



Bellingham
At Home

Your Village Voice – October 2017

"None of us is as smart as all of us." --Ken Blanchard

BAH's First Annual Meeting

By Janet Simpson, Intrepid Reporter
and Lauren Phillips

What does the ideal BAH look like to you? What has to happen to get us to that ideal? What can an individual member do to make that happen?

More than 50 members showed up for our first annual meeting on August 27, proclaimed Bellingham At Home day by Mayor Kelli Linville. (Unable to attend at the last minute, the mayor sent City Council member April Barker to present the proclamation in her stead.) We were there to celebrate BAH's short but stellar past and help create our future, focusing on those three questions.



CITY OF BELLINGHAM
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
KELLI LINVILLE

MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Bellingham At Home, a program of the Whatcom Council on Aging, is celebrating its first year in operation; and

WHEREAS, Bellingham At Home is a virtual village that empowers seniors to stay active and engaged while continuing to live in their own homes and neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Bellingham At Home provides members with opportunities to give and receive volunteer service related to household tasks, transportation and social opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Bellingham At Home is member and volunteer-driven and works to build community amongst its members.

NOW, THEREFORE, DO I, Kelli Linville, Mayor of the City of Bellingham, proclaim Sunday, August 27, 2017 to be

BELLINGHAM AT HOME DAY

In the City of Bellingham, Washington in honor of it's first year of serving its members in our community.

Signed this 21st day of August, 2017

Kelli Linville, Mayor
City of Bellingham



The meeting started with general visiting around tables set up for each area of Bellingham, where people got to know other members in their own neighborhood. Emceed by Steve Morris, the Leadership Council then presented various aspects of our history and events that were highlighted on a large timeline: Richard Abbot talked about the early days, including a survey showing that 90 percent of community respondents wanted to stay in their own homes as they aged; Elaine Cress introduced our leaders, past and present; Barb Evans told the story of recruiting and training our volunteers; and Allen Johnson took us through the tireless efforts of the Outreach and Publicity task forces to reach out to the community. Every person received a copy of the Bellingham At Home financial report for the year. Refreshments were available at a buffet table throughout the program.

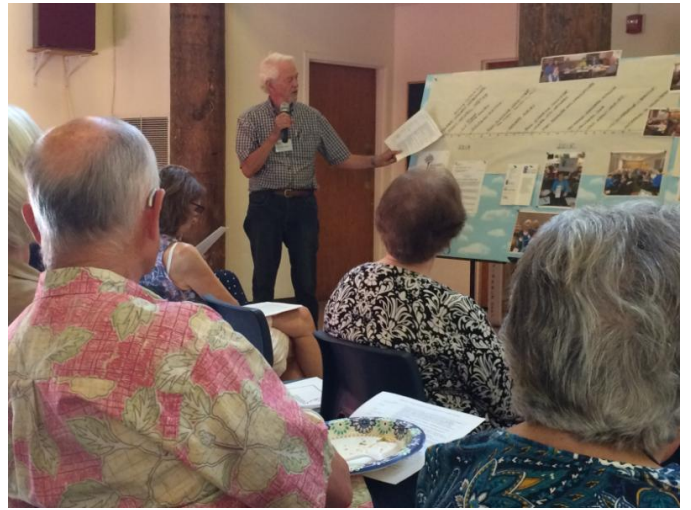
Members then tackled the three key questions about our future, moving from table to table until everyone had had their say about each issue, with volunteer scribes recording the proceedings and later reporting them to the entire group. Key findings:

1. There was definitely support for creating more neighborhood connections, a greater sense of community and shared activities, and added visibility in Bellingham; also an improved list of vetted contractors.

2. People expressed a need for more members, more service requests, daily check-in partners, neighborhood activities, and succession training for leadership positions.
3. Some people took the opportunity to commit to volunteering and to helping create neighborhood groups.

Watch this spot for more detailed recommendations and future directions from the formal meeting report, to be released over the next few months as we study the feedback from participants.

