

Experience *in Action!*

King County RSVP's news for people 55 & older

Volume 37 | Number 1 | Winter/Spring 2022



AmeriCorps
Seniors



Volunteers help build strong readers!

Site partner spotlight: Reading Partners

by David Thornbrugh

For most *Experience in Action* followers, the mechanics of reading aren't something you think about. Absorbing and understanding printed words is a skill you mastered years ago, along with tying your own shoes and being able to put on your own clothes.

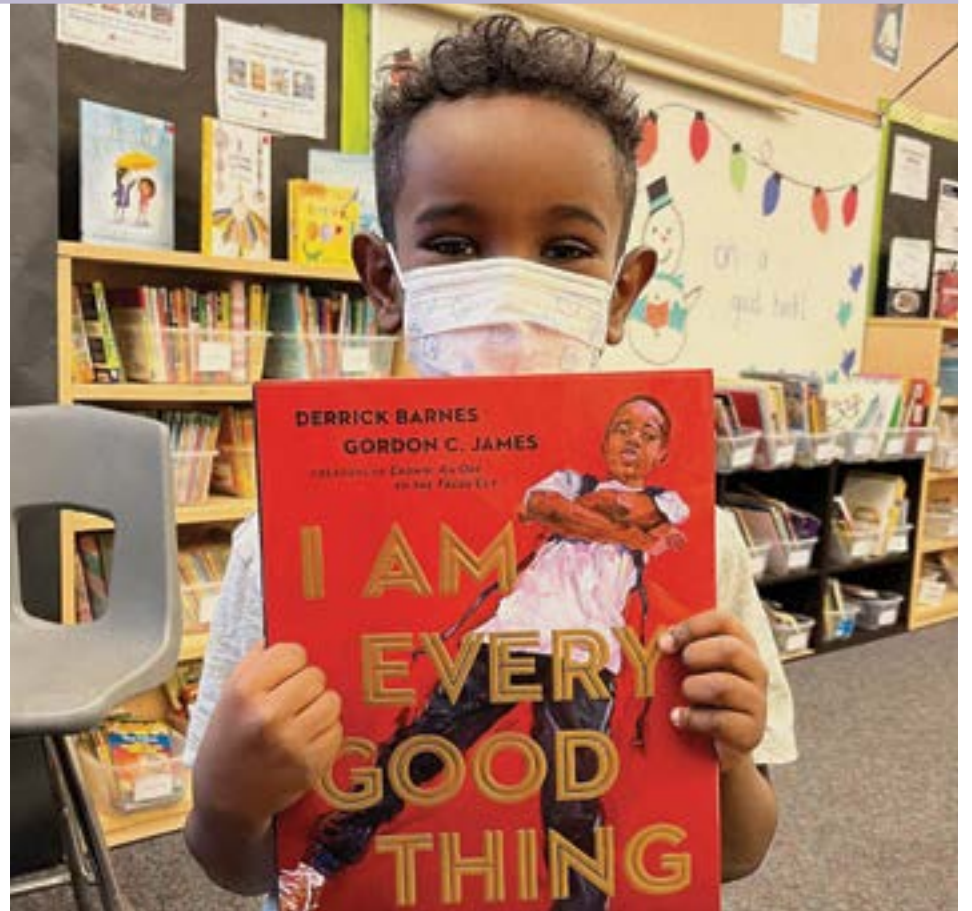
But doing what you're doing right now – reading – is very much on Hannah Tyne's mind. As the External Relations Manager for the national nonprofit

organization [Reading Partners](#), she helps bring one-on-one tutors into five Seattle schools to help children master this essential skill.

"As adult learners, it is easy to forget how hard the process of learning to read actually is. ... Probably only 6% of students will learn to read without any intervention or any explicit instruction. For so many of our kids, they just need individualized instruction."

**Solid Ground's King County RSVP
(Retired and Senior Volunteer Program)**
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Child at Reading Partners (photo courtesy of Reading Partners)

The fact that only 22% of Washington state low-income students read at grade level brought Reading Partners to Seattle seven years ago. It now provides five area schools with volunteer tutors, who operate within the day-to-day schoolroom schedule and meet students for two 45-minute tutoring sessions a week.

Many students work with only one tutor. "They're seeing the same person every week, socially and emotionally bonding with them, which becomes so integral to learning," Tyne says. "Really, it's the foundation of trust." Because some volunteers can only commit to once a week, some students might have different Monday and Wednesday tutors, for example.

Reading Partners works with kindergartners through fourth graders who read between two months to two and half years behind their grade level, because as Tyne says, "Fourth grade is such a pivotal time in the life of a reader. They're shifting in the classroom from learning how to read to reading to learn."

In other words, now the teacher is no longer teaching *how* to read: the child is reading in order to understand their science homework and math problems, and if they can't read at grade

level, they'll be shut out of all the content learning.

To address this essential learning period, a school invites Reading Partners into a classroom, which the organization transforms into a learning center. "It is a beautiful, well-lit, clean space for learning. We bring in all of our own library and curriculum – all of our own resources – and we have a full-time program coordinator, who is an AmeriCorps member."

