



Leading with Heart –a message from our President

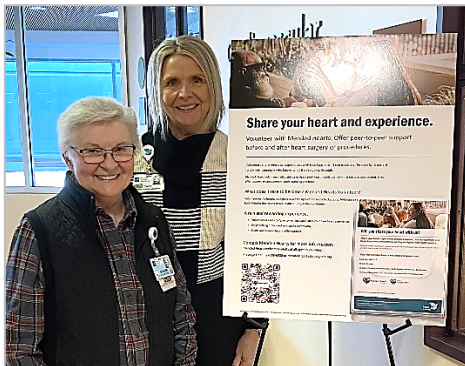
Can We Do This All Over Again

Have you ever worked with someone you really enjoyed working with only to have them leave? You just can't understand why they wouldn't want to stay. We've had two people very close to Mended Hearts who have left and we have conflicted feelings.

Cindy Gunderson, assistant to the executive director of Cardiovascular Services, became an integral part in the Mended Hearts chapter we built here. Cindy understood what we were trying to accomplish. She coordinated our every need, including some we didn't know we needed. She was one of our biggest cheerleaders. She always helped make our special events even more special. Cindy has our deepest thanks and appreciation. She will always be part of the Mended Hearts family.

Dr. James Douglas was a pioneer for heart surgery at St. Joseph Medical Center. During his 31 years of service to our community Dr. Douglas performed thousands of open-heart surgeries, enabling a better, longer life for his patients. To honor his work, the PeaceHealth Foundation created the Dr. James M. Douglas, Jr. Cardiothoracic Surgery Endowment. Cardiovascular Services hosted a special event honoring him and his career. Many of us in Mended Hearts are recipients of both Dr. Douglas' surgical skills and his special patient care. All of us join to echo our thanks and appreciation for his dedication to our heart community.

While we are all sad that we won't see them in cardiovascular services or the surgery office, we are grateful we got to know and work with them. In retirement, it's more pickleball for Ms. Gunderson and more golf for Dr. Douglas and we couldn't be happier for them. But we would love to do it all over again.



Pictured (L-R) Dianna and Cindy kicking off special promotion to encourage more hospital volunteers



Pictured with Dr. Douglas at his special event, his wife Veronica and his son Jared.

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A Member's Journey

This month, we are delighted to welcome and spotlight two of our newer Mended Hearts Chapter members, Mike and Tori. Mike and Tori recently joined our chapter after first being introduced to Mended Hearts during Mike's hospital stay. A visit from our accredited visitors helped Mike feel less lost and more confident as he began navigating his heart journey. Later, they heard about Mended Hearts again through friends at cardiac rehab, which encouraged them to become involved.



Originally from Los Angeles, Mike and Tori have spent their careers helping and supporting others. Mike worked as a special education teacher across multiple disciplines, and Tori served as a school psychologist. Their background in education and care for others shines through in the warmth they bring to our group.

They attend meetings to continue learning more about heart issues, connect with others, and be part of a supportive heart community. We are so glad Mike and Tori found their way to Mended Hearts, and we are grateful to have them as part of our chapter's family.

Gratitude Gathering – *recognizing those who shared their time and expertise*



January 2026

St. Joseph Medical Center Foundation - Community donations at work for you.

Amber Asbjornsen,
Chief Philanthropy Officer
Northwest Network

February 2026

SJMC Institute for Nursing Excellence – Nurses are the heart of exceptional care.

Carrie Kronberg, Professional Practice Leader



UPCOMING EVENTS

13
JUNE

Monthly Meeting
Saturday @ 10:00am
Health Education Center
3333 Squalicum Parkway
Bellingham, WA 98225

11
JULY

Summer Picnic
Saturday from
12:00 – 3:00pm
Squalicum Creek Park
1001 Squalicum Way
Bellingham, WA 98225

Contact us

Message Line
(360) 788-6928

www.MendedHearts-Bellingham.org

Healthy Options

Summer brings the garden to life with vibrant colors and fresh flavors. Crisp peas, juicy tomatoes, sweet corn, and bright peppers begin to make their seasonal debut, offering a perfect opportunity to enjoy food at its freshest. Whether picked from your own garden or found at a local farmers market, these ingredients are packed with nutrients that support heart health—rich in fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants. Eating seasonally not only enhances flavor but also helps you connect with the natural rhythm of summer and the goodness it brings.

Fresh Summer Garden Salad

Celebrate the season with this light and refreshing salad:

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh corn (cut off the cob, raw or lightly steamed)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup sugar snap peas or shelled peas
- 1 bell pepper, diced (any color)
- ¼ cup red onion, finely sliced (optional)
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil or parsley, chopped

Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice or red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste



Directions:

In a large bowl, combine all vegetables and herbs. In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients. Pour over the salad and toss gently to combine. Chill for 15–20 minutes before serving for best flavor.

Honoring Marc Shaner: A Treasure to our Chapter

In February, our chapter had the privilege of recognizing Marc Shaner for thirteen years of dedicated service as a certified hospital volunteer. Marc is a founding member of Mended Hearts and has been an important part of our chapter's success.

The plaque presented to Marc reads:

Celebrating your thirteen years as a certified hospital volunteer. Thank you on behalf of the hundreds of people you've helped on their heart journey. Your efforts are a large part of our chapter's success.

Through his visits with heart patients, Marc has offered comfort, encouragement, and hope to hundreds of people and their families. Although he has stepped back from regular patient visits, he continues to fill in when needed.

Marc is truly one of our chapter's treasures, and we are grateful for the many lives he has touched. Congratulations, Marc, and thank you for your faithful service.



We're Changing. We're Growing.

We're changing our look. With the help of Tammy Longstaff, our new media relations chair and editor, we've revamped our Mended Hearts brochure and developed our first Young Mended Hearts brochure. Cardiac Rehab also has a video with information about our chapter that rotates on their screens. Our goal is to provide a more up-to-date look for our chapter. We think you'll like it.

We're growing. Our membership is increasing. Our number of hospital volunteers has increased. We have three new hospital volunteers working through the process at this moment. Our number of patient visits is back to pre-Covid days. We have a new volunteer helping with data entry. More people are getting involved.

But we still need your help so we can continue our goal to help heart patients and their families in our community. We are looking for a chapter secretary and someone to schedule our volunteers who visit patients. We are also looking for a data entry coordinator. All positions require computer skills. If you are interested, please contact one of the board members at our meetings, or leave a message on our message line at 360-788-6928.



Mended Hearts®
of Bellingham



Young
Mended Hearts®
of Northwest Washington

Mended Hearts – Bellingham
c/o Volunteer Office
2901 Squalicum Parkway
Bellingham, WA 98225