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July 2025

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& **A**
with
**Tina
O'Brien**

Executive Director
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Cover photography: Leah Thompson / Scandia Studio

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Economic Force, Cultural Anchor

PME's Role in Kitsap County's Future

Port Madison Enterprises, the economic arm of the Suquamish Tribe, has grown into one of Kitsap's largest private employers. From hospitality to retail and construction, PME funds essential tribal services while reflecting the Tribe's long-term vision, cultural values, and commitment to community stewardship.

Leading with Heart

Honeybee Horticulture's Journey from Side Hustle to Visionary Venture

Founded by Mariah Mendez, Honeybee Horticulture blends floral design, event planning, and charcuterie catering to create personalized, meaningful celebrations. Rooted in creativity and community, the Kitsap-based business brings heartfelt detail to every event.

More Than Movies

The Roxy Brings Arts, Culture, and Conversation to Quincy Square

Now a nonprofit, the historic Roxy Theater has become a hub for film, music, and community events in downtown Bremerton. With themed movie nights, live performances, and local partnerships, the venue blends vintage charm with modern experiences. Executive Director Michael Goodnow emphasizes connection, making the Roxy a key part of the city's creative district and cultural revival.

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Roots and Resilience

For **WARD**
THINKING

Welcome to the July edition of Kitsap Business, where we spotlight enterprises and leaders who understand that the most powerful growth often begins with deep roots – in community, in culture, and in purpose.

This month, we begin with Port Madison Enterprises, the economic force behind the Suquamish Tribe. What started nearly four decades ago as a single store has expanded into a dynamic enterprise touching hospitality, retail, construction, cannabis, and culture. But PME's greatest strength isn't scale – it's vision. CEO Rion Ramirez puts it plainly: "We're the Department of Revenue for the Suquamish Tribe." The work isn't just about generating profit. It's about sustaining sovereignty, investing in people, and protecting the land and legacy that has shaped this region since time immemorial.

You'll also meet Mariah Mendez of Honeybee Horticulture, a Kitsap entrepreneur who transformed a nickname from her mother into a full-fledged brand of floral artistry, event planning, and now, mobile charcuterie. Leading with heart and intention, Mendez shows us that even side hustles can bloom into visionary ventures when rooted in care and connection.

From there, we head to Bainbridge Island, where Fire + Floe is redefining wellness. Through Scandinavian-inspired contrast therapy, founder Mikal Foushee is inviting people to gather, ground themselves, and heal – especially during the Pacific Northwest's cold, gray months. "I never imagined I would start a sauna," she says. "But I thought, well, it's what I want to be doing – maybe other people want to do it, too." It turns out, they do.

In downtown Bremerton, the Roxy Theater reminds us that a screen can be a stage for something much bigger. Under Executive Director Michael Goodnow, the historic



venue is now a community hub for dialogue, discovery, and shared experience – where movies, music, and conversation bring neighbors together one screening at a time.

Finally, the Bremerton WestSound Symphony founded in 1942 is a cornerstone of Kitsap's cultural and educational landscape. With volunteer musicians, professional talent, and a mission steeped in access and equity, the Symphony continues to inspire generations – on stage, in schools, and throughout the region.

Taken together, these stories reveal what

makes Kitsap unique. Businesses here don't just look ahead – they look inward and outward. They honor the past while designing a better future. They grow not only because they innovate, but because they remember who they're growing for.

Thank you for reading – and for being part of a business community that understands: true success is measured not only in profits, but in people. ■

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The Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort, named for the “people of the clear salt water,” blends cultural heritage with modern entertainment.

Economic Force, Cultural Anchor

PME's Role in Kitsap County's Future

By Quinn Propst | Ward Media Staff Reporter

When the Suquamish Tribe established Port Madison Enterprises (PME) in the mid-1980s, it was a bold and visionary move. At a time when few tribes had separated business from government, the Suquamish Tribe charted a course that emphasized sustainable economic development, cultural stewardship, and long-term thinking –

principles that continue to define PME today.

As the economic arm of the Suquamish Tribe, PME was founded to generate revenue and economic opportunity in the absence of a traditional tax base. What began as a single retail store has grown into a thriving enterprise that includes the Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort, Kiana Lodge, White Horse Golf Club, a suite of retail

outlets and gas stations, and a property management division.

PME also oversees several wholly owned subsidiaries – PME Construction Corporation, Port Madison Construction Corporation, and Suquamish Evergreen Corporation.

PME serves as the Tribe's Department of Revenue, providing essential support for the Suquamish government's services and long-term goals.

"We're the Department of Revenue for the Suquamish Tribe," said PME CEO Rion Ramirez. "We provide the revenue

for the Tribe to do the work of a government – to provide essential governmental services.”

That responsibility has guided PME's steady growth over nearly four decades. The Tribe's early success in Indian gaming, sanctioned by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, laid the groundwork for diversification.

“The tribe getting into gaming has been a real success for us in terms of being able to take some of those resources and begin to diversify out and not be so predicated upon the boom and bust of gaming,” Ramirez said.

A new economic impact study by John B. Taylor, Professor of Economics at Stanford University, finds that the Suquamish Tribe generates over \$250 million annually for the Kitsap County economy and supports more than 2,200 jobs through direct, indirect, and induced effects. With 1,240 employees, the Tribe ranks among the county's top five employers, contributing \$85.5 million in annual payroll and more than \$19 million in state and local taxes. The study also highlights the Tribe's expanding regional role, with 78% of its workforce made up of non-tribal members, reflecting its broad economic impact across the community.

Poulsbo, Bremerton, Silverdale, Port Orchard, Bainbridge Island and parts of Seattle are all part of the Tribe's ancestral homelands. Over the past seven to eight years, the Tribe has worked to reacquire lands in



PME CEO Rion Ramirez continues to shape community development through visionary leadership.

these areas, reestablishing its physical and cultural presence while creating opportunities for economic development.

New businesses, like Clearwater Markets and Agate Dreams retail cannabis stores, now stand on lands once lost but now reclaimed and repurposed to serve both tribal members and surrounding communities.

“This has been our homelands for time immemorial, and we're committed to continuing to be a strong steward, a strong friend, and committed to continuing to do things the right way and growing those relationships in a positive way,” he said.

PME's commitment to

stewardship goes beyond land. It's deeply rooted in the Tribe's cultural values, including generosity and leadership through service.

“The Suquamish Tribe is known to be great hosts,” Ramirez said.

Leadership in the Suquamish Tribe – and across Pacific Northwest Tribes – has long been rooted in the cultural tradition of giving and sharing wealth, as seen in practices like the potlatch. This spirit of generosity remains central today, reflected in the Tribe's ongoing commitment to supporting employees and meeting community needs.

That philosophy extends to

PME's workforce, where many employees – tribal and non-tribal alike – have found not just jobs but careers.

“We try to do things the right way,” he said. “We try to treat people well. We try to make it a fun environment for folks – not only to work and grow in – but we want them to know that we love and care about them all.”

“The amount of long-term employees, whether it's 40 years, 30 years, 25 years, 15 years, we have a lot of folks that have worked here for a very long time and choose to work here because of the love and attention and commitment that we from the top down, I think, show to our employees,” he said. “And their commitment as being the front line folks working in the area is really what, I think, is the differentiator in terms of ourselves and how we grow.”

Creating a positive work environment has become a

Inside the Clearwater Casino, guests enjoy exciting gaming experiences in a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere.



Feature

key focus for Ramirez, who wants PME to be known as the employer of choice in the region. Whether at the casino, hotel, golf course, or retail divisions, PME strives to offer strong career opportunities, a supportive culture, and benefits that meet the real needs of its workforce. One example is the recent addition of a mental health support program, which connects employees with therapists within 24 to 48 hours – a response to the growing mental health challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.

"We recognized the difficulty many folks were facing in accessing timely mental health care," Ramirez said. "This was something that was really important to leadership at PME – to make sure we were showing up for our people."

That

long-term commitment – to people, to place, and to community – is what sets PME and the Suquamish Tribe apart. While corporations may shift operations across state or national borders, the Tribe's businesses are here to stay.

"The tribe has been here from time immemorial," he said. "It's going to be here, forever into the future. So we have the opportunity to think much more long term versus short term. I think their decision making and their willingness to focus on that long term commitment is something that has been a tremendously positive side of things."

PME's contributions to the region are significant. The organization generates livable wage jobs, recycles revenue back into the community, and supports both tribal members and non-Indians through services and employment. The ripple effect is felt across Kitsap County and beyond, with substantial payroll and tax contributions flowing back to the state.

"The work that we do in the tribe is rather unique in that our reservation is here," Ramirez said. "Our homelands are here. We're not going anywhere. We're not taking any businesses and moving them to another country or another state." "Our overall ripple effect is



The team at Beach Glass Café brings warmth and hospitality to every guest, offering locally inspired dishes in a casual setting.

tremendously positive in terms of the work that we do here within the state, both for Kitsap County, and for Washington state as a whole," he said.

At its core, PME is about nation building – investing in the Tribe's future while supporting the broader community.

"In terms of being able to put in place a forward-thinking vision of business and politics, and then membership supporting that vision and rallying around the work that

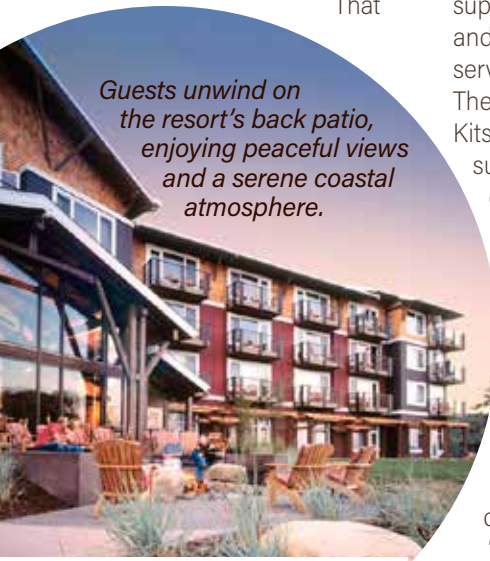
we do to create a real, sustained economy for the tribe is something that I think we can all really be very, very proud of," he said.

