

CHANGING LIVES

The newsletter for the Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center



Founding members of JLSFRC's new San Juan Island Childcare Cooperative

SJI CHILDCARE COOPERATIVE

When JLSFRC completed a Childcare Needs Assessment for San Juan Island in 2021, one of the most pressing areas of identified need was safe, reliable care for infants and toddlers. Currently, no infant care exists on SJI, and there are only 7 all-day slots to serve working parents with toddlers – a number far short of the 70+ families who need childcare for children ages 0-3. With financial help from the Town of Friday Harbor, San Juan County and private donors, JLSFRC is now in the process of launching a Childcare Cooperative specifically for infants and toddlers. Established in partnership with the Skagit Valley College Cooperative Preschool Program, the cooperative engages parents in the governance and daily running of a childcare program that complies with WA state requirements. Participating parents contribute weekly hours to help run the program, and in return earn low-cost childcare hours and tuition-free college credits. The SJI Childcare Cooperative is set to launch in spring of 2022 – please consider supporting this critical community venture that will serve island families for years to come!



UTILITIES ASSISTANCE

This winter's extreme weather in the islands has had a big impact on everyone's utility bills, from higher heating costs to unexpected water bills due to frozen pipes. Luckily, the Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center works hard each winter to help community members get the help they need – last year, we helped 322 households obtain utilities assistance, totaling \$82,300. This means that community members were kept safe and sound without having the intimidating financial burden of paying bills bigger than expected.

JLSFRC partners with federal and state utility assistance programs, as well as the Town of Friday Harbor and OPALCO, to ensure that local households can stay warm and have reliable running water. We're especially grateful to the SJI Community Foundation for a special grant that is also helping low-income households repair pipes that were damaged during the cold snap we had in December. Season by season the JLSFRC is there to help families meet their basic needs in challenging times.

HOUSING/RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Stable housing is a key determinant of overall health. In the midst of the local housing crisis and the pandemic, JLSFRC has played a crucial role in keeping roofs over the heads of our community members through our Housing Stabilization Program.

This program serves vulnerable islanders by assisting them in finding and maintaining appropriate housing and providing temporary rental assistance. The Housing Stabilization Program also connects tenants and landlords financially impacted by COVID-19 to government housing relief funds that are available to cover unpaid rent.

The numbers tell part of the story, with the JLSFRC serving 132 households and providing more than \$162,000 in direct financial assistance in 2021. In total, 462 children and adults were kept in stable housing because of this program. Additionally, the JLSFRC was able to refer over 27 families to the Opportunity Council's T-RAP program for additional rental assistance. Donations from community members, grants from local organizations such as the SJI Community Foundation, and county, state, and federal funding make this program possible.

MEET MELISSA HOPE

Melissa grew up in Friday Harbor, and after 24 years away is back as the Housing & Behavioral Health Case Manager at the Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center. Her professional life has centered around social work and higher education. Most recently, she provided advising and service-learning supervision for university students studying to become teachers, and spent her time between San Francisco and Belize. Now, she's excited to be back on the island and part of the amazing team at the FRC! In her downtime, she enjoys outdoor adventures with her dog Mina, visiting with friends or hunting for a new jigsaw puzzle.



Housing & Behavioral Health Case Manager, Melissa Hope

If you would like to support this ongoing programs, please:



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COMMUNITY WELLNESS PROGRAM

Access to quality mental health is a growing need across the nation and here on San Juan Island, JLSFRC is part of a unique and successful solution. The Community Wellness Program (CWP) is a San Juan County-funded behavioral health access program that is administered by the JLS Family Resource Center. CWP funding provides income-based counseling, medication management and other behavioral health supports for low-income community members who lack health insurance, as well as low- to moderate-income community members who have private pay insurance with a high deductible that they are not able to pay down.

