A MOVING STORY

Relocating for a new job can be quite an ordeal with the many hurdles to navigate and changes it brings. Throw in a pandemic, missing close family and friends, and a sudden increase in cost of living - and it can become overwhelming.

Robert and his family were living near Phoenix when Robert was offered a promotion to a job in Washington state by his employer, a large financial firm. He and his wife, Isabelle, both in their 30's, knew it would cost more to live in Washington but figured Robert’s increase in salary would offset the higher cost of living. They had visited friends in Issaquah and were attracted by the outdoor recreation, excellent schools, and safe environment. It was a tough decision for the young couple to leave their family, especially during the December 2021 holidays, but Robert and Isabelle decided to seize the opportunity.

LOOKING FORWARD TO A STRONG FUTURE

By Lori Birrell, ICS Board President

What an amazing 50 years! Issaquah Community Services is celebrating its half century of helping thousands of families in our community. Looking back, we are proud of our small, all-volunteer organization’s long history of responding compassionately to neighbors in crisis.

As we look to the future, ICS pledges to:

• Continue our passion for helping neighbors stay in their homes or transition to more affordable housing.
• Listen with empathy to our clients and assist in locating additional resources to support their needs.
• Continue our careful stewardship of our donors’ contributions by giving 100% to those in need.
• Grow our partnerships with local businesses to strengthen our financial stability and increase our visibility.
• Collaborate with the Issaquah and Sammamish city governments and local charitable organizations to build a comprehensive safety net for residents in crisis.

Over the next years, ICS will be here to strengthen our community by helping our neighbors regain financial stability. We need your help and financial support to make ICS viable for the future. Please join us in this important mission.

LEARN MORE ABOUT US AT ISSAQUAHCOMMUNITYSERVICES.ORG
**1972**

**Issaquah Community Services** was founded by a local educator, a doctor and a clergyman as a referral service for area social services and as a community counseling and educational service. Emphasis was put on teenage drug abuse. Office space was provided upstairs in Issaquah Theater (now First Stage).

**1973**

In October, we shared a Salmon Days booth with Forum Books. ICS served hot home made apple pie and coffee for donations.

**1979**

We began offering rent and utility assistance to residents experiencing financial emergencies.

**1981**

Realtor Bob Catterall initiated the **Merry Christmas Issaquah Fund** with the support of the Issaquah Press. The first year’s drive was both a food drive and fundraiser to benefit ICS and the Issaquah Food Bank.

**1984**

Emergency financial aid became our primary function. The Reverend Bob Gray of Pine Lake Presbyterian was nearly single-handedly running the operation.

**1985**

A floundering ICS was rescued and reorganized by volunteers from 4 churches - St Joseph’s, St Michael and All Angels, Community Baptist, and Pine Lake Presbyterian. The name was changed to **Issaquah Church and Community Services**, but the mission remained the same, as did our main funding source, the Merry Christmas Issaquah Fund.

**2010-2013**

We reclaimed our original name, **Issaquah Community Services**, and moved from a closet in the Sunset Firehouse to an office. Space was provided by the City of Issaquah.

**2017**

**The Issaquah Press**, the primary promoter of our annual fundraiser for 32 years, closed its doors. This loss to the community presented a big fundraising hurdle for ICS.

**2020-2021**

We weathered COVID by creating a virtual application process and renamed Merry Christmas Issaquah **Neighbors Helping Neighbors** - still our major source of income.

**2022**

ICS’s future is bright with our all-volunteer staff and your financial support. Thank you!
In addition, ICS supported 149 households with utility and rent payments using PSE and Salvation Army Funds.

2022 January thru September
Assisted with rent and/or utilities: 326 Households (503 adults and 481 children)
ICS Funds Disbursed $273,932

Disbursed 47% more than the same period in 2021

Where the $$ Go...

Imagine being in your mid-fifties and losing your livelihood, your home, and your life savings. Imagine, when you are just starting to get back on your feet, the COVID pandemic hits and you lose your spouse to cancer. This is Emily Pederson’s story. At 67, she is once again working her way back to financial stability and a happy life.

Some years ago, Emily and her husband Terry ran a lucrative house-flipping business. Then came 2008 and the real estate market crash. Emily and Terry lost everything - their business, their savings, even their home. They moved to a rental house in Issaquah, found jobs, and were making ends meet, mostly on Terry’s income. Living on a shoestring, they were not able to afford "luxuries" like life insurance.

In early 2020 when COVID hit, Terry was working three jobs and Sally one. One day, Terry noticed a lump on his lip and was diagnosed with advanced b cell lymphoma. He fought a short but difficult battle and succumbed during his second bout of radiation in April 2020.

Not only was Emily devastated over the loss of her dear companion of 30 years, but she also lost her retail job due to COVID and was locked down in COVID-imposed isolation. She was all alone and terrified. She and Terry had been living on his wages, and that income was gone. The $15,000 in their savings and Emily’s modest SSI benefits would not stretch far.

