

Charter Memberships Available April 1-June 1

Things are moving fast at Bellingham At Home. Since our last newsletter, we've developed a launch plan and will be starting to sign up members next month. The big news right now is Charter Memberships. Beginning April 1, Charter Memberships are available at a special rate of \$350 per year for three years. By joining early, you'll be able to lock in the annual membership fee. If you choose to wait, you will be subject to annual increases as services are added.

We're firming up membership details. Check the website for updates. The membership application form will be available very soon. We will notify you when it's posted on the website, and we'll let you know how you can request a form if you don't use a computer.

Soft Opening June 1

Volunteers will start delivering support services in June. We're calling it a soft opening because we know we'll need a little time to get things running smoothly. We will have everything working by July 1, our full-program launch date. We remind you, and ourselves, that we are a work in progress and will respond to input from members, volunteers, and the community at large.

Find out more! Sign up for a Charter Membership!

We have scheduled several sessions to present more detailed information, with an opportunity to join as a Charter Member. Find out more, ask questions, get excited about our new community effort! Information for volunteers will be available, too.

Bellingham Senior Activity Center
315 Halleck Street - April 27, 10:45 am
Center for Spiritual Living
2224 Yew Street Road - May 4, 6 pm
Bellingham Senior Activity Center
315 Halleck Street - May 25, 1 pm



Above: LC member Elaine Cress explains Bellingham At Home membership details at a well-attended session of the 2016 Housing Options As We Age event, held at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center.

Membership Details Announced

Our Membership task force, headed by Elaine Cress of the Leadership Council, has been hard at work developing a definition for Bellingham At Home membership, including criteria, levels, membership fees, and benefits. At the BSAC's Housing Options As We Age 2016 event last month, we previewed the membership plan and got feedback from attendees. The reception was enthusiastic.

Below is a summary of Bellingham At Home membership.

Membership Levels

You can join at the Full Household Membership level, with or without the Charter Membership option. Charter Members are Full Household Members with the added benefit of a membership fee that doesn't change for the first three years. Full Household Membership applies to one home. The other level of membership is Associate Membership, which is offered at a reduced membership fee to those who wish to have access only to our activities and our vetted service provider referrals; they may live outside our Village boundaries.

Membership is open to people age 50 and over (exceptions will be considered) who reside in the Bellingham At Home area.

Membership Fees

Bellingham At Home is a community cooperative enterprise. Membership fees are used to support operating expenses such as part-time paid staff, office rental, telephone, equipment, vetting, insurance, and monthly software charges.

Charter Full Household Member: Fixed membership rate (\$350) for three years. Joining with this membership option is available only from April 1 to June 1, 2016.

Full Household Member: Payable annually. Year 1 (2016) \$350; subsequent years subject to increase as services are added. A monthly payment plan is available for this level but may incur an additional charge.

Associate Member: Payable annually. Year 1 (2016) \$150; subsequent years subject to increase as services are added.

Member Benefits:

- A single number to call for a helping hand
- A chance to talk with someone who cares about you as a member
- Referrals to vetted service providers with preferred terms and rates for our members
- Access to vetted, trained service volunteers for helping-hand chores and transportation
- Participation in social events
- A chance to volunteer and be part of a community within a community
- Bellingham Senior Activity Center membership for one person in the household.

Additional benefits will be available in years 2 and 3.

Membership Applications

Applications to join will be accepted starting April 1st, 2016. Before then, the application form will be downloadable from our [website](#). We will notify you when it's there. A membership form will be mailed to individuals who have recently submitted the paper form indicating an interest in joining.

Bellingham At Home Service Area

Where will our Village services be available? We're close to pinning it down on the map. The boundaries include everything within Bellingham city limits--plus. What are we deciding? Well, frankly, we want to make sure that we can get service volunteers into all the areas that we open up to membership. Setting our boundaries too far from the city center may seem beneficial to some people who live on the fringes of the city limits, but in reality it could be a source of dissatisfaction if we are unable to deliver on our service promise. We want to start with something manageable and then possibly extend the boundaries as we grow. Please check our website. We will have details posted soon.



People are talking...

Task force volunteer Joan Dow relates a snippet of a conversation she overheard on a street in downtown Bellingham:

First woman: Have you heard about Bellingham At Home?

Second woman: Yes, I have!

The word is getting out!

