staffing the tables at the new pantry is bound to be a pleasure. Not only do you get a chance to give back to your community and enjoy the appreciation of the people you serve, but you get to do so in a vintage building set in beautiful scenery that many of the people visiting this pantry call home.

Volunteers are needed for shifts between 9:30am–3pm every Wednesday. Contact Megan Wildhood for more information: meganw@solid-ground.org.



Veggie pasta sample at the Magnuson Park Community Food Pantry (photo by Jalayna Carter)

WHAT IS AN RSVP AMBASSADOR?

An RSVP Ambassador is an RSVP Volunteer who is willing to help us spread the word about the benefits of volunteering.

Because of our small staff, we have assembled a wonderful group of volunteers who help us share RSVP’s mission with other seniors. If you would be willing to represent RSVP at events around King County, we would like to talk to you.

We do not ask for a specific time commitment, only that you occasionally share your enthusiasm for volunteering and relate your own experiences with RSVP to encourage others to join. We provide a fun, interactive training and give you the opportunity to meet another group of active, enthusiastic people.

To sign up or ask more questions, please contact: Megan Wildhood, 206.694.6786 | meganw@solid-ground.org



2018 Community Needs Assessment

Solid Ground believes poverty is solvable, that people know best what they need, and that they should be involved in decisions that affect their lives. We conduct a Community Needs Assessment once every three years to listen to and honor input from people we serve, and to collaborate with partners to ensure our services support people to create the lives they want to live.

Three goals of the Community Needs Assessment:

- 1) Identify how well the needs of people living on low incomes are being met
- 2) Identify barriers that limit our effectiveness
- 3) Develop recommendations to enhance our community's ability to address these challenges

Key Findings

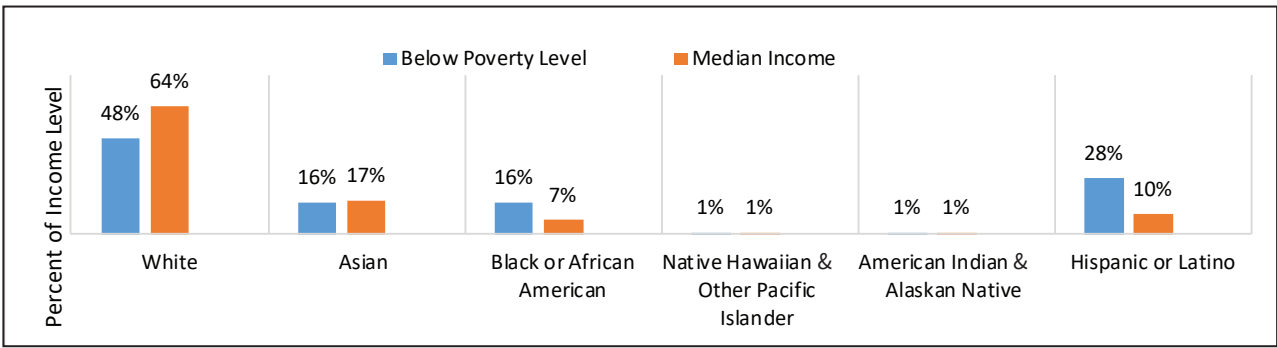
Whole Lives: People want to be seen as whole beings, not isolated problems. Issues such as “housing” and “health” are interconnected in a person’s life and by how systems “treat” them; they often cannot be addressed in isolation. People also want earlier and deeper support before they reach a state of crisis.

Building Commitment to End Poverty in the Community: Growing inequity in our community feels overpowering to many people. Community members want to help but don’t know where to start, and they often struggle with being identified as a problem to their neighbors.

Internal Support: Navigating the system itself is a huge challenge. There is a shared desire both for deeper, consistent support between nonprofits and people accessing services, as well as for agencies to mitigate the impact of various program restrictions on participants.

2017 King/Snohomish County Households at Income Level, by Race

▶ \$20,420 = Poverty Level for a 3-person household ▶ \$89,675 = Area Median Income for a 3-person household



Gender & Poverty

In Seattle in 2017, 53.3% of people who live under the federal poverty line identified as women, up from 50.4% in 2014. Nationally, 55.4% of people living in poverty identified as women. The US Census is limited in its ability to provide information on individuals whose identities do not fit into the gender binary (i.e., men and women). In 2015, the National Center for Transgender Equality reported that 28% of transgender people in our state lived in poverty, 14% were unemployed, and 37% experienced homelessness at some point. Of those, 33% avoided staying in a shelter because of fear of mistreatment due to their gender.