However, the work of making a difference in these young readers' lives is done by what Tyne calls "our amazing community volunteers," whose initial commitment is to tutor a student once a week for six months. The goal is to ensure that the tutor-student bond continues and grows and leads to an ability to follow the school's curriculum.

While many of the program's current 133 volunteers are retired teachers, Tyne insists that "you don't have to have a master's in literacy instruction to make a difference!" Other volunteers are new to tutoring and come from various backgrounds.

"What I hear from people is that it's a really intuitive system; it's really structured. But there's room as a tutor, as you get to know your students, to really

Read continued on page 2

EiA Inside This Issue...

Staying warm and cozy

- ▶ Beat the cold..... p. 3
- ▶ Book Reviews: *The Premonition* and *These Truths*..... p. 4
- ▶ Winterize..... p. 6
- ▶ SHIBA volunteers needed – and ready to help!..... p. 7



Speaking Directly

by Megan Wildhood, RSVP Coordinator

Staying warm and cozy: A reader appreciates winter

Welcome to our first issue of 2022! Heading into this year at the tail end of 2021, the Seattle/King County area had a week of below-freezing temperatures and off-and-on snow that totaled more than six inches in some places. And as we go to print, we're experiencing even more sub-freezing temps.

This harkens back to my childhood in Colorado, where we'd hunker down under piles of blankets that probably weighed more than we did as kids. There was little to do but read near a fireplace and wait for the snow (and the families of snowpeople we made out of it) to melt, thus inspiring this edition's theme: Staying warm and cozy.

The weather in Seattle/King County the week between this past Christmas and New Year's made national news, but the impulse to curl up with an engrossing read is with me year-round. Whether it's because it could snow at practically any moment in my home state

(we had "snow-contingency" plans for outside high school graduation ceremonies in late May, which they had to implement for the graduating class before mine) – or because I've been cold ever since I moved up to the Pacific Northwest 15 years ago because snowy Colorado is also the sunniest state in the country and can see 80°F on Christmas – I'm not sure.

My suspicion is actually that I simply love reading and will look for any excuse to do so. It's that typical Seattle mist that doesn't seem thick enough to completely drench you on your way around town doing errands – and yet somehow it does? Time to pull out *The Goldfinch* and put off the post office run until tomorrow. Ominously dark clouds gather on the close side of the Cascades? Maybe I'll reschedule that walk around the neighborhood with a friend in favor of some Joan Didion or Maya Angelou so we can both stay warm and dry, of course.



Not that one needs an excuse to cozy up with a book. In fact, when I was young, my parents sometimes struggled with creating excuses for me not to read. I would take a book (and a notebook, for when the words of others inspired my own) to hockey games my family would bundle up for on occasion. I would stick a book into my saxophone case and sneak a paragraph here and there during marching band practice breaks.

In fact, my parents struggled to discipline me when I failed to mind them: They couldn't send me to my room or ground me, for I would revel in the uninterrupted hours that I would take as a gift rather than time to think about what I'd done. However, they couldn't bear to take away my books or associate reading with punishment in any way. And as

unique a challenge as it was for them, I'm so grateful they found other ways to teach me manners; I love reading to this day.

Of course, reading isn't the only way to keep warm and stay cozy as we wait out winter and look forward to our area's glorious spring. For those of you who do, our writers have a few recommendations. And you'll get to hear about a volunteer opportunity to work with children learning how to read.

For those who have other affinities, our columnists offer reflections and suggestions. We've also included a thank you to our Knit-It-Alls volunteers who help to keep people throughout the county warm. No matter how this season finds you as we start off 2022, the RSVP staff and the EIA team wish you a warm and cozy one! ●

Read continued from page 1

make adjustments and then really make the lesson your own." The result is what Tyne calls "a beautiful mentoring relationship."

She explains that what Reading Partners asks of their volunteers, more than anything, is empathy and open mindedness to working with and learning from students. "I say all the time, 'I often learn more from students than I teach them.' It's also important to be open to feedback and coaching."

Reading Partners hopes to eventually have 300 volunteers, "but," Tyne says, "as long as the students are being served, that's the bottom line." Meanwhile, the organization is "always looking for more volunteers across all five of our reading centers."

Through the online program called [Reading Partners Connects](#), volunteer tutors instruct students online for 100% of one of the program's five participating schools, and 60% of the other four. The online curriculum replicates the structured lesson plan: "I do, you do, we do." That is, the tutor demonstrates a skill, then the pair do it together, and then the student does it independently.

"This is whether you're a kindergartner or you're a fourth grader, that's what it looks like sitting side by side at desks and what it looks like on our online curriculum."



Regardless of the teaching format, the program continues to improve its recipients' reading skills: based on last year's figures, 80% of students double their rate of learning while enrolled with Reading Partners.

An ebullient, outgoing woman, Hannah joined Reading Partners in Seattle not long after a stint teaching English in Spain for a couple of years and "fell in love" with the program. As one of four full-time staff and five AmeriCorps members, she gets to wear all of the hats. "I get to be in centers, and I get to work with students, and I also write grants."

As for volunteering to tutor young readers, she suggests RSVP volunteers look upon it as "an opportunity to be like a supplemental grandparent. It's a really mentoring role. It's what keeps our volunteers coming back to Reading Partners.

