

FOCUS

PIERCE COUNTY COALITION FOR
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



FALL 2026 | VOLUME 32, ISSUE 1 | SERVING PIERCE COUNTY SINCE 1995

BACK TO SCHOOL ISSUE!



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"We are all different, but we all have that same spark that makes us light up."

— Naoki Higashida

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome back to school!

As another school year begins, I want to remind families of just how important your role is in your child's education and future. **You are your child's best advocate.** You know your child better than anyone else. You know their strengths, their needs, what makes them successful, and what they need to have a good day.



As you begin this new school year, remember that being an advocate also means asking questions, staying informed, and making sure you have accurate information. There are many resources available to families, and sometimes it can be difficult to know what information is correct or where to turn. Don't be afraid to ask questions, seek another resource, or reach out to someone who can help you understand what is happening.

This fall, there will also be changes taking place within programs and services that support individuals and families. Every effort is being made to minimize the impact of these changes, but some changes will happen. **Please keep your eyes open and your advocates close.** If something doesn't feel right or doesn't look right, trust yourself enough to ask questions and seek out the information you need.

At PC2, our goal continues to be connecting families with accurate information, resources, and people who can help. We want families to feel supported and connected—not isolated as they try to navigate systems that can sometimes feel overwhelming.

This fall, we also say goodbye to a very good friend and longtime member of the PC2 team. We are grateful for the years of dedication, kindness, and service she has given to our families and our organization. At the same time, we are excited to welcome new staff members who are joining our team. They will help us continue building relationships,

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK (CONT.)

strengthening our community connections, and keeping families connected to facts, resources, and opportunities.

I also encourage families to continue looking for ways for your loved ones to be involved in the community. Find activities, friendships, recreation, employment opportunities, and places where they can belong and contribute. The best life skill you can teach our children is how to get along with other people. **A full life is built through connection, relationships, and opportunities, not just through services.**

And most importantly, **talk to each other.** Share what you know. Share resources. Share ideas and experiences. Sometimes the person sitting next to you has the information or connection that can make a difficult situation a little easier.

We are all better together.

As we begin this new school year and move into a season of change, please remember that PC2 is here to walk alongside families, connect you with resources, and help you find accurate information.

Wishing all of our students, families, educators, and community partners a safe, successful, and connected fall.

Warmly,

Michele Lehosky, Executive Director

Pierce County Coalition for Developmental Disabilities (PC2)



SO LONG, JAUNA!

Jauna Balderston-Todd retired on September 2 after serving the PC2 family for twenty-five years. During her tenure, Jauna wore many hats. Bookkeeper. Media specialist. Unofficial PC2 archivist and historian. She did whatever needed doing and did so with a fierce dedication to the people she served and the colleagues she worked alongside. Below is Jauna's farewell address, plus several tributes from those she inspired.



Dear Colleagues, Friends, Partners, and Families:

After 25 years at PC2, I am writing to share the news that I am retiring.

To all the PC2 staff members I have worked with over the past 25 years, thank you. For the friendships, camaraderie, and memories we've made.

SO LONG, JAUNA! (CONT.)

To all the wonderful families I have had the privilege to meet, thank you. You've taught me the challenges families face while helping their loved ones live full, meaningful lives. And you've shown me what courage and resilience look like as you've navigated complex service and support systems for your loved ones.

Thank you all for being a part of my journey and for making my years at PC2 special. I leave with a grateful, full heart and many wonderful memories.

Wishing you all peace, success, and happiness.

Jauna B Todd



Jauna,

It has been a pleasure working with you. Thank you for your service to our community, and to individuals and family members served by PC2. Your work made a tremendous impact in helping people access services and support to meet their needs and reach their goals. Wishing you the best as you enter well-deserved retirement!

Sincerely,

Monique Patel, Outreach and Education Program Specialist

Pierce County Human Services



SO LONG, JAUNA! (CONT.)

Jauna,

Thank you for 25 years of dedication, loyalty, and commitment to PC2—Pierce County Coalition for Developmental Disabilities. Through your hard work and unwavering dedication, PC2 has made tremendous progress, provided meaningful support to families, and grown into a trusted organization in our community.

We are deeply grateful for the time, energy, and heart you have given to PC2 over the years. Your contributions have made a lasting difference, and your commitment will always be remembered and appreciated.

As you begin this exciting new chapter in retirement, we wish you every happiness. Take time to enjoy life, care for yourself, and celebrate all you have accomplished.

Congratulations on 25 incredible years, Jauna! Wishing you joy, relaxation, and many wonderful adventures ahead.

Michele Lehosky, Executive Director, PC2



Jauna,

Thank you for your steadfast dedication to PC2 and Pierce County families. Your legacy of care will continue for years to come. Thank you for bringing us the news every month, being an amazing, kind, and consistent partner and friend to so many over the years. The love you give

SO LONG, JAUNA! (CONT.)

and the organization and support you have provided leaves us all with nothing but incredible feelings of goodness about the support you have been. You will be missed.



Doreen VanderVort, Reg 3 Intake and Enrollment Developmental Disability Administrator 1
Developmental Disabilities Administration
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



It's hard to find the right words to express just how much Jauna has done for PC2 over the past 25 years. She has been the glue that has held PC2 together, playing such a huge role in keeping everything going through her dedication, hard work, knowledge, and commitment to our organization.

She leaves behind some very big shoes to fill and will be dearly missed. Her impact on PC2 and the people she has worked with over the years will not be forgotten.

Wishing Jauna a wonderful and well-deserved retirement filled with happiness, relaxation, and new adventures. Congratulations, Jauna, and thank you for everything you've done for PC2!

Kristin Loos, Office Manager, PC2



SO LONG, JAUNA! (CONT.)

Jauna,

I was fortunate to meet you just before you left and will never forget entering your office and staring slack-jawed at a mountain of files, folders, and boxes. It's not easy sorting through a quarter century of dedication, but you were determined to leave PC2 better than you found it. Thank you for your service and for trusting the rest of us to continue the mission. Enjoy a retirement well-deserved!

Matt Kite, Media Specialist, PC2



GUARDIANSHIP SEMINAR

Are you the parent of a developmentally disabled child or the adult child of an ill or incapacitated parent? If so, it's in the best interest of you and your loved one to learn all you can about legal guardianship and/or conservatorship.

That's the message being shared by **Amylyn Riedling**, a paralegal with thirty years of experience in the profession.



A lifelong Puget Sounder who grew up in Federal Way and studied at Central Washington University and Highline Community College, Amylyn will be teaming up with attorney **Jennifer Niehaus-River** and **PC2** to lead a **free, two-part online seminar on guardianship**, with the first **Zoom** session running from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on **Thursday, September 24**.

Parents of children with **severe cognitive disabilities** are often surprised to learn that they need to apply for legal guardianship when their children turn eighteen. Likewise, adults with intellectual disabilities and with parents who've never done estate planning can find out the hard way when their parents become incapacitated or disabled.

In each scenario, the first question on most people's minds is usually, "What legal hoops do I have to jump through now?"

