

Community NEWSLETTER

July 2026

Summer BBQ

Hosting a summer BBQ for residents who have experienced chronic homelessness provides more than just a shared meal—it creates an opportunity to build community, celebrate the season, and strengthen relationships in a welcoming environment. Gathering outdoors for food, conversation, and laughter helps reduce social isolation and encourages residents to connect with neighbors and staff in a relaxed setting. For many, these positive community experiences are an important part of rebuilding trust, fostering a sense of belonging, and creating new memories that support long-term healing and housing stability.



Residents looking forward to Animals as Natural Therapy monthly visits

The monthly visits from Animals as Natural Therapy have become one of the most anticipated events for residents, with many asking when the animals will return. Residents who are often hesitant to leave their apartments eagerly come into shared spaces to greet the animals, creating natural opportunities for conversation, laughter, and connection with neighbors. The consistency of these visits has established a comforting routine that residents look forward to each month, fostering emotional well-being, reducing isolation, and bringing moments of joy that continue long after the animals have gone home.



Pizza Party with Peer Recovery Specialist Tamika

We hosted a pizza party with Peer Recovery Specialist Tamika to create a welcoming and low-pressure environment where residents could gather, build relationships, and access support in a natural setting. Sharing a meal together encouraged conversation, laughter, and connection, while the meet'n'greet pamphlet as seen below helped break down social barriers and foster a sense of community. Tamika's presence as a Peer Recovery Specialist provided residents with an approachable opportunity to learn about available recovery resources, ask questions, and build trust with someone who brings lived experience and understanding. By combining food, recreation, and supportive services, the event strengthened community engagement and created a space where residents felt comfortable, connected, and supported.

Meet Tamika Heath



Hi! My name is Tamika Heath . I work at Ideal Option as a Peer Recovery Specialist. I am Native American from the Yakama Nation. I moved to Bellingham eight years ago to continue my education at Northwest Indian College, where I am working toward becoming a Substance Use Disorder Professional (SUDP)

About Me

When I'm not at school or work, I enjoy drawing, painting, playing guitar, and making beaded earrings and medallions. I also love animals! especially horses, Highland cows, sloths, and koalas. If you ask me; my favorite colors, they're definitely red and black.

I became a peer counselor because of my own lived experiences with substance use, alcohol, and mental health challenges.

There was a time in my life when I felt alone and didn't have someone I felt safe talking to.

Because of that, I want to be the person I needed back then; someone who listens without judgment and helps others feel seen, heard, and supported.

I want to help people find hope, recognize the strengths they already have, and remind them that healing is possible.

Sometimes we lose sight of our own strengths during difficult times, and having someone believe in us can make all the difference.

I'm grateful to be here, and I look forward to getting to know everyone. If there's one thing I'd like people to remember, it's this: You are never alone.

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Looking Ahead

Partnering with Ragfinery



Partnering with Ragfinery to repair and mend torn clothing provides a practical service that also restores dignity for residents who have experienced chronic homelessness. Many residents have limited financial resources and may wear damaged clothing because replacing it is not an option. By offering free clothing repairs, this partnership helps extend the life of essential garments while removing financial barriers to maintaining a clean, well-kept wardrobe. Beyond the tangible benefit, having clothing repaired can boost confidence, support employment and community participation, and reinforce the message that residents deserve care, respect, and access to resources that help them thrive.

Summer Picnic with park clean-up

In August we will be putting on a summer picnic at Waypoint Park combined with a community park clean-up. This provides residents with an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors while giving back to the community. The picnic encourages social connection, physical activity, and time in nature, all of which support improved mental and emotional well-being. Incorporating a park clean-up fosters a sense of purpose, pride, and stewardship by allowing residents to make a visible, positive impact on a shared public space. We will be providing gift cards as an incentive to recognize residents' contributions, encourage participation, and reinforce that their time and effort is valued. This event promotes community engagement, teamwork, and empowerment while creating a fun and meaningful summer experience.

