



# INTERFAITH CONNECTION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

## A HOME FOR HOMEWORK

By Cheryl Stritzel McCarthy

“Hi Dot, what’s for dinner?” called out one pre-teen boy, as 10 children and four moms poured through the doors of St. Paul Episcopal Church’s hall. Family Promise volunteer Dot Nichols and other parishioners were ready to serve a hot meal, help with homework, and offer overnight accommodations for a week to local families experiencing homelessness.

Volunteers make sure children have a warm and happy place conducive to homework while their parents work toward long-term housing. Families stay in the program about seven weeks, with 94% of them graduating into stable, long-term housing.

“Our church has four large round tables where we gather,” Dot says. “After dinner, there’s plenty of space. It’s important for children to have a table, comfortable chair, and good lighting, which they certainly wouldn’t have in the back of a van, or a tent.” Volunteers can help the youngsters, one on one if necessary.

“It’s heartwarming to be



“That boy was so proud of his book, and so happy with himself.”

-Dot Nichols,  
Family Promise Volunteer,  
St. Paul Episcopal Church

appreciated by a child,” Dot says. “It’s powerful to see Christ in the faces of the people who come to us: the children, the moms, the dads. We have so much love. How wonderful to be able to share it, and be loved back. You can feel the gratitude.”

Dot is one of seven Family Promise volunteer coordinators at St. Paul’s. “We worked hard to get everybody on board throughout the parish. That’s paid off! That’s how we get 50 volunteers for a week, four times a year.”

A retired counselor at elementary schools and Western Washington University, Dot especially

enjoys interacting with children. Her bright moments are many. One 10-year-old boy came in “a loner,” but connected with a volunteer who encouraged him in his homework assignment of writing a comic-book story. “That boy was so proud of his book, and so happy with himself,” Dot says.

“It feels great when we turn out our Great Hall lights, and 14 of God’s children are warm, safe, and comfortable for another night.”



# WHY WE DONATE: THREE DONOR FAMILIES' STORIES

*Edited by Cheryl Stritzel McCarthy*

Interfaith's 628 local donors fund 97% of Interfaith's annual budget of \$700,000. Because Interfaith makes use of volunteers and other existing resources such as congregational buildings, the impact of your financial donation is tripled, with every donated dollar delivering \$3 worth of value to local children and families most in need.

## **JOYCE & JOHN PEDLOW: ONE FAMILY AT A TIME**

Joyce and John Pedlow have been Interfaith donors for 10 years. Interfaith's mission of bringing local faith communities together to serve neighbors in need is demonstrated most fully in Interfaith's successful Family Promise of Whatcom County, Joyce says.

"Children who experience homelessness are affected in so many negative ways. We support Interfaith because of the hundreds of volunteers and IFC staff who come together to help families, one family at a time, have hope. It is heartwarming to hear these families' courageous stories, and to see their genuine appreciation for the support Interfaith gives.

## **HOLLY & PETER TELFER: REACHING OUT LOCALLY**

Holly and Peter Telfer, donors since 2009, feel that with Interfaith, they can "make a difference in our own backyard."

The Telfers learned about Interfaith when they joined friends at an Interfaith auction. "Their enthusiasm was contagious," Holly says. "Interfaith is unique in our community by allowing local homeless families with children to stay together. Shelter, food, and financial counseling are provided, but the main effort is permanent housing. We feel proud and thankful to live in such a kind and generous community."

## **BARBARA MATHERS-SCHMIDT & BOB SCHMIDT: GIVING BACK IS GETTING BACK**

Barbara Mathers-Schmidt and her husband Bob

Schmidt have been donating to Interfaith for 27 years. "Over the years, we became increasingly involved, responding to families experiencing homelessness—contributing time and money, building relationships, and providing hope alongside

others in Interfaith," Barbara says.

"We know our dollars and volunteer efforts make a difference in the lives of families with children. In turn, the guests in Family Promise impact me, teaching invaluable lessons about generosity, grace, and gratitude.

"Repeatedly, I've witnessed the power of people acting together, 'one-by-one-by-one,' so all might have food for their families and a place to call home."



*We know our dollars and volunteer efforts make a difference in the lives of families with children."*

-Barbara Mathers-Schmidt



# WHO IS INTERFAITH?



WE ARE OVER  
**2,208**  
LOCAL VOLUNTEERS...

SPENDING  
**31,754**  
HOURS EVERY YEAR HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS THIS YEAR -

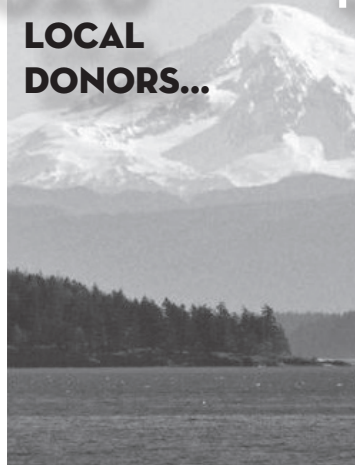


VOLUNTEER WORK VALUED AT OVER  
**\$1,007,237**

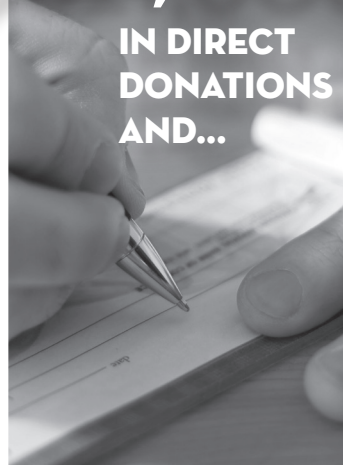


WE ARE  
**55**  
PARTNER CONGREGATIONS.

AND  
**628**  
LOCAL DONORS...



GIVING  
**\$621,608**  
IN DIRECT DONATIONS AND...



**\$612,121**  
OF IN-KIND GOODS AND SERVICES TO HELP LOCAL FAMILIES RISE OUT OF POVERTY AND FIND STABLE HOUSING.



WE BRING PEOPLE OF  
**DIVERSE FAITHS**  
TOGETHER, TO SERVE OTHERS.



WE  
**LEVERAGE**  
SMALL, INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS INTO BIG RESULTS.



WE SHARE OUR  
**ABUNDANCE**  
WITH LOCAL NEIGHBORS IN NEED.



**WE ARE INTERFAITH.**



**INTERFAITH COALITION  
OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

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## SAVE THE DATE:



## JOIN US! BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

The best way to eradicate poverty in America is to improve the lives of children, according to a report in a November issues of *The Economist*.

Interfaith empowers families in Whatcom County to get out of poverty and into housing, making a huge positive impact in the lives of local children most in need.

At Interfaith, your financial donation does the most good, for the most vulnerable families among us. Interfaith uses existing resources in our communities, including congregational buildings and volunteers, to triple the impact of your donation.

At Interfaith, every dollar you donate delivers \$3 worth of value to local families.

**DONATE TODAY AT:** [www.interfaith-coalition.org/donate/online/](http://www.interfaith-coalition.org/donate/online/)  
**OR BY SENDING IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE!**

**LIKE INTERFAITH COALITION  
OF WHATCOM COUNTY  
ON FACEBOOK!**