Below: Photos from the Village Gathering, August 27



Getting Familiar with the BAH Website

Marilyn Burlingame reports that additional classes in how to maneuver around our Bellingham At Home website will be offered soon. “We’re planning a variety of options, from classroom learning to one-on-one at the BSAC to members’ own homes. Stay tuned.”

In the meantime, for those of you who are already fairly comfortable online, we’re attaching a checklist to help you explore the website (<http://bellinghamathome.org>) on your own. Please call the office with any questions.

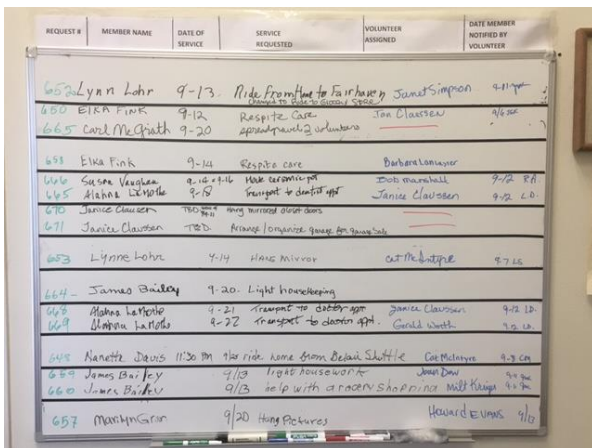
Leslie Checks in

By Leslie Jackson, Program Coordinator
Leslie.jackson@bellinghamathome.org

I would like to take this time to talk about the dedicated team of trained office volunteers that handles members’ service requests. I quickly came to realize that these people are BAH’s backbone, making things happen for all of us every day.

There is more to a service request than meets the eye. Once a member calls in and asks for help, the office volunteer generates an email service request through our computer system. After that goes out to available service volunteers, the office volunteer calls those individuals who do not like to be contacted by email.

The service request is then written on a large white board—our holy grail.



REQUEST #	MEMBER NAME	DATE OF SERVICE	SERVICE REQUESTED	VOLUNTEER ASSIGNED	DATE MEMBER NOTIFIED BY VOLUNTEER
660	Lynn Lohr	9-13	Ride from home to Fairhaven	Janet Simpson	9-11-14
661	Brian Fink	9-12	Respite Care	Janet Simpson	9-10-14
665	Carol McQuinn	9-20	Transport to doctor's appointment	Janet Simpson	9-10-14
663	Elva Fink	9-12	Respite Care	Barbara Langer	
666	Susan Vaughan	9-10-14	Housekeeping	Donna Marshall	9-12-14
665	Elaine Lohr	9-15	Transport to doctor's appointment	Janet Simpson	9-12-14
660	Janet Simpson	9-10-14	Transport to doctor's appointment	Janet Simpson	9-12-14
661	Janet Simpson	9-10-14	Transport to doctor's appointment	Janet Simpson	9-12-14
663	Lynn Lohr	9-14	Housekeeping	Donna Marshall	9-12-14
664	James Bailey	9-20	Housekeeping	Donna Marshall	9-12-14
667	Alma Lohr	9-20	Transport to doctor's appointment	Janet Simpson	9-12-14
669	Alma Lohr	9-22	Transport to doctor's appointment	Donna Marshall	9-12-14
668	Nanette Davis	9-20	Transport home from Bell's Shuttle	Donna Marshall	9-12-14
669	James Bailey	9-13	Housekeeping	Donna Marshall	9-12-14
660	James Bailey	9-13	Help with a recent shopping list	Donna Marshall	9-12-14
667	Martha Grier	9-20	Housekeeping	Howard Evans	9-12-14

Command Central of the BAH office

The board helps each of us see which members have had their needs met and which have not. The office volunteers are diligent about keeping track of this information, doing everything they can to get a request filled. I am amazed at how hard they work!