"It can feel like you're just in this mud puddle of gobbledygook," a sympathetic Amylyn says, "and what do you even do with this?"

GUARDIANSHIP SEMINAR (CONT.)

That question and several more will be answered by Amylyn and Jennifer during their two-part seminar. On September 24, participants will learn about **guidelines and statutes** that have been updated over the last few years in Washington state.

“We’ll go through the statutes and explain, ‘What is a guardian, and what are your duties?’” Amylyn says. “And what is a conservator, and what are your duties? What can you do without court permission, and what do you need court permission for?”



Many parents are frustrated to have to examine their legal obligations. They’ve been parenting their children for years. Why would anything change when their children become adults?

But **establishing legal guardianship**, Amylyn points out, protects not only the child but the parent. If the parent is no longer able to look after their child, a legal framework has been established for the caregiver next in line. Expectations about health, well-being, and finances are established in advance.

During the second session, slated for **Thursday, October 1**, Amylyn and Jennifer will guide participants through the process of **reporting to the court**.

“Reporting to the court can feel daunting,” Amylyn says. “We’ll show you where the forms are. They’re all available free online. We’ll explain what the court is looking for in this information. And we’ll discuss the best ways to organize and keep your information between reporting periods so that when it comes time to report, you’ve already got everything in place.”

GUARDIANSHIP SEMINAR (CONT.)

It can be helpful, Amylyn says, to flip the script. Yes, when reporting to the court, parents are complying with legal requirements and **navigating the state bureaucracy**. But they're also training the court to understand how they want their children parented.

"If someone has to step in," she says, "the court already knows how things are handled. So if something is off, the court is going to know."

Amylyn and Jennifer have organized both sessions to be factual, practical, and parent-friendly. The ultimate goal? To make sure every child is protected and nurtured now and in the future.

"If you have a great road map and guardianship that's already set up," Amylyn says, "whoever comes in to take over, whether it's a sibling, other family member, or professional, that road map is in place. You're telling the world how you want your child to be treated when you're no longer able to do it. It adds a layer of care that exists after you're gone."

Adds Amylyn, "If you take nothing else from the presentation, make sure as parents that you've done your own estate planning, so someone doesn't have to go through all of this to take care of you."



Like Amylyn, Jennifer's area of legal expertise includes **guardianship, conservatorship, and estate planning**. Because she's an attorney, Jennifer can answer legal questions during the seminar.

"She's a good fit," Amylyn says, "especially if you're applying for guardianship and haven't done that before."

GUARDIANSHIP SEMINAR (CONT.)

Participants can get the most out of the seminar, Amylyn suggests, by **preparing questions ahead of time**. Those who are already a guardian or conservator can prepare by making sure they have access to their **LINX account** with the **Pierce County Superior Court**. That way, they can review their court case or documents online during the seminar.

Amylyn, like Jennifer, is donating her time to the seminar. She offers her expertise for free, she says, in order to give back to the community.

“I’m not a fly-by-night paralegal who’s trying to get her name out there or get business for my firm,” she says. “I just want to help.”

As part of her devotion to ethics and community, Amylyn is a long-time member of the **National Association for Legal Support Professionals**. She has served as president (2023-2025) and director (2016-2019, 2022-2023).

To attend the free seminar, use the QR code below to log into the first Zoom session:



GUARDIANSHIP SEMINAR (CONT.)



GUARDIANSHIP SEMINAR

Presented by **AMYLYN RIEDLING, PP, PLS**
and **JENNIFER NIEHAUS-RIVER, JD, MPA**

SEPT. 24, 6-8PM AND OCT. 1, 6-8PM

Join us on **ZOOM** for this **2-part informational session**

NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY
USE THE LINK OR QR CODE BELOW



- **OPTIONS:** Learn what's best for you and your family.
- **REQUIREMENTS:** Find out about legal requirements.
- **RESOURCES:** Connect with others who can help you.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89577258325?pwd=0paGKQanNHHmWjQWMkz3hnR3Q4f2Jt.1>

PIERCE COUNTY COALITION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (PC2)

3716 Pacific Ave Ste A, Tacoma, WA 98418 | (253) 564-0707 | info@pc2online.org | www.pc2online.org

What is Guardianship?

A guardianship is a court-appointed role where a person becomes responsible for the medical, financial, and personal choices for another person deemed unable to manage them on their own.

Full Guardianship	Limited Guardianship	Emergency Guardianship
The court assigns a guardian who assumes final decision-making authority for all of a person's rights listed in Washington law (see RCW 11.130.310).	The court assigns a guardian who assumes final decision-making authority for specific rights of a person by a court order, but not for all rights.	The court assigns a guardian for up to 60 days. The only authority a guardian has is to meet the person's identified emergency needs.

Alternatives to Guardianship

Guardianship is very serious and can be costly. Before petitioning for guardianship, a potential guardian should always check to see if alternatives to guardianship could be a better solution. Here are some alternatives to guardianship:

- Power of Attorney (POA)
- Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA)
- Trusts
- Joint Property Arrangements
- Third Party Notifications RE: Bill Paying
- Living Will (Health Care Directives)
- Mental Health Advance Directives
- Shared Housing Programs
- Adult Family Homes
- Assisted Living/Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Consent to Health Care Statue
- Representative Payee



A guardian could make the following medical decisions:

- Choose or change a doctor
- Make healthcare appointments
- Make decisions about treatments and medication



A guardian could make the following financial decisions:

- Decide what a person can buy
- Make decisions about savings and stocks
- Sell property or assets



A guardian could make the following personal decisions:

- Select where a person works
- Decide if a person can date or marry
- Choose where a person lives

(360) 704-1925

gmsi@courts.wa.gov

eService Center

Adfad

What is Conservatorship?

A conservatorship is a court-appointed role where a person becomes responsible for the financial and property choices for another person deemed unable to manage them on their own.

Full Conservatorship	Limited Conservatorship	Emergency Conservatorship
The court assigns a conservator who assumes final decision-making authority for a person's finances as listed in Washington law (see RCW 11.130.420).	The court assigns a conservator who assumes final decision-making authority for specific financial needs of a person by a court order, but not for all needs.	The court assigns a conservator for up to 60 days. The only authority a conservator has is to meet the person's identified emergency needs.

Alternatives to Conservatorship

Conservatorship is very serious and can be costly. Before petitioning for conservatorship, a potential conservator should always check to see if alternatives to conservatorship could be a better solution.

Here are some alternatives to conservatorship:

- Power of Attorney (POA)
- Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA)
- Trusts
- Joint Property Arrangements
- Third Party Notifications RE: Bill Paying
- Living Will (Health Care Directives)
- Mental Health Advance Directives
- Shared Housing Programs
- Adult Family Homes
- Assisted Living/Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Technological Assistance
- Representative Payee



A conservator could make the following financial decisions:

- Decide what a person can buy
- Make decisions about savings and stocks
- Sell property or assets
- Set a monthly budget
- Make decisions about a person's living situation



Is a conservatorship the right choice?

