



The family of Leslee Francis, Olympic Peninsula Healthy Communities Coalition executive director, son, Austin, 11, husband, Doug, and daughter ,Savannah, 13, help arrange 350 "jars of kindness" for distribution to Clallam County behavioral health workers. (Courtesy photo)

Gifting Tuesday thanks behavioral health workers

First responders add notes to 'jars of kindness'

By Michael Carman

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CARLSBORG — Officials with an area nonprofit embraced two tenets of the holiday season this year: It is the thought that counts, and it is better to give than receive.

The Olympic Peninsula Healthy Communities Coalition (OPHCC) turned Giving Tuesday, the now-traditional post-Thanksgiving philanthropy event, into Gifting Tuesday for 350 behavioral health workers in the nonprofit, educational and tribal sectors across Clallam County.

The move also boosted locally-owned businesses with \$3,500 in purchases.

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Behavioral health workers were provided small tokens of appreciation in the form of “jars of kindness” that each contained \$10 gift certificates to locally-owned restaurants and small businesses as well as an Advent calendar-style collection of 31 days of thank-you notes and inspirational quotes from a selection of politicians, first responders and other county leaders.



Leslee Francis, Olympic Peninsula Healthy Communities Coalition executive director, prepares to deliver some of the 350 jars of kindness prepared by the organization for behavioral health workers. (Courtesy photo)

OPHCC Executive Director Leslee Francis said the coalition’s board brainstormed potential recipients of some kindness and decided that, due to the rise in demand for mental health care during the pandemic, behavioral health care workers were a more than worthy cause.

“That’s exactly where our heart was with this project,” Francis said.

“Giving kindness is one of the most important things to us, and to make sure the gifts were sincere and show behavioral health workers how valuable and appreciated they are.”

Foregoing the initial thoughts of jars full of homemade cookies or soup, Francis and the coalition collected 31 quotes across December’s 31 days “to have something positive and kind.”

She worked with the Sequim Walmart to source 350 canning jars, no small feat in the pandemic supply chain, and had the quotes printed on colorful paper at Office Depot.

Canning jars have become a hot commodity during the pandemic and were selected to represent how valuable the aid these workers provide has been during this time.

[Thank-you notes to behavioral health workers](#) by [Laura Foster](#) on Scribd

“Let joy be joy... even when it feels subtle and fleeting. For even when joy takes on the form of a momentary flicker, it is still worth noticing and keeping.”

– Morgan Harper Nichols

Thanks,

Amy Brandt, Olympic Community of Health
Communications & Special Project Coordinator

See the world as good
Their needs are legitimate
Human support is necessary

By Joan Chittister

Submitted by Andra Smith, Executive Director
Sequim Food Bank

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

–Maya Angelou

Thank you all!

D. Brent Simcosky,
Director of Health Services
Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

The Starfish Story

A young man is walking along the ocean and sees a beach on which thousands and thousands of starfish have washed ashore. Further along he sees an old man, walking slowly and stooping often, picking up one starfish after another and tossing each one gently into the ocean.

“Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?” he asks.

“Because the sun is up and the tide is going out and if I don’t throw them further in they will die.”

“But, old man, don’t you realize there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it! You can’t possibly save them all, you can’t even save one-tenth of them. In fact, even if you work all day, your efforts won’t make any difference at all.”

The old man listened calmly and then bent down to pick up another starfish and threw it into the sea. “It made a difference to that one.”

–Loren Easley
Brian S. Smith, Chief of Police,
City of Port Angeles

Mental health workers: We in law enforcement have a strong sense of how challenging your jobs are in normal times. We count on and rely on you every day. We do not have the opportunity in our daily whirlwinds to pause and express our thanks and appreciation. Thank you from law enforcement and thank you from PAPD. You are our sisters and brothers and a vital partner in public safety. We

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Sincere thanks

Notes from first responders struck a powerful chord with Francis since those frontline workers deal with behavioral health crises on a daily basis — and also with the aftermath of those events.

“The Port Angeles Fire Chief Ken Dubuc sent an incredibly heart-felt thank you,” Francis said. “Also the Joyce Fire Chief Greg Waters and the Police Chief in Port Angeles, Brian Smith.”