Those interested fill out an application, work with the Case Manager at the JLSFRC to choose a therapist, and then pay a copay based on their income. Depending on need, enrolled clients can receive up to 18 subsidized counseling sessions, and can choose from thirteen therapists that are part of the program, all of whom offer different clinical specialties such as hypnotherapy, nature based therapy, EMDR, and more.

With additional funding from the Town of Friday Harbor and private donors, in 2021 the Community Wellness Program was able to serve two-hundred clients from different ethnic and economic backgrounds, as well as age demographics, benefitted from the program, significantly reducing the stigma around mental health services. Clients completed the sessions with a renewed sense of confidence and capacity to endure life's challenges and the tools to thrive.



Community Wellness therapist Melissa Guard (center) with JLSFRC Case Managers Ashley Strutz & Yubi Schollmeyer

POP-UP LATINX HEALTHCARE CLINIC

Understanding the healthcare needs of specific populations is a key factor in providing relevant services. With this in mind, the Family Resource Center formed a Latinx Healthcare Advisory Committee of local Latinx volunteers in 2020, with grant funding from PeaceHealth. The first aim of the committee was to conduct a healthcare access survey with forty-one local Latinx households. The survey revealed that the majority of Latinx families lack access to a regular healthcare provider on the island. Language and literacy barriers also stand in the way of scheduling appointments, filling out forms, and understanding bills.



Community members attend a diabetes prevention presentation at JLSFRC's recent pop-up Latinx Healthcare Clinic

In response, JLSFRC partnered with SeaMar, a statewide non-profit organization that focuses on healthcare and human services for low-income and Latinx communities. Together they hosted a Latinx Pop-Up Clinic on San Juan Island in December 2021 with groundbreaking success. The clinic provided health screenings, Covid and influenza vaccinations, and preventative health education on cancer and diabetes. Seventy-seven community members received services at the event, and its popularity is attributed to multilingual service providers, multifaceted health offerings and the involvement of the Latinx community in voicing their needs and structuring the event. More clinics and a Community Health Worker program are in the works for 2022.

STAFF

Jennifer Armstrong	Delphina Liles
Mary Blevins	Carmen Orozco
Steph Coffey	Jamie Rice
Jen DeShon	Yubi Schollmeyer
Adriana Gonzalez	Ashley Strutz
Melissa Hope	Mary Uri

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RAIN OR SHINE PLAYGROUP

Opportunities for new parents to get out and about with their babies, toddlers, and small children have been limited over the last two years but the Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center responded to the growing need by adapting their traditional services for children. What used to be known as Lapsit & Linger has now transitioned to become the Rain or Shine Playgroup, led by Ashley Strutz of JLSFRC and Cynthia Parkin of Toddler Learning Center.

This group is designed as a drop-in play and support group for families with children 0-5. Activities are based entirely outdoors in all types of weather and over thirty-five hardy island families have participated to date. Parents and children benefit from the group, as one parent shared, "Outdoor playgroup gives me the opportunity to expose my toddler to socialization and gives me a chance to meet other parents."

Furthermore, the Rain or Shine Playgroup provides a new learning curve for facilitators and parents as they encourage children to get outside in all types of weather, with rocks, sticks, steps, and swings being their main toys. In the end, everyone benefits from fresh air, time away from screens, movement, and connection.



Determined moms and tots attend our "Rain or Shine" playgroup through all types of weather!

How Can I Help Today?



The JLSFRC relies on the generosity of this community to make our vital work happen. We change lives because you care! So, if you'd like to help then please consider the following:

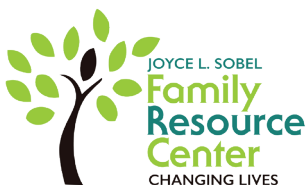
- Donate paper towels and laundry soap to our Household Essentials Program
- Bring in a stack of King's receipts
- Become a mentor to an elementary or middle school youth
- Volunteer with Island Neighbors to provide companionship and assistance to a senior



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Our team and our community thank you!



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