- Determine the areas where a person needs support
- Speak with a financial or estate planner
- Think about making changes to a person's utility accounts to ensure timely payment

(360) 704-1925

gmsi@courts.wa.gov

eService Center

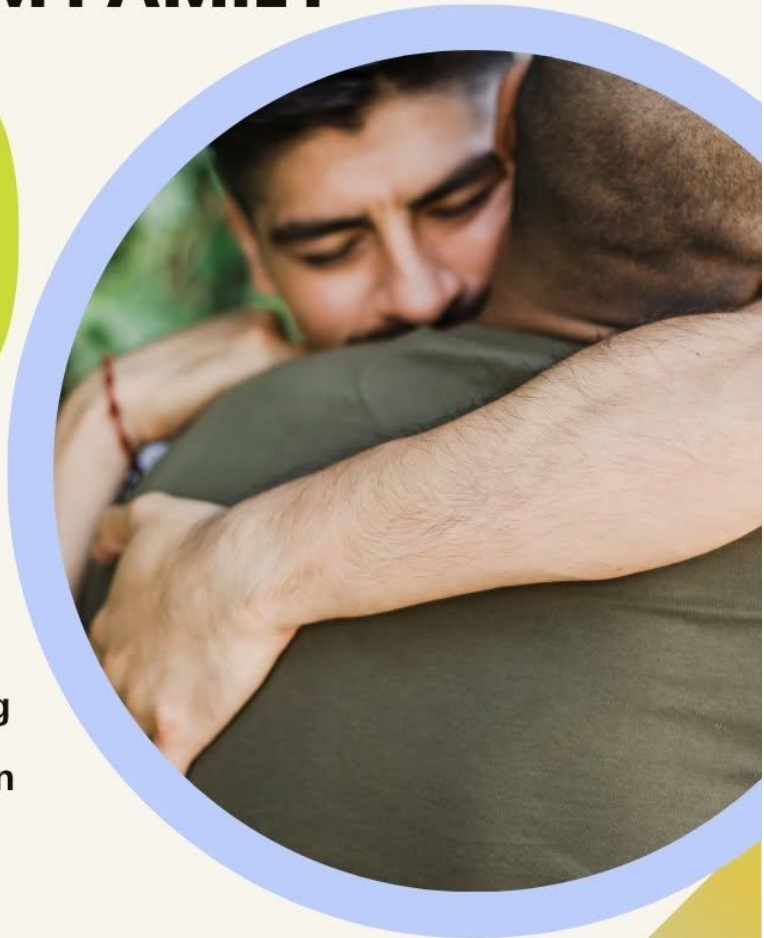
WHAT DOCTORS NEED TO HEAR FROM FAMILY CAREGIVERS

PAVE

Family caregivers do so much more than “help out”—

They coordinate care, manage daily needs, and often carry an invisible workload doctors need to understand.

This PAVE article explains why sharing your caregiving role with medical providers matters, how care teams can better support families, and what legal healthcare tools may help improve communication.



Visit wapave.org and type in the search bar: Caregivers

This article includes:

Information that you can view, download and print





Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

What Is Special Education?

Special education is specially designed instruction that addresses the unique needs of a student eligible to receive special education services. Special education is provided at no cost to parents and includes the related services a student needs to access her/his educational program.

Early Stages (ages 0-2): Early intervention services are available to children who have disabilities and/or developmental delays. The Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program provides services to eligible children and families in a variety of settings - in their homes, in child care, in preschool or school programs, and in their communities.

School Age (ages 3-21): Students with disabilities who are determined eligible for special education and related services are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Services are provided to eligible students according to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in preschools, elementary, and secondary schools, or other appropriate settings.

MORE INFORMATION

EMAIL: speced@k12.wa.us

PHONE: (360) 725-6075

TTY: (360) 664-3631



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Eligibility for Special Education

Students determined eligible for special education services must meet **all three** of the following criteria:

- The student must have a disability or disabilities.
- The student's disability/disabilities adversely affect educational performance.
- The student's unique needs cannot be addressed through education in general education classes alone – with or without individual accommodations and requires specially designed instruction (SDI).

Eligibility is based on a comprehensive initial evaluation. A comprehensive initial evaluation includes all of the existing data gathered about the student through the referral process and any additional assessments needed to determine whether a student is eligible for special education. The initial evaluation report is used to determine what special education and related services the student needs.

MORE INFORMATION

EMAIL: speced@k12.wa.us

PHONE: (360) 725-6075

TTY: (360) 664-3631



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Frequently Asked Questions

What is SDI? Specially designed instruction is a set of organized and planned instructional activities which adapt, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs that result from a student's disability.

Who decides what assessments need to be done as part of the initial evaluation for special education eligibility? The school district's evaluation group will decide. The assessments should provide the district with functional, developmental, and academic information about your student. If the district needs assessments from outside sources in order to conduct a comprehensive evaluation, such as medical or neurological information, it must ensure the outside assessments are conducted by qualified providers.

Do I need to get a medical diagnosis for my student's disability before the district can find my student eligible for special education? You are not required to obtain and provide the school district with a medical diagnosis for your student in order for a district to evaluate your student for special education. A medical diagnosis is also not required in order to be found eligible for special education services. The school district, however, may request that you provide any medical information you may have as part of the referral process and may, if necessary, seek your consent to obtain a medical statement or assessment indicating whether there are any other factors that may be affecting your student's educational performance as part of any district evaluation.

I think my student has a learning disability, how does s/he qualify for special education? The requirements for determining whether a student has a Specific Learning Disability can vary by district. The booklet [Identification of Students with Specific Learning Disabilities](#) provides more information about the overall SLD eligibility process.

How do I withdraw my student from special education services? If you (or an adult student) revokes consent, in writing, for the continued provision of special education and related services, the district must honor the revocation and provide you with [Prior Written Notice](#) identifying the date the district will stop providing services.

Need more answers? EMAIL: speced@k12.wa.us | **PHONE:** (360) 725-6075 | **TTY:** (360) 664-3631



January 2023

Child Development Services

Overview

Child Development Services promote partnerships with local early intervention services, preschools and other providers. Together they serve children and their families to encourage developmental growth in natural environments.

Child Development Services emphasize early interventions designed to meet the needs of a specific child. Services may include therapy, education, family counseling and training. The services are for children from birth until age 3 when they become eligible through public schools.

We support Child Development Services through partnerships with 25 of the 39 Washington state counties. Those counties collaborate with local agencies to provide services to approximately 15,500 clients a year.

Eligibility Requirements

DDA clients who are two years or younger and have a 25 percent delay or show a 1.5 standard deviation below their age in one or more of the developmental areas.

Oversight

External

- Department of Children, Youth and Families
- Office of the Washington State Auditor

Internal

- DDA monitoring and evaluation process of counties and client service
- County monitoring of subcontracted providers and client service



Budget

These expenses cross multiple budget units and we do not currently track at this level.

Rates

Monthly fee for service.