Here are some helpful tips to remember when making a service request:

- Allow at least three days to get your request filled. We do not advise calling up and expecting service that same day. This is not to say we won't try, especially if it is a medical issue, but finding someone on short notice rarely happens.
- Be as specific as possible; this helps the service volunteer filling your request know exactly what to expect and/or bring.
- Please remember that many of our service providers are also members, or old enough to be members. Service requests for

challenging jobs such as heavy gardening or climbing on ladders to the third story may be beyond our volunteers' ability, but we will do our best to fill requests.

- Thank your office volunteer! These are outstanding people doing their best to see that your request is met out of a sincere desire to help others.

Here's a big thank you from me to Joanne Kurtz, Richard Abbott, Lynn DeFehr, Joanne Knittel, Howard Furst, Lisa Schork, Judith Koontz, Cat McIntyre, and Lelia Coyne—we are so grateful for your hard work and commitment to the BAH Community.

Interested in joining the team? Please call the office and ask for me; I'd love to talk with you.

Good Governance Begins at Home—Bellingham At Home

Governance is rarely at the top of members' minds in a well-run organization, but it's important for everyone to understand the framework and infrastructure that keep us functioning smoothly and progressing toward our goals. Meet the newest

addition to that infrastructure: BAH's Executive Committee (EXCO), designed to enhance our efficiency and speed up our ability to make and implement timely decisions.

First, a quick recap: Back in 2014, a steering committee was formed to frame and tackle key start-up questions (who, what, where, when) about what would soon be known as Bellingham At Home. Task forces then took on the individual issues, and the steering committee turned itself into the Leadership Council in 2015. The LC charged itself with raising funds and developing an implementation plan, zooming in on recruiting members and volunteers in 2016.

Since our launch in July of last year, the Leadership Council has been focused on three areas: getting an operational office up and running; recruiting and developing a paid professional program coordinator (Leslie Jackson); and planning for the future.

A big shout-out to Barb Evans (chair), Allen Johnson (vice chair), Elaine Cress (secretary), and Steve Morris (finance) for starting up our Executive Committee.

Members on Volunteers



What a wonderful help volunteer Joanne Knittel was to me today! A raccoon had chewed irregular pieces of wood off the yellow edge on my garage roof. Joanne not only had the idea of covering it with masking tape, but she did the job! (I was the assistant). The tape was a perfect match and everybody was happy (except perhaps the raccoon). Thanks, Joanne.

Lynne Lohr

Left: Joanne to the rescue!

Take Charge of Your Health

By Elaine Cress, PhD, FACSM

Is it possible to live well while living with chronic disease? It is if you take charge of managing your goals and behavior. This six-week, evidence-based workshop offered by the Bellingham Senior Activity Center (BSAC) is designed to give you the tools to do just that. You will learn to set and meet goals, problem solve, and make decisions. Additional tools help to manage stress and improve your ability to relax, fight fatigue and frustration, eat better and exercise safely, control pain and improve activity, and be an advocate for yourself.

Live Well, Live Today (<http://livewellivetoday.weebly.com/>) is a behaviorally based healthy living program developed by Stanford University proven to reduce symptoms and doctors' appointments. The course is led by certified leaders Elaine Cress and Julie Johnson. Each participant in the workshop receives a copy of the companion book, *Living a Healthy Life With Chronic Conditions*, 3rd Edition. As a BAH member, your fee is \$30; register at the front desk of the BSAC. If you have questions, please contact Elaine Cress at (360)733-4030 x1033 or ecress@wccoa.org. Class times are Mondays, October 9th - November 13th, 9:00 - 11:30 am, held at the BSAC.

Volunteers Matter

Spotlight on Joan Dow

There's a wonderful story that Joan tells that is very telling about Joan herself:

"I just love insects and earthworms. After it rains, I go out in our driveway with a little card and shove it under each earthworm and carry them all back to the dirt—because otherwise they'll die when the sun comes up. You know, earthworms are very interesting creatures. I was outside digging a hole in the garden and I dug up an earthworm. So I picked her up and moved her to another hole to keep her safe. And she was completely outraged. She came out of that hole, whump, whump whump, and went right back into the original hole. I found that fascinating. So I went online and watched a documentary on earthworms and, sure enough, they are territorial."