Port Madison Enterprises is more than a business enterprise. It is a living example of what visionary leadership, cultural stewardship, and community commitment can build – rooted in ancestral land, driven by a long-term vision, and guided by the values of the Suquamish people. ■

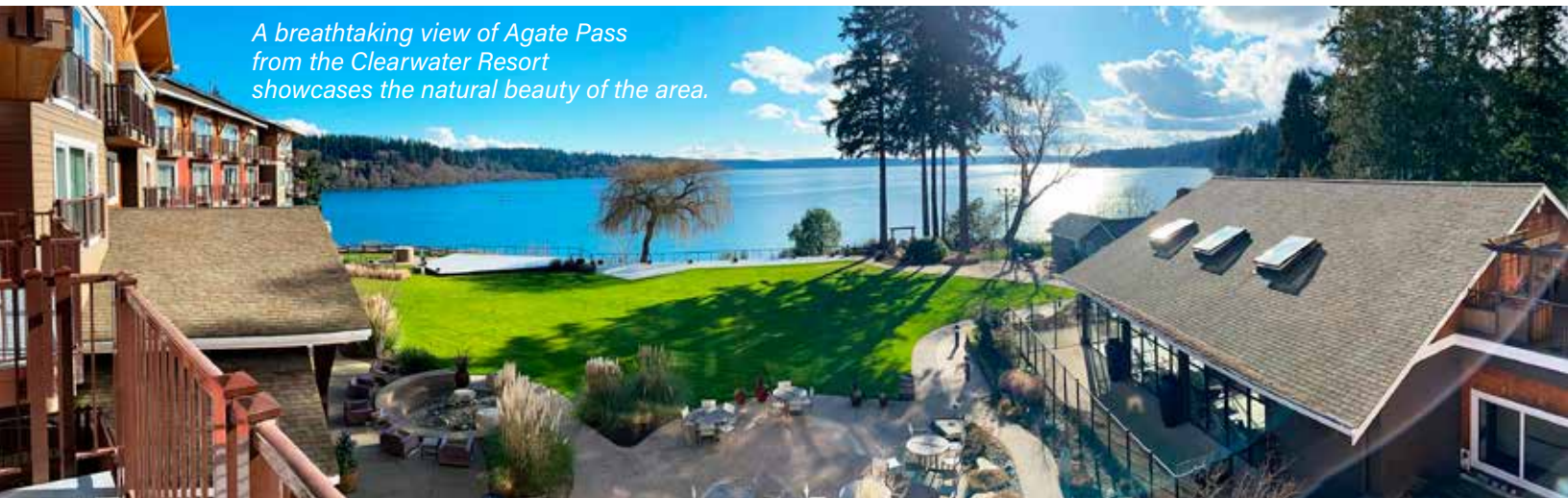


Kiana Lodge offers a breathtaking setting for weddings and events, surrounded by lush gardens and water views.

Guests unwind on the resort's back patio, enjoying peaceful views and a serene coastal atmosphere.



A breathtaking view of Agate Pass from the Clearwater Resort showcases the natural beauty of the area.



Technology

Beyond Break-Fix

Why Businesses Choose Managed Service Providers

By Jon Hoehne | CMIT Solutions

Most business owners didn't start their companies to become IT experts. Yet increasingly, that's exactly what running a business demands. Between cybersecurity threats, software updates, and network management, IT can become a full-time job that pulls focus from core business activities. Managed Service Providers (MSPs) offer an alternative approach.

UNDERSTANDING THE MSP MODEL

A Managed Service Provider is essentially your outsourced IT department, but with a crucial difference from traditional IT support. Rather than waiting for something to break before fixing it (the old "break-fix" model), MSPs proactively monitor, maintain, and optimize your technology infrastructure.

MSPs typically offer comprehensive services including network monitoring, cybersecurity protection, data backup and recovery, help desk support, strategic IT planning, and compliance management. All these recurring services are delivered for a predictable monthly fee, transforming IT from an unpredictable expense into a manageable operational cost.

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF DIY IT

When starting out, many businesses manage "back-office" functions internally, including IT. While this might work initially, it creates significant vulnerabilities. As your business

grows and you deploy more IT assets, who's ensuring your cybersecurity measures can withstand increasingly sophisticated threats?

When IT problems become a regular part of your business day, you're not just losing time – you're losing ground to competitors who've solved these issues. While you're dealing with network outages or security scares, they're focused on growth.

THE MSP ADVANTAGE: MORE THAN JUST SUPPORT

Working with an MSP provides several strategic advantages that go beyond simple technical support:

More Predictable

Budgeting: MSPs operate on a subscription model covering proactive monitoring, maintenance, and basic support. Major projects or extensive onsite work can be planned and scoped with clear costs and timelines. The

proactive approach significantly

reduces costly emergency situations. A good MSP will be transparent about what's included versus billable, helping you budget more effectively than with traditional break-fix IT support.

Enterprise-Level Expertise: MSPs bring expertise typically reserved for large corporations to small and medium businesses. You gain access to specialists in cybersecurity, cloud computing, compliance, and more – without the overhead of hiring full-time experts.

Proactive Problem Prevention:

Through continuous monitoring and maintenance, MSPs identify and resolve potential issues before they impact your business. This approach dramatically

reduces downtime and improves overall system reliability.

Strategic Partnership: A good MSP doesn't just fix problems – they help you use technology to achieve business goals. They can advise on everything from improving remote work capabilities to implementing automation that increases efficiency.

Enhanced Security: With cyber threats evolving daily, MSPs provide multi-layered security approaches that most businesses couldn't implement alone, including advanced threat detection, regular security updates, and employee training.

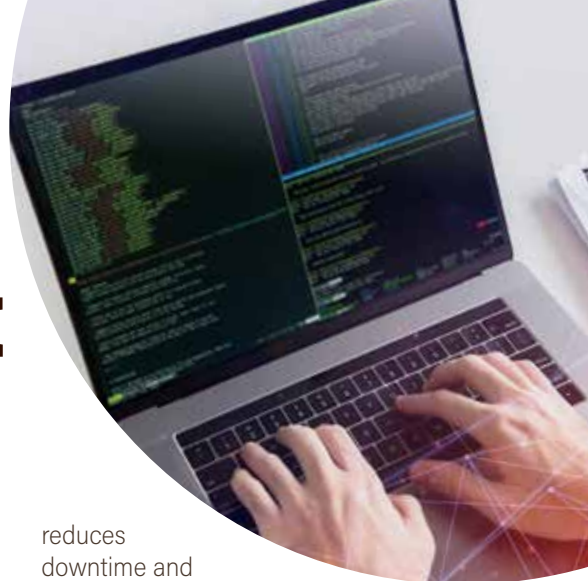
IS AN MSP RIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Consider these questions: Are IT issues regularly disrupting your operations? Do you worry about cybersecurity but lack the expertise to address it properly? Is your business growth being held back by technology limitations? Are you tired of reactive, expensive IT fixes?

If you answered yes to any of these, an MSP partnership could be transformative. The right MSP becomes an extension of your team, allowing you to focus on what you do best – running your business – while ensuring your technology infrastructure supports rather than hinders your success.

MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE

The decision to partner with an MSP isn't just about solving today's IT challenges – it's about positioning your business for tomorrow's opportunities. In an era where technology drives competitive advantage, having a dedicated team of experts managing your IT infrastructure isn't a luxury; it's a strategic necessity. ■



Leading with Heart

Honeybee Horticulture's Journey from Side Hustle to Visionary Venture

By Quinn Propst | Ward Media Staff Reporter

Honeybee Horticulture is a Kitsap-based event planning and floral design business that also offers charcuterie catering, combining artistic detail with heartfelt personalization to create meaningful, memorable experiences for weddings, celebrations, and community events.

For owner and founder Mariah Mendez, the name Honeybee Horticulture is more than a nod to flowers – it's personal. Her mother always called her "honeybee," and the business name reflects both that endearment and Mendez's original intention: to grow plants.

"I realized maybe I don't have as green of a thumb as I thought I did, and I actually do better with arranging blooms when they're already grown," Mendez said.

That shift in focus – from propagation to floral design – set the foundation for a

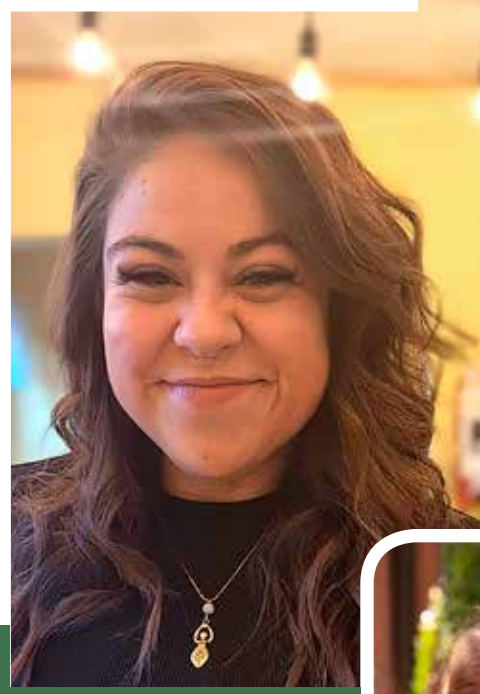
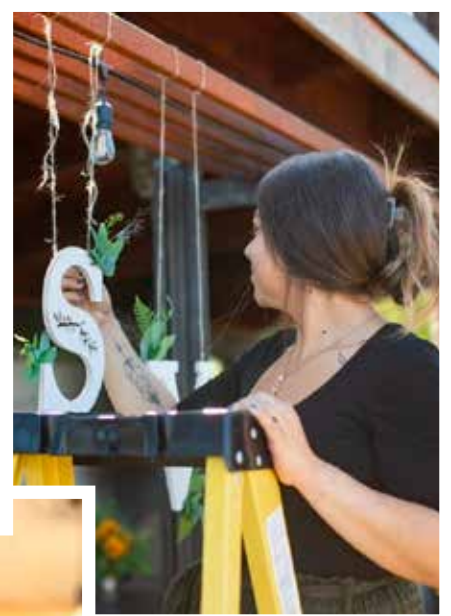
business rooted in creativity, storytelling, and community. In 2023, Mendez officially launched Honeybee Horticulture.

The idea took shape when her cousin asked her to help plan a wedding.

"That was my first opportunity to see if this was something that I wanted to really do and pursue," she said. "It was great. It was beautiful, and it was fun, and it just kind of fueled the fire for me to keep this dream alive."

Mendez works full-time in healthcare, but her passion lies with Honeybee Horticulture. Eventually, she hopes to transition to the business full time.

"We can do all the planning for you, or we can fill in gaps where it's needed," she said.



Mariah Mendez is the founder of Honeybee Horticulture, a Kitsap-based business that blends floral design, event planning, and charcuterie catering to create personalized, heartfelt experiences for weddings, celebrations, and community events.





Ready-to-enjoy charcuterie boxes from Honeybee Horticulture are perfect for weddings, pop-ups, and celebrations of all kinds.

From managing budgets and coordinating vendors to helping with vows and registries, her event planning services are flexible and deeply personal.

Weddings are her specialty – ranging from intimate 15-person ceremonies to full-scale events with over 200 guests.

Her floral work is equally customized. Mendez designs with both fresh and faux flowers, experimenting with different mediums and challenging conventional styles.

"We do all sorts of large installments and I'm always looking for something different, not just things that you've already seen," she said. "I always try to push the envelope a little

bit as far as what we can make."

What truly sets her apart is her focus on meaning and detail. Mendez finds inspiration in her clients' stories and often incorporates sentimental items into her designs.

"I had a bride who wanted to incorporate the necklace that had her mom's ashes in it," she said. "She just wanted it to be there for her. I was able to incorporate that in her bouquet, and it was just very special."

"It's all in the details," she said. "Every little detail matters. That is what makes it special."