Partners

- Individuals receiving services and their families
- Counties
- Qualified service providers
- Advocacy organizations
- Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- School districts
- Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Authority

Chapter 388-823 WAC, DDA Intake and Determination of Developmental Disabilities

Chapter 388-825 WAC, DDA Services Rules

Chapter 388-850 WAC, County Plan for Developmental Disabilities

Contact: **Branda Matson**, Employment and Day Program Services Unit Manager • Branda.Matson@dshs.wa.gov • 360-407-1522
Saif Hakim, Chief, Office of Residential, Employment, and Day Programs • Saif.Hakim@dshs.wa.gov • 360-407-1505

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



December 2023

Intensive Habilitation Services for Children

Overview

The DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration's Intensive Habilitation Services for Children service provides short-term stabilization for children and youth between the ages of 8 to 20. This program provides habilitative goal development, instruction and support for up to 90 days. The client's family, DDA staff and the IHS provider work together to identify client goals. Currently, we have a state-operated provider in Lakewood and one in Spokane. We have funding to develop a third in 2024.

Quality Assurance Oversight

External

- Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families.
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Internal

- DDA Office of Compliance, Monitoring and Training.

Stakeholders

- Local school districts.
- Individuals receiving services.
- Families of program participants.
- Washington State Health Care Authority.



Eligibility

DDA clients who are:

- Eight to 17 years of age or between age 18 and 20 and enrolled in school.
- Approved for waiver stabilization services.
- Not assessed to need inpatient treatment for conditions related to behavioral health or autism as recommended by the client's treating professional.
- Not assessed to need a locked or secure facility and does not require an intervention that is prohibited in a community setting.
- Not a risk to the health or safety of IHS staff or other clients supported by the program.
- Able to have their medication needs met through nurse delegation.

Contact: Kaitlyn Collins, *Intensive Habilitation Services Program Manager* • Kaitlyn.Collins@dshs.wa.gov • 360-764-6936
Melanie Ingram, *Children's Residential and Stabilization Unit Manager* • Melanie.Ingram@dshs.wa.gov • 360-764-6915

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

DSHS 22-1965 (Rev. 4/24)



January 2023

Peer Mentoring

Overview

Peer mentoring takes place between a person who has lived through a specific experience (mentor) and a person who is new to that experience (mentee).

In DSHS' Developmental Disabilities Administration, peer mentoring provides support to clients and their families in locating and accessing community services.

Peer Mentors:

- Meet and discuss goals in the person-centered service plan developed by you and your case manager.
- Help you develop specific goals related to engaging with the community.
- Share successful experiences to navigate community resources beyond those offered through DDA waiver services.
- Develop, with the client and family, strategies to navigate new experiences and connect the client with community resources based on their interests and needs.



Eligibility

This service is available to participants enrolled on the Children's Intensive In-Home Behavioral Supports and Individual and Family Services waivers.

The Department of Social and Health Services assists more than 35,000 clients through the Developmental Disabilities Administration. As part of our mission of transforming lives, we need people to serve in the role of Peer Mentor provider.

Contact: Leila Graves, Waiver Services Program Manager • Leila.Graves@dshs.wa.gov • 360-890-2127

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



ACTION ALERT: Stop Proposed Eligibility Cuts for People with Developmental Disabilities

The legislative session doesn't begin until January, but the fight over the 2027–2029 budget has already started, and we need your voice now. State agencies have submitted their budget decision packages to the Governor, who will decide in the coming weeks which to include in his budget proposal. One of those proposals would be devastating for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

THE PROPOSAL: Beginning in 2029, the state would restrict eligibility for long-term care services, including Home and Community-Based Services waivers and Personal Care. It is framed as a cost-saving measure. In reality, it would strip services from thousands of Washingtonians and cost the state more in the long run.

WHO WOULD LOSE SERVICES? An estimated **2,655 people** would no longer qualify. Still unknown: how many DDA clients in Adult Family Homes would lose services, and how many adults and children would lose Medicaid coverage altogether when they lose their waiver.

WHY THIS MATTERS: Because the new criteria would apply to both DDA and Long-Term Care services, people living in residential settings would have nowhere else to turn. Many no longer have family able to care for them. Where are they supposed to go? We know how this ends: people lose their homes, their supports, and their stability. The state then pays more, through emergency rooms, hospitals, jails, and crisis systems, than it ever saved. The human cost is higher still. Our state has a moral obligation to care for this population. Cutting people from the services that keep them housed and safe is not a budget solution. It is abandonment.

THESE CUTS ARE NOT FINAL. The Governor has not yet released his budget, and the Legislature has not voted. With your help, we can stop them. Contact the Governor and your legislators. Tell them:

"Do NOT change eligibility for people with developmental disabilities. People depend on these services to live, work, and participate in their communities. Please reject any decision package that restricts long-term care or DDA eligibility."

If you or a family member would be affected, say so. Personal stories are the most powerful tool we have.

Thank you for your advocacy,

Cathy Murahashi
Public Policy Specialist

MORE INFO: www.arcwa.org



On the Road with PartnerCafe

Community Resource Room

★ *A Twice-Monthly Community Event* ★

A one stop Resource Room designed to help the general public, caregivers, family members and individuals.

You're invited to stop by TACID to meet with us and one of our Partners to ask questions and connect in-person, get referrals, information and resources.

★ *The 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the Month* ★

12pm - 3pm

at TACID: 6315 S 19th St,
Tacoma, WA 98466 (Room #5)

Organizations: Use
this QR code to
reserve a time slot!



info@ontheroadwpc.org





Mental Health Crisis Card

Name: _____	Mental Health Crisis Card
Disability info: _____	
My disability affects me in this way: _____ _____	
To help, please do this: _____ _____	

Emergency contact:
Name: _____
Relationship: _____
Phone/Email: _____
Additional instructions: _____ _____

Printing Instructions

- Print this page at 100% size (Actual Size) on standard 8.5" × 11" paper. Do not select "Fit to Page" or any scaling options.
- Cut out both card sections along the outer border lines.
- Fold or align the two pieces so the front and back of the card match up.
- Glue, tape, or laminate the pieces together.
- Trim any excess edges if needed.
- Keep the finished card in your wallet, purse, backpack, or another easily accessible location.

Tip: For a more durable card, print on cardstock or laminate after assembling.



Developmental Disabilities Community Services

Caregiver Bulletin

Suicide Among People with Disabilities



We may make assumptions about people with disabilities' risk for suicide.

A 2021 report published in the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#) found people with disabilities are more likely to think about, plan or attempt suicide than people without disabilities.

In 2022, a university in Florida further researched the topic and found people with functional limitations in selfcare or independent living had the highest risk of suicidal thoughts, suicide planning and suicide attempts.

*Call 911 if someone is in danger.
Call or text 988, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to speak with a crisis professional any time of the day or night.*

Learn more

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline <https://988lifeline.org/>
- UW's In The Forefront <https://intheforefront.org/>



DSHS 22-1918 (7/25)

Risk Factors

- Feeling isolated or disconnected from people and the community.
- Feeling like a burden to others.
- Thinking others would be better off if they were dead.
- Difficulties communicating feelings (these can be physical, intellectual or emotional difficulties).
- Limited community access.

