



INTERFAITH COALITION

Partners in Faith. Changing Lives.



2023 is off to a strong start and I am pleased to report on some areas of purposeful growth. We started the year by welcoming our new Family Housing Director, Hannah Kunde, to the Interfaith Coalition team. Hannah is overseeing our housing programs.

Along with providing case management for families in our Family Promise program, she is working with families in Interfaith Coalition transitional housing and their case managers at our partner nonprofits, such as Lydia Place and Opportunity Council. With Hannah's guidance, these families have the support to ensure their success in finding permanent housing. She is off to a great start and it has been a joy to watch her grow into the position after only a short time with us. Hannah brings a gentle maturity in her approach to our guests and she is learning her way around the resource landscape in Whatcom County. We are delighted to have her with us! Read more about Hannah in this newsletter.

In other news, IFC has a new home to offer to families! We signed the master lease on a home that is currently owned by Christ the Servant Lutheran Church (CTS), a long-time IFC member congregation. This lovely single family home was donated to CTS by a devoted parishioner after his passing. The Mission Planning Team at CTS put a tremendous amount of work and care into making the home ready for IFC families, and the completion of the work was marked with a celebratory open house in January. As of February 1st, we moved the first family into this home.

In other news, many volunteers and member congregations have reached out to express a desire to return to volunteering for IFC or to do more going forward. We are touched by the amount of interest we have received, and we are actively compiling a list of projects where we could use help.

One request we have for those of you reading this is to let us know if you have a new IFC Congregational Representative within your faith community. We're finding that much of our information has aged during the

Much of our congregation information has aged during the pandemic. We want to fix that.

If you have a new IFC Congregational Representative within your faith community, please reach out to Lindsey McGuirk with updated contact information:

lindsey@interfaith-coalition.org / 360.359.4755.

pandemic, and we would like to update our records so our volunteer engagement needs have the best chance of being met. Please reach out to Lindsey McGuirk with any updated contact information:

lindsey@interfaith-coalition.org / 360.359.4755.

Thank you for all of the ways in which you support our work.

Devin Connolly
Executive Director

**Please note: We are not having the Hope Auction this year, but are planning a different event that brings us together for our cause.*



WE'VE MOVED!

Please update your address book and donation payment methods with our new mailing address. Thank you!

New Mailing Address:

PO Box 30767, Bellingham, WA 98228 | 360-734-3983
info@interfaith-coalition.org | interfaith-coalition.org

“WE DO NOT HAVE TO BE DEFINED BY OUR WOUNDS”

There is an old saying in social work: “Hurt people hurt people.”

If you have not heard it before, it means that people who are hurting often hurt other people. Unfortunately, it is true. The most vulnerable can be the most challenging. Many vulnerabilities can cause problematic behavior.

That is not complete, though.

There is a related concept: “Broken people heal broken people.”

This is also true:

- People who have experienced deep pain can be the most empathetic.
- People who have been wounded can be the most compassionate.
- People who have experienced trauma can be the most caring.

**We do not have to be defined by our wounds.
But if we allow them, our wounds just might heal the world.**

Source: Ryan Dowd, homelesstraining.com



Donate to Interfaith Coalition by mailing your payment in the provided envelope, visiting our website interfaith-coalition.org, or scanning the QR code.



THE CHARDI KALA PROJECT AND INTERFAITH COALITION COME TOGETHER FOR GOOD



“We all have our little circles, but we need to get people to stand together,” said Kamalla Kaur, Executive Director of The Chardi Kala Project.

Started in 2018, The Chardi Kala’s mission is to build bridges between Sikhs and non-Sikhs to reduce hate crimes against Sikhs by educating and providing opportunities for connection around Whatcom County. They believe that hate crimes and bigotry can be stopped if we get to know each other, even if it’s in small, positive interactions every day.

Because both The Chardi Kala Project and Interfaith Coalition connect people with different beliefs who unite for a common

good, Kamalla Kaur approached Interfaith Coalition about becoming a partner. We agreed that with our abilities to bring people together to help others, the partnership is a great fit. The Chardi Kala Project hopes to tap into their collective strength to help us with projects to ensure our housing remains safe and secure so it is welcoming to families on their paths out of homelessness.