In his note, Dubuc mentioned sometimes feeling “embarrassed” by the amount of publicity and praise that first responders and firefighters receive for racing to emergencies, while the aftermath of these events — hurt and broken lives, sadness and pain and property loss — often go unrecognized.

“It seems to me that it is the mental health providers who are often left to ‘pick up the pieces’ and heal the wounds — an effort that goes on behind the scenes and often unnoticed, an effort that is complex, time consuming and certainly difficult,” Dubuc wrote.

“For what it is worth, please know that you are appreciated, that you are noticed, that you are considered a vital link in the chain of responders who work tirelessly every day to [do] what can be done to care for those in need.”

Agency Thank You's by [Laura Foster](#) on Scribd

Thanks so much for the very thoughtful gifts for my staff.

Sorry I was in a meeting yesterday and was unable to thank you in person!

Tanya MacNeil | Executive Director
Forks Community Hospital
West End Outreach Services
530 Bogachiel Way | Forks, WA 98331
Phone: (360) 374-5011 | Fax: (360) 374-6691
tanyam@forkshospital.org | www.forkshospital.org

Loved the gift jar I received yesterday! So sweet to read all the positive affirmation from other important agencies in our community. Very thoughtful.

Thank you!
Dana

Dana Christenson, M. Ed
(She/Her/Hers | [Why Pronouns Matter](#))
School Counselor, Stevens Middle School
Port Angeles, Washington

Thank you so much for the jar filled with appreciations from the community. What a thoughtful gift! I treasure this gift and all you do for the community.
Thanks again,

Leslie

Leslie Mraz
School Psychologist
Port Angeles School District
(360) 565-1558

Thank you Leslee for the gift! It is greatly appreciated especially being so unexpected.
With a grateful heart,
Gill Orr – Director Cedar Grove Counseling

Hi Rebekah,

I have a free hour here at the end of the week. So I grabbed my little inc, put my feet under my desk

Waters’ words touched on the increased demand for these workers during the pandemic.

“I can’t recall a time in recent history where your services were more vital for our community,” Waters wrote.

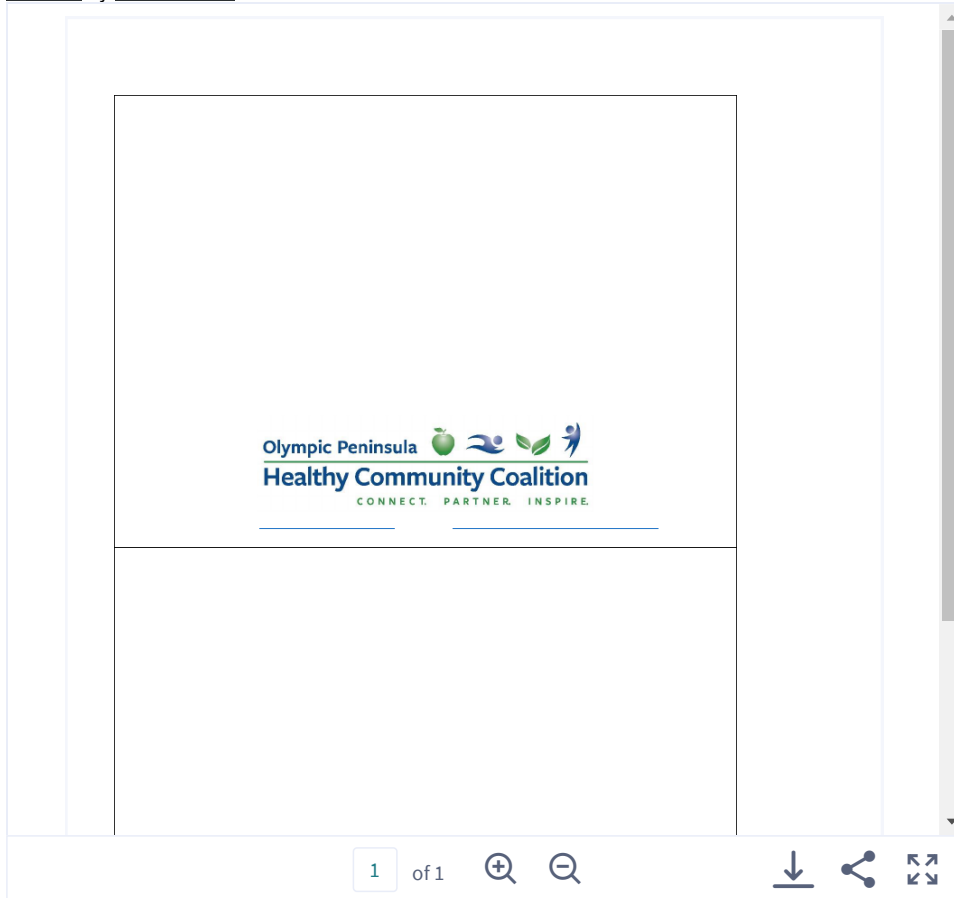
“As a paramedic, I have seen the toll mental health issues have on our patients along with their family and loved ones.”