What You Can Do as a Caregiver

- An active and connected life is the best prevention for self-harm and suicide.
- Take time to understand and connect with the person you support.
- Help them find and participate in regular social activities.
- Help them get out of the house multiple times a week.
- Create fun routines, rituals and traditions with them.
- Find ways they can contribute to the community by volunteering, participating in social groups and special events.

What To Look For

- Some individuals have difficulty communicating with words. Learn how the people you support respond to discomfort, pain and disappointment.
- Do they seem "off" but aren't sick? They might be suffering from emotional pain.
- Look for changes in behavior, disposition, and responses to everyday activities.
- When you see changes like these, let your supervisor and or the individual's doctor know.

When To Get Help

If you are concerned someone may be thinking about suicide, ask, "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?" Listen to the response. Offer to help the person to connect with someone who can help. Treat any talk of harm or killing oneself seriously. Tell your supervisor or the individual's doctor immediately if the person is feeling like hurting themselves. You can help the most by helping the person connect with a professional.

RESOURCES (CONT.)

5204 Solberg Drive SW
Lakewood, WA 98499
Phone: 253.584.1001

centerforce.net



Find us on social media



@centerforcelakewood

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. We spotlight some of our clients:



Lance at Marshalls

For eight years, Lance has shown up every Thursday to keep the Lakewood Marshalls spotless — and along the way, with support from his Centerforce job coach, he's grown from quiet and reserved into a team member whose presence, his manager Megan says, makes a real difference.



Madison at Red Lobster

Madison celebrated her 11th work anniversary at Tacoma's Red Lobster and has been part of the Centerforce family for 12 years. She's built a career of consistent, valued work alongside coworker (and best friend) Tyaunna, proving what long-term support and the right opportunity can lead to.



Tino at Safeway

Since starting at the Tacoma Safeway on 72nd Street through Centerforce's School-to-Work program, Tino has grown into a fully independent, Employee-of-the-Month-winning team member — proof of what consistent coaching and a supportive workplace can build together.



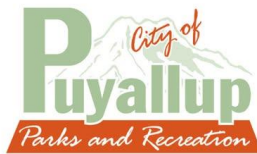
Staff connection

Our staff picnic at Parks Tacoma's Dune Peninsula in late August was a blast! Lots of great team-building activities and conversations were a highlight of the day.



The road ahead

We face significant obstacles as proposed policy and funding changes threaten support for the people we serve. To protect their rights, we are uniting with fellow community providers and elected officials to defend the landmark 1999 Supreme Court *Olmstead* decision. This ensures individuals with disabilities continue to receive care in the most integrated settings possible. Furthermore, pending Medicaid cuts put intense pressure on state budgets, jeopardizing the very services that make independent community living a reality. Even as we fight hard at the state and federal levels, our core focus remains unchanged: delivering the highest-quality services and achieving lasting, positive impacts for our community.



REGISTRATION INFORMATION



REGISTRATION OPENS SEPT 16: Pre-Registration is required. Class sizes are limited. To register online, visit our website at www.piercecountywa.gov/PCSR. To register by phone, please call **(253) 798-2997**. Register in person at the **Lakewood Community Center**, 9112 Lakewood Drive, Lakewood, WA 98499 Tuesday through Friday between 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.



DDA: Pierce County Parks Specialized Recreation programs are supported by DDA funding; respite money may be used. If using DDA funds to register please have the participant's case manager contact information on-hand.



GENERAL BILLING INFO: Case managers will be billed monthly, using the hourly reimbursement rate based on the quarter hour.



CANCELLATION POLICY: You must request cancellation, and receive confirmation, from Pierce County Parks staff at least 5 business days before an activity begins for a refund. Refunds will not be made for missed or forgotten sessions, or late cancellations.



EARLY DROP OFF / LATE PICK UP POLICY: Beginning on January 1, 2026 a disciplinary policy will be enforced when a participant arrives earlier than thirty minutes before a program starts or remains longer than thirty minutes after it ends. Disciplinary actions may include a fine and suspension from participation.



ACCOMMODATIONS: To request accommodations, please call (253) 798-2997.

R3 ONLINE TRAINING

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION

CONTINUING EDUCATION TRAINING



October 7, 9am-4pm

6CEs

Influencing Outcomes, October 7, 9am-4pm

Presented by Roger Ramsukh

Influencing Outcomes is a behaviorally based coaching program with a slight focus - but not exclusively- on individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder that helps staff to understand how their own actions can trigger an unwanted behavior in an individual and how to understand that person's behavior from a lens of understanding rather than frustration. It covers behavioral principles and uses real life examples to illustrate the relationship between a staff's actions and an individual's perception.

Important

- Prepare to be Zoom ready for training - Download the Zoom app onto your computer for this training: <https://zoom.us/download>.
- Participants must have access to both Zoom audio and video. Please test your devices in advance to ensure full participation.
- Class starts promptly at the stated times. If you are late, you may not receive credit.

Additional classes are listed online at [DDA Provider Training Opportunities](#)

Register here:

<https://events.humanitix.com/r3-influencing-outcomes-10-07-2026-9am-4pm>

Class Size: Limited to 50 Participants per class.

Please Note: Class starts promptly at the stated times. If you are late, you may not receive credit.

R3 ONLINE TRAINING

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION

CONTINUING EDUCATION TRAINING



Oct 7, 10am-12pm

(2 CE)

Adults with Autism and Co-Occurring Intellectual Disability: Communication, Relationship Development and Technology

Presented by Monica Meyer. This training provides an overview of autism spectrum disorder, including current understanding of prevalence and contributing factors, and examines how autism impacts functional communication. Participants will explore the importance of relationship development and learn evidence-based strategies and supportive technologies that promote communication, engagement, and meaningful participation across home, work, and community settings.

What to Expect:

- Interactive group activities
- Research and resource sharing
- Real-life examples and stories
- Question-and-answer opportunities throughout the session

Who Should Attend:

Individuals with autism, healthcare providers, case managers, job coaches, respite care providers, and family members.

[Register Here](#)

- Prepare to be Zoom ready for training - Download the Zoom app onto your computer for this training: <https://zoom.us/download>.
- Participants must have access to both Zoom audio and video. Please test your devices in advance to ensure full participation.
- Class starts promptly at the stated times. If you are late, you may not receive credit.

R3 ONLINE TRAINING

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION

CONTINUING EDUCATION TRAINING



Oct 21 , 1pm-3pm

(2 CE)

Autism and Communication Supports Presented by Monica Meyer

Unlocking Understanding. Building Connections. Strong Communication is the foundation of independence and inclusion for individuals with autism, but it must be understood in context—compliance does not necessarily mean understanding. True choice comes from a clear menu of options, not from open-ended questions that can overwhelm or confuse. Strategies that rely on inference, subtlety, or reading between the lines are not effective supports for autistic individuals—in fact, they can be counterproductive. This interactive training examines how autism impacts different forms of communication and offers practical, evidence-based supports for both verbal and non-verbal individuals. Participants will learn tools and approaches to promote genuine understanding, reduce frustration, and foster meaningful interactions, including how to integrate visual, sensory, and assistive technology into everyday communication.