**“We all have our little circles,
but we need to get people to
stand together.”**

We welcome our new connection with The Chardi Kala Project, as well as our connections with our longtime partners who help provide stability and community to families in our housing. **There is power in people of diverse beliefs working together.**

Read this full article on our website: interfaith-coalition.org

MEET OUR NEW FAMILY HOUSING DIRECTOR, HANNAH KUNDE

A bike commuter and lover of water, trails, and trees, our new Family Housing Director Hannah Kunde is an introvert with a quiet, thoughtful inquisitiveness.

“It’s kind of geeky, but I’m learning the Latin names for trees in the Pacific Northwest,” she laughs.

Born in Seattle, a love of gardening and farming led Hannah to working at small, organic farms that curated Community Supported Agriculture (commonly called CSAs) in Virginia, Oregon, and Washington.

Two years ago, she moved back to Seattle to start seeding another kind of nourishment. She ran the Wednesday Night Dinner through Bethany Presbyterian Church in the Queen Anne neighborhood. The weekly community meal provided food to anyone in need. A typical night served approximately 60 people, but when Covid struck, those numbers more than doubled. During her time running the meal program,

it upon herself to dig deep to locate resources that were available to guests with specific needs.

Feeling her time in a big city was drawing to close, Hannah started looking to move to Whatcom County where her family has decades-long roots. Her mom was born in Ferndale and, along with Hannah’s great grandma and grandpa, all went to Western (before it was called Western Washington University). In December of last year, Hannah moved to Bellingham, along with her 13-year-old Mini Australian Shepherd, Delilah, who had been rescued from a breeder mill.



Hannah joins Interfaith Coalition as our Family Housing Director, standing alongside families on their paths out of homelessness and keeping them accountable to their

“I am committed to approaching this work with curiosity, humility, and always a desire to treat others with the dignity that is inherently theirs.”



Hannah was reminded of her experience in Mexico City where she lived with a Quaker Community who worked in social justice. As a group, the Quakers would prepare meals and go around the city serving people who were fleeing violence.

“It was so different hearing stories directly from the people I was helping as compared to the stories I was hearing from politicians in the U.S.,” Hannah reflects.

Listening to first-hand stories from the people she was serving in Seattle, Hannah occasionally took

goals. She will provide case management, work with Devin Connolly, our Executive Director, to bring more focus to our efforts in Whatcom County, and be part of the conversations with the network of individuals and organizations working to prevent homelessness in our community. Hannah’s personal goal at Interfaith is to build relationships and, conversely, to learn to let relationships go. It’s the nature of our work with families as we help them prepare for life in a home of their own.

“Interfaith is a small group of people doing a lot of work. I feel both impressed and intimidated,” Hannah says. “I have a lot to learn from the folks in the family housing programs and am committed to approaching this work with curiosity, humility, and always a desire to treat others with the dignity that is inherently theirs.”



INTERFAITH COALITION
of WHATCOM COUNTY
PO Box 30767
Bellingham, WA 98228

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Bellingham, WA 98226
Permit No. PI 231

Consider this...

**Homelessness is often the result
of two types of poverty:**

Financial & Relational Poverty

Strong support systems and relationships can be the difference between bouncing back after a life crisis or losing one's home and livelihood.

A LASTING GIFT MEANS A SAFE PLACE FOR FAMILIES LEAVING HOMELESSNESS



Thanks to an incredible gift left by a member of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Interfaith Coalition now has another home in Bellingham to help families on their paths out of homelessness. Congregation members repaired and freshened up the house in preparation for its use by Interfaith.

This house will function as transitional housing, which will allow a family to build a rental history. During a family's time in the house, they will pay a reduced rent and contribute to a savings plan that will be put toward a future rental deposit. Families in this house will receive case management that supports them along their journey out of homelessness.

Thank you, Christ the Servant Lutheran!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

We are honored and grateful to be a Haggen Cultivating Community Together 2023 recipient!

From March 29 - May 23, Haggen shoppers will be able to donate during checkout. Cultivating Community Together supports organizations that contribute to the health, resiliency, and well being of our community.

