



# INTERFAITH COALITION

Partners in Faith. Changing Lives.



As I write this, several families in our housing programs are waiting; one family is waiting to move out of state, one family is waiting for news on a housing subsidy, still another family is waiting to be reunited with a parent abroad who is completing steps to receive their U.S.

work permit. We often use the term “the waiting game” to describe all kinds of anticipation, but for families whose housing and economic prospects are unstable, a period of waiting does not feel like a game, and nor should it. These lags can further exacerbate feelings of uncertainty and lead to anxiety that short-circuits the brain’s ability to plan effectively.

At Interfaith Coalition, we understand this paradigm and we work hard to draw a support system around the families we serve to hedge against the overwhelm that comes with so much uncertainty. With the help of our amazing volunteers, we have been able to assist families in our housing programs in unique ways; we have helped by procuring furniture, offering meal kits, diapers and baby clothes, and by providing supportive case management through these seasons of change.

The staff and board at Interfaith Coalition are also waiting; we await news of a grant application recently submitted, we await two upcoming opportunities to connect with you in the coming months, and we await the arrival of new families in at least half of our homes in the next three months. This summer will be a busy turnaround season; several families are approaching the end of their two-year transitional housing stays and two families in shelter are planning exits to onward housing situations. As these families begin to move on from our housing programs, we are hard at work preparing

the homes for the next families to move in, and we are working with several candidate families on feasibility and timeline concerns.

In the midst of all of this, we embrace opportunities to connect with you. We have a fun, summer event planned at Boundary Bay Brewery at the end of July, and a celebratory event at the Center for Spiritual Living planned for September. Details will be forthcoming on our website, Facebook, Instagram, and e-newsletters. If you don’t receive our monthly e-newsletters, you can sign up on our website.

Finally, I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of you who have supported our work. To say we could not do this without you is an understatement. As a small nonprofit, the valuable support we receive from dozens of faith communities and hundreds of individuals throughout Whatcom County reminds us that we are still mighty.

Devin Connolly  
Executive Director

**JULY 30**  
**BOUNDARY BAY BREWERY**  
**MUSIC BY THE NAUGHTY BLOKES**

**SEPTEMBER 23**  
**CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING**  
**INTERFAITH HONOREES CELEBRATION**

## THE WAY TO OUR HEART IS THROUGH OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to our congregation and community partners who give money, time, item donations, and assurance that even when this work is daunting, we are making a difference in Whatcom County.

We're shining a spotlight on partners who buy ingredients and deliver meal kits to families in our emergency shelters. Each week these families can choose two recipes they would like to cook at home. The meal kits supplement food assistance the families already receive, such as SNAP benefits, and help families develop a daily routine while reinforcing that there are people around them who want to help. Thank you!

Bellingham Friends  
Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship  
Center for Spiritual Living  
Christ Lutheran Church  
Christ the Servant Lutheran Church  
Church of the Assumption  
Congregation Beth Israel  
Garden Street United Methodist Church  
First Congregational Church  
Guardian Security Systems  
Hope in Christ Church

Lake Whatcom Ward (Latter-Day Saints)  
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church  
Red Cedar Zen Center  
Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
St. James Presbyterian Church  
St. Joseph Catholic Church  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
United Church of Ferndale  
Unity of Bellingham  
Zion Lutheran Church



## WORKING TOGETHER TO REMOVE BARRIERS FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY

Emily Humphrey-Krigbaum and Jami Pitman are Family Liaisons with Bellingham Public Schools. Their job can be boiled down to removing barriers that prevent a child experiencing homelessness from receiving the same opportunities as their peers who are housed. With the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act, every school district in Whatcom County has a Family Liaison (or similar title). Over the years, our housing staffs' relationship with Family Liaisons has grown both due to the increase in family homelessness in Whatcom County and the need to have stronger collaboration.



“Over the years I’ve seen Interfaith Coalition adjust to the needs within the community,” Emily said. “That’s been amazing. The support families who have worked with Interfaith Coalition has received is huge,” Emily said. “A lot of their housing needs get met, so I can focus on the child’s academic needs.”

“It’s a relief,” Jami added. “There were a couple families we were so involved with, but as soon as they got connected with Interfaith Coalition, their needs from Emily and me essentially stopped.”