That same personal approach flows into Honeybee Horticulture's newest offering: charcuterie. The catering side of the business began in December 2024, taking off after



a successful Kitsap Chamber holiday luncheon. Since then, Mendez has brought her charcuterie creations to community events like the Port Orchard Night Market and Quincy Square's grand opening in Bremerton.

"I come from a very big Hispanic family, and we feed people, that's just what we do," Mendez said. "So it felt natural for us to start the charcuterie side. I didn't want to get into full cooking, because I just don't have the time with everything else I'm managing. So it felt very comfortable to start feeding people and doing it beautifully."

Honeybee Horticulture

now features a mobile charcuterie cart that creates build-your-own boxes on the spot. Mendez hopes to grow this concept into a full fleet of carts, allowing the business to appear at multiple events at once.

She doesn't do it all alone. Her best friend Autumn Furman, currently a volunteer, will soon become a business partner. With a background in education and curriculum





A custom bouquet by Mariah Mendez showcases her signature style – lush, modern, and deeply personal.

development, Furman helped design a successful Mother's Day floral workshop this spring. Mendez hopes to expand into more floral and charcuterie classes, partnering with local businesses to host pop-up events throughout Kitsap County.

Mendez is committed to sourcing flowers through local collectives and staying community-centered in all aspects of the business.

"We lead with heart," Mendez said. "Everything we do is very centered towards you. Not every client is the same. We want to really make sure that this is personalized to their

needs and what they want, and we're just not a transactional event company."

Long-term, Mendez dreams of owning a large, live-on property to serve as a multi-use venue – a place for weddings, retreats, birthdays, and corporate gatherings. She envisions a welcoming, out-of-the-ordinary space where people can connect, celebrate, and feel safe.

Running a small business hasn't been easy, but Mendez has embraced the uncertainty.

"There's a lot of things that I've done not knowing what the end result was going to be," she said. "It is a scary thing. It



can feel lonely at times, even if you're not alone."

Still, she presses on – heart first – fueled by the joy she brings to others.

"I look for the joy," she said. "Not just in the food part, but in the reactions to the florals and everything coming together. Being able to actually create my vision and have people be either awestruck or just really touched – it's a really good feeling." ■



Best friends and business partners Autumn Furman and Mariah Mendez craft charcuterie boxes at their mobile charcuterie cart.





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Chill Together, Heal Together

Fire + Floe Sparks New Kind of Gathering Space

By Quinn Propst | Ward Media Staff Reporter

On Bainbridge Island, where misty mornings linger and the views never disappoint, Mikal Foushee has created something extraordinary: a Scandinavian-inspired refuge where heat meets cold – and transformation begins. Launched in 2024, Fire + Floe is rooted in the centuries-old Nordic tradition of sauna and cold plunging. It's a ritual Foushee

and her husband practiced for years in the chilly waters of the Puget Sound. Inspired by travels to Denmark and Sweden – where sauna culture is seamlessly woven into daily life – Foushee often dreamed aloud of a sauna to warm up in after their plunges. Eventually, that dream took shape.

Foushee began to wonder why, in a region so similar to Scandinavia in climate

and landscape, saunas weren't a more common part of life.

"I never imagined I would start a sauna," she said. "But I thought, well, it's what I want to be doing – maybe other people want to do it, too."

Now, nestled near the Bainbridge shoreline, Fire + Floe offers contrast therapy: the practice of alternating between intense heat and cold immersion to relax the body, clear the mind, and build resilience. Sessions are about an hour and 15 minutes and typically begin with 10–15 minutes in the sauna, followed by a plunge

into the Sound. Guests are encouraged to flow back and forth between the two extremes as well as to listen to their bodies instead of watching a clock.

"People walk away feeling calm, clear, and more connected to themselves," Foushee said. "It's a practice that helps you meet discomfort and move through it – and in that process, something shifts."

Foushee grew up on Bainbridge Island and has been plunging in these waters for many years. She knows the place intimately – its rhythms, tides, and moods. After a career in photography, video, and project management in the health and wellness industry, she found herself burned out after the pandemic. What was meant to be a

sunny. Not everybody wants to be outside in January, February, March, when it's raining and cold – and those are actually my favorite months to be outside now," she said.

Foushee is passionate about reclaiming winter as a time to gather and connect. She remembers dreading the cold and noticing how local parks would sit empty most of the year. But something changed when she committed to contrast therapy.

"I am no longer that cold person," she said. "That's definitely helped change my core temperature and just make it more bearable through the rest of the year."

She describes the winter water as "so special" – clear, crisp, and fresh – each session is unique. Summer's low tides bring their own magic, but it's the ebb and flow of the elements that makes Fire + Floe so compelling.

"The tides are a challenge, but also one that I welcome," she said. "You could be here for an hour and 15 minutes, and your first time out in the water and in the sauna will feel one way, and then the next time you go out there, it will feel and look totally different."

People are often surprised by how much discomfort they can endure and how quickly their tolerance grows.

"I think a lot of people surprise themselves, like, 'Oh, I wasn't planning on going in the water because that's cold or that's scary,' but you know, by the end of it, they're totally underwater, and they're coming back and they're like, 'This is amazing,'" she said.

For Foushee, contrast therapy is as much about mental clarity as physical wellness. As a busy parent, she turns to cold plunging as a powerful equalizer – a way to release tension, clear the mind, and reset.

"It's so great if you are having a really stressful day to go out into the water or the sauna, and that all just completely clears itself," she said.

She also hears from others about the unexpected benefits: deeper sleep, more energy, and a profound sense of relaxation.

"People tell me they sleep better than they have in ages," she said. "I love hearing that."

Science backs her up – regular sauna use improves cardiovascular health, supports recovery, and reduces inflammation.

"I have a lot of athletes that come for recovery," she said.



Founder Mikal Foushee launched Fire + Floe to bring the restorative power of contrast therapy to Kitsap County.

short break turned into a complete shift in direction and ultimately, the founding of Fire + Floe.

Her mobile timber sauna, custom-built by Michigan-based craftsmen, was designed specifically for its spot in Lynwood Center near the southern end of the island. Because the Puget Sound and Scandinavian coastlines share so much – wind, fog, evergreens, cold water – Foushee saw an opportunity to build community in nature, especially during the darker months.

"Everybody wants to be outside when it's



Feature

But perhaps the most underrated benefit of Fire + Floe is the community it fosters.

"I've got a good chunk of people that come just for some social interaction, because they work from home by themselves, or they don't have any family close by, and they come here to meet people, to get out of the house, to interact with others," she said.

What began as a personal project has evolved into a welcoming, inclusive space where strangers often become friends.

"One of my favorite parts is having these disparate groups all come together, and at the end they're exchanging phone numbers, or they're hanging out afterwards, or now they plan sessions to come when they're here together," she said. "I think that is something that's really important for me, to help foster that community."

Foushee loves to see people's initial trepidation turn to something more confident through their sessions.

"I always want to take a before and after photo, because their faces are kind of like, 'What are we doing here? This sounds terrifying or exciting,'" she said.

That hesitation usually gives way to joy and repeat visits. People frequently ask about memberships and that is something she hopes to offer in the near future.

"It's such a special place," she said. "It's so healing, just being in nature by itself, and the more time you can spend outside, the better, especially doing it with other



people in a beautiful place."

Fire + Floe has also become a hub for private events and creative collaborations. From wedding parties and family reunions to birthday celebrations and beachside wellness experiences, Foushee has partnered with chefs, acupuncturists, and other local businesses to create immersive offerings.

"It gives people a way to connect that isn't centered around food or drink – just being together, relaxing, and enjoying the moment," she said.

Whether people come for recovery, reconnection, or simply curiosity, Foushee hopes they leave feeling better than they imagined – and surprised by their own strength. ■



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Breaking the Stigma of the Nursing Home and Assisted Living

By **Jessica Hull** | Community Relations Director, Bay Pointe by Cogir

CHALLENGING NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES

Have you ever heard your loved one tell you, "You're not going to put me in a home"? It's the age-old stigma that conjures up the image of a cold, institutional environment where seniors are warehoused and neglected. This is an outdated perception for nursing homes, but even more so, further from the truth for Assisted Living Communities. Modern Assisted Livings prioritize person-centered care, comfort, and community. Breaking through the stereotype of a nursing home, they shift the focus from mere care to a vibrant community experience and redefine what it means to live life to the fullest in one's later years.

Assisted Living Communities offer a home-like environment than a clinical one. They are ideal for those seeking comfort, community, and what is often times hard to believe: independence. Nursing homes prioritize medical care and treatment such as physical and occupational therapy. Both options are equally needed and important. The choice depends on your loved one's needs and preferences.

THE CHOSEN DIFFERENCE

Planning ahead is what can make all the difference when it comes to senior living options. Choosing an Assisted Living community allows an individual to maintain their autonomy by controlling their future, selecting a community that is supportive of not only their needs but their likes and dislikes. Whether it be activities or amenities, an Assisted Living consideration will allow an individual to cater their future on their lifestyle that suits them best, rather than leaving it up to chance. Early intervention creates muscle memory that avoids emergencies. Wouldn't you want to choose where you live? Be a part of the process of choosing a community, the apartment, and decorating.



THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY LIVING

- **Maintenance-free living:** No more household chores. No more yard work. No more home maintenance!
- **Access to healthcare services:** Communities offer on-site healthcare services such as 24/7 care staff, RN or LPN's on staff and partnerships with healthcare providers. Some communities even assist with scheduling and transportation to appointments.
- **Socialization and a sense of community:** Opportunities to connect with others, build relationships, and participate in activities such as large events, senior balls, and outings.
- **Safety and security:** Assisted Living communities offer 24/7 staff, emergency response systems, and secure environments.
- **Peace of Mind/Promotion of independence:** Maintain independence in activities of daily living and receiving help only where and when it's needed.
- **Respite for family caregivers:** Relief for family members who may be caring for loved ones. Be family again.
- **Apartment Style Living:** Individual apartments that can be personalized and decorated to individuals' tastes.

THE BENEFITS OF A NURSING HOME

- **Skilled Nursing:** Receive specialized care from licensed nurses and therapists
- **Rehabilitation Services:** Receive physical, occupational, and speech therapy to aid recovery.
- **24/7 Medical Care & Monitoring:** Continuous medical attention and monitoring around-the-clock.
- **Complex Medical Attention:** Wound care, IV Therapy, and post-surgical care.
- **Nutritional Support:** Diets tailored

to specific medical conditions, such as swallowing disorders.

PERSONALIZED CARE AND SUPPORT

Nursing homes and Assisted Living Communities can both provide 24/7 medical care. However, Nursing Homes can provide skilled nursing and rehabilitation services for those that require a higher level of care whereas Assisted Living Communities offer supportive services such as home care, adult day care for individuals who need assistance with daily activities. Think of intensive medical care versus supporting daily living activities such as bathing, grooming, and dressing. The best way to determine what level of care is appropriate is a nurse assessment for an individualized care plan.