Emily moved from their rented house to a less expensive apartment and lived a very thrifty existence. In early 2021, she was able to return to a part-time retail job, but it was still an ongoing struggle to pay the bills. She reached out to Issaquah Community Services this year, and we were able to help with both rent and utilities, giving her some much needed breathing room.

Emily is optimistic about her future. She still misses Terry every day, but she loves where she lives and she loves her job. She plans to improve her financial situation by finding a second job and more economical housing. She is thankful for family, friends and neighbors who have lent their support throughout her arduous journey. She is also very thankful to ICS and the assistance she found with us. She looks forward to the day when she can give back to her community because she well understands how people can easily lose their footing in life.
The transition to their new hometown started well as the family settled into a nice apartment in Issaquah. Their 8-year-old son Ben made friends in his new school and Isabelle had a good job working from home as a healthcare telemarketer. Robert and Isabelle thought they had done well with their research, but the thing they had not anticipated was the impact of inflation and shift in the economy as COVID wound down. To make ends meet, they turned to family for financial help, but they could not keep asking. Finally in August, they learned about Issaquah Community Services. As a couple with two incomes, they were both humbled and embarrassed to have to seek assistance. We assured them there are many hardworking people in our area who find themselves in similar circumstances. ICS helped Robert and Isabelle with their August rent and referred them to additional resources.

The family loves their new community but continues to struggle financially. They have cut back on expenses and work as much overtime as possible. They do not expect to have to ask for more financial help in the future but are thankful to know that ICS is close by with empathy and a safety net to catch them and their neighbors when it is needed.

**When We Began...**

**In 1972**
- The average rent in Issaquah/Sammamish was $108 per month.
- The median annual income in United States was $9,870.
- ICS budget was under $3000

**And Now**
- The average rent in Issaquah/Sammamish is $2788 per month
- The median household income in Issaquah is $121,500 and in Sammamish, $188,500
- ICS budget is $250,000

**Sing-Along/Play-Along Messiah**
by G.F. Handel

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church
325 SE Darst Street, Issaquah
2:30 p.m. Sunday, December 18, 2022
Come join friends and neighbors for a joyful afternoon of community music making. Singers, instrumentalists and all who enjoy music are welcome.

**This Annual Performance Benefits Issaquah Community Services**
Volunteers are the heart of us. Would you like to make a difference in your community? Join us in this rewarding work. We offer flexible scheduling and a variety of assignments depending on your unique skill set.

Learn more on our website: issaquahcommunityservices.org/volunteer

Since its modest beginning in 1972, our grassroots, all-volunteer organization has provided service to our community. Generous donations from community members and partners have funded these efforts. We now give assistance to hundreds of families each year, to keep them in their homes, safe from eviction and homelessness. We have continued serving this community because of the many people willing to share their time and talents solely for the satisfaction of helping others.

Some volunteered with us for decades. Three of our Golden Girls are pictured here. Together they devoted nearly 70 years to the ICS mission.

Shirleann Nold (35 year volunteer) started with ICS in 1985. She was part of the group of women from four local churches who brought ICS back from the brink of dissolution. In 1985, when ICS was being run single-handedly by the Reverend Bob Gray, these 17 volunteers reimagined and reorganized ICS, laying the groundwork of the organization that we are today.

Nancy Nersveen (14 years) and Carol Murphy (20 years) spent untold hours connecting with clients, giving them relief and hope. We are grateful to them and to the countless other Golden Volunteers who have sustained this organization throughout our history.

Ways to Give

Consider, as you read this newsletter, that this dynamic little non-profit has brightened countless lives in this community you love for 50 years. That has been possible because of you, our donors. The ongoing support of our community has enabled us to sustain this mission for so long. Please help us carry on into the future. Share your caring for your neighbors with the gift that is best for you:

- Annual donation
- Monthly or other recurring donation
- Charitable bequest
- In Memoriam
- Volunteering with us.

Our team and the clients we help are very grateful for your kindness.
Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Donate at our website:  www.issaquahcommunityservices.org/donate
or mail your donation with this form to:
Issaquah Community Services, PO Box 669, Issaquah, WA 98027

NAME: _____________________________________________________
NAME: _____________________________________________________

ADDRESS:___________________________________________________
ADDRESS:___________________________________________________

CITY/STATE/ZIP: ______________________________________________
CITY/STATE/ZIP: ______________________________________________

EMAIL ADDRESS: ______________________________________________
EMAIL ADDRESS: ______________________________________________

Enclosed is my onetime gift of $_________
I will provide a monthly donation of $_______

My gift is in memory of ________________________________
May we acknowledge your gift on our website?  Yes _____ No_____

Please consider doubling the impact of your donation if you have a corporate match.
Letters to donors of more the $250 will be mailed in January 2023, as required by the IRS.

ICS is a 501 (c)3 non-profit
100% of your donations go to neighbors in need

Please give today.
Your simple act of kindness can keep a roof over someone's head.