Calling Volunteer Enthusiasts 55 & Older!

Passionate about making a difference? We need **YOU** to share your experience and skills to help meet critical community needs!

Wednesday, November 6, 2019 | 11am – 12:30pm

@ Solid Ground (1501 North 45th Street, Seattle WA 98103)

RSVP invites you to a discussion to learn about...

- ▶ Critical needs of families, youth and seniors in your community
- ▶ What is being done to assist them
- ▶ The impacts volunteers are making
- ▶ How you can provide support, services and encouragement

All are welcome! Complimentary light lunch will be served!

To reserve your space...

Call **206.694.6786** or visit **www.solid-ground.org/rsvp-11-6-19**.



Top Community-Identified Needs

(Ranked by the percentage of respondents who identified each need.)



Health: 20%

“People of color in King County are more likely to be uninsured and to have poor health outcomes.” (King County, 2018)

- ▶ Lack of accessible and affordable medical care
- ▶ Inability to actively make healthy choices
- ▶ Increased healthcare barriers for those experiencing chronic homelessness

Civic & Community Involvement: 18%

“Social isolation is increasingly understood as not only a significant cause of emotional difficulty, but also as a potent risk factor for health-harming conditions.” (King County)

- ▶ People living on low incomes report not feeling fully seen and valued
- ▶ Social isolation and lack of community
- ▶ Lack of power to navigate supportive systems



Housing: 17%

“A total of 12,112 individuals were experiencing homelessness in Seattle/King County on January 26, 2018. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the population was unsheltered, living on the street, or in parks, tents, vehicles, or other places not meant for human habitation.” (All Home, 2018)

- ▶ Lack of affordable housing
- ▶ Lack of support when housing is at risk or when newly housed
- ▶ Additional barriers when chronically homeless

Income & Asset Building: 15%

From 2014-2017, the national cost of living rose 3.5%. The Seattle metropolitan area, on the other hand, had an increase of 6.8% after already starting above the national average in 2014.

- ▶ Income inequality creates heavier burdens on those living on low incomes
- ▶ There are financial hurdles to navigate when working with a fixed income
- ▶ People report not feeling ready or supported to take on living wage employment



Mobility: 8%

Many respondents commented on the cost burden for people on low incomes who live further outside of the city but need to commute in.

- ▶ Challenging for a growing number of older adults and homebound individuals
- ▶ Lack of transportation options that work for different needs
- ▶ High financial and time costs of transportation

QUESTIONS about Solid Ground’s Community Needs Assessment? Contact: 206.694.6724 | development@solid-ground.org

SEND US YOUR HOURS!

Yes, your hours as an RSVP volunteer are important and need to be reported to us.

Your hours are not only tied to federal funding with benefits then provided to you (e.g., excess accident medical and liability insurance), but they also help the volunteer sites and RSVP reach volunteer hour goals.

And just as importantly, it helps us recognize you for your service and highlights the contributions you make to meet community needs when you volunteer.

If you have questions, please contact:
Megan Wildhood, 206.694.6786 | meganw@solid-ground.org

Volunteer & Community Opportunities through RSVP

The following are just a few of the opportunities RSVP has to offer. To talk to a real person about opportunities that are just right for you, call Megan Wildhood at 206.694.6786 – or visit our website at www.solid-ground.org/RSVP for volunteer opportunity listings organized by region.

VOLUNTEERING

Bailey-Boushay House began when a group of passionate community members saw a need. Volunteers have always been the heart of our facility, increasing the quality of life for those living in the margins and those who are with us for long-term or end-of-life care. We rely on the consistency and dependability of our volunteers 7 days each week to provide one-to-one companionship, assist with community meals, outings, and activities, or assist at the front desk. Learn about yourself while “walking” alongside our clients and residents during your weekly 4-hour shift. *Central Seattle*

Cancer Lifeline seeks a committed volunteer with strong attention to detail and administrative experience in an office environment who is willing to commit to regular “office hours” for a growing Development Department. You will provide emotional support and resource referral on the Lifeline, assist with administrative tasks and mailings, and attend and support fundraising and outreach events. Comfort with data entry and basic Microsoft Office skills a must. Knowledge of CRM databases critical and E-Tapestry/Blackbaud/Raiser’s Edge a major plus. Thursday afternoons and/or Friday mornings, ideally three hours each day. *North Seattle*