COST AND FUNDING DIFFERENCES

The cost of Assisted Living is going to vary depending on location, services, apartment, and level of care. In Kitsap County, the average costs will range from \$4,500 to \$7,000 per month. The costs are typically paid for out-of-pocket. Some communities offer Medicaid contract programs and private pay spenddowns, or other forms of financial assistance. Services in Assisted Living typically include rent, meals, housekeeping, transportation, and assistance with daily activities.

On the other hand, the cost of a Nursing Home is generally more expensive than Assisted Living; ranging from \$7,500 to \$10,000 per month or more. However, it can be funded through a range of financial options including:

- Medicare/Medicaid
- Private Insurance
- Out-of-Pocket

Services in a Nursing Home include 24/7 nursing care, meals, housekeeping, and assistance with daily activities, as well as medical services and rehabilitation therapies such as physical and occupational. A big reason for the increase of cost of a Nursing Home is due to them providing more intensive medical care than an Assisted Living. Understanding these differences between the two will help individuals and families make informed decisions about care options.

By exploring these questions, individuals and families can gain a more comprehensive understanding of care options and make those big decisions that prioritize quality of life, care, and support whether it be a Nursing Home or an Assisted Living. ■

New Board Members Announced

The Greater Kitsap Chamber Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of six new members to its Board of Directors, representing a diverse cross-section of Kitsap County's business leadership.

The Chamber also extends heartfelt gratitude to three outgoing board members for their years of dedicated service.

The newly appointed board members are:

- **Christine Cochran**, Marina Square Suites
- **Shauna Washburn**, United Moving and Storage
- **Susan Larsen**, Land Title of Kitsap County
- **Amy Yaley**, Ward Media
- **Jason Ritter-Lopatowski**, Rice Fergus Miller Architecture
- **Amy Zinkhon**, Suitcases on Standby

Cochran, Washburn, Larsen, Ritter-Lopatowski and Zinkhon have previously served as board directors and have been selected for new terms. Ward Media's Amy Yaley is new to the board.

These leaders bring a diverse range of professional expertise, community insight, and strategic vision to the Chamber, thereby strengthening its mission to foster economic vitality, advocate for local businesses, and promote regional collaboration.

"We are thrilled to welcome

these dynamic individuals to the Board," said Irene Moyer, President & CEO of the Greater Kitsap Chamber. "Their experience and commitment to Kitsap County will be instrumental as we continue to grow our programs, expand our partnerships, and support our members."

The Chamber also recognizes and thanks the following outgoing board members for their service and leadership:

- **Jim Cook**, White Barn Decor
- **Breane Martinez**, Nothing Bundt Cakes
- **Rick Soper**, LPL Financial at Kitsap Credit Union

A special thank you goes to Rick Soper, who has served on both the Silverdale Chamber and Greater Kitsap Chamber boards for the past ten years. His longstanding commitment to local business and his contributions to the Chamber's growth and transition have left a lasting impact.

The Greater Kitsap Chamber Board of Directors provides strategic guidance to advance the Chamber's work in advocacy, education, economic development, and member engagement.

The Chamber serves businesses across Bremerton, Silverdale, and the surrounding greater Kitsap communities.

For more information, visit www.greaterkitsapchamber.com. ■

Irene Moyer Named President & CEO of the Greater Kitsap Chamber

The Greater Kitsap Chamber Board of Directors is proud to announce the appointment of Irene Moyer as its new President and Chief Executive Officer.

Moyer brings a wealth of leadership experience, a deep commitment to community development, and a vision for continued business growth throughout Kitsap County.

Having served in various leadership roles within the Poulsbo, Silverdale, and Greater Kitsap Chambers, as well as the Kitsap nonprofit community, Moyer steps into the role with strong relationships across sectors and a passion for economic vitality.

Her appointment in February marks an exciting new chapter for the organization as it continues its mission to strengthen and promote regional prosperity.

"I am honored to lead the Greater Kitsap Chamber and continue our work of supporting local businesses, advocating for smart growth, and fostering meaningful partnerships," said Moyer. "Kitsap is a vibrant and innovative community, and I look forward to building on our successes while charting a bold path forward."

Former leader, David Emmons, will remain with the organization in a new role as Vice President of Membership and Development. In this capacity, Emmons will continue to focus on member



engagement, relationship building, and fundraising.

"Irene is a thoughtful and strategic leader who understands the unique needs of our members," said Emmons. "I'm excited to support her vision and continue contributing to the Chamber's mission in this new role."

Moyer's leadership comes at a time of dynamic momentum for the Chamber, following key initiatives in workforce development, small business support, and regional collaboration.

As President & CEO, she will focus on member engagement, public policy advocacy, tourism promotion, and expanding opportunities for all business sectors.

The Greater Kitsap Chamber serves as the voice of business in Bremerton, Silverdale, and the surrounding communities, representing a diverse and growing membership base.

For more information about the Chamber, please visit www.greaterkitsapchamber.com. ■

May Member of the Month: Geico Local Office



The Greater Kitsap Chamber was pleased to honor the Geico Local Office - Silverdale as the May 2025 Member of the Month.

Members since 1990, the Geico Office led by Kevin Krieger, are hyper-engaged in the Central Kitsap Community supporting not just clients, but the greater community and we're excited to celebrate them this month.

WHERE LOCAL SERVICE MEETS NATIONAL STRENGTH

In the heart of Silverdale, Washington, just a short drive from the bustling waterfront and scenic views of the Olympic Peninsula, the GEICO Local Office led by Kevin Krieger is redefining what it means to blend local customer care with one of

the nation's most trusted names in insurance.

As part of the GEICO family, this local office offers all the reliability and innovation of a national brand, while focusing intently on serving the unique needs of Kitsap County and beyond.

LOCAL ROOTS, NATIONAL POWER

Kevin Krieger brings more than just industry knowledge to the table – he brings a passion for connecting with his community.

With years of experience and a commitment to service, Kevin and his team are more than just insurance agents; they're trusted advisors and neighbors. Located conveniently in Silverdale, the office provides a warm, welcoming space where

individuals and families can sit down face-to-face and have their insurance questions answered clearly and thoroughly.

The mission at the Silverdale GEICO office is simple yet powerful: offer personalized service backed by the strength and resources of GEICO's national network. That means faster claims processing, better rates, and real-time support – delivered by people who live and work in the same community as their customers.

CUSTOMIZED COVERAGE FOR EVERY NEED

What sets the Silverdale GEICO office apart is its ability to tailor insurance solutions to a wide range of needs, whether you're a first-time driver, a military family, or a small business owner

seeking liability coverage.

The team takes pride in guiding clients through the insurance maze with clarity and care.

A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

The Silverdale GEICO office isn't just about policies – it's about people. Kevin and his team actively support local events, collaborate with area businesses, and strive to be a helpful resource both inside and outside the office.

Whether it's sponsoring local sports teams or participating in community outreach efforts, this team embodies the values of service and connection.

Congratulations to Kevin and his team on this recognition and for 35 years with the Chamber! ■

GKC Around the Community



Owner and North Kitsap native, Tanner Tennyson, and 100+ members of the Greater Kitsap community celebrated the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting of Integrity Roofing and Construction's new showroom and offices on June 6th. Guests were treated to entertainment provided by Skinny Blues along with bites and tours of the new location on Viking Avenue in Poulsbo.



The Coffee Oasis - Burwell Cafe and Roastery celebrated a Grand Re-opening on the 9th with a Ribbon Cutting and remarks from Bremerton Mayor Greg Wheeler. The popular cafe and provider of youth services throughout Kitsap and Pierce Counties recently completed renovations at their flagship location in Downtown Bremerton.

Spotlight on Washington Department of Labor & Industries

The Greater Kitsap Chamber was grateful to receive a grant from the Washington Department of Labor & Industries and for the last 18 months have been sharing information about L&I's Small Business Office.

An amazing resource for businesses across our region, the L&I Small Business Office is excited to offer free support for the entire life cycle of a business.

UNLOCKING SUCCESS: HOW L&I SUPPORTS WASHINGTON'S SMALL BUSINESSES

Running a business comes with countless challenges – compliance, safety regulations, hiring, and keeping up with ever-changing workplace laws.

Fortunately, the **Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I)** is more than just a regulatory agency; it's an **invaluable partner** for small businesses across the state.

MORE THAN WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS

L&I is widely recognized for its role in workplace safety, ensuring compliance with health and safety standards, and investigating hazards.

However, many business owners don't realize the **wealth**

of resources and expertise L&I provides to support entrepreneurs at every stage of growth.

With **19 offices statewide** and a team of **nearly 3,000 skilled professionals** – including consultants and advisors – L&I is uniquely positioned to help businesses **stay compliant, improve workplace safety, and navigate labor laws.**

Moreover, L&I offers confidential, no-fee consultations that can help you find and fix hazards in your workplace and strengthen your safety program. **No fines or penalties will result from issues uncovered during a consultation.**

A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

The **L&I Small Business Office** is a hidden gem for business owners looking for guidance on compliance, safety, and operations.

Whether you're just starting out or managing a growing workforce, L&I offers a variety of free services, including:

- **Hiring Guidance:** Confused about what paperwork you need to hire an employee? L&I provides step-by-step guidance to help businesses onboard new workers correctly.
- **Safety & Compliance Templates:** Need a workplace safety plan or record-keeping templates? L&I offers **ready-to-use**

resources to simplify compliance and protect your employees.

- **Workshops & Training:** From L&I Essentials for Business (in English & Spanish) to ergonomics to retail safety to independent contractor guidelines, L&I hosts **free** educational workshops and maintains a video library covering essential topics for Washington businesses.
- **Workers' Compensation Expertise:** As administrators of the state's **workers' compensation system**, L&I acts like a **large insurance provider**, ensuring that injured workers receive medical care and wage-replacement benefits – while also helping employers understand their responsibilities and reduce risks.

A VITAL - AND FREE - RESOURCE FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Navigating Washington's labor laws and safety requirements doesn't have to be overwhelming. With L&I's **free** resources and expert guidance, small businesses can **stay compliant, reduce risks, and build a safer, more productive workplace.**

Want to take advantage of these valuable business tools? Learn more at Lni.wa.gov/SmallBusiness. ■



In partnership with the Department of Labor & Industries for employer outreach and education.





New and Renewal Members for April and May

We appreciate your support of the Chamber's Mission!

