

Community NEWSLETTER

August 2025



What is this Newsletter?

The purpose of the Community Newsletter is to share updates on Opportunity Council's Downtown housing communities. This includes 22 North, Dorothy Place and Laurel Forest.

Each month, staff facilitate a variety of services and activities at these properties. This newsletter will highlight their impact on residents and the broader community. By providing a transparent and informative monthly update, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of our programs and the people we serve.

In This Issue

What is PSH?

22 North

Dorothy Place

Laurel Forest

Looking Forward

What is Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)?

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) blends affordable housing with individualized support services to help people and families experiencing homelessness. The goal is to make sure highly vulnerable individuals and families have the stability of a home while ensuring access to life-changing resources such as mental health care, substance use treatment, and employment support. Opportunity Council's PSH programs, like 22 North and Dorothy Place, exemplify this approach, offering not just a place to stay, but a community where residents have the freedom and support everyone needs to thrive.

22 North

22 North is a PSH community developed to provide wraparound support services to adults experiencing homelessness as they build lives of stability and opportunity.



Ragfinery and 22 North - A Common Thread

Ragfinery's mission is to grow a culture of creative textile reuse through education, entrepreneurial opportunities, and job training. Ragfinery volunteered their time to give residents of 22N the opportunity to learn how to sew, talk to Ragfinery staff and volunteers about job and education opportunities, and have some fun craft time with new faces in the community!

Music is better when we play together!

One of our Residential Counselors has been hosting weekly jam sessions in the shared lobby space at 22 North. Music has been shown to improve mood and reduce stress and anxiety. These sessions also give residents an opportunity to explore their creative side, build stronger relationships with neighbors, and form new friendships through music.

Residential Counselors are staffed at 22 North 24/7, helping to foster an inclusive and neighborly environment for all residents.



End of Summer Arts & Crafts

To celebrate the beauty of the season, residents were invited to paint on seashells and decorate their rooms with them as a cheerful reminder that summer will come again! Some chose to write poetry, while others created pun-filled self-affirmations—but everyone came together to get creative and connect. By participating in art, residents were able to personalize their homes, improve emotional well-being and strengthen their sense of community.

Dorothy Place



Animals as Natural Therapy Farm Tour

Dorothy Place residents took a Farm Tour at Animals as Natural Therapy. Animals as Natural Therapy is a local nonprofit that aims to improve mental and behavioral health through animal-guided programs and mentorship.

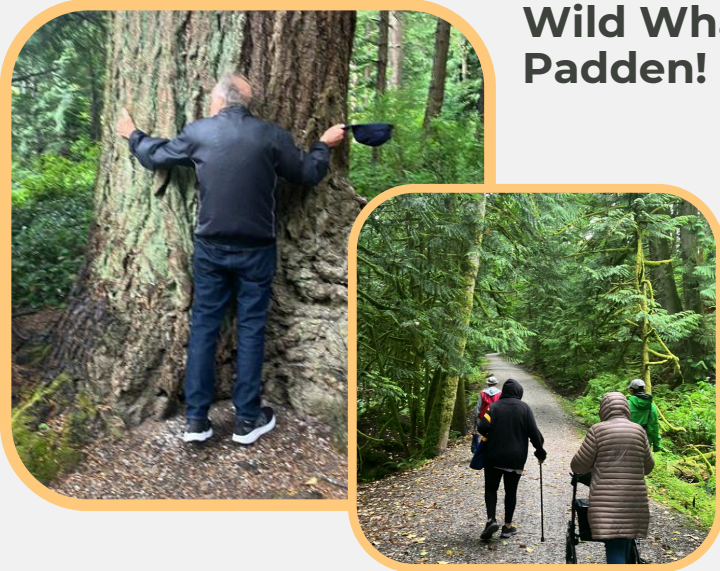
Bringing vulnerable adults and children to Animals as Natural Therapy had a deeply positive impact by creating a safe, nonjudgmental space for healing and connection. The calming presence of the animals helped reduce stress and anxiety, while hands-on activities like grooming and walking encouraged gentle physical movement and built confidence. For adults, the experience offered companionship and relief from isolation, while children developed empathy, communication skills, and social confidence. Most importantly, the shared focus on the animals fostered trust and meaningful interaction within the group, leaving participants feeling supported, valued, and more connected to one another.

About Dorothy Place

Since 1999, Dorothy Place Apartments have been a sanctuary for individuals and families who are homeless after escaping domestic violence. Our first official supportive housing program, Dorothy Place is a crucial resource in our community, ensuring that vulnerable families have a safe and stable place to call home. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a proven, long-term solution for helping people experiencing chronic homelessness achieve stability. At Dorothy Place, PSH offers stability, housing, and supportive services for children, families, and other people in need.

Laurel Forest

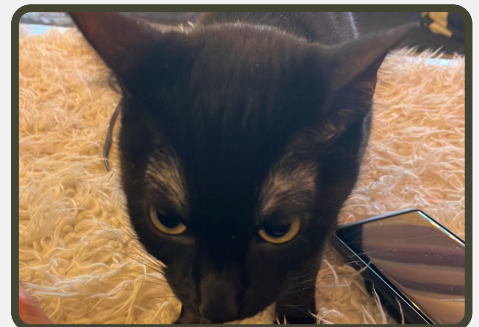
Wild Whatcom - Wonder Walk at Lake Padden!



For the past few months, Laurel Forest residents have been joining Wild Whatcom's Wonder Walks, a local nonprofit program that connects people with nature. Time outdoors offers proven mental, emotional, and physical benefits—improving attention, memory, mood, and mobility while reducing stress and loneliness. These walks give seniors a chance to stay active, build connections, and feel more engaged with both their peers and the natural world.

Neko Cat Cafe, the Pur-fect Afternoon.

This month, our Laurel Forest residents took a trip to Neko Cat Cafe. This not only allowed them to get out and about and create new memories with their neighbors, but also to have the opportunity to contemplate adopting their own Emotional Support Animal. Residents were able to get to know the animal to see if a cat could be a good fit for them along with simply enjoy an afternoon with a cat in their lap.



Laurel Forest is an affordable housing community for senior adults age 55 and older. Supportive services and community engagement activities are available to help residents prevent isolation and build community.

Looking Ahead



22 North Resource Fair

22 North is hosting an in-house Resource Fair with local agencies including Whatcom Public Health, Law Advocates, Evergreen Goodwill, Northwest Youth Services, and Northwest Regional Council. The fair connects residents with essential services to help overcome barriers to employment, education, and health care. By bringing providers on-site, the event makes resources more accessible, builds trust, and supports residents in taking steps toward stability, wellness, and independence.

Weekly Tai Chi at Laurel Forest

We have partnered with Lindi's Tai Chi in Fairhaven to offer weekly classes for Laurel Forest residents in the Community Room. Tai Chi provides gentle movement that improves balance, flexibility, and mobility, while also reducing the risk of falls. In addition to the physical benefits, the calming, meditative practice supports stress reduction, enhances focus, and promotes overall emotional well-being—offering residents a holistic way to stay active, centered, and connected.



ANT for 22 North

After seeing the positive impact at Dorothy Place, we are offering a Farm Tour with Animals as Natural Therapy to 22 North residents. This experience will support stress relief and social connection, while also offering gentle physical activity, providing a meaningful opportunity for healing and growth.



More yoga at Dorothy Place

Recurring yoga is being offered at Dorothy Place by a staff member who is a certified instructor. Yoga supports survivors of domestic violence by reducing stress and anxiety, building emotional resilience, and promoting physical strength and healing—creating a safe space for residents to restore balance and well-being.