[Register Here](#)

Class Size: Limited to 50 Participants.

Important:

- Prepare to be Zoom ready for training - Download the Zoom app onto your computer for this training: <https://zoom.us/download>.
- Participants must have access to both Zoom audio and video. Please test your devices in advance to ensure full participation.
- Class starts promptly at the stated times. If you are late, you may not receive credit.

Additional classes are listed online at [DDA Provider Training Opportunities](#)



SpEd Dispute Resolution Workshop

Learn how to navigate conflicts with your child's IEP or 504 plan. This session provides parents with practical strategies to address issues with schools, understand their rights, and work toward solutions that support their child's success.

- 9/29/26
- 5pm-7pm
- Virtual
- Microsoft Teams

Register Here!



What is It?

Join Us September 29th for an Informative Training.

As a Caregiver- Gain valuable insights into IEP and 504 plans for your child. This session will help you understand the process and learn strategies to advocate for what's best for your child.

In this session we will learn how to explore effective methods for resolving disputes.

Presented By

Tahoma NW and Attorney Heather Kolbly at Jones and Ibrahim.



Offerings are free of charge to anyone in the community. Please watch our website and subscribe to our newsletter to get registration updates.

Subscribe Here!



214 121 St. S. Tacoma WA
98444
www.TahomaNW.org

 206-747-7450
 Jkellam@TahomaNW.org

City of
Lakewood

Fiesta

de la Familia

Lakewood

Fort Steilacoom Park
September 26, 2026
12-6pm

Thanks To Our Sponsors Fiesta is a Free Family Friendly Event Fiesta Info:

AMERICAN
LAKE
CREDIT
UNION

Virginia Mason
Franciscan Health
St. Clare Hospital

Pierce
Transit

KBTC

PBS

peak

Credit
Union

EVENTS (CONT.)

**CELEBRATE
NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS
DAY**

Show up for the park *you* love.

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 • 9 AM -12 PM • 📍 PUGET PARK

**PARKS
TACOMA** In partnership with **NEEF**



**Fri. & Sat.
October 2 & 3**

Experience a magical evening walking tour of Fort Nisqually. Candles and campfires light your way as the people of 1859 come to life.

**FORT NISQUALLY
LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM** | **PARKS
TACOMA**

EVENTS (CONT.)



EVENTS (CONT.)



THOMAS DAMBO

TROLLS

A

FIELD STUDY

Coming
Oct.15-Jan.24

POINT DEFIANCE
ZOO
& AQUARIUM
PARKS TACOMA


Northwest Trek
Wildlife Park
PARKS TACOMA

THOMAS DAMBO
presented by
imagine

[Learn More](#)

EVENTS (CONT.)

A brown-themed poster for the 'Harvest of Hope' event. It features illustrations of pumpkins, autumn leaves, and a string of bunting. The L'Arche Tahoma Hope logo is in the top left. The event title 'HARVEST OF HOPE' is prominently displayed in the center. Details about the date, time, location, and ticket prices are provided. A list of event highlights is on the right, and contact information with a QR code is at the bottom right.

 L'ARCHE Tahoma Hope

L'ARCHE TAHOMA HOPE

HARVEST OF HOPE

**\$5/PERSON
\$20/FAMILY**

**SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 17**

**11:00AM
1:00PM**

**L'ARCHE FARM
11814 VICKERY AVE EAST
TACOMA, WA 98446**

Join us for a day of fun, food, and festivities as we celebrate the inclusive community!

Event Highlights

- FARM-FRESH PRODUCE**
- PUMPKIN PATCH**
- FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES**
- LIVE MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT**
- ARTISAN CRAFTS & VENDORS**
- DELICIOUS FALL TREATS**

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL
info@larchetahomahope.org





City of
Lakewood



Truck & Tractor Day

Fort Steilacoom Park

8714 87th Ave
Lakewood, WA 98498

Free Activities!

Hayrides, Pumpkin Patch,
Slingshot, Games and more!

Saturday
October 17
12 - 3 pm

Sponsored by:

WSECU



Harborstone[®]
Credit Union



EVENTS (CONT.)



ORCA RECOVERY DAY

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 17, 2026
9 AM -12 PM

TITLOW PARK
8425 6th Avenue Tacoma, WA 98465
MCKINLEY PARK
907 Upper Park St, Tacoma, WA 98404

In partnership with
BETTER GROUND



GRIT CITY CHERKINS

Pickle Boo
PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

ENTER IF YOU DARE!

REGISTER EARLY!

Saturday Oct 24 10am

People's Center

SPACE LIMITED!



Mary Bridge Children's
Physical Medicine & Rehab Clinic Presents

A WIDER LENS

A film celebration of stories and
perspectives from and about individuals
with intellectual, physical, and/or
developmental disabilities.

SATURDAY
November 7th
2 0 2 6

The Grand Cinema
606 Fawcett Ave.
Tacoma, WA 98402

TWO DIFFERENT VIEWING OPTIONS
11:30am-1:00pm or 2:30pm-4:00pm

Experience a powerful lineup of
films that inspire, educate, and
promote understanding. Engage
in meaningful conversation with
healthcare providers, community
members, parents, caregivers,
and advocates.

Scan here for tickets:



Tickets \$5 + ticketing fees

*Let's come together to foster inclusivity and celebrate
diverse voices. We hope to see you there!*

MultiCare 

Mary Bridge Children's 

EVENTS (CONT.)



Group Activities & Events

STROLL & ROLL

Join our walk and roll group for weekly afternoon stroll and roll at Dune Peninsula. This outdoor group walk welcomes all movement abilities, including wheelchairs and mobility aids. We'll enjoy a relaxed route through the park getting fresh air, gentle exercise, and good conversation with peers. Meet at the bathrooms.

Tuesdays, 3:30 - 5:00 pm

\$180.00 Registration | \$90 with scholarship
September 15- October 27:

Dune Peninsula:
5361 Yacht Club Rd, Tacoma, WA 98407, USA



Stroll & Rollers enjoying summer sun

BUNCO PARTY

Engage in a delightful social dice game with your friends. Gather in groups of four to roll the dice for points in the lively game of Bunco. Throughout the game, expect friendly rotations of seats and tables. Experienced Bunco players will be on hand to ensure everyone has a fantastic time together. Plus, don't miss out on the chance to win exciting themed prizes at the end of the event. Come join the fun! The BNC has ADA parking. If you need a space saved, let us know!