"We have tutors who have been volunteering with us since our nascence, seven years ago. It's not about the staff, it's not about the classroom, it's about the students. It's about being able to see growth in the students.

"You have tutors telling stories about students who would put their head down, and they couldn't sound out the word cat. And by the end of the year, their reading and fluency would have confidence, and that was tangible to see." ●



It Seems to Me...

by Peter Langmaid

Beat the cold:

8 Ways to stay warm in winter

I've lived in Seattle since 1982, and I don't know about you, but I think this past winter has been the coldest, wettest, snowiest, darkest, and gloomiest in memory. During my working years, I didn't pay much attention to the cold because I was busy with work and raising a family. Since retirement and the absence of kids in the house, my life has become more sedentary, and suddenly I feel more sensitive to the cold. Part of this feeling, my dermatologist tells me, is that as we age, our skin thins out, which decreases blood flow. In summary, I'm always cold.

The solution to staying warm and comfortable can't be found in the thermostat. We keep ours set at 68°F during the day and 63°F when we're under our thick down quilt at night. Turning up the thermostat is pointless because, after your body adjusts to the new higher temperature, you begin to feel cold again. Since we can't change winter, I have a few brief suggestions for staying warm and comfortable.

1ST: Set your thermostat to a reasonable level – then leave it there. It may be different for you, but 68°F works for us. After all, you don't want visitors saying your house feels like a sauna! If you feel cold, put on a sweater, don't turn up the heat.

2ND: Keep moving – preferably outside where the air is fresh and invigorating. A brisk walk with the dog or friends warms the body and lifts the spirits. At home, find an exercise program you like (there are dozens to choose from on the internet) and stick with it. You'll feel both warm and good about yourself. If you don't have a computer, simple calisthenics offer the same benefits.

3RD: Socialize. Nothing warms the body and lifts spirits more than interacting with friends and family. Organize a walking club and combine exercise with socializing. Experiment with new recipes and invite friends and family over for dinner.

4TH: Cuddle. We have a dog that craves human contact. Cuddling with her is like snuggling with a hot water bottle. If you don't have a pet, cuddle with your partner. If you don't have a partner, hug yourself with your favorite warm blanket.

5TH: Stay nourished in a healthy way. Winter isn't the time to start a diet. Food brings energy to your body and energy creates warmth. Try new, healthy recipes to keep things interesting. Instead of snacking on chips and sweets, treat yourself to a warm beverage. And don't limit yourself

to coffee, hot chocolate, or tea. A steaming mug of hot water with lemon will warm your hands and your body.

6TH: Stay busy. Cold, wet weather thrives on attention; don't let it thrive on you. Volunteering is a great way to stay busy. For myself, volunteering has the quadruple benefits of getting me out of the house, cultivating new friendships, socializing with the people we serve and fellow volunteers, and taking my mind off myself for a few hours.

7TH: Try something new. My wife plays bridge online and a series of games on her phone that keep her mind healthy and alert. Card games, board games, and puzzles stimulate and refresh the mind while staving off boredom.

8TH and most important: Stay positive. Just as winter comes every year, so do spring, summer, and fall. We're lucky that spring comes early in the Pacific Northwest. Trees green up, buds begin to open, and the sun shines more often beginning in March, while many parts of the country are still buried in snow. And that – or at least the anticipation of it – can bring its own sense of coziness, too. ●

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



RSVP



AmeriCorps Seniors

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a nonprofit AmeriCorps Seniors 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. The *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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Thanks to our KIA volunteers! by Jen Gahagan



With the help of 10 RSVP volunteers, we distributed over 1,000 beautifully made hats, scarves, mittens, sweaters, blankets, and other knitted, crocheted, and sewn items to families and individuals across King County this year.

Four key agencies helped distribute the items: Eastside Baby Corner, Jewish Family Services, Catholic Community Services and Solid Ground's Sand Point Family Housing.

Ann Esslinger, who's been an RSVP Knit-It-Alls (KIA) volunteer for 13 years, shares that "It is such a rewarding experience, knowing that my small offering is going toward helping many of those in need during cold and inclement weather."

We know how much skill, time, and tenderness it takes to create each handcrafted item – all of which are appreciated and cherished by so many people. Thank you KIA Volunteers! ●

KIA volunteer Ann Esslinger (photo by Jen Gahagan)

Book reviews: 'The Premonition' a review by Bill Pharr

In his latest book *The Premonition*, Michael Lewis provides an insightful, reality-based look into America's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. This work, a skillful intertwining of real-life stories of central characters with actual past and present events, is a must-read for anyone interested in learning more about the handling of this crisis.

Lewis starts his book by introducing us to Charity Dean, a doctor who has just become Santa Barbara County's Chief Public Health Director. Dean takes a hands-on approach to her job. She actually goes to food banks, and low-income emergency care facilities and gets involved with the daily challenges people encounter in public health.

This is where Lewis exposes the fact that each of America's almost 3,000 counties has a different approach to public health. When a country faces a national health crisis, the fact that none of the counties' public health departments are communicating is the opposite of efficiency.

The next key personality in the book is Carter Mecher, a doctor working at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mecher is a very smart medical professional who specializes in analyzing problems and developing solutions, often in real time, in the world of healthcare and pandemics.