Community Food Education is a Solid Ground program designed to teach community members living on low incomes how to prepare healthy and appetizing meals on a limited budget. Volunteers are trained to assist in providing hands-on cooking, nutrition education, menu planning, kitchen safety, and set up. Commitment is to participate in a series of six-week classes. *Various Locations Greater Seattle Area*

Financial Beginnings: This volunteer driven, community-oriented nonprofit utilizes trained volunteers to teach students from elementary through high school age, young adults, and economically vulnerable individuals the basics of banking, budgeting, investing, credit, and risk management. Classroom and community teaching opportunities include presenting programming in a group setting and/or as a one-to-one financial coach. Turn your compassion to action! *Various Locations Seattle/King County Area*

Franciscan Hospice & Palliative Care (FHPC): Affirming every life, FHPC invites you to join them as a volunteer, enhancing the compassionate care they provide to patients and families. Volunteers will make home visits to see patients. Be part of a team of professionals and volunteers to discover and meet the unique needs of hospice patients and their families, providing them with both practical companionship and emotional support. *South King County (especially Auburn & Kent)*

Habitat for Humanity provides homeownership opportunities for low- to moderate-income families. We seek Family Support Partners, volunteer mentors for families approved into the program. Families partner with Habitat while completing 250 hours of sweat equity, and creating budgets and savings plans. If you are or have been a homeowner and would like to work with a family in the process of becoming homeowners for a period of six months to two years (approximately 4–12 hours per month), please consider this opportunity. *Countywide*

Jewish Family Services seeks Home Delivery, Food Bank, and Friendly Visitor volunteers. These are ongoing, regular shifts that help reduce isolation and feed the most vulnerable in our community. Volunteers are, and always have been, the heart of Jewish Family Services; they are instrumental in fulfilling our mission to help people achieve well-being, health, and stability. *Seattle*

Mercer Island Parks & Recreation - Community & Event Center seeks help in our very special Senior Social program. This program has served the Mercer Island community for over 20 years, addressing the need for senior adults with physical, memory, hearing, or visual limitations to socialize and engage in a safe, fun, and interactive atmosphere. The program creates socialization through physically and mentally stimulating activities such as music, arts/crafts, games, exercise, guest speakers, and education. It also fills a need for respite time for full-time caregivers of the participants. If you have experience working with senior adults and would like to lend a hand, please connect now! Tuesdays and/or Wednesdays anytime between 10am-2pm. *Mercer Island*

Reading Partners is an education nonprofit that mobilizes community volunteers to provide one-to-one tutoring to struggling elementary student readers across five Seattle schools. We seek volunteers who can commit a minimum of one hour/week for the school year. Tutors are paired to work with the same student and provided with an easy-to-follow curriculum that includes all books, worksheets, and step-by-step lesson plans. A staff Site Coordinator is available to support tutors at all times. Tutoring runs Mondays-Thursdays, 8am-3pm. *Throughout Greater Seattle*

Veterans Administration (VA) Puget Sound Health Care System: Help serve those who have served our country. The VA has a variety of opportunities available at its Seattle facility on Beacon Hill. Important needs include drivers to take veterans to appointments, and friendly customer service volunteers who help visitors navigate the medical center. *South Seattle*

Washington DECA: WA DECA’s vision is to prepare innovative leaders and entrepreneurs who make a positive social and global impact by providing business and leadership opportunities to high school students to succeed in school, careers, and life. DECA seeks volunteer judges for online and in-person events occurring in Bellevue in November, January, and March. These involve role playing with students, evaluating written events online according to a provided rubric, and/or scoring live presentations. Areas to be judged include operations research, entrepreneurship business plans, and project management events. *South Seattle & online*

Youth Tutoring Program (YTP) needs caring volunteers to tutor students in low-income housing across Seattle. YTP serves diverse students, many from immigrant and refugee families. Tutors and students are matched one-to-one to foster the best mentoring and tutoring relationships. Volunteers are trained to be effective tutors and provided with the tools they need to make a difference. *Throughout Seattle*

☐ Please call to help me find a volunteer opportunity suited just for me.

☐ Please send information about RSVP.

☐ Please note my new address.

Name:_____

Phone:_____ Email:_____

Address:_____

Please mail this form to: RSVP, 1501 N 45th Street, Seattle, WA 98103