Stakeholder



Virginia Mason Franciscan Health - St. Michael Medical Center (1977)

Community Connector



United Moving & Storage (2016)



Peaks Financial (2023)

Growth

Care Partners Living (2024)

Cascade Natural Gas Commercial and Industrial Program (2025)

Main Street

Admiral Theatre (1994)

Central Kitsap School District (2006)

Mountain to Sound Law (2025)

Navy Federal Credit Union (2001)

Pillar to Post - Jarquin Team (2022)

Tara Scouten Real Estate -

Broker (2022)

The Trails at Silverdale (2016)

Business

Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce (2004)

Bayani Journey (2025)

Bremerton - Olympic Peninsula Navy League (2002)

Buffalo Wild Wings (2014)

Cameo Craft (2025)

Camp Bow Wow (2018)

Central Stage Theatre (CSTOCK) (2009)

Clear Creek Trail (2010)

Community Frameworks (2022)

Crista Shores (2022)

Cross Creek Self Storage (2020)

Debbie Doll Insurance Agent Broker (2011)

Doug Nathan Coaching and Consulting (2025)

Dream Seeking Traveler (2024)

Edward Jones - Paul Miller (2024)

Erickson Construction (2025)

Four Seasons Pools & Spas (2016)

Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce (2021)

Grand Canyon University (2022)

Graphic Reflections (2023)

Greater Kingston Community Chamber of Commerce (2007)

Hall & West (2001)

Hill Worldwide Moving Services (2013)

Jersey Mike's Subs (2016)

KidVantage (2016)

Kiwanis Club of Bremerton (2019)

KW Commercial - Kitsap Spaces (2025)

Liberty Bank (2011)

Life Care Center of Port Orchard (2005)

Live Well Kitsap! (2025)

Meals on Wheels Kitsap (2018)

NAMI Kitsap (2025)

Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport (2022)

Navy City Realty (2025)

Nonprofit Association of Washington (2022)

Noo-Kayet Investments (2023)

NW 4x4 Outfitters (2020)

One Hit Wonder Cannabis (2025)

Our Place Pub & Eatery (1984)

Peninsula Alliance (2025)

Peninsula Construction Services (2023)

Pot O' Gold Inc (2024)

Precision Notary (2021)

Purpose (2025)

RE/MAX Platinum Services (2025)

Reid Property Management (2019)

Resilient Quality Solutions (2025)

Salvation Army Community Center (1983)

Scott Cashman State Farm (2019)

Scouting America (2018)

Silverdale Recycling and Garbage Facility (2014)

Spark Commons (2016)

State Farm - Nicole Grigg (2021)

The Agency- Bainbridge Island (2025)

The Olsen Agency (2025)

United States Submarine Veterans - Bremerton Base (2024)

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health Emergency & Urgent Care - Bremerton (2025)

Waste Management (2018)

Western Technology (2024)

Westsound Home & Garden (2015)

Wet Apple Media (2006)

New Members

Thank you for your continued support of the Greater Kitsap Chamber through your membership. Your commitment to the Chamber plays a vital role in strengthening our business community and fostering growth, connection, and advocacy across the region. ■



Financial Independence: More Than Just Retirement

By Kevin Campbell | Wealth Advisor & Founder of Peaks Financial, Host of Kitsap Matters Podcast, Author of Fearless: Charting Your Course to Financial Independence

When people talk about retirement, most imagine some magical finish line between ages 62 and 67. The truth? Retirement isn't really about a date—it's about freedom. Not just freedom from work, but freedom to live how and where you want. That's financial independence.

It's the difference between having to work and choosing to work. Between clocking in and checking out – to hike the Olympics, sail the Sound, or chase passion projects with the energy you used to spend on Zoom calls.

CHARTING YOUR COURSE TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Just yesterday, I met with a couple – both longtime schoolteachers – who wanted to know if they could retire in a year or two. They'd saved diligently, lived below their means, and built up a nest egg. But when we first ran the numbers, the answer was: maybe. Their retirement plan initially looked like a tightrope walk.

That is, until we added one critical layer – **tax strategy**.

See, for most of their working lives they'd been in the 12% tax bracket. But between pensions, Social Security, and Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) on the tax deferred retirement savings, they would be forced into the 22% bracket or higher during retirement. In other words, the IRS had its

own plan for their money – and it wasn't great.

So, we built a smarter strategy. By managing when and how they paid taxes, they will likely remain in the 12% bracket or lower throughout retirement based on current tax laws, though tax laws may be subject to change in the future.

The impact? Their odds of covering their living and lifestyle expenses through their life expectancy jumped from 53% to 97%. No extra savings. No delayed retirement. Just smart, intentional planning.

This is what financial independence looks like – not just a bigger number, but a better strategy.

So what made the biggest difference?

Three things, and they're the same for almost everyone:

1. Income: How Will You Replace Your Paycheck?

Financial independence is about replacing earned income with reliable cash flow – from pensions, Social Security, rental income, annuities or withdrawals from your portfolio. The key is to ensure the money keeps flowing, even when you stop.

2. Investment Strategy: Maximize Growth, Minimize Regret

Investing isn't about chasing returns; it's about building a plan you can stick with. That usually means a formulaic approach that aims to reduce the impact of downturns

without capping your upside. Especially in volatile markets, your investment strategy should be built to weather storms and capture growth.

3. Tax Management: Keep More of What You Earn

This one doesn't get the spotlight enough. But optimizing when you pay taxes – whether through Roth conversions, strategic withdrawals, or asset location – can have a massive impact. It's not just about saving today. It's about the compounding growth on money you didn't hand over to the IRS. Be smart: pay the IRS what you owe – but not a penny more than necessary.

FINAL THOUGHT: YOUR INDEPENDENCE, YOUR TIMELINE

You don't need to wait for Social Security eligibility or Medicare to begin thinking about independence. Financial freedom is about owning your time, not hitting a retirement milestone. That journey might start earlier than you think – if you plan smart. Because in the end, it's not about retiring. It's about living life on your own terms. ■

Tax Disclaimer: Tax strategies discussed are for general informational purposes and should not be interpreted as specific tax advice. You should consult with a qualified tax professional before making any tax-related decisions.

Kevin Campbell is an Investment Advisor Representative of, and advisory services are offered through USA Financial Securities, A Registered Investment Advisor located at 6020 E. Fulton St., Ada, MI 49301. Peaks Financial is not affiliated with USA Financial Securities.



Feature

More Than Movies

The Roxy Brings Arts, Culture, and Conversation to Quincy Square

By Quinn Propst

Ward Media Staff Reporter

The Historic Roxy Theater in downtown Bremerton has been around since 1941, but these days it feels anything but stuck in the past.

Now run as a nonprofit, the single-screen venue has carved out a fresh identity as a place where locals can catch everything from first-run movies to concert films, jazz nights, drag performances, and community events – all in a space that blends vintage charm with modern sound and projection.

“Our mission is to entertain, inspire and connect the community through the magic of film, live performances and shared experiences,” said Executive Director Michael Goodnow.

For Goodnow, it's not just about showing movies – it's about creating meaningful, shared experiences. That's clear on any given week at the Roxy,



where the calendar includes an eclectic mix of screenings, live music, and events you won't find anywhere else.

A recent Star Wars night brought out more than 100 fans in costume, celebrating the film's deep connection to the Roxy, where it originally screened in 1977. A Big Lebowski night had attendees donning bathrobes and sipping themed cocktails like White Russians.

“We love to show these sort of retro

movies, and we always try to make them a little more, a little more community oriented,” Goodnow said.

The Roxy plays a unique role in Bremerton's arts scene, offering something between smaller bar venues and larger stages like the Admiral Theatre or Bremerton High's Performing Arts Center. It's a middle ground – more intimate than a big theater, but more immersive than a typical bar show – tailored for film, music, and community-

driven programming.

With a full bar and curated drink menu, the Roxy blends the nostalgia of classic movies with a fun, locally focused experience. They host a film-themed book club, organize special events, and offer a membership program with perks. Seasonal popcorn flavors are made in partnership with local spice company SPIVA Cooking.

"We try to really focus on experience, because you can watch a movie in your car, in your house, or wherever," Goodnow said. "We want to make it special to be here."

"It's that shared experience," he added. "You can watch Star Wars at home every day, but you can come here and you can watch it with other folks. It's always fun, especially a comedy movie, when people are bringing kids, because you hear that kid get it, and that kid laughs, and then everybody laughs because they remember getting it the first time, or experiencing it the first time. It's those kinds of things that help bring connections."

That sense of connection runs through everything the Roxy does – from its quirky themed



screenings to major events like the West Sound Film Festival, which returns August 1-3. Originally started in Port Orchard, the festival has grown steadily since moving to the Roxy in 2019, bringing filmmakers and audiences together for a weekend of shorts, features, and post-film discussions.

This August, the Roxy has a packed lineup including jazz performances, a Bremerton High School reunion, and the annual Grateful Dead Meet-Up concert film (tentatively scheduled for August 14). On August 30, Latin Jazz Night brings another genre to the stage. Looking ahead to September 5-7, the Roxy will host an all-Italian weekend featuring films, wine, Aperol spritzes, and

Italian bites served outside under the Quincy Square marquee – a celebration of cinema, culture, and community.

The Roxy is proud to be part of Quincy Square, a public plaza named for legendary musician Quincy Jones, who spent part of his youth in Bremerton. The area is being reimaged as a music and arts destination, and the Roxy plays a key role in that revitalization – helping shape Bremerton's growing identity as a state-designated Creative District.

"Even though we're a non-profit, we see the value in partnering with other businesses because we're stronger together," Goodnow said. Collaborations with other local businesses – whether a themed

pop-up, food pairing, or cross-promotion – are common, especially for special events. "It makes the event better and it's good for the neighborhood," he said.

Inside, the Roxy features high ceilings, original plaster walls, Kitsap's only laser projector, and Dolby 7.1 surround sound. The auditorium seats just under 500 people, making it ideal for community events or a night out that feels elevated but approachable.

The Roxy is currently fundraising to meet the terms of a \$50,000 state grant awarded through Washington's Historic Theaters Grant Program. It's a matching grant, requiring the theater to complete \$100,000 in improvements and raise \$50,000 to receive the full reimbursement. A recent budget extension gave the Roxy more time to meet its goal.

The planned upgrades focus on accessibility. New front doors and a push-button ADA entry system are in the works, along with an intercom at the box office to help staff hear patrons over street noise. There are also plans to restore the historic outdoor concession stand – longtime locals might remember grabbing tickets or snacks through the window back in the day.



Executive Director Michael Goodnow gathers with community members at The Historic Roxy Theater.



Feature

Currently, the indoor concessions area is located down a couple stairs, posing challenges for patrons with mobility issues. While the outdoor window won't be open all the time, it could be staffed during larger events, improving access.

Another update Goodnow hopes to make is a mobile point-of-sale system, allowing staff to bring a tablet to customers who may need assistance.

The overall goal is to make the building more accessible and welcoming to everyone. Goodnow also prioritizes programming that reflects Kitsap's unique culture, helping the Roxy stand out from other venues in the region.

Even with a packed schedule, the Roxy keeps space open for local artists, creatives, and small businesses – whether that means hosting a pop-up shop, offering stage time, or simply giving a shoutout to a nearby café during movie night. The goal is always to support the local community and make the Roxy a place where people feel like they belong.

"One of my absolute favorite things here is when people go into a movie strangers, and then come out and talk about a movie in the lobby," Goodnow said. "You're bringing folks together



The Roxy's full bar offers cocktails, beer, and wine to elevate your movie-going experience.

with a common interest. Maybe they're very different people, but they're like minded in the concept of the movie, or for their passion for film or things like that. I think that's kind of fun."

The Roxy regularly screens documentaries and independent films, often paired with post-film discussions or guest speakers. Whether tackling serious topics or sharing lighthearted stories, the goal is the same: to inspire conversation and community.