Mecher's story starts when he worked under the Bush administration and developed

a pandemic response based on findings from the 1918 Flu Pandemic. President Bush commissioned this study after he realized America didn't have a pandemic response plan in place.

Mecher wrote a pandemic plan (circa 2004) based on social distancing, shutting down schools immediately, and working from home. His documented plan is based on beating a pandemic by acting before the danger is clear.

In 2009, the swine-flu epidemic presented a chance to act on Mecher's overall plan, but the Obama administration didn't implement it – and fortunately there wasn't a major outbreak. However, it turned out to be an opportunity lost to prepare for the next virus outbreak of 2020 – a missed chance for the U.S. to learn how to deal with a pandemic and reinforce the need to act quickly, intelligently, and in a coordinated way with all Americans participating.

The next personality Lewis introduces readers to is Joe De Risi. Joe is a genius biochemist who hand-built a gene analyzer to identify the first SARS virus. His clear skillset is building efficient, cost-effective testing systems. One of the tools that was and is still needed is the ability to accurately test individuals to see if they have COVID-19 or not.

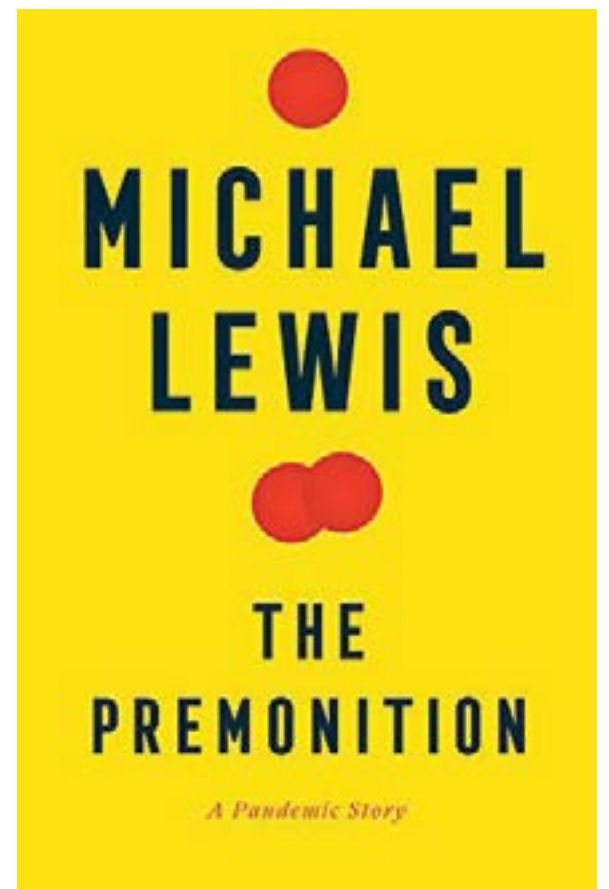
As the pandemic advanced in our country into spring and summer 2020, the three individuals above and a few more Lewis mentions become

tightly united in their common beliefs, based on 50 years of scientific research and Mecher's 2004 plan for how to deal with a pandemic. As amazing as it is, despite all of its wealth and technology, the U.S. has an underfunded and fragmented healthcare system.

In the latter part of this story, because of her great work in Santa Barbara, Charity Dean is appointed to be the assistant to the head of the California Department of Public Health under Sonia Angell in 2020. Angell is in over her head and intimidated by Dean. She bans Dean from department meetings, from using the internet, and from ever using the word "pandemic." Shortly thereafter, Gavin Newsome, the Governor of California, asks Angell to resign.

Lewis expertly weaves the story of how these individuals, along with others, try to help the U.S. intelligently develop an approach to the COVID-19 outbreak at a time when the CDC and then President Trump believed the best approach was to do nothing.

The Premonition's conclusion is that America's leaders and the CDC ignored accurate research we've had for decades on how to effectively deal with a pandemic and failed to act quickly with an

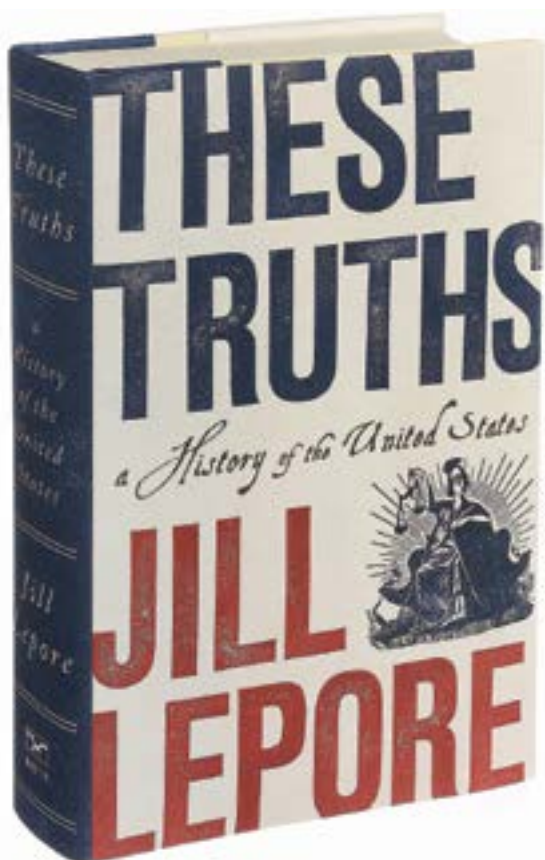


organized plan. It did not have to be that way, because the U.S. has people – including the individuals featured in this book – who have the intelligence, knowledge, and skill to successfully manage situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lewis has identified the "odd ducks" who don't have the usual credentials or the "right ideas," and may not be household names, but who turn out to be right in the end.