Sound Publishing Vice President Terry Ward — publisher of the Peninsula Daily News, Sequim Gazette and Forks Forum — reflected on the value found in serving others above self.

He quoted actor Will Smith: “If you’re not making someone else’s life better, then you are wasting your time. Your life will be become better by making others’ lives better.”

Wrote Ward: “Thank you for working so diligently to make the lives of others better. The difference you make is valued and appreciated.”

OPHCC by [Laura Foster](#) on Scribd



Gift certificates were purchased at Sequim’s Sunshine Cafe, Lola’s Cafe, barbecue and Frugal’s in Port Angeles, Blackberry Cafe in Joyce; and at Sully’s Burgers in Forks.

“The owner of Lola’s teared up, he was so touched to be included,” Francis said.

The Lower Elwha Food and Fuel station, which didn’t offer gift certificates previously, even went to the trouble of producing some for workers with the Lower Elwha Klallam and Makah tribes.

For three days, Francis’ kitchen and dining room was turned into a jars-of-kindness assembly line with her two children, Sequim Middle School students Austin, 11, and Savannah 13, providing assistance, along with her husband Doug.

Francis then delivered the jars to behavioral health workers from Sequim to Neah Bay.

She said the response was full of gratitude and overwhelmingly emotional.

“Once they received the jars and saw what they were, they realized we see you and so does our community,” Francis said.

A selection of sentiments sent to OPHCC follows.



Thank-you notes and inspirational quotes from Clallam County politicians, first responders and other well-known residents were included in jars of kindness distributed to 350 Clallam County behavioral health workers by the Olympic Peninsula Healthy Communities Coalition. (Courtesy photo)

‘Literally bawling’

“I have a free hour here at the end of the week. So I grabbed my little jar, put my feet up on my desk and am literally bawling as I read these beautiful messages,” Front Street Clinic Supervisor Dena Crosby wrote.

“I didn’t even realize just how tired we all are and how much we are all doing, I guess, until I stopped to read these. To know people see and hear and do care means so much and will help keep us all going strong... . Now I need a Kleenex.”

“I thank you, our kindred spirits, for your thoughtfulness and support to our Behavioral Health team. It means a lot to us. Klecko, Klecko [Thank you in the Makah language],” wrote Elizabeth Buckingham, Behavioral Health and Wellness Manager for the Makah Tribe’s Sophie Trettevick Indian Health Center.

Dr. Kristine Johnson, North Olympic Healthcare Network Behavioral Health Services manager, wrote, “I had the great privilege today of receiving the incredibly thoughtful, endlessly warm gift of jars of appreciation from your

team. It was an honor to get to distribute the jars to my staff and take a few moments with each of them to express the tremendous gratitude expressed in your gift.

“The potted plant to adorn our front desk area is a great reminder of the hard work of the behavioral health team and also brightens the space tremendously,” she said.

“Thank you so very much for the time, effort and energy that went into these gifts. Thank you for thinking of us. We wish you a healthy and happy holiday season.”

Francis said OPHCC will reprise its 5-2-1-0 challenge of eating five or more servings of fruit and vegetables, limiting recreational screen time to two hours or less, getting at least an hour of physical activity and drinking zero sugar-based drinks, “with a twist” in 2021.

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