Joan and Chet

See what I mean? This tells us not only that Joan is curious about earthworms but that she is observant, patient, and thoughtful. She is also ready, willing, and able to pursue an interest well past the point where the average run of person might, well, lose interest.

In fact, about five months ago, Joan started a group at the senior center called Trends in Science.

"Each week I plan the topic, do the research, email everybody with links to background articles and video, and then lead the discussion for however many people show up—sometimes six, sometimes 12. We have a couple of retired scientists who usually come. It takes a fair amount of my time but there are so many interesting things going on and it's a fun group; we laugh a lot."

"Frustrated biologist" she may be, but Joan is also "a bit of a language fanatic" and that was the focus of her career, first as a teacher of ESL and then, for 20 years, as a freelance consultant teaching business writing. To this day, she's always editing when she reads and when she's listening to people talk. "It drives me crazy."

Joan grew up in Arlington, VA, just outside Washington, DC, where she had "a wonderful childhood going to the Smithsonian," but in her 20s she decided she wanted a change.

"I just thought what the heck. I sold everything, threw a suitcase in the car, and drove to Seattle. I found a job that only lasted two days but in those two days I met my husband, Chet! We've been married for 47 years."

Here's another example of Joan's all-in, wide-open nature. As a volunteer with the erstwhile community organization Friendly Visitors, she was assigned to a 93-year old woman who was legally blind and deaf but who could hear Joan, who has a strong voice.

"I asked if she'd like me to write down her life story so we could put it on a disc and give it to her son. She said she'd be delighted, so that's what we did. It was just a spontaneous thing—a half hour Q&A, an hour of my time writing it up—but it was fun for both of us and I think her son was glad to have those memories." It then occurred to Joan that there might well be other elderly people who would like to do the same thing. So she's putting the word out that she's available—"no charge, strictly fun."

For Bellingham At Home, Joan volunteers an hour or two a week as a service volunteer, sits on the Events Task Force, and is in the group exploring the launch of a BAH advocacy program. And when she's not volunteering? She's reading. Oh my, is she reading. "I'm a maniac about biographies. Right now, I'm reading a big beautiful biography about Goebbels. Reading biographies is my hobby." Well, and listening to Italian opera. "I have a tiny classical music group that meets once a month at the senior center to listen to and talk about an assigned piece of music."

So there you have it: a curious, passionate, generous, and thoughtful person. Joan Dow... earthworm lover.

Have you renewed your membership for the current year?

We're gratified to report that so far, more than 80% of our members who have completed one year of membership have re-upped—that's better than or equal to the national average for first-year villages. If you haven't gotten around to it yet, please call the office today or renew online on BellinghamAtHome.org.

Coming Next Month: A New Newsletter Format

You've been getting Your Village Voice from Bellingham At Home's own email account (the "from" in your inbox shows "Bellingham At Home"). We are going to try something new in November, using the same communications tool that our sister programs use at Whatcom Council on Aging. This means the email edition of Your Village Voice will come from "Bellingham Senior Activity Center" and will have a new, fresher look. Two big advantages of this switch will be formatting ease for us and the ability for readers to view on different devices.

Note: If you don't see our next newsletter in your regular email by November 1, please check your spam folder. If necessary, you can get email from this address to show up in your regular email by adding Bellingham Senior Activity Center to your Contacts. (You get email from BSAC already so we don't expect this will be a problem.)

Paper newsletter recipients will continue to receive our publication by regular mail.

PLEASE WATCH FOR THE OCTOBER BAH CALENDAR IN A SEPARATE MAILING.

Bellingham At Home Contact Information

Location: Bellingham Senior Activity Center, Room 14, 315 Halleck Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Phone: 360 746-3462 E-mail: info@bellinghamathome.org

Website: <http://BellinghamAtHome.org>

Bellingham At Home is a program of the Whatcom Council on Aging, which is a 501(c)(3) organization, and a member of the Village to Village Network.