For those interested in an uncommon look at the times we're currently living through, Michael Lewis delivers in *The Premonition*. ●

'These Truths: A History of the United States' a review by Gwen Campbell



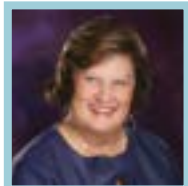
These Truths: A History of the United States by Jill Lepore is a fascinating but dense book, so I set it aside until my recent retirement from my full-time job. The author is a professor of American history at Harvard University, and this book is her attempt at a one-volume history of America from 1492 to the election of 2016.

The basic outline of American history is familiar to us, although I'm reminded of how much I've forgotten since formal history classes. However, what makes this book most interesting to me is its thematic structure. For example, the period from the end of the Civil War to the end of World War II is framed as the development of the modern American state.

Central topics include the attempt to define persons and citizens under the Constitution, the development of the cult of efficiency as the industrial revolution blossomed, the rise of populism, and the brutality of modernity.

The book includes information that was new to me, such as the history of polling and its role in political campaigns, which strikes me as particularly relevant given the polling history in two recent presidential elections. And I was surprised to discover that even during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1936 presidential campaign, political observers and the media warned of the danger to democracy of voters living in their own political bubbles.

Reading *These Truths: A History of the United States* alongside the daily newspaper and more recent books (re)examining historic events, I'm reminded both that today's events are not new, and what we think we know of history can and should be regularly subjected to fresh perspectives. ●



Aging with Wisdom

by Carol Scott-Kassner

Spiritual warmth

Rivers of rain pour down on the Puget Sound Basin and beyond, and piles of snow clog the mountain passes like never before. I'm seeing this as an invitation to stay home, to stay warm and cozy – hopefully curled up in a blanket or sitting in front of a warm fire.

What a time this has been. What a time this is. As we move into our third year of living with COVID-19 and its variants, we often feel angry, confused, sad, lonely, or frightened. In fact, according to the American Psychological Association, 70% of people in the U.S. have reported such feelings during this pandemic. It's hard to stay upbeat when our lives have changed so radically and uncertainty continues with seemingly no end in sight.

In such times as these, it's important to reach into our spiritual tool bag and pull out some instruments that can help us feel better. Here are some ideas to try and to share with others.

1) Find peace and quiet

- ▶ Begin each day with 15-20 minutes of quiet meditation or prayer.
- ▶ Focus on breathing deeply and letting it out slowly. Inhale for 6 counts, hold for 6, and exhale for 6. Repeat several times.
- ▶ Find solace in the regeneration of nature. Walk outdoors using slow, measured steps. Find a place that you find beautiful. Consciously spend time focusing on what you notice, including subtle changes such as new buds or new shoots growing.
- ▶ Journal. Reflect on your dreams, your feelings, or your gratuities.

2) Connect with others

- ▶ Join a virtual book club.
- ▶ Take an online class that helps you deepen spiritually. You can find wonderful resources at Sage-ing International (sage-ing.org) and Spirituality and Practice (spiritualityandpractice.com).
- ▶ Take leadership to invite people in your neighborhood or living center over for tea. Invite each person to contribute something to enrich the experience such as an interesting tea, some cookies or small sandwiches, or the name of a book worth reading.
- ▶ Silently bless people you meet on walks or in the grocery store.

3) Wean yourself from things that upset you.

- ▶ Cut back on reading and watching the news.
- ▶ Avoid disturbing websites or media that upset or anger you.
- ▶ Make peace with people who are difficult for you insofar as possible.
- ▶ Forgive others who have hurt you.

4) Reflect on your life

- ▶ Write a legacy letter to a beloved grandchild, niece, or nephew. Share core values you'd like them to carry on into a new generation.
- ▶ Write your spiritual autobiography.

Patching

by Ana Lisa de Jong, Living Tree Poetry

*I'm just glad I got through
another day with a little bit
of beauty.*

It's like patching a quilt.

*You choose the swatches of
fabric you wish to keep.*

You select the thread.