Saturday, October 24th

12:30 - 3:30 pm

\$37.00 Registration | \$20 with scholarship
Bryant Neighborhood Center: 1619 6th Ave, Tacoma, WA 98405, USA



Great knife work



Bunco friends at BNC

COOKING COURSE

Cooking returns this fall with tried and true, low-tech recipes that do not require a stove or oven but are still delicious, simple, and perfect for independent cooking at home. This hands-on, small-group class will continue building essential kitchen skills in a fun and supportive environment. Participants will prepare and enjoy a tasty dish each week, expand their cooking confidence, and take home step-by-step visual recipes. Dietary restrictions? No problem. Our recipes are naturally gluten and dairy free or offer easy to find substitutions. We also want to hear about your favorite foods, dietary needs, and interests so we can create the best experience for you. We look forward to some flavorful fun with both new and returning chefs! Space is limited and fills quickly. NO CLASS September 24th.

(Session 1) September 17 - October 22

Thursdays, 5:00 - 7:00 pm

(Session 2) UNCONFIRMED- Stay tuned for details about Cooking Course Session 2 coming soon!

\$200.00 Registration | \$100 with scholarship

EVENTS (CONT.)



Group Activities & Events



Sheriff David off the clock bowling



Robbie's concentration!



Halloween fans Josh and Swana

BOWLING

Join Sequoia TR for a 9-week social recreational bowling session with friends. Bowling starts at 4pm, practice bowling is from 3:50-4pm. Teams of three will bowl two games, no lane switching. All levels welcome. Please tell us if you would like to bowl with a specific friend, and STR staff will do our best to partner folks together. Registration fee includes shoe rentals and games. Please give us a heads up if you won't make it to practice. If you are late and your team has bowled more than 5 frames we will add you in on the second game.

September 16 - November 18

Wednesdays, 3:50 - 5:30 pm

\$225.00 Registration | \$110 with scholarship
Bowlero Lanes of Lakewood: 3852 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood, WA 98499, USA

SUPER STRONG WEIGHTLIFTING

This adaptive weightlifting program is not competitive and designed to be tailored to meet the specific goals and needs of the small group that signs up. This class will increase your strength through movement patterns familiar to daily activities like push, pull, hinge, and carry. A short questionnaire will be emailed out upon registration to assess your skill level and your fitness goals. All abilities and levels welcome. Please register for each session separately!

(Session 1) September 15 - October 13

Tuesdays, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

(Session 2) October 20 - November 17

Tuesdays, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

\$200.00 Registration | \$100 with scholarship
GoodFit & FitFight Studio: 8107 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood, WA 98498, USA

DANCE & MORE

Join us at our new partner location- Cultivate Dance Project at the Image Studio of Dance to move, groove, and have fun exploring a variety of dance styles. This class introduces multiple genres—from line dancing and folk dances to Zumba-inspired movement. You'll learn and practice easy-to-follow routines in a welcoming, energetic environment. No prior dance experience required.

September 16 - November 18

Wednesdays, 12:00 - 1:30 pm

\$200.00 Registration | \$100 with scholarship

EVENTS (CONT.)



Group Activities & Events

SEQUOIA SOCIAL

Have fun socializing with friends at the beginning of the week. Create seasonal arts & crafts, play fun games, and make something tasty in the kitchen! Meet us at Fircrest Presbyterian Church at 12:30. It's ok to bring a snack and a drink.

September 14 - November 23

Mondays, 12:30 - 2:30 pm

\$225.00 Registration | \$110 with scholarship
Fircrest Presbyterian Church: 1250 Emerson St, Fircrest, WA 98466, USA

HOLIDAY GARLAND & ORNAMENTS

This fall we will be making Homemade Holiday garland and ornaments using natural supplies. Please meet us at Fircrest Presbyterian Church for a fun afternoon.

Monday, November 30

12:30 - 2:30 pm

\$37.00 Registration | \$20 with scholarship
Fircrest Presbyterian Church: 1250 Emerson St, Fircrest, WA 98466, USA

THE GREAT COOKIE CLASS

Who loves baking (and eating) cookies?! We will spend our time in and out of the kitchen at Fircrest Presbyterian Church creating delicious cookies to eat and share. Please let us know what dietary considerations you have to help us narrow down our favorite cookie recipes!

Monday, December 7

12:30 - 2:30 pm

\$37.00 Registration | \$20 with scholarship
Fircrest Presbyterian Church: 1250 Emerson St, Fircrest, WA 98466, USA

CARDS, COCOA, CIDER, KARAOKE CAROLS

Gather together and sip on cocoa or tea while we create holiday cards for your friends and family. Sing songs or just listen happily, optional Karaoke.

Monday, December 14

12:30 - 2:30 pm

\$37.00 Registration | \$20 with scholarship
Fircrest Presbyterian Church: 1250 Emerson St, Fircrest, WA 98466, USA



Kevin's cookie creation



Smiley Julia at the social



"Expelliarmus!" - Wizard Logan

EVENTS (CONT.)



Group Activities & Events

MINI GOLF & DINNER

Meet your friends at Tower Lanes on 6th Ave this winter for some mini golf followed by dinner. We encourage you to wear your festive holiday attire! Bring \$25 for dinner. Volunteers please register to help with this outing. Register for each date separately.

Wednesday, December 2

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Wednesday, December 9

4:00 - 6:00 pm

\$37.00 Registration | \$20 with scholarship
Tower Lanes: 6323 6th Ave, Tacoma, WA 98406, USA



Ashley explains her design



Trey, Rory, & Jeff mini golf fun



Rachel, Liesl, Bartek festive friends

REGISTRATION INFORMATION FOR GROUP ACTIVITIES

Our programs are all online for easy registration via phone, tablet, or computer. The first registration does take a bit of time for new families. We ask a lot of questions to make sure we are prepared to provide the best service and support needed. After the first registration, signing up is easy. Our programs are priced as low as possible to make sure many people can participate, thanks to donations and grants.

Navigate to <https://www.sequoiatr.org/activities> and select the activity you would like to sign up for from the calendar. Click REGISTER on the bottom right hand side of the page and follow the prompts.



NEW: Download the Jumbula app for the ability to see all your scheduled programs and events.

Visit our website for answers to these questions and more:

- I want to sign up for more than one program, do I have to start over each time?
- I am not super with a computer is there another way to register?
- Can I use DDA to pay for programs, how do I sign up?
- I have limited income but I want to participate in programs.
- I applied for a scholarship, do I need to wait to sign up?
- I signed up for a program, but something came up and I can't go what do I do?
- I participate in a weekly program but can't make it to one session what do I do?

Volunteer!