Past selections have ranged from documentaries on Gaza and Palestine to a nostalgic look at Rainier Beer's iconic marketing history.

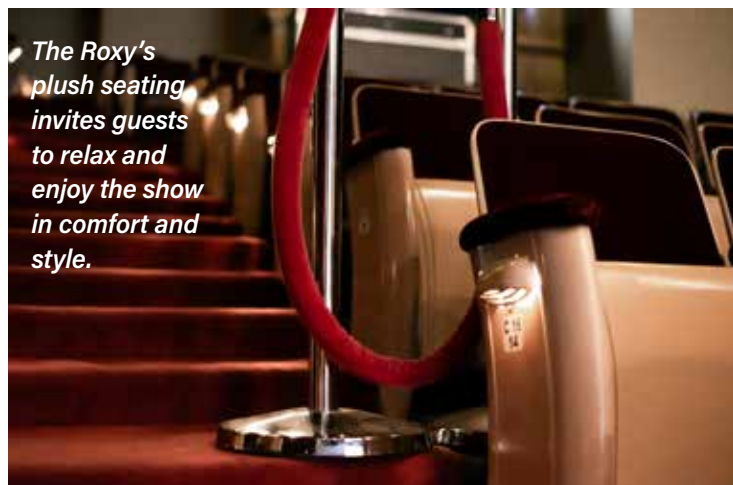
"It's about connecting with people, connecting people to stories," Goodnow said.

As a nonprofit, the Roxy relies on community support. Beyond donations, supporters can help by becoming members, seeing movies, and bringing friends along.

"We feel like we're on the right track," Goodnow said. "The numbers are clicking along, but it's a struggle all the time." ■



The Roxy's plush seating invites guests to relax and enjoy the show in comfort and style.



Michael Goodnow, executive director of The Historic Roxy Theater, is on a mission to make every visit a one-of-a-kind experience.



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Marketing Is a Muscle Not a One-Time Push

Steady, Ongoing Efforts Beat Short-Term Bursts Every Time

By Amy Yaley | COO of Ward Media

You wouldn't expect to get in shape by going to the gym once, nor would you train for a marathon with a single jog around the block. Marketing works the same way. It's not a one-and-done effort; it's a muscle that needs regular activity to stay strong, perform well, and deliver long-term results.

Many businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones, tend to treat marketing as a campaign rather than a practice. They'll run a single ad, boost a post, or send one email and hope for an immediate sales spike. And when that doesn't happen, they pull back. But just like physical fitness, the results of marketing compound over time when you keep at it.

WHY ONE-TIME MARKETING PUSHES OFTEN FAIL

The reality is, buyers rarely take action the first time they encounter your brand. It can take multiple exposures before someone is

ready to buy, refer, or even remember you. If your marketing is sporadic or inconsistent, you break that cycle of familiarity and trust before it has a chance to take root.

Short-term efforts can deliver a quick blip of visibility, but they rarely build lasting brand equity. And once you go quiet again, you risk falling off your audience's radar completely. Marketing momentum isn't just hard to build – it's easy to lose.

CONSISTENCY BUILDS BRAND TRUST AND RECALL

The real power of marketing lies in repetition. When customers see your business regularly, across platforms, formats, and messages, they begin to recognize and trust you. Over time, this steady presence conveys you're reliable, established, and here to stay.

Whether you're selling to consumers or other businesses, consistency signals professionalism. It also makes you more memorable. So when the moment comes that a prospect is ready to act – whether it's to buy, call, or click – they think of you first.

SMALL, SUSTAINABLE HABITS DRIVE BIG RESULTS

You don't need to launch a huge campaign to be effective. Most businesses see better returns from consistent, smaller-scale tactics executed well. These include:

- A monthly or bi-weekly email newsletter
- Regular social media content tailored to your audience
- Quarterly print or digital ads that reinforce your core message

- A strong, updated website with fresh blog content or FAQs
- Retargeting ads that keep you in front of warm prospects

These efforts work best when they're part of a rhythm, not an afterthought. When you create a routine and stick with it, marketing becomes more manageable, more strategic, and more likely to succeed.

BUILD A ROUTINE THAT FITS YOUR BUSINESS

Not every business needs to be on every platform or follow the same calendar. The key is finding a cadence that works for your goals, your bandwidth, and your audience. Here are a few tips to get started:

- **Set realistic expectations:** You don't have to post every day or write weekly blogs. Start with what's sustainable.
- **Create an editorial calendar:** Planning avoids last-minute stress and maintains consistency.
- **Batch and automate:** Scheduling tools and content batching can be useful to stay ahead without constant effort.
- **Measure and adjust:**

Track what's working and refine over time. Consistency doesn't mean repetition without results.

THE BUSINESSES THAT KEEP SHOWING UP WIN

When the market gets noisy or uncertain, staying steady becomes your competitive edge. While others may go quiet, the brands that keep showing up – thoughtfully, consistently, and clearly – are the ones that stand out.

Marketing isn't about pushing hard once. It's about building strength over time. With regular effort and a long-term mindset, you create a brand that your customers not only recognize but trust and choose.

So flex your marketing muscle. Then keep flexing it. The momentum you build today will carry your business further tomorrow. ■

Amy Yaley is the COO of Ward Media and the co-owner of Northwest Swag Works. She can be reached at amy@ward.media.





A Message from Jaclyn Williams

Executive Director South Kitsap Chamber of Commerce

I'm honored to have been appointed by the Board of Directors to serve as the new Executive Director of the South Kitsap Chamber of Commerce. After more than six years supporting this organization as Executive Assistant, I look forward to continuing to serve our members and community in this new capacity.

We're a vibrant, growing region with a strong foundation of entrepreneurial spirit and community pride. In my role, I'll focus on deepening member engagement, expanding valuable resources, and creating meaningful opportunities for connection and growth. While we'll continue the Chamber's hallmark events – like the beloved Seagull Calling Contest and the Cornhole Classic – we're also exploring new initiatives to ensure your Chamber membership delivers real, lasting value.

As we move into summer, the Chamber will take a brief pause from our regular Chamber Luncheons and South Kitsap Young Professionals events during July and August. While we'll miss seeing you at these gatherings, this break gives us time to plan exciting new opportunities for the fall and beyond.

Our popular GreenDrinks networking events will continue each month throughout the summer. These casual, after-hours meetups are a great way to stay connected with fellow professionals and enjoy some relaxed conversation and community.

Here are just a few of the things we're planning for fall and winter:

CHAMBER AWARDS LUNCHEON

A refreshed celebration to recognize standout businesses, leaders, and



community champions across South Kitsap.

FALL NETWORKING LUNCHEON

Showcase your businesses, make connections, and build lasting relationships in a dynamic, expo-style setting.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Workshops, speaker events, and hands-on training designed to help you and your team grow, adapt, and thrive in today's ever-changing business landscape.

Thank you for your support and participation – it's your involvement that drives our success. ■

Welcome New Members

Good Stuff Grocery LLC
Windermere Professional Partners
Topham Home Renovations LLC

Renewing Members

State Farm Insurance, Thomas Hanrahan
Living Hope Comm. Baptist Church
Orchard Pointe
Olalla Bay Market
John L Scott Inc - Christine Johnson
My Printing Services Inc.
Trina Knoche Insurance Agency, LLC
Family Pancake House
Kitsap Credit Union
Fathoms O' Fun Festival
Great Match Painting & Wall Covering
Bruce Titus Port Orchard Ford
Ecological Land Services, Inc.
Banks Consulting Northwest Inc.
Port Orchard Farmers' Market Association

Cornhole Classic

The **6th Annual Kitsap County Cornhole Classic** returns **Saturday, August 16** at the South Kitsap Western Little League fields. Hosted by the South Kitsap Chamber in partnership with Kitsap Cornhole, this summer favorite features a double-elimination tournament, food trucks, a beverage garden, raffle prizes, and more.

Register your team of two for \$30 – spots fill fast! Want to promote your business? **Sponsorships are available** with great visibility.

Don't miss the bags, the bragging rights, and the community fun!
www.skchamber.org/kcc. ■



More Than Music



The Bremerton WestSound Symphony brings world-class performances and cultural vibrancy to Kitsap County.

Bremerton Symphony's 80 plus year Legacy of Learning and Leadership

By Quinn Propst | Ward Media Staff Reporter

In the heart of Kitsap County, a symphony orchestra has quietly – and powerfully – been shaping the cultural, educational, and economic landscape for more than eight decades. Founded in 1942 during World War II as part of a nationwide initiative promoted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to build community in military towns, the Bremerton WestSound Symphony has grown from a wartime pastime to a vibrant cultural institution.

Today, under the direction of Music Director Alan Futterman, the Symphony continues to fulfill its mission of bringing great music to local audiences while offering a vital creative outlet for the region's talented musicians.

A VOLUNTEER ENSEMBLE WITH PROFESSIONAL SKILL

"We're a community orchestra, but we have a number of people who play at a professional level," Futterman said. "Many of them actually went to music school, got music degrees, and then were just smarter than I was and decided there were easier ways to make a living."

The orchestra's musicians include doctors, engineers, teachers, and even submarine intelligence commanders.

"When the work day is over, they like nothing better than to pick up an instrument and come in and help us put together great performances of great masterpieces of music," Futterman said.



Music Director Alan Futterman

That spirit of shared artistry allows the orchestra to reach well beyond its volunteer status. Futterman and his artistic committee – which includes board members, musicians, Chorale singers, and community representatives – collaboratively plan each season, tackling an ambitious mix of classical standards and new compositions.

INVESTING IN FUTURE GENERATIONS

One of the Symphony's most important missions is education. Through its "OrKIDstra" concerts, the Symphony reaches

thousands of local students each year, particularly fourth graders who are just beginning their journey with musical instruments.

"You know, I can remember perfectly when I was taken to a Seattle Symphony concert in 1966," Futterman said. "I was in elementary school, and as I say, that had quite an effect on me, culminating in a master's degree at Juilliard."

The Bremerton Symphony's musicians aren't just performers; many are also music educators.

"We've known for years that students who study music are always the ones at the top of their classes in all the other subjects as well," Futterman said. "Music teaches them about discipline, about study, setting and achieving long-term goals."

"High school students do better in science, math and English if they also take music," he said.

The Symphony's long-term impact is measurable not only in cultural enrichment but also in economic terms.

"The Bremerton symphony, with all of our work in music, really helps to create and educate future professionals and leaders in our community," he said.



The Bremerton WestSound Symphony performs aboard the historic USS Turner Joy, blending music and maritime history in a memorable setting.

"Every professional who moves into our county makes a really big economic contribution to our region," Futterman said. "Think about the fact that every professional we help create supports an entire array of industries – housing, real estate, construction, schools, grocery stores, gas stations, everything."

MORE THAN A PERFORMANCE

Putting on a concert, however, comes at a steep price. While the orchestra is made up of volunteers, the behind-the-scenes costs are significant.