*You carry on with immortalising it.
The memories you hope to retain
made predominant, the colours
made from feeling.*

*At night you pull it up to under
your chin, or over your cheeks.*

*Who can be cold or without
comfort with the best kept.*

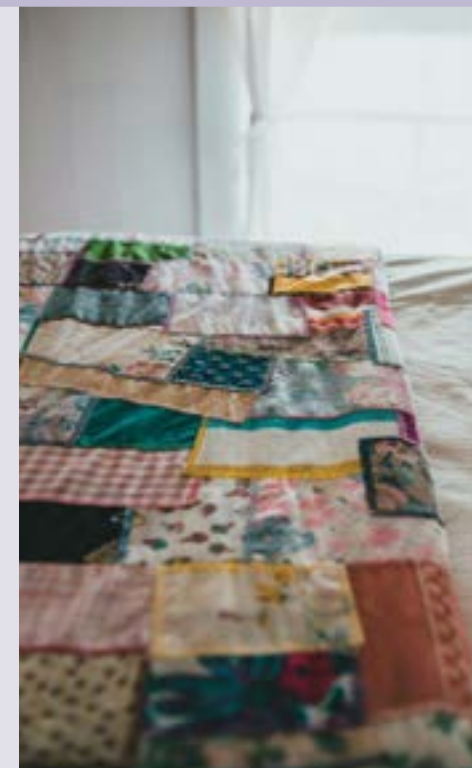
*Turned into the things we've
chosen to recall.*

*The rest discarded to the pile
of cloth for which there might
be a place one day,
a reason why.*

*In the meantime
a 'comforter' needs the things to
which our heart leans.*

The softness of a safe embrace.

*The enfolding swell of down,
the cool of cotton.*



*The colours of the feelings
that feel best.*

*Yes, to get through another
day is just enough, with
beauty in it to retain.*

*Enough of which
to make a keepsake.*

*The rest against which
we can close our eyes.*

*Discard to the floor,
anything which doesn't fit,
or disturbs the vision.*

*Thank God we have a mind
to choose, a heart to discern,
what it is our lives are made from.*

In the end, we're all patching our lives together in the most meaningful ways possible regardless of what is happening around us. Ana Lisa de Jong alludes to this in her poem above.

May you find ways to create a beautiful patchwork out of this time of your life. May you be blessed with peace, good health, and love. ●

Carol Scott-Kassner is a Certified Spiritual Director and member of Sage-ing International, an organization dedicated to awakening spiritually as we get older. You can find it at sage-ing.org.

Upcoming RSVP Volunteer Informational Events

Passionate about making a difference? We need **YOU** to share your experience and skills to help meet critical community needs! Join Solid Ground and RSVP to learn how.

All are welcome! We'll discuss...

- ▶ Critical needs of families, youth, and seniors in your community.
- ▶ What's being done to assist them.
- ▶ The impacts volunteers are making.
- ▶ How you can provide support, services, and encouragement.
- ▶ All RSVP opportunities (virtual, socially distant, and in-person).

Questions/Technical Support? Contact:

Megan Wildhood at meganw@solid-ground.org or 206.694.6786.

EVENTS SCHEDULE

~ 11am-12:15pm all dates ~

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

tinyurl.com/RSVP-Vols-4-13-22

Thursday, June 2, 2022

tinyurl.com/RSVP-Vols-6-2-22

Tuesday, October 4, 2022

tinyurl.com/RSVP-Vols-10-4-22





Financial Planning

by Bill Pharr

How to winterize your home

In previous articles, I've written about "winterizing" your financial portfolios and financial situation regularly. This article is about **winterizing your home and garden**. In the financial sense, I define winterizing as formally sitting down and reviewing the results of the previous year and setting goals for the upcoming year. In the ideal world, this thorough review of both big- and little-picture items happens no less than one time per year.

As with a financial review, winterizing your home and garden should start months in advance of winter and should happen every year. Many home-winterizing items can and should be taken care of in the summer or fall, while some items must be done close to the time when the cold weather arrives. I recommend regular visual inspections of your home throughout the year, keeping your eyes open for things that need attention.

Home Checklist

- ▶ **Inspect for missing tiles, holes, moss, and potential patches** that need to be completed.
- ▶ **Check trim work around windows, garage doors, and screens.** Fill in the cracks, if small enough, with all-weather caulk.
- ▶ **Inspect your washer and dryer hoses.** If it's been a while since the hoses have been replaced, prioritize this item.
- ▶ **Roof, chimney, and gutters:** Have a professional come out and take a look at these. Your gutters need to be clear of debris and draining properly. Keeping your gutters clean throughout the year can save a lot of money in the end. (I do *not* recommend getting on your roof with a ladder – it's too dangerous.)
- ▶ **Insulate!** All attics should be insulated (as well as exterior walls, if possible) to save on monthly energy costs. Energy companies often offer deals to insulate attics, and in the energy review they provide, they can let you know about the status of your walls.
- ▶ **Give your furnace an annual checkup as well.** Having your furnace go out in the middle of a cold spell is not fun! I'm a big believer in annual maintenance contracts if you can afford it. Annual contracts can also provide for a review of your ductwork, and your air filter(s) will get checked and replaced as needed.
- ▶ **And then, there's water!** You should know where your home's main water shutoff is, as well as the street water shutoff (and have a tool available to turn the valve as necessary). If you have an irrigation system in the yard, it should be turned off and the lines cleaned out by compressed air. Cover outside hose bibs. Inside pipes, if accessible, can be insulated quite easily with a quick trip to the hardware store.

