



# INTERFAITH CONNECTION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

## WHY WE SHELTER OUR NEIGHBORS

For the first time, our Severe Weather Shelters opened all three holidays. Up to 80 men and women each night found warmth and safety at our shelters.

Late Christmas night, the lights were dimmed as many men were already resting under clean blankets on sleeping pads. The coffee pot was full. Some played cards, against a low murmur of conversation. Volunteers kept the shelters open.

Longtime volunteer Tad Lewis said, “I worked many of the holidays because I am able to. It is a joy to share with these people. This service is greatly needed. It provides a safe dry place to stay with two meals. Many who attend have not eaten in a couple of days.”

Interfaith Outreach Coordinator Janie Pemble said, “There is a connection made during these hours with these brothers of mine. Even though some of them are obviously troubled with challenges, things I can’t even imagine, in this room I am reminded we have more in common than we are different. I am reminded they are fellow humans first and foremost. I pray that there are better times ahead for them.”

Cindy Louws volunteers because of “caring for loved ones who deal with mental illness” and her own experience “with life on the streets.”

“They are living in their cars, doorways, the woods, with friends or family or they simply don’t have anyone in their life. Some have lost jobs; some have jobs but no

home. Many deal with physical and/or mental health issues. Some with drugs or alcohol. Some have been abused; some are abusers. Some young, some old. They desire access to the basic needs of life: shelter, food and clothing. Shelters are temporary.

There’s a great need for a permanent shelter for those who need a hand up.”

Thad Allen said, “I ask myself how would I like to be treated if I were the one standing in front of the desk requesting a mat and a blanket? It breaks my heart to see these fellow members of this community enduring such hardship. It

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also motivates me to do something about it.

“There is sadness involved in this work; however positive experiences as well. To work alongside these wonderful volunteers is truly a privilege and an honor. I have met people who remind me there is still good in the world. I see potential in the faces of the homeless and that gives me hope that better days are possible for them.”

Rick Congdon added, “Working at the shelters changes your perspective of the homeless. It wakes me up to how fortunate I am. Maybe/hopefully I am doing something good, but in helping I find I am helping myself as well.”

The volunteers who are the face of the Shelters offer a life-line this community needs and save lives by welcoming the most vulnerable people to warmth and safety inside. Sanctuary.



**SATURDAY,  
MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup>  
5:30 P.M.**

**FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON  
714 LAKEWAY DRIVE, BELLINGHAM**  
formerly Best Western Lakeway Inn  
**TICKETS \$50** dinner included

To buy tickets, donate, or volunteer, **CALL 360-734-3983**  
or visit us at **WWW.INTERFAITH-COALITION.ORG**

You're warmly invited to Hope Auction, Interfaith's 25th annual spring fundraiser to bring homes, warmth, and hope to our neighbors. This friendly evening features one of the community's largest silent auctions, dinner plus a fun live auction. Enjoy an evening of fellowship, learn about how our housing program makes a difference in challenged lives, and help us raise over one-third of our annual budget to do more to transform the lives of families and individuals who need a fresh start.

**TICKETS!**

Buy your tickets now! See the form below or order online at [www.interfaith-coalition.org](http://www.interfaith-coalition.org).

Put together a table of friends or congregation members. Encourage your congregation to donate a gift as an auction item! Most of all, mark your calendar to partner with us in making a difference in peoples' lives!

**DONATE!**

Can you contribute an auction item – a professional service, a vacation getaway, gourmet dinner, gift certificates, sports tickets, treats for children and pets, artwork, music and so much more? Contact us at [info@interfaith-coalition.org](mailto:info@interfaith-coalition.org) with your ideas and donations.

**SPONSORS!**

We are proud to welcome these businesses and individuals as sponsors for Hope Auction 2016 (as of January 27).