"To rent a piece of music, especially anything written in the last 100 years, costs between \$2,000 and \$3,000," Futterman

explained. "Then to get into the venue – also between \$2,000 and \$3,000 or more. We have to move timpani and music stands. We need a truck. We need people. Altogether, it probably costs north of \$10,000 just in incidental expenses to put on a concert."

Marketing and publicity add even more to that total. That's why fundraising is essential, and in some years, Futterman has taken on the role of lead fundraiser himself.

"It doesn't matter whether you're an art school or a university or an orchestra – if you're a nonprofit, you always have to be worried about that sort of thing," he said.

THE HIDDEN GEM OF BREMERTON

Despite its history and contributions, many locals still don't know the Symphony exists. Futterman often meets people who are surprised to learn that Bremerton does indeed have a symphony orchestra.

This lack of awareness reflects a broader cultural difference.

"Orchestral music isn't really a part of American culture the way it is in Europe," he said. "In Europe, on a Friday night, it's normal to go check out the

Music Director Alan Futterman leads the Bremerton Symphony in a thrilling performance of the Star Wars score.



Feature

orchestra. That's not so common here."

Still, popular culture has helped in surprising ways.

"John Williams made a whole generation of people listen to symphony orchestras, even if they didn't realize it," Futterman said. "Star Wars, Superman, Raiders of the Lost Ark – they all used full orchestras. It got people more interested in symphonic music through the movies."

ENTERTAINING, ENLIGHTENING, NEVER BORING

Futterman strives to make every concert informative and engaging.

"My concerts are never boring," he said. "We've kind of forgotten that music – if it wasn't religious – was entertainment. Mozart didn't write his symphonies to be studied for the next 500 years. He wrote something that his friends and of course, the nobility who paid him would be entertained by listening to it."

Each performance is preceded by a talk introducing



Alan Futterman brings energy, emotion, and expertise to every performance as Music Director of the Bremerton Symphony.

the music and the composer, often tying their lives to relatable modern-day issues.

"There are always societal problems, and they haven't changed all that much in 200 years," he said. "People love hearing about the personal lives of composers. It's a window into not just culture, but our history."

He also occasionally shares his own compositions – like *Fiesta Mexicana*, inspired by travels in Mexico – and plans to bring back something new from

an upcoming trip to Eastern Europe.

"As a musician, you're a perennial student. There's always something new to learn," he said. "If it's great, I'll bring it to Kitsap County."

A CULTURAL CORNERSTONE

At its core, the Bremerton WestSound Symphony is much more than a concert series. It's a living, breathing part of the community – offering inspiration, education, and a sense of shared

identity.

"It's exhilarating, it's entertaining, and it's educational," Futterman said. "But it all comes as a really fun package. Nobody goes away from our concerts thinking, 'There was nothing interesting today.' There's always something that grabs people."

And that's exactly the legacy the Symphony has cultivated for more than 80 years – one performance, one student, one note at a time. ■





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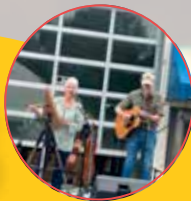
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Q & A

Executive



As Executive Director of the Kitsap Community Foundation, Tina O'Brien is leading a movement to redefine the role of philanthropy in shaping Kitsap County's future.

Meet Tina O'Brien, Executive Director of Kitsap Community Foundation

As Executive Director of the Kitsap Community Foundation, Tina O'Brien is working to transform how philanthropy shapes the future of Kitsap County.

By Quinn Propst | Ward Media Staff Reporter

With three decades of nonprofit leadership experience and deep roots in the local community, O'Brien is passionate about helping individuals, families, and organizations turn their generosity into lasting impact.

Under her guidance, the Foundation is expanding access to legacy giving, supporting nonprofits through strategic tools and training, and championing a vision of abundance across the region.

In this Q&A, O'Brien shares her personal journey, insights into local challenges and opportunities, and why she believes the power to create lasting change already

lives within the Kitsap community.

Please Tell Our Readers A Little About Yourself.

I'm a native Washingtonian who spent every Labor Day camping with my cousins at Point No Point. We built sand forts on the beach and waited all day for the waves from the passing Princess Marguerite to sweep them away. My dad and grandfather took us fishing and if we caught a salmon, our grandmother rewarded us with a full-size candy bar. On really good days – if we were lucky – we got to ride down the boat ramp in the boat.

So many of my favorite memories were

made in Kitsap. My husband and I bought our first home in Eglon and we started our family here. I trained as a Kitsap County Master Gardener and loved volunteering at the Kingston Farmers Market. These days, we live in Seabeck and can often be found with our children out on the waters of Hood Canal.

Professionally, I've worked in the nonprofit sector for 30 years. I hold a master's degree in not-for-profit leadership, Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy certification, and am trained in the 21/64 method for multigenerational philanthropy and family enterprise advising. I joined Kitsap Community Foundation in Fall of 2022 and am grateful every day to use my skills and serve this community that I love.

Please Tell Our Readers About the Kitsap Community Foundation.

For over 30 years, Kitsap Community Foundation (KCF) has helped individuals, families, nonprofits, churches, businesses,

and community groups steward charitable wealth and strengthen the greater good across the Kitsap Peninsula.

A catalyst for the greater good, we increase nonprofit capacity through initiatives like the Kitsap Great Give and the Kitsap Center for Nonprofit Excellence, provide fiscal sponsorships for emerging nonprofits, and manage charitable funds for various organizations and projects.

We also partner with donors who want to keep their giving local – now and forever.

As a permanent philanthropic institution, KCF manages funds through a professional investment firm specializing in charitable assets. Our Investment Committee – made up of local financial experts – oversees performance, along with our Finance Committee and Board of Directors. Funds are independently audited each year. Our accreditation from the Council on Foundations affirms our commitment to financial transparency and fiduciary excellence.

What are some current initiatives or programs you're especially excited about?

One exciting effort is addressing the fact that 7 in 10 Kitsap residents don't have a will. To help, KCF now offers a free, easy way for anyone to create a legally valid will in under 20 minutes at www.freewill.com/kitsapfoundation.

This free service is part of our Your Cause Is Our Cause initiative, which encourages legacy gifts – planned gifts made through wills and estates – to support the causes people care about most. These future gifts

can be transformational for local nonprofits and strengthen our community for generations.

What are some of the biggest challenges facing Kitsap's nonprofit sector right now – and how is KCF helping to address them?

Many local nonprofits are undercapitalized: 47% rely entirely on volunteers, and 63% operate with budgets under \$250,000.

Nonprofits play a vital role in our quality of life but often lack the reserves needed for long-term sustainability – especially in the face of potential government funding cuts.

Our experienced team regularly meets with local nonprofit leaders to support their efforts – whether by providing board training, offering fundraising tips, or sharing ideas to make events more memorable. We process complex gifts, such as donated real estate, so nonprofits don't have to. We also guide nonprofits through the community grant application process and help develop effective strategies for the Kitsap Great Give.

When a nonprofit has a donor who could benefit from philanthropic counsel, we're ready to help.

At Kitsap Community Foundation, we offer something powerful to both nonprofits and donors: permanence. Donors trust that their gifts will be managed wisely and used as intended. And even if a nonprofit closes, the Foundation ensures that endowed funds continue to support similar local needs. That kind of permanence gives donors the confidence to give generously.



What do you see as the greatest opportunities for building community resilience and equity in Kitsap?

Kitsap has long been constrained by a scarcity mindset – the idea that we don't have the philanthropic wealth to make real change. But we're in the midst of the largest intergenerational transfer of wealth in U.S. history. Here in Kitsap, an estimated \$12 billion will change hands by 2027 – and \$102 billion by 2067.

Capturing even a small portion of that through planned gifts could direct millions into housing, education, healthcare, the arts, and more. Your Cause Is Our Cause helps nonprofits tap into this potential by making legacy giving more accessible for all – not just the wealthy. KCF provides tools and expertise so nonprofits can focus on what they do best – fulfilling their mission.

Why is planned giving such an important but often overlooked opportunity for nonprofits and donors alike?

Americans are generous – 81% donate to charity, and 56% volunteer – but only 2–5% include charities in their wills. Why? Three out of four people don't have a will, often because they feel estate planning is only for the wealthy, or it seems too complex and expensive. Without a will, people's accumulated assets are directed by the state's probate system – missing the chance to support the causes they loved.

FreeWill and similar tools are changing that. When the process is simplified, people are excited to leave a legacy. By offering FreeWill at no cost for all to use, KCF is removing barriers and helping donors and nonprofits unlock transformational gifts that might otherwise be lost.

What motivates you personally in this work?

I believe legacy isn't just what we leave behind – it's what we set in motion. Every donor, volunteer, and advocate already has



Executive Q & A

the heart of a philanthropist. Helping them realize that their final gift – no matter the size – can shape the future of the causes they love is profoundly meaningful to me.

The Kitsap Community Foundation has a strong vision of fostering an abundant future. What does that look like to you?

An abundant Kitsap is one where nonprofits thrive, people feel connected, and giving and volunteering is part of everyday life. It's a place where every cause – whether it's housing or the arts – has the financial security to innovate, grow, and serve for generations. When nonprofits flourish, so do our communities.

How do you balance long-term strategic goals with the immediate needs of the community?

It's not either/or – it's both. Meeting urgent needs is essential, and we do that through programs like the Kitsap Great Give, our community grantmaking, and helping local philanthropists support the causes they love now.

But if we focus only on today, we leave tomorrow vulnerable. That's why we lead the Kitsap Center for Nonprofit Excellence – offering skills and professional development for nonprofit leaders, staff, and volunteers. It's also why we help nonprofits develop planned giving programs, grow endowments, and build sustainable revenue streams – so they can thrive not just this year, but for decades to come.

How have partnerships shaped the Foundation's impact, and what new opportunities are you building toward?

Over a decade ago, through strong partnerships, we launched the Kitsap Great Give – a bold idea that collective giving could fuel real change. It worked: the Kitsap Great Give has raised more than \$18.5 million for local nonprofits at no cost to them. That kind of success shows what's possible when we build shared infrastructure.

Now, we're using the same model to make legacy giving accessible for all. By working alongside nonprofits, donors, and professional advisors, we're empowering organizations of all sizes with tools and support that were previously out of reach. At the same time, we're empowering individuals to protect the people, pets, and causes they love.



It's the next evolution of how collective action of ordinary people—like you and me—can create lasting change.

How does KCF help ensure that philanthropy in Kitsap is both equitable and sustainable?

Sustainability means investing in shared tools and services that benefit the entire nonprofit ecosystem – not just the few organizations that can afford them. Through our Your Cause Is Our Cause initiative, we're providing shared access to emerging technology, expert support, and endowment-building resources. Our goal is simple: to ensure that every nonprofit – large or small – and every donor, regardless of wealth, can make a lasting impact on the causes they love and the community they care about.

How can individuals and businesses in Kitsap best support KCF's mission moving forward?

Lean into this community you love. Think about the causes that have touched your life and consider extending that impact with a legacy gift. Whether it's your church, a food bank, an arts group, or a scholarship fund – every gift matters and helps shape the Kitsap we leave to future generations. Connect with your favorite nonprofit – or reach out to us – to learn how easy it can be to make a lasting difference.