Gardening in the Pacific Northwest

The garden is a tricky topic as it's hard to prepare plants for the weather in our region. Often, we have mild weather going into December or January (with the exception of this past year!) – then a cold snap hits quick and hard in February, sometimes with lots of snow. It's hard or nearly impossible to prepare sensitive plants for these quick changes of weather. No matter the weather, it always makes sense to put down compost in late fall. If not compost, a coverage layer of leaves, grass clippings, straw, and other natural items always makes sense to get through the winter months.

Below are some weatherization resources for low-income folks that you may be eligible to apply for:

▶ **City of Seattle Weatherization:** seattle.gov/housing/homeowners/weatherization

▶ **King County Housing Authority Weatherization Program:** (outside of Seattle) kcha.org/wx

It's not possible to list all winterizing items since everyone's situation is different, but you can use this checklist to prepare your own, adding items as they fit your personal situation. Good luck! ●

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

Welcome to Medicare Workshops: Understand your options!



Solid Ground SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) volunteers teach monthly virtual workshops to help people navigate Medicare. In these workshops, we cover:

- ▶ Medicare A, B, C, and D
- ▶ Enrollment
- ▶ Understanding your Medicare benefits and options
- ▶ Medigaps (supplemental) & Medicare Advantage plans
- ▶ Help paying for Medicare
- ▶ Medicare fraud

Visit Solid Ground's Events webpage to view and register for upcoming events: solid-ground.org/events.

WHAT'S AN RSVP AMBASSADOR?

RSVP Volunteers willing to help us spread the word about the benefits of volunteering are RSVP Ambassadors!

Because of our small staff, we've assembled this wonderful group of volunteers who help us share RSVP's mission with other seniors. If you're willing to represent RSVP at events around King County, we'd like to talk to you.

We don't 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 chance to meet other active, enthusiastic people.

SEND US YOUR HOURS!

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

Your hours are not only tied to federal funding with benefits then provided to you – like the excess accident medical and liability insurance – but they also help our 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.



To sign up, send hours, or ask more questions, please contact: Megan Wildhood, 206.694.6785 | meganw@solid-ground.org.

SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors)

SHIBA volunteers needed!

Do you have a passion for helping others in your community? Become a SHIBA volunteer! You can join the hundreds of volunteers across Washington state who help over 90,000 people each year understand their Medicare options and answer questions. And you don't have to know Medicare – we'll teach you!

SHIBA provides information about Medicare health care coverage and access to help improve the lives of all Washington state residents. We cultivate community commitment through partnership, service, and volunteering.

SHIBA volunteers work to empower, educate, and assist Medicare-eligible people, their families, and caregivers through objective outreach, counseling, and training to make informed health insurance decisions that optimize access to care and benefits. They also help prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, error, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.

What's required?

Being comfortable using a computer and the internet is required. But remember, you don't have to know Medicare – you just need to have a passion for helping others and want to learn! We'll train you in everything else you'll need to be a successful SHIBA volunteer.

Some SHIBA tasks:

- ▶ Counsel others
- ▶ Provide clerical support
- ▶ Work on special projects
- ▶ Participate in outreach activities
- ▶ Give presentations to the public

Medicare Counselors typically volunteer a minimum of five hours per week (20 hours per month). Other roles, like Public Presenters, Fraud Specialists, Outreach Volunteers, and Administrative Assistants contribute at least four hours per month. Schedules are flexible. We work with each volunteer to schedule assignments and determine the number of hours volunteered each month. We also provide ongoing training and support.

Solid Ground is King County, WA's SHIBA sponsor in partnership with the Washington state Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). For more information or to sign up to volunteer, please contact Sam Stones, SHIBA Program Coordinator, sams@solid-ground.org. To learn more about SHIBA, visit insurance.wa.gov/shiba.



Do YOU need help navigating Medicare? Talk to a SHIBA volunteer!

SHIBA volunteers assist people through one-to-one counseling via video chat, phone, or in-person appointments. We answer your Medicare questions, make referrals, and help evaluate and compare health insurance policies so you can make informed decisions to find the best possible coverage that fits within your budget and meets your needs. We can also help screen to see if you qualify for low-income programs that may save you money.

Specifically, SHIBA volunteers can help you:

- ▶ Find Medicare options that meet your personal needs
- ▶ Learn about your Medicare rights and options
- ▶ Compare Medicare plans and prices
- ▶ Report health care fraud and abuse

To get started, call 206.753.4806 (1.800.562.6900) or email shiba@solid-ground.org, and a SHIBA volunteer will get back to you within 2-3 business days. To make an appointment for an in-person counseling session, please reach out to one of the locations listed below.



In-Person SHIBA Counseling Locations:

SEATTLE

Central Area Senior Center
Every 4th Thursday, 10am-1pm
Call 206.726.4926

Greenwood Senior Center
Every 4th Thursday, 12:30-3:45pm
Call 206.297.0875

SOUTH

Auburn Senior Activity Center
Every 3rd Wednesday, 9am-3pm
Call 253.931.3016

Federal Way Community Center
Every 2nd Thursday, 9am-3pm
Call 253.835.6925

Kent Senior Activity Center
Every 2nd Friday, 9am-12pm
Call 253.856.5150

NORTH/NORTHEAST

Evergreen Hospital (Kirkland)
Every 4th Friday, 9am-12pm
Call 425.899.3200 (then press 2, then 1)

Kenmore Senior Center
Every 2nd Friday, 9am-12pm
Call 425.489.0707

Northshore Senior Center (Bothell)
Every 4th Tuesday, 9am-12pm
Call 425.286.1035

Peter Kirk Community Center (Kirkland)
Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 9am-12pm
Call 425.587.3360

Phone Consultation Resource:

King County Library System (KCLS) | Every other Wednesday, 12-4pm
Call 800.462.9600 and ask a KCLS staff member to sign you up for a one-hour Medicare phone consultation appointment.



