



LOPEZ ISLAND  
HOME &  
HOSPICE  
SUPPORT

# A YEAR IN REVIEW: 2023 AT LIHHS

## A Note From Our President

All in all 2023 was a very good year for Lopez Island Home & Hospice Support. Certainly we encountered challenges, but we are in a strong financial position based on the strong support from our amazing community. Energized by that strength, the Board has been looking for opportunities to focus on our mission and expand our footprint and our impact on our community. We will continue that effort as we turn to 2024. My thanks to the Board, Emma and Megan, and our treasured Lopez community for your ongoing support. Gratitude is what I am feeling as we wrap up 2023.

### In 2023

We served **over 160 Lopez residents or households** throughout all our services. We also trained 10 new volunteers!

### What We Did

#### LIHHS Volunteers

Our incredible group of volunteers worked with **over 20 home support clients** throughout the year spending nearly **1000 hours** providing respite care, social visits and help with household tasks, organizing and errands. In September, we hosted a volunteer training and **welcomed 10 new volunteers**.

Two of our volunteers provide **bereavement support**, and **met with 1-2 clients monthly**. These sessions are typically 2-3 sessions per client.

Towards the end of 2023, we piloted a project-based option for **folks who want help with a specific task or project** rather than long term home support.

#### Durable Medical Equipment

Over the past year, we lent out **over 200 items of medical equipment** to **over 100 Lopez residents** and relatives.

Our walkers, canes, crutches, and wheelchairs helped folks to navigate accidents and surgeries, gave people tools to make their daily lives comfortable and on more than one occasion, **helped an older relative attend a family wedding on the island!**

#### Home Safety Grants

After adding to our Home Safety Grant fund through Give Lopez and raising our individual grant limit to \$2000, we were able to **fund 3 grants in 2023**. These grants helped folks make the home modifications or repairs they needed to stay safely in their homes.

#### Death With Dignity

Thanks to a restricted donation from a generous donor, we set up a fund to help those approved for Death With Dignity afford the cost of the medications.

### Changes at Lopez Island Home & Hospice New Faces in the Office

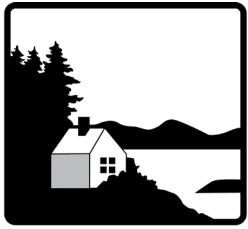
This past year, **we welcomed two staff members**, Emma Ewert as the Office Manager and Megan Havner as the Client Services Manager. They come to the organization with a strong background and **commitment to the community** and are excited to continue the work of LIHHS.

These roles were previously filled by Sarah Rabel, who had been with us since 2017, but moved off the island with her family earlier in the year. Sarah helped with the 2023 volunteer training, and **we thank her for her many years of service**.

Having two staff members allowed us to expand office hours and we are **now open 8:30-12:30, Monday through Friday**

#### Board Changes

We said farewell to Charles Givens and Doug Bowen, and welcomed June Coover!



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#### Board of Trustees

June Coover  
Jonathan Dahl  
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#### To Contact Us:

360-468-4446

Client Services Manager  
Megan Havner  
csm@lihhs.org

Office Manager:  
Emma Ewert  
admin@lihhs.org

178 Weeks Road  
PO Box 747  
Lopez Island WA  
98261

www.lihhs.org

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# ACCEPTING & OFFERING HELP

## Accepting help is hard ... Asking can be harder

By Elizabeth Landrum, Ph.D.

There are many reasons people have difficulty accepting help, ranging from cultural norms that teach us not to be selfish, dependent, or indebted, to personal beliefs about vulnerability and privacy. If you're the kind of person who strongly values strength and independence, accepting help might conflict with your sense of self, and possibly your sense of self-worth. You might see acceptance of help as a sign of weakness or failure of some kind, something meant for someone else. People are generally better at giving than asking. However, the exchange of giving and receiving help is part of the human social experience which allows us to join together in our humanity, in our sense of community.

Most of us are rewarded by the simple gift of giving. This is certainly true of LIHHS volunteers who donate their time because they want to be of service to their fellow Lopezians who are dealing with illness, injury, or loss. The many ways they offer help extend from short-term to long-term, from small and focused to broader and less defined. One volunteer might weed a garden or carry groceries for someone whose injury or surgery has made these ordinary things temporarily difficult or impossible. Another might provide respite for a family caregiver of an aging parent or accompany someone on a walk for companionship and safety. Most serve each person for about 2 hours/week. After extensive training, volunteers are individually matched with someone who requests help, with the receiver being fully in charge of deciding what they do and don't want from a menu of services offered.

You don't have to sacrifice independence when receiving help. Being independent doesn't mean "never needing help." By that definition, no one is truly independent. A better interpretation of independence is recognizing when you can use some help and reaching out for it.

