



# INTERFAITH CONNECTION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

## FAMILY PROMISE: OUR STORY BEGINS HERE

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, on a dark and stormy night...

Wait. Wrong story. This is not a fairy tale. It is right here today. And though our winters can be a bit dark and rainy, today it is bright and sunny and full of hope!

Our story began well before we opened our doors to the Whatcom County community with two years of preparation that resulted in our readiness to open on April 2nd. We filled within three days! Since opening day, we've brought stability to more than five families and watched three graduate with jobs and homes. In the past two months, over 15 congregations have served families. We've built partnerships with the Opportunity Council and school districts, UnityCare NW and the Whatcom Family YMCA. And these are just the bare bones of our story, which seems to be more of an epic journey—one that Ulysses, Achilles, or Moses would lead.

Family Promise is the story of each family and each person. It is the dad who finds a job and the son who finds a place in a new school. It is the story of kids planting lettuce in the garden—and realizing that lettuce isn't so bad after all! It's a clothesline of paintings, hanging above the kitchen table, featuring the brushstrokes of tiny fingers, as parents let out a great sigh of rest on a Sunday afternoon. And it is the story of a family reunited.

Our story has a setting that continuously changes, as families take their epic journey from one loving congregation to the next. While they played a mean game of roundball at Assumption, they made sweet cards for distant family members at Christ the Servant

Lutheran Church.

Our story is being written each day. The plot has many twists and turns. Sometimes, it is “boringly good,” accomplishing the blissfully mundane tasks of life really well—like cleaning the day center or getting to the church on time (that should be a song, by the way). At other times, it's a high-intensity moment, when a family awaits a phone call about a possible job.



*Family Promise staff: from left, Robert Bell, transportation coordinator and hospitality liaison, Gina Hanna, case manager/day center coordinator, and Sarah Lane, program director.*

The protagonist is each person touched by our program, volunteers and family members alike. They include the volunteer who comes by the day center to work with a mom on financial management and the UnityCare NW staff who make the healthcare connection. The protagonists are the sheet washers and meal preparers and child-herders when a mom needs a moment to gather herself.

While it may have been a dream, once upon a time, it is no dark and stormy night. It's a bright and sunny spring with new growth abounding. And it's not far away at all. Rather, it's right here, and we are the epic heroes, living in strength and faith and community.

# HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR NEIGHBOR TODAY?

## CONSIDER

1. a donation to the Interfaith Endowment Fund. This allows your tax-deductible gift to be invested and multiplied via a professionally managed account, creating a source of income that will continue caring for our neighbors in need into the future. (contact Laura at Interfaith, 360 734-3983.)



## LEASE

2. one of your rental units to an Interfaith family in need of housing. Why not take a blessing you've received and use it as a ministry for others? Interfaith will screen tenants, help structure the lease, and provide in-home case management regularly. Use what you have to help Interfaith lift families out of poverty. (contact Carolyn at Interfaith, 360 734-3983.)

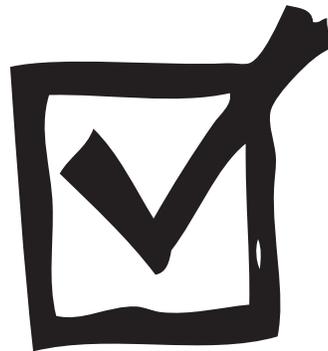
## THINK

3. about using your benefit at Thrivent Financial (thrivent.com). Through their Thrivent Choice program, you are allocated funds to be given to good causes. Please recommend Thrivent direct your share of charitable donations to Interfaith Coalition.



## CHOOSE

4. to make a significant difference in the lives of your neighbors in need by naming Interfaith Coalition as a beneficiary in your will. Why not direct some of the resources you've accrued over a lifetime to give others a boost? A bequest to Interfaith is a powerful way to put your values into action. Ask your financial advisor to contact Laura at Interfaith, 360 734-3983.



“Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him.”

-C.S. Lewis

## DOUBLE

5. the benefit of donating to Interfaith. You can donate stock contributions, or donate to Interfaith with appreciated assets. When you donate appreciated assets, you don't pay tax on your capital gains. You can take the full amount of your contribution as a tax-deductible donation. Companies and donating after-tax income can help you be able to increase your impact. (Contact Laura at Interfaith, 360 734-3983.)