- Bob and Diane Becker
- Dean and Mary Brett
- Compass Point Survey Group
- HUB International
- Kathy and Paul Lovdahl
- McEvoy Oil
- PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center
- Brenda and John Riseland
- Barbara Mathers-Schmidt and Bob Schmidt
- Windermere Property Management

**INTERFAITH COALITION HOPE AUCTION TICKET ORDER FORM - PLEASE COMPLETE ALL OF THE INFORMATION BELOW.**

**\$50 - INDIVIDUAL**  **\$100 - GOLD LEVEL** - includes additional contribution to Interfaith Coalition. Please indicate the desired number of tickets in the appropriate box above. Please mail or return your check for the total amount (no cash please) to the Interfaith Coalition office at **910 14TH STREET, BELLINGHAM, WA 98225**

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Email:

City:

Zip:

Preferred Seating:

Special Dietary Request:

## CHOIR FEST

This year's Choir Fest promises a special treat. The Fest, Sunday, Feb. 21 at 3:30 at First Congregational Church (2401 Cornwall Ave. Bellingham), features music from Interfaith member congregation choirs.

All voices then join together in two songs. The first is *Make Me An Instrument*, a lovely setting of the Prayer of St. Francis. The second is *All Lifted Hearts*, a simple melody including spoken lines about the golden rule. Singers from the diverse faith traditions we enjoy here, including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Native American/Lummi and Buddhist, will make a powerful statement about working together for peace.

Please join us! An offering to benefit our programs will be gladly received. **(We would love additional singers to participate this year. Please call us at 734-3983.)**

## HELPING OUR FAITH COMMUNITIES

Because many of our congregations share that they feel unprepared and/or lack resources to respond to a variety of challenging needs and situations they encounter, Interfaith hosted a forum last fall: "Help! Helping Faith Communities Respond Faithfully to Those in Need." Experts from the Homeless Outreach Team, Opportunity Council and Bellingham Police presented information on Whatcom resources and how to access them. Congregations shared ministries and programs already in place, discussing how to respond compassionately, but within boundaries, keeping staff, clergy and property safe. We plan to offer more forums to serve and support the work our faith communities do.



*Singers from Choir Fest 2014 raise their voices in support of Interfaith Coalition programs.*

## WHY WE CARE

"A clean bed. A kitchen to make their own meals and then sit together to enjoy them. A safe house. We take these things for granted. Others only dream about them. With blessings from above and some practical help WE CAN CHANGE LIVES!"

*Holly Telfer, Board Chair*

"Our work has always been about basic needs for our community. It started with healthcare, then expanded to dental and mental health services. Housing for families to help them stabilize fit right in with basic needs. The partnerships with community agencies, and the support from congregations in Whatcom County speak of the widespread caring and interest in helping our neighbors. I was always touched by all the help and caring of our supporters."

*Kathy Lovdahl, 15-year board member*



**INTERFAITH COALITION  
OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

910 14th St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225

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**BECAUSE OF YOUR  
COMMITMENT**

- In 2015, Interfaith Coalition hosted 23 families (a total of 89 people of all ages) in our 11 units of housing, giving them a space to restart and a place to call home.
- Men, women and children received over 3,000 winter coats and jackets and hundreds of handmade hats and scarves this fall in Blaine, Bellingham, Ferndale and Deming through Project Warm-Up.
- Holiday gifts to 93 families and 244 individuals were joyfully chosen, wrapped, and delivered this season.
- CAST's 112 volunteers prepared sandwiches and hot drinks, delivering over 675 meals each month to hungry people four nights a week in downtown Bellingham.

- Severe Weather Shelters opened over Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's, providing a safe and dry place to rest for over 80 people overnight.
- Whether you are a volunteer who shares your time with one of Interfaith's programs, whether you donate a warm jacket or coordinate your faith community's fall coat drive, whether you contribute monthly...you are a community of compassion and resolve helping our neediest brothers and sisters. We are filled with gratitude for all you do and for your belief that life can be better for each of us.

**“** We give to Interfaith because we love that what we give is valued and, when added to what others give, becomes enough to make a difference to help people in our own community...”

**LIKE INTERFAITH COALITION  
OF WHATCOM COUNTY  
ON FACEBOOK!**

