

# Meeting Notes

## Agenda:

- 12:00pm** Open Networking
- 12:15pm** Presentation: Unity Care and McGregor Benefits
- 1:15pm** Network Updates & Announcements

## Attendance:

- Alle S. - YWCA
- Alison B. - Health Ministries Network
- Allison J. - St. Paul's
- Allyson H. - Opportunity Council
- Amanda D. - Opportunity Council
- Ann E. - St. Paul's
- Brendan G. - Northwest Justice Project
- Brylie T. - NAMI Whatcom
- Cathie H. - Cascade Housing Foundation
- Cocoa L. - Northwest Workforce Council
- Cristina M. - Bellingham School District
- Destiny M. - Opportunity Council
- Edith T. - Opportunity Council
- Erika M. - Unity Care NW
- Esther C. - Opportunity Council
- Freddi S. - St. Paul's
- Gabby S. - Ferndale Community Center
- Hannah R. - Lifeline Connections
- Heidi C. - Lydia Place
- Hunter H. - Puget Sound Energy
- Jeremy L. - McGregor Benefits
- Jerry F. - Contact Counseling Resources
- Julie S. - Cascade Connections
- Kate P. - Lydia Place
- Kat D. - Brigid Collins
- Kevin S. - Whatcom Dream
- Maria M. - Sea Mar
- Martha R. - Sea Mar
- Melissa L. - Contact Counseling Recovery Services
- Nicole S. - Signature Health Care at Home
- Rachel M. - Lifeline Connections
- Rebecca R. - United Way of Whatcom County
- Sandy W. - Northwest Regional Council
- Sandeep R. - Opportunity Council
- Sara O. - Ferndale Community Services
- Susan M. - Brigid Collins
- Stephanie S. - Bellingham Food Bank
- Theresa H. - YWCA
- Trista B. - Unity Care NW
- Victoria B. - Lifelong

# Featured Presentation:

*Medicaid and Medicare Basics - Erika Mounts, Unity Care NW  
Jeremy Loween, McGregor Benefits*

- [Presentation](#)
- [Unity Care NW](#)
- [McGregor Benefits](#)
- UCNW enrollment hours: Mon-Fri 8:00-5:00
- UCNW enrollment specialist line (360) 788-2669
- Jeremy Loween: [jeremy@mcgregorbenefits.com](mailto:jeremy@mcgregorbenefits.com)

## Network Updates & Announcements:

### NAMI Whatcom

- Upcoming fundraiser – fun run and walk on October 16. Starts at 10:00 at Bloedel Donovan Park. Register [here](#).
- Received a grant in April for Ending the Silence presentations. These presentations are meant to help build awareness and understanding of mental health conditions. Facilitators and moderators all have lived experience. Visit the [website](#) to learn more.
- Contact: [btaylor@namiwhatcom.org](mailto:btaylor@namiwhatcom.org)

### Northwest Youth Services

- Introducing Cocoa, the new development director.
- Hosting the first ever Healing Centered Engagement Gathering. Free event on 10/7 from 8-4. Speakers and workshops about community building and healing. Will have coffee and lunch provided. RSVP and learn more on the [website](#).
- Contact: Cocoa, [cocoal@nwys.org](mailto:cocoal@nwys.org)

### Lydia Place

- They have Habitat for Humanity vouchers for clients, but their inventory is zero. If you donate to Habitat you can designate your donation to the Lydia Place account.
- Rapid rehousing program: looking to recruit landlord partners.
- Contact: Heidi, [heidic@lydiaplace.org](mailto:heidic@lydiaplace.org)

### Ferndale Community Resources

- Fundraiser coming on October 12th from 6-9 at the Pioneer Pavilion. Beach Bingo Party – 21+ only. Find more information on the [website](#).
- Severe weather shelter is currently hiring for 5 overnight temp positions and volunteers. \$25 an hour.
- Launching safe parking program. A place where people who are living in their car to sleep, looking for advisory committee volunteers for feedback.
- Contact: Sara, [sara@ferndalecs.org](mailto:sara@ferndalecs.org)