## SHOP

6. at Amazon as a way to support a free way to help those in need. Go to Amazon.com/interfaith. Amazon.com, just like Amazon.com, just like Amazon.com. Do not go to Amazon.com.



inquire at Customer Service. You can link your Rewards card to your Amazon account. You still get all your Amazon points, and rebates your company. Using Fred Meyer's corporate card to donate to Interfaith, at no cost to you.

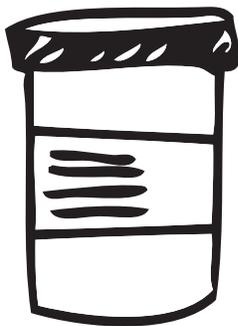
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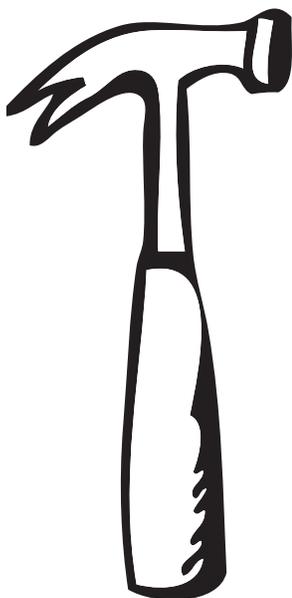
## SPREAD

7. the love around when you pick up a few empty prescription bottles from the Interfaith office at 910 14th St. on South Hill in Bellingham. Place a bottle in your office, or with your book club, sports team, youth group, or other gathering. Encourage your congregation to do the same. Keep it visible and invite others to chip in; each bottle holds \$10 in quarters. This is an easy, accessible way for kids or anyone to participate and learn about giving back. Return bottles to Interfaith office when full.



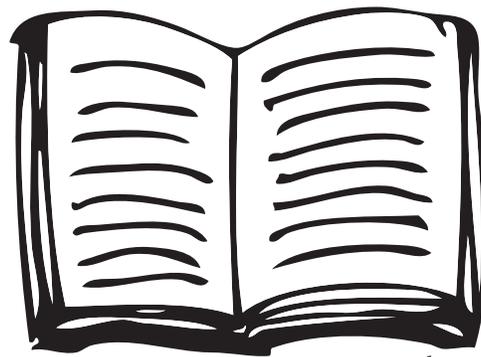
## UPGRADE

8. your own home, and when you do, donate previous items that are still in fine shape. For free pickup of gently used furniture and appliances, call Interfaith at 360 734-3983; they will arrange pick-up with Habitat for Humanity or Appliance Depot at no charge to you, while crediting your donations to Interfaith. With homeless families moving into Interfaith housing, your furniture and still-good bedding, towels, cookware, utensils, and family-friendly DVDs are always welcomed.



## SEARCH

9. around your house for gently used, quality books that children and teens might enjoy. The Interfaith program Kids Need Books, created by local volunteer and retired teacher Joe Nolting, distributes free books to low-income folks at food banks, local festivals, and other community gatherings. Via Hope Lutheran Church in Lynden, these books also go to migrant-worker families throughout Whatcom County. Drop off books at the Interfaith office, 910 14th St., Bellingham 98225.



## BECOME A HERO

10. by using the Realtor 2roofs (2roofs.com) if you're buying or selling real estate. This local company, started by two Whatcom County friends, directs a significant portion of proceeds from every commission to local nonprofits such as Interfaith to help end homelessness. Their stated mission is premier service with transparent and responsible giving. One roof can help build another.





**INTERFAITH COALITION  
OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

910 14th St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225

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## SAVE THE DATE - SEPT. 30!

### 2ND ANNUAL BED RACE TO HELP CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Round up four friends into a team and join the wacky, fun Bed Race from **2 to 4 pm Sunday, Sept. 30 in Bellingham's Civic Field parking lot.** The second annual Bed Race begins with an informal parade as costumed teams showcase their decorated and newly mobile beds. Here's how to participate ([familypromisebedrace.com](http://familypromisebedrace.com), click Enter a Team). You can also sponsor a team. Lots of laughs and free family fun, with a chance to donate if you wish. Prizes awarded for fastest bed (grease those wheels!), most money raised, best theme, and more. All proceeds benefit Interfaith's Family Promise, which offers shelter and meals in existing church buildings to local families in need throughout Whatcom County.

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