If you regularly support local nonprofits and don't yet have a Donor Advised Fund (DAF), it's worth considering. DAFs are especially valuable in high-tax years, allowing you to redirect funds that might have gone to taxes to instead support the causes you care about. You get an immediate tax deduction and the flexibility to be able to give when and how you choose. Donor Advised Funds are one of

philanthropy's best-kept secrets. Reach out to us to learn more.

If you own a business or run an organization, consider sponsoring the annual Kitsap Great Give, promoting the annual event on your readerboard, and encouraging your constituencies to support the local nonprofits that help make Kitsap such a special place to live.

Who or what inspires you?

I once met Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who radiated light and joy. He often said: *"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."*

That's what I strive to do every day. ■

For Good. For Kitsap. Forever.

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Sample Language for Bequests

I give, devise and bequeath to Kitsap Community Foundation (Tax ID #94-3205217), a tax-exempt organization located at 9657 Levin Rd NW, Ste 220, Silverdale, WA, 98383, the sum of \$_____ (or) _____% of my estate (or the property described herein) to be used for _____.

(You may specify your purpose, e.g., greatest need, a specific nonprofit, a cause such as homelessness, food security, arts, environment, human services, BIPOC organizations, education, support of emerging needs of local nonprofits through KCF's community grants process, etc.)

Informing us of your intent helps us ensure your wishes are honored. Thank you for your love and support of our beloved community!

Changing Faces Changing Places

The following announcements highlight staff changes, changes of ownership or location, honors, awards, new board member listings, promotions, donations, and certifications. To submit information, email news@kitsapbusiness.com.

Promotions

Ecological Land Services (ELS) has announced several staff promotions at its Bremerton office, recognizing technical excellence and project contributions.



Brenda Ruddick



Megan Mill



Emma Godin



Chloe Bartlett

Brenda Ruddick was promoted to Professional Biologist, bringing nearly two decades of experience in wetland and marine ecosystems. **Megan Mill** advanced to Senior Biologist, and **Emma Godin** was named Biologist III. On the graphics team, **Chloe Bartlett** was promoted to Graphics Technician IV.

The Bremerton office is led by Senior Professional Wetland Scientist **Joanne Bartlett** and provides permitting and environmental consulting services to public and private sector clients across the region.

More information is available at www.eco-land.com or by calling 360-674-7186.

Milestones

Independent Scentsy consultant **Denise Steele** is celebrating a decade in business this year. Steele recently earned the Annual Sales of Excellence Award and continues to expand her reach in Kitsap County and beyond.

In addition to her sales achievements, Steele is a sponsor of the Silverdale Rotary's annual Duck Race and is growing her client gift program to support local businesses. She is also partnering with several nonprofit organizations on fundraising initiatives.



Denise Steele

Steele has been a part of the Scentsy community since 2014, offering scented products, gift packages and custom fundraising opportunities for individuals and groups.

Dr. Tom Colby, water resources manager at **Kitsap Public Utility District**, has earned his license as a professional hydrogeologist.

The certification strengthens Colby's role in leading groundwater research and overseeing regulatory work aimed at protecting Kitsap County's drinking water supply. Colby is a key figure in KPUD's efforts to ensure sustainable water management for the region.

RE/MAX Platinum Services is celebrating its 24th anniversary serving clients across Kitsap County.

The real estate office, based in Silverdale, has built a reputation for guiding homebuyers and sellers through the local market with professional service and community focus.

The company marks nearly a quarter-century of real estate transactions, neighborhood involvement and client support.

New Hires

Bay Pointe Welcomes New Executive Chef Mark Deitch
Bay Pointe Retirement and Marine Courte Memory Care has welcomed

Mark Deitch as its new executive chef. Deitch brings extensive experience in long-term care food service and a focus on crafting meals



Mark Deitch

that balance nutrition with flavor. Known for his adaptability and resident-centered approach, he frequently incorporates resident feedback and traditional recipes into the dining program.

With a background in creating meals tailored to diverse dietary needs, Deitch aims to enhance the quality of life for Bay Pointe residents through personalized, homestyle cooking.

"By embracing the tastes and traditions of those we serve, Mark aims to make every meal a comforting and enjoyable experience," the facility said in a statement.

Ecological Land Services (ELS) has added biologist **JC Cleary** to its



JC Cleary

Bremerton office. Cleary brings recent project experience from across Western Washington and has already taken on project

management responsibilities.

Cleary's background includes regulatory coordination and fieldwork in environmental permitting. The addition supports ELS's growing operations in shoreline permitting, wetland delineations, habitat assessments and mitigation planning. For more information, visit www.eco-land.com or call 360-674-7186.

Kitsap Public Utility District has hired **Claire Ward** as its new telecom strategy and community relations



Claire Ward

specialist. Ward's role includes expanding strategic business development, building partnerships, and enhancing

public understanding of KPUD's open-access fiber internet utility. Her work will support the district's efforts to improve broadband access throughout Kitsap County.

On Top

Julian Kohlbrand, known to listeners as Jewlz the Budget Nerd, has won "Best Financial Podcast" at the 2025 Women Podcasters Awards for her show, The Debt Rebel Podcast.

Presented by the Women of Podcasting network, the international

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Changing Faces, Changing Places

award honors female-led shows that demonstrate excellence in mission, originality, production and audience impact.

"Winning this award is a full-circle moment," Kohlbrand said. "I started this podcast to be the voice I wish I had when I was drowning in debt and Googling 'how to stop using credit cards without feeling deprived.' I'm honored and humbled that the message is resonating – and changing lives."

Kohlbrand is a certified financial coach and former \$107,000 debt warrior. Her podcast focuses on practical, grace-based strategies for financial freedom, with a special emphasis on empowering working mothers and families to break free from credit card dependence and live purpose-driven financial lives.

Now in its second year, the Women Podcasters Awards received thousands of global submissions. Kohlbrand's win highlights her growing influence in the personal finance space.

More information is available at www.debtreliefpodcast.com and www.jewlzthebudgetnerd.com.

Moves

The **Jarquín Team of Pillar To Post Home Inspectors** has opened a new office in Silverdale. The new location is at 9465 Provost Road NW, Suite 201.

Owner **Paige Jarquin** leads the team, which offers residential inspection services throughout Kitsap County and surrounding areas. Clients can now book inspections online, by phone, or via email.

More information is available at JarquinTeam.PillarToPost.com or by calling (360) 552-0523.

Business Briefs

The **Kitsap Economic Development Alliance (KEDA)**, in partnership with the **Center for Economic and Business Research at Western Washington University**, has released its 2024 Kitsap Top Employers List, highlighting trends in the county's employment landscape.

The report, based on year-end 2024 data, shows total employment rose to 64,837, up from 63,156 in 2023. Public sector employers continue to dominate the local workforce, accounting for over 77% of all jobs. Of the 75 employers listed, 23 are public entities employing 50,260 workers, including eight of the top 10 largest employers.

Private sector companies reported a combined 14,577 employees across 52 organizations, with job growth led by the health care, manufacturing and professional services industries. Both public and private sectors experienced employment increases of roughly 2.6% last year.

The report is widely used by public agencies, site selectors, and companies considering expansion in Kitsap County. It is the most downloaded resource on KEDA's website.

To view or download the full 2024 report, visit kitsapeda.me/Top. For more information on KEDA, go to www.kitsapeda.org.

Unity Fired Arts has opened a new community ceramics studio in Bremerton, offering a much-needed creative space for local artists. Located at 4203 Kitsap Way, the studio provides shared access to tools, equipment and kilns for beginners and experienced potters alike.

Founded by **Michael Forhan**, a U.S. Navy veteran and former IT professional, Unity Fired Arts emerged from a vision formed in 2007 and realized in 2023. The space offers eight pottery wheels, high-fire kilns, a glaze kitchen, woodshop tools and other resources for ceramic artists working in stoneware.

The studio accommodates up to a dozen artists and aims to foster connection, creativity and learning. "Unity Fired Arts is what was needed," said Forhan. "A place to connect and find community, identity and compassion."

Unity Fired Arts plans to develop programs such as a community pottery library and initiatives supporting veteran artists. The

studio emphasizes collaboration and artistic growth within a welcoming environment.

For more information or to inquire about membership, visit www.unityfiredarts.com or call (360) 627-8017.

The **Kitsap Building Association** welcomed thousands of visitors to the Peninsula Home & Remodel Expo, held May 2-4 at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds.

Celebrating over 45 years in Kitsap County, the 2025 Expo featured more than 160 local vendors, builders and design professionals showcasing the latest in home improvement, smart technology and remodeling solutions. The event is billed as "the biggest and best home show west of Seattle™."

"What started as a small member-to-member gathering has grown into a signature community event," said Randall King, executive officer of the Kitsap Building Association. "It's all about

connecting people with ideas – and the professionals who can bring them to life. With attractions for every age group, we're proud to offer an experience that's both educational and entertaining – one that draws visitors to the region and celebrates the creativity and craftsmanship of our industry."

Guests explored interactive exhibits, live demonstrations and family-friendly features such as the Construction in Motion display, a Reptile and Wildlife Exhibit, and hands-on beekeeping seminars.

The LEGO® Building Challenge offered a creative outlet for children, while the crowd-favorite Car & Motorcycle Show returned with vintage and custom vehicles.

A food court, prize giveaways and a full schedule of seminars rounded out the three-day event, aimed at sparking inspiration and connecting homeowners with trusted professionals. More information on upcoming expos is available at www.peninsulahomeexpo.com. ■

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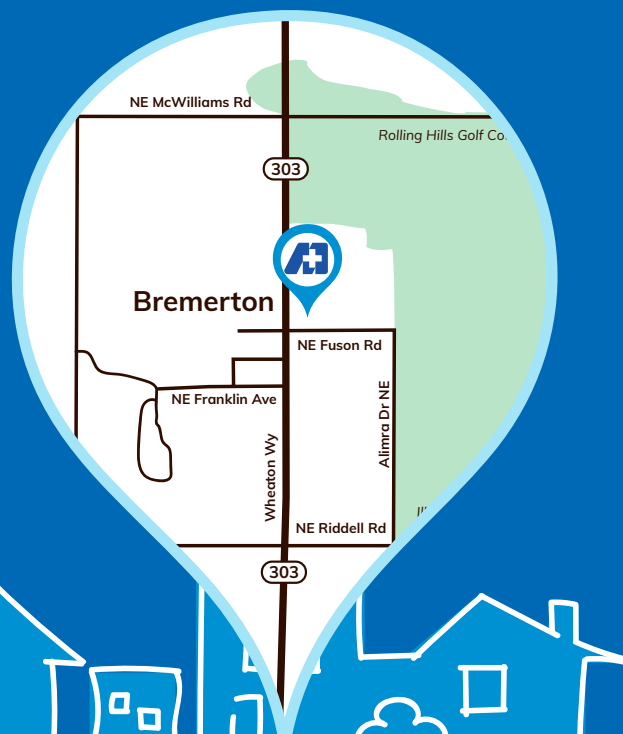


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