## Puget Sound Energy

- The Equity Advisor Group has been working to develop a couple of new bill assistance programs.
- Starting October 1st: Bill Discount Rate – discount on your bill from 5–45% depending on level of need and household income. This is a new program. Changes to PSE Help: no documentation requirements, no need for SSN or ID.
- Applications available online on PSE website with a two week turnaround time.
- Application is only available in English, so hopefully this will change soon.
- Hunter is available to do workshops for clients or for staff at organizations.
- Contact: Hunter, [hunter.hassig@pse.com](mailto:hunter.hassig@pse.com)

## Lifeline Connections

- Behavioral health agency in Bellingham, for all of Whatcom.
- Outpatient mental health program just cleared waitlist, open for enrollment, and offering an additional prescriber.
- Anyone seeking affordable mental health services, call Lifeline.
- PACT team: serves people with serious mental illness: someone who's tried other services, but nothing's working.
- Offers peer support, counseling, prescribing, medication support, case management, and access to other services like employment and education.
- Lifeline can take multiple sources of insurance, not just Medicaid.
- Housing program can help people find housing, but Lifeline does not have housing.
- Contact: Rachel, [rmunroe@lifelineconnections.org](mailto:rmunroe@lifelineconnections.org)

## Opportunity Council - Economic Security for All (EcSA)

- A year long financial literacy and empowerment program that pairs families with mentors.
- New cohort starts in October. The new cohort will have Spanish and Ukrainian participants.
- Looking for mentors!
- Most recent cohort of eight families graduated in August
- Contact: Kevi, [kevi\\_veldman@oppco.org](mailto:kevi_veldman@oppco.org)

## Whatcom Dream

- A financial literacy and empowerment agency serving Whatcom County.
- Offers classes and one-on-one financial coaching.
- Classes offered for teens, adults, and now seniors as well. Also available to come to high school classrooms.
- Contact: Kevin, [kevin@thewhatcomdream.org](mailto:kevin@thewhatcomdream.org)

## YWCA

- Main building has two floors of permanent supportive housing, has just purchased a new apartment building on the same block. Plan to move people into the first 6 apartments in the next week.
- Leadership breakfast fundraiser is sold out! Hooray!
- If anyone feels that their services could benefit those at the YWCA please reach out. A lot of staff, including leadership, are relatively new to the organization and looking to make more connections in the community.
- Contact: Theresa, [theresa.hohman@ywcabellingham.org](mailto:theresa.hohman@ywcabellingham.org)

## Bellingham School District

- Winter bash on Feb 2nd, 2024. Will be at the Sportsplex, stay tuned for more information. Hoping to host a fun, community building event.
- Contact: Cristina, [cristina.manterola@bellingshamschools.org](mailto:cristina.manterola@bellingshamschools.org)

## Lifelong

- Lifelong provides medical case management for people who are HIV positive.
- There has been an uptick in HIV cases in Whatcom and in Skagit.
- If your agency is interested in learning about prevention, please reach out.
- Lifelong also offers free STI testing.
- Contact: Victoria, [victoriab@lifelong.org](mailto:victoriab@lifelong.org)

## Brigid Collins

- Stewards of Children trainings are back, with dates scheduled starting in October. These trainings help adults recognize and react to childhood sexual abuse. Learn more in the [website](#).
- Contact: Susan, [smahar@brigidcollins.org](mailto:smahar@brigidcollins.org)

## Contact Counseling Recovery Services

- Private substance use disorder facility. Can provide drug and alcohol counseling, assessments, intervention, referral to inpatient treatment, sober living and outpatient treatment to both youth and adults
- Expanding and hiring more clinicians, as well as moving towards accepting Medicaid. Currently only taking private insurance.
- 12-step based care, with 41 sober living beds available. Currently no pets or family members allowed except for visits.
- Contact: Melissa, [meljledford@gmail.com](mailto:meljledford@gmail.com)

## Next Meeting:

**Thursday, October 19, 12 - 2pm @ St. Paul's**