Task Forces Need Help:

More volunteers are needed for two of our pre-launch task forces, Fundraising and Service Providers. Their work is key to laying the groundwork for our Village so we can launch services. Please consider joining one of these:

Fundraising

Our budget depends on more than membership fees. Established villages report needing to raise 50-60% of their budgets from other sources. Particularly in this start-up year, our Fundraising task force needs more person power. If you would like to help, please join us.

Service Providers

One of the primary benefits we provide members is access to service providers in our communities who are interested in working with older adults and willing to provide their services at a discount. The task of the Service Provider task force is to recruit such businesses and coach them through the application process. We are contacting everyone, from electricians to estate planners, from contractors to counsellors – and beyond. There is a long list of services our members will need.

To offer your services for either the Fundraising or the Service Providers task force, please let us know by emailing or calling Leadership Council member Marci Haskell (marci.haskell@bellinghamathome.org) (360) 733-0683).

Service Volunteers Are Sought – Apply Now!

Service volunteers are the work horses of Village operation. At the first meeting for Bellingham At Home's service volunteers, more than 20 interested prospects came together to find out what work the Village will need help with and how to become a volunteer. The drive to recruit volunteers is under way and will continue as part of preparation for our June 1 start date. Between now and then, prospects will be vetted and trained. Volunteer recruitment and training is expected to be an ongoing part of village operation. ***To offer your services, please email or call our volunteer coordinator, Barb Evans (barb.evans@bellinghamathome.org) (360) 650-9724).***

FAQ #5 (...the 5th in our series)

What is the profile of a typical Village member?

Most members are fairly healthy, active older adults who may or may not currently need assistance with various tasks to enable them to stay in their homes. Some members have hearing loss or impaired vision and may no longer drive. Others simply need assistance with changing a light bulb or solving a computer glitch. Anyone is welcome to become a member, whether or not they need services. Everyone can benefit from the social and educational activities, and everyone can have the satisfaction of building a Village for our community.

Brochure

Need one or two? The Bellingham At Home brochure is available at the Senior Center on the publications table in the lounge. If you need more than a couple, or if the supply is empty, please email or call us (see contact info below).

Coming soon, to a neighborhood or community group near you...

We're going into the community to get the word out. Bellingham At Home representatives are contacting your neighborhood representatives to arrange to introduce our Village at your community group meeting. We've already visited Fairhaven and Cordata neighborhoods. Here's what's scheduled as of this newsletter. Please consult your group for meeting time and location.

Group or Association	Date
Happy Valley Neighborhood Association	March 20
Newman Conference Center (WWU)	April 3 (seeking student service volunteers)
South Hill Neighborhood Association	April 6
Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship Forum	April 10
Whatcom Falls Neighborhood Association	April 12
Samish Neighborhood Association	April 14
Bellingham Shambhala Center	April 17
Kiwanis Club	April 19
Silver Beach Neighborhood Association	May 9
Puget Neighborhood Association	May 17
Sehome Neighborhood Association	May (TBD)
Birchwood Neighborhood Association	May (TBD)
York Neighborhood Association	June or July (TBD)

Watch for a smaller gathering in your neighborhood

Besides neighborhood association and service organization meetings, our Leadership Council is planning smaller events to bring prospective members and volunteers together. If you live in the Pacific View neighborhood, a home wine and cheese gathering will take place on April 1. Contact us by phone or email for details (see contact information below) and to find out what's happening near you.

Nanette Davis will be seeking volunteer service providers at the Newman Conference Center on the campus of Western Washington University on April 3, 2016. Student service providers are especially sought for garden chores, computer help, and assisting elders in writing their life stories. Students will also have an opportunity to serve Bellingham At Home as interns.

Thank You to our Donors!

Thanks to the many who have made donations to support Bellingham At Home.

If you wish to write a check, please designate the Whatcom Council on Aging as the payee, with "Bellingham At Home" in the memo. Credit card donations can be made through the [secure donations link on the WCCOA website](#).

For more about us...

Come and visit the Bellingham At Home [website](#). Stop by often, and keep up with our activities and progress!

Bellingham At Home Contact Information

Location: Bellingham Senior Activity Center, 315 Halleck Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Phone: 360 746-3462 **E-mail:** info@bellinghamathome.org

Website: <http://BellinghamAtHome.org>

Bellingham At Home is a program of the [Whatcom Council on Aging](#), which is a 501(c)(3) organization, and a member of the [Village to Village Network](#).