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 solid-ground.org/RSVP for volunteer opportunity listings organized by region.

VOLUNTEERING...

Auburn Community Food Bank: Lend a hand and help others access food. The Auburn Food Bank is a volunteer-directed organization that provides food, referrals, and emergency assistance to those in need. Volunteer opportunities include: counter person, door person, bagger, vegetable/bread attendant, and van helper (loading and unloading food donations). ~South King County

Catholic Community Services (CCS) welcomes volunteers to enable elders living on low incomes and adults with disabilities to remain independent in their own homes. Volunteers may help one person regularly or be on call depending on schedules and interests. Volunteers receive training, mileage reimbursement and insurance. Requests include: grocery, medication, and/or meal delivery; rides to medical appointments; yardwork; and phone buddies. ~Countywide

FareStart helps people break the cycle of poverty by teaching work and lifeskills people need to succeed in the food service industry – and in life. FareStart seeks drivers to deliver supplies to remote culinary class students. Remote opportunities include: 1) write and decorate letters for meal kits for local homeless shelters, nonprofits, senior facilities, and schools, and 2) make masks for essential kitchen staff. Volunteers are reimbursed for materials. ~Central Seattle

Franciscan Hospice & Palliative Care (FHPC): Affirming every life, FHPC invites you to be part of a team of professionals and volunteers who meet the unique needs of hospice patients and their families. Volunteers provide both practical companionship and emotional support by making friendly phone calls to patients, enhancing FHPC's compassionate care. ~South King County

Food Lifeline: Be one of more than 10,000 people lending a hand to help stop hunger. Food Lifeline needs volunteer assistance to sort and pack donated produce and food. Each day, they receive 25,000 pounds of donated food, which is sorted by volunteers and then distributed to 275 food banks and meal programs in western Washington. They have opportunities to fit every schedule. ~South Seattle

Full Life Care is dedicated to enhancing quality of life for low-income elders and adults with disabilities. Volunteers are invited to support elders through the ElderFriends Program, which custom-matches volunteers with lonely and isolated older adults in King County for 1:1 companionship via in-home or remote friendly visits in Seattle and King County. ~Countywide

Habitat for Humanity seeks regular volunteers to help build and repair homes for hardworking families in King County. Volunteers also coach families in Habitat's Family Support program, helping them find a home. Remote and in-person options are available. Join them for a volunteer orientation session to learn more. ~Countywide

Hopelink serves people living on low incomes and/or experiencing homelessness, promoting self-sufficiency for all members of the community. Daytime and evening hours are available at Bellevue, Kirkland, Northshore, Redmond, Shoreline, and Sno-Valley locations. Volunteer opportunities include food distributors, community van drivers, and food bank workers. ~North and East King County

Jewish Family Services helps vulnerable individuals and families in the Puget Sound region achieve well-being, health, and stability. Volunteer opportunities include: food bank shifts, food bank home delivery, market and farm gleaning, virtual friendly visitors for older adults, remote data support, and supporting resettled refugees. ~South King County

Lifelong: For more than 30 years, Lifelong's volunteers, who are the heart and soul of the organization, have played a vital role in helping provide quality care and services to clients. The food program Chicken Soup Brigade lies at the heart of their commitment to easing the lives of people living with or at risk of serious illnesses. We would love to have you join us in this effort! Volunteer opportunities include: Repacking food donations, prepping food, packaging meals, delivering nutritious food, and assembling health care kits. ~South Seattle

North Helpline Emergency Services & Food Bank: There are many opportunities for volunteers to help in the food bank with sorting and food distribution. Requests include: food delivery and pickup drivers, food bank helpers, and hygiene kit assemblers. ~North Seattle

Port of Seattle: Do you love to travel and enjoy being in airports? Join a dynamic group of volunteers to assist travelers at Sea-Tac Airport. Help travelers find their way around the airport, give out information about the Seattle-Tacoma-Everett area, or provide service to those in distress or needing assistance in changing planes. ~South King County

Reading Partners, a literacy nonprofit that mobilizes community volunteers to provide 1:1 tutoring to struggling elementary school readers, seeks volunteers to tutor 1 hour a week during the school year. No experience required as you'll be provided with an easy-to-follow curriculum that includes all the books, worksheets, and step-by-step lesson plans to teach an effective lesson. In person and virtual tutoring positions available! ~South Seattle

SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) through Solid Ground provide free, unbiased information about health care coverage and access to Medicare-eligible Washington state residents. Roles include: 1) Medicare Counselor, 2) Fraud Specialist, 3) Public Presenter, 4) Outreach Volunteer, and 5) Administrative Assistant. Training provided. ~Countywide

- 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 North 45th Street, Seattle, WA 98103