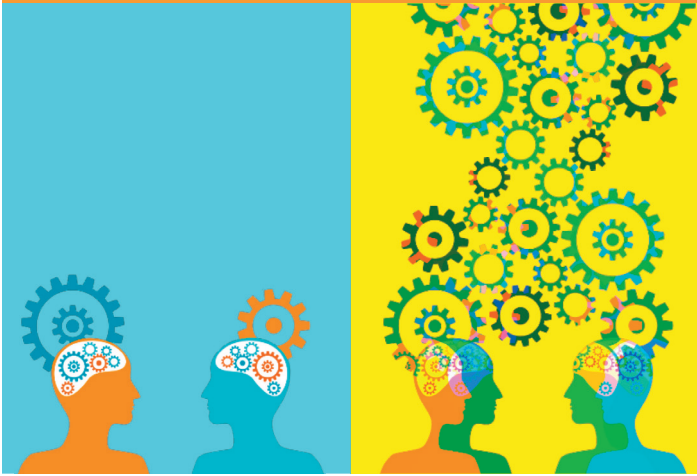
Both Emily and Jami emphasized how they want children and their parents to know that they are there to be a support, regardless of what the family is going through. They are guided by the principles that every student deserves to be a kid, have fun, feel confident going to school, and know that they belong.

“We want kids to know we will always show up,” Jami added.

A great takeaway from the work that Family Liaisons do is that we may never understand what a person is going through, and we don’t need to in order to help them.

***Our Maintenance Manager, Warren, is a pretty lovable guy. One child, in particular, in our housing is over the moon with Warren. They watch from their living room window in hopes of seeing Warren’s red pickup pull up in front of their house. When they do, this kiddo grabs their toy tools and follows Warren around the house to watch him in action. Who knows? Maybe when Warren retires we’ll have our next Maintenance Manager!***

## Perpetuating Homelessness: Scarcity Mindset vs. Abundance Mindset



(con't from back cover)

Poverty impacts everyone. A place where we all have opportunities to live affordably within our respective means is a healthier community. We are more engaged, personally invested, trusting, and collaborative.

With a scarcity mindset, whether individually or communally, our focus narrows on what we lack. Every interaction or situation points to evidence that supports that belief. We become less efficient in our long-term planning and seek immediate gratification. Problem solving skills diminish, alternative solutions are overlooked, and resource-hoarding becomes prevalent. Individually and as a community, we suffer repercussions.

Scarcity mindset increases jealousy between each other. When we perceive there isn't enough to go around, competition becomes more rampant. We lose trust in people outside our circles. We feel helpless, believing things cannot be changed and therefore we don't take actions to improve the circumstances. The fear of "not enough" supersedes seeing the whole picture. Decisions become based on individual and immediate needs rather than community and long-term needs that could lift up less privileged members of society. Poverty perpetuates, homelessness grows, anger and cynicism flares.

### Signs of a scarcity mindset:

- Constantly talking about what is lacking
- Tunnel vision (also known as "tunneling")
- Social comparison and that leads to competition
- Distrust in others

The opposite of scarcity mindset is abundance mindset. With this outlook, we see more options and recognize when resources are available so they can be shared. Abundance mindset is more collective-focused on those both inside and outside our circles. We become collaborative, which leads to talking with and learning from each other. Through that we are more creative, innovative, and understanding. We are cooperative and more resilient because we trust each other for support and have each other's best interest in mind. Strong communities with abundance mentality advance solutions that empower those around us who haven't had the opportunities we may have had.

### How to move toward an abundance mindset:

- Form collaborative relationships
- Seek and recognize possibilities
- Focus on the big picture
- Think like a beginner, letting go of preconceptions

**"If people find big and small ways to support each other, this creates the resources others are seeking."**

If we as Whatcom County want to address our homelessness issue, look at what we have, pool our resources, and when we have it, share our abundance. As Tabitha Kirkland, psychologist and associate teaching professor at the University of Washington's Department of Psychology said, "Helping and giving to others lifts everyone up. If people find big and small ways to support each other, this creates the resources others are seeking."



Donate to Interfaith Coalition by mailing your gift in the provided envelope, visiting our website [interfaith-coalition.org](http://interfaith-coalition.org), or scanning the QR code to the right.





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— Bellingham Public Schools  
Family Liaison

## PERPETUATING HOMELESSNESS: SCARCITY MINDSET VS. ABUNDANCE MINDSET



A scarcity mindset centers on the belief that there are not enough resources to go around. This outlook instills the idea that if your fellow community members get what you need, there will not be enough left for you. As such, your worldview is colored by that lens. The result is hoarding resources and focusing only on ways to obtain more.

A problem when we collectively have scarcity mindset is that it perpetuates the poverty and that so many of us wish would just disappear. ***Read inside about scarcity and abundance mindsets and how they can impact homelessness.***

## SAVE THESE DATES:

**JULY 30**  
**BOUNDARY BAY BREWERY**  
**MUSIC BY THE NAUGHTY BLOKES**



**SEPTEMBER 23**  
**CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING**  
**INTERFAITH HONOREES CELEBRATION**

FUNDRAISERS FOR FAMILIES