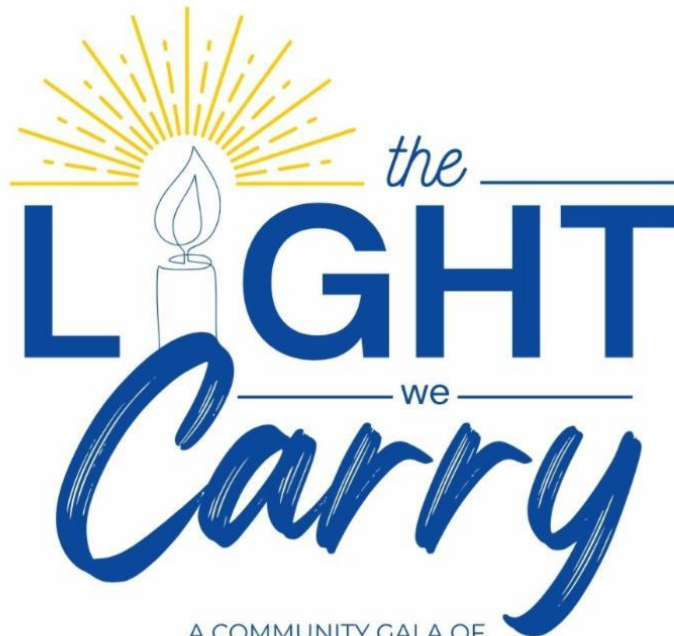
We are always looking for more enthusiastic volunteers who are interested in helping out with programs, getting involved with our mission, and forming relationships with an awesome group of people. If that's you,

Visit our website [SEQUOIATR.ORG](https://www.sequoiatr.org) and navigate to the "Volunteer" tab to sign up. You won't regret it!





EVENTS (CONT.)



A COMMUNITY GALA OF
HOPE • CONNECTION • BELONGING

A NIGHT WHERE
YOU CAN COME AS YOU ARE



Join us for a community gala and fundraiser benefiting NAMI Pierce County. Enjoy an evening of music, movement, stories, and connection as we celebrate hope and the people who make our community brighter.

Together, we'll raise funds to keep mental health resources free throughout Pierce County.



Pierce County



SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 14



5:30 - 7:30PM



Meridian Habitat Park
14422 MERIDIAN E, PUYALLUP, WA 98375

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT
LEARN MORE : NAMIPIERCE.ORG



EVENTS (CONT.)



EVENTS (CONT.)



Young Adult Specialized Afternoon Club

Ages 18–35 | Wednesdays | 2–4 pm | STAR Center

Let's hang! Afternoon Club creates a welcoming space for young adults to socialize, make connections and enjoy games and other activities together.

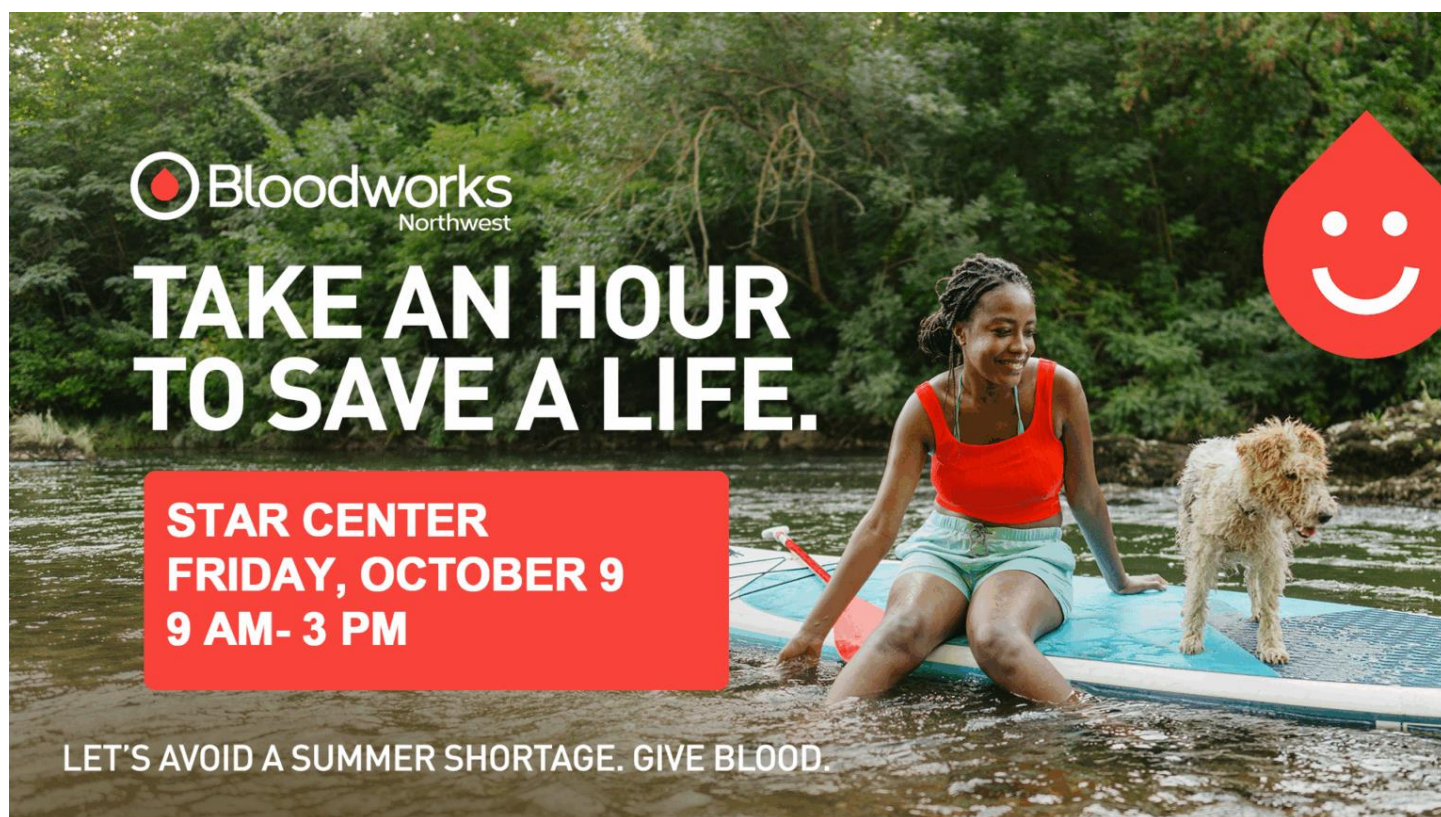
[Sign up for October 14-28](#)

[Sign up for November 4-18](#)

[Sign up for December 2-16](#)

PARKS
TACOMA

EVENTS (CONT.)



 **Bloodworks**
Northwest

TAKE AN HOUR TO SAVE A LIFE.

**STAR CENTER
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9
9 AM- 3 PM**

LET'S AVOID A SUMMER SHORTAGE. GIVE BLOOD.



CONTACT

Thank you for reading the FOCUS 2026 Fall Newsletter. Please send your stories, calendar events, and news items to:

**Pierce County Coalition for
Developmental Disabilities (PC2)**

3716 Pacific Ave, STE A
Tacoma, WA 9841

(253) 564-0707
(877) 335-4657

info@pc2online.org

PC2 office hours:

Monday-Thursday, 9AM-4PM; Friday, 9AM-1PM

Board Members:

Dr. Alan Gill, Board Chair, member since 2007

Jason Clapp, Board Treasurer/Secretary, member since 2019

Jo Simms, member since 2014

Laura O'Rourke, member since 2024

Nancy Lee, member since 2021

