



SERVING THE SALISH REGION

KITSAP, JEFFERSON, AND CLALLAM COUNTIES

Homeless Connect

The homeless of Clallam County defy easy categorization. There are energetic young families, Vietnam veterans, smiling women, laughing recovering addicts, grumpy men, unkept young adults, jovial individuals with disabilities, and everywhere, those who are physically exhausted, yet are still fighting for a good life. And on March First, over three hundred of them attended Homeless Connect in Port Angeles.

A plethora of agencies and volunteers turned out at Vern Burton Gym to provide aid and information to the county's most vulnerable. Representatives from agencies such as Social Security, Molina Healthcare, Healthy Families of Clallam County, West End Housing, Salvation Army, Jobs Corps, Port Angeles Food Bank, and Oxford House attended the event. Many providers expressed how important the annual event was, not only for the attendees, but the providers themselves. Providers received valuable feedback on what services are needed, where the system is not working properly, and how to provide for a better community.

The annual event was hosted by Clallam County Project Homeless Connect, which has been running the event for ten years. Non-profit and government agencies worked alongside dozens of volunteers to see that individuals who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless were able to access services they needed. Free hot meals were given out, along with haircuts, dental care, clothing, vaccinations, legal advice, and advice for accessing government services. Most attendees left with full bellies, more knowledge, and bags of desperately needed clothing.

Salish FYSRT attended and was able to give information to several families who were concerned about the behavioral health of the children in their family. Beyond this, many older adults who suffered from prolonged homelessness, joblessness, or addiction problems, spoke with a FYSRT representative about their own, more recently understood behavioral health problems. They praised the current importance placed on childhood behavioral health; in many cases stating that if they had received proper diagnosis and treatment of their mental health issues as a child, their lives would have turned out far better than they had. It is a reminder to all of us that ignoring childhood behavioral health concerns leads to dire consequences.

Upcoming Events

- Helping All People Flourish --- March 14, 11:00am-1:00pm, Norm Dicks Government Center, Bremerton
- Kingston Cares Annual Meeting --- March 15, 9:00-11:00am, Village Green Community Center, Kingston
- Salish BHO Executive Board Meeting --- March 15, 9:00-11:00am, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe Council Chambers
- Community Café --- March 19, 10:00am-12:00pm, Lower Elwha Heritage Center, Port Angeles
- Clallam County Job Fair --- March 20, 1:00-6:00pm, Vern Burton Community Center, Port Angeles
- Salish FYSRT Monthly Meeting --- March 25, 3:00-5:00pm, Jefferson County Library, Port Hadlock
- NEAR Science Training --- March 27, 6:00-8:00pm, Port Angeles Library
- Salish BHO Advisory Board Meeting --- April 5, 10:00am-12:00pm, Sequim Transit Center
- Salish FYSRT Monthly Meeting --- April 29, 3:00-5:00pm, Jamestown S'Klallam Community Center

For more information on these events and others, visit www.salishfysprt.org/calendar

Employment Opportunities

Many individuals who have suffered through behavioral health problems or fought alongside their child to conquer their behavioral health trials may wish to use their own experiences to help others in similar positions. Indeed, these life experiences should be viewed as being an education. As rigorous as a university education can be, some things can only be understood by those who experience them first hand. Which is why there are several behavioral health positions that are geared towards peer guidance. Those with lived experience simply understand the problem in a way that no amount of book learning can instill. With that in mind, Salish FYSPRT would like to encourage anyone with lived experience to apply for a position that helps others going through behavioral health crises. The Salish FYSPRT website now has a page listing jobs that are either explicitly for those with lived experience, or those whose lived experience would be of significant advantage. Check out www.salishfysprt.org/lived-experience-jobs for current listings.

Meeting Changes

At the February Salish FYSPRT meeting in Port Orchard, there was a consensus to change the rotating location of meetings to a more permanent, fixed location. Due to the wide distribution of the population in Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap, many FYSPRT members are not able to attend meetings outside of their area. Increasing the ability of community members to attend and participate in monthly meetings is crucial to ensuring the success of Salish FYSPRT. Ideally, three locations in the three counties would be selected, and during the last Monday of the month, all three locations would be hooked up via satellite, allowing the three locations to communicate with one another. In short, every county would have its own, permanent monthly meeting space, and would be able to easily connect with the participants in the other two counties. The logistics of this change are daunting, and it may take a couple of months to put the new plan into place. The first step is to decide on meeting locations. The FYSPRT Leadership Team is taking suggestions for locations in each county to have as a regular meeting space. The space must be accessible and have media access. If you have any suggestions, please e-mail them to cbradely@wapave.org.

Submissions for Newsletter Wanted

The Salish FYSPRT Newsletter desires to incorporate a greater variety of sources in our monthly newsletter. We welcome articles, opinion pieces, short stories, poems, and artwork created by the youth, family, and systems partners in our community. We accept all topics, as long as the subject touches on behavioral health and is appropriate for a wide readership. Family and youth submissions that are accepted will receive a \$25 gift card in show of our gratitude.