Accepting help is its own kind of strength, but asking can be hard. Many people have difficulty seeing themselves as different from what they have always known themselves to be (e.g. fiercely independent, physically strong, mentally sharp). Some believe others are more deserving, worry about being an imposition, or feel guilty for asking. Remember, there's plenty of service time available from people who want to serve.

Unfortunately, the impulse to reject assistance can have negative consequences for one's health and/or relationships. Resisting can lead to problems when trying to be too self-reliant (e.g. pushing through restrictions after an operation). Some people will deny (to themselves or others) their own needs and vulnerabilities. Others may lean too much on family members, unwilling to call on outside sources for assistance, which can lead to stress in the relationship or caregiver burn-out. Families often then miss out on important time to be together in enjoyable and meaningful ways.

Anyone can get better at accepting help, at letting someone in. Finding the source of one's own discomfort is a place to start — Is it pride or shame? A previous bad experience? Concern about what others might think? Worries about losing independence? Feeling vulnerable? Reluctance to have a stranger in your home? Acknowledgment of one's personal concerns and fears opens the door to invite change. After accepting assistance, people usually say that what they feared does not play out in the ways they had imagined.

If you're considering asking, remember that you don't have to make long-term commitments. One way to begin is to start small, with low-stake requests. You don't even have to know exactly what you need.

#### What about when you want to encourage someone you care about to consider help?

The following are common suggestions offered to adult children when having these conversations with an aging parent. They may be helpful in other discussions with someone you're trying to encourage to accept any type of assistance:

- Make it clear that your goal is to help someone you care about to maintain his or her own independence and live safely, comfortably and happily in his or her own home.
- Listen deeply to their concerns, trying to understand their thoughts and feelings with curiosity and an open mind. Acknowledge your understanding with compassion and reassurance. Ask about their specific concerns, what they imagine, then ask how you might help.
- Educate, when possible (e.g. about LIHHS services and procedures).
- Allow them to have the dignity of their own experience. Focus on what's important to them now.
- Show that you want to make it easier for them, and to collaborate with them.
- Help them understand that your offers come from a heartfelt desire to support, instead of an attempt to take over or control. Don't allow the conversation to evolve into a power struggle. No one can feel a sense of independence in the same moment someone else seems to be making a decision for them.
- When taking with a parent, understand that aging parents are likely to feel conflicted about role reversals after decades of being in the parent role.
- Be flexible and creative. See if there's a way for them to feel decisions are being made by them, not for them. You may want to offer choices between two alternatives. For example, you might ask if they would want to call LIHHS themselves to ask questions or have you make the call in their presence.
- Start small, like having someone come to visit or to do one small task.
- Consider safety (e.g. food safety, medications, driving, fire hazards) before other concerns for their wellbeing.
- Support their autonomy and acknowledge its importance.
- When appropriate, put the conversation "on pause", then try again. There may be many conversations before a change is realized, so be patient and give it time.
- Accept your own limits. Competent elders have the right to make their own decisions, even if you don't agree with them. Sometimes all you can do is offer your suggestions and then let them choose.

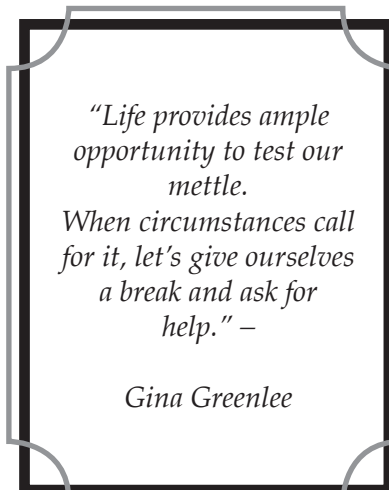
#### Asking For Help At LIHHS

By Megan Havner

When you are interested in LIHHS assistance, you may simply call to ask questions, and go from there.

You can stop by the office to peruse our "DME shed" for mobility aids, grab an application for our home safety improvement grant, or inquire about our bereavement support program. Or, you might have a longer conversation about ongoing volunteer support. This can be "one-off" volunteer assistance – for example, for short term projects around the house. This can be arranged with a quick intake over the phone. Volunteer support can also be long-term, with a volunteer stopping by once a week or less to provide social visits, household tasks, running errands, etc.

With LIHHS, you will always have the final say in what services you receive and when. Volunteers are here to help on your schedule, at your pace, with your best interests at heart. Our volunteers and staff are open to adapting to support to your needs, and are here to troubleshoot any issues that might arise.





From us to you, a HUGE thank you for sponsoring, donating auction items and volunteering to support our work in our community!



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PO Box 747  
Lopez Island  
WA 98261  
  
178 Weeks Road  
360-468-4446  
admin@lihhs.org

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Winter 2024