Heart to Heart

2026 Mended Hearts® National Chapter of the Year

Mended Hearts, Bellingham, WA – Chapter 382

November | December 2026



Leading with Heart –*a message from our President*



As We Celebrate Our 14th Year, Hope and Support are in the Air

We have made thousands of patient and caregiver visits since we became a Mended Hearts chapter in 2012, providing support and hope to many. We weathered the ups and downs in the number of both members and hospital volunteers. We survived Covid and with the support of Cardiovascular Services developed a plan to regrow our hospital volunteer team. We are now on track to make 3,000 patient and caregiver visits this year. To make things perfect, we were named The Mended Hearts, Inc (MHI), National Chapter of the Year, winning the prestigious President's Cup Award.

MHI's new CEO, Natalie Crawford, came from Atlanta to our October meeting. She talked about her plans for MHI and presented us with the President's Cup Award. After the meeting, she and our board members also shared ideas over lunch.

Another highlight of our meeting was our guest speaker, Jerry Marschke, the Executive Director of Cardiovascular Services. With detailed graphics Jerry showed us the status of the new Peter Paulson Pavillion and the remodeling of the cardiology offices.

Most importantly, Jerry detailed their plan to increase the number of cardiology caregivers. For general cardiology the plan is for three new physicians, a new PA-C and a new ARNP. Electrophysiology will add an ARNP and vascular surgery will add a fourth surgeon. Jerry acknowledged the difficulty of getting timely medical appointments. He talked about the lack of medical professionals nationally. But he said their goal is to continue to reduce the time for patient appointments.

If you were at our meeting, I hope you felt the pride that filled our meeting. And whether you are a heart patient or their family, I hope you felt the hope. We are always here to support you.



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A Member's Journey - *Celebrating a life filled with family, friendship, laughter, and a heart for helping others.*



If you've ever had the pleasure of meeting Bonnie Gran, you know she has a way of lighting up a room. With her ever-present smile, wonderful sense of humor, and seemingly endless energy, it's hard to believe Bonnie is 94 years young! Her remarkable zest for life reflects a lifetime of family, community, resilience, and service to others.

Bonnie's roots in Whatcom County run deep. Born in her grandmother's home in Bellingham, she grew up in Deming. Her varied career included working for Ma Bell and Columbia Cement before retiring after 15 years at the courthouse.

Family has always been important to Bonnie. She raised a son and daughter and is a proud grandmother of four and great-grandmother of two, along with two more youngsters she lovingly considers family. Her life has also included heartbreak, including the loss of her son to a heart attack. With heart disease running in her family, Bonnie knows how deeply it can affect those we love.

Bonnie's own heart journey began in an unusual way—on the golf course! After accidentally being struck in the head by a golf club, she sought treatment at urgent care, where providers discovered a concerning heart arrhythmia. In 2018, Bonnie underwent open-heart bypass surgery, a heart valve replacement, and received a pacemaker.

During her recovery, Bonnie was visited by Marilyn Huffman, a former president of Mended Hearts Bellingham, who introduced her to the organization. That connection grew into years of friendship and service.

When asked what Mended Hearts means to her, Bonnie's answer was simple but meaningful: **a sense of community.** Over the years, she has contributed in many ways, from organizing bake sales to serving as an Accredited Hospital Visitor, offering encouragement to fellow heart patients. Today, she continues sharing her welcoming spirit on the chapter's Welcoming Committee, helping members and guests feel right at home.

Perhaps one secret to Bonnie's remarkable vitality is her lifelong love of staying active. In earlier years, she regularly enjoyed hiking and walking at least three days a week. These days, she stays socially active, playing cribbage weekly at the Senior Center and pinochle twice a month at the Elks.

What makes Bonnie especially memorable isn't simply her age or experiences, but her attitude toward life. She finds humor in almost anything, greets others with a genuine smile, and brings an enthusiasm that's truly contagious.

Bonnie reminds us that a full life isn't measured only in years, but in the friendships we build, the laughter we share, and the ways we continue making a difference.

Bonnie, thank you for the joy, laughter, and kindness you bring to our Mended Hearts family. Chapter 382 is a brighter place because of you!

Young Mended Hearts® Upcoming Events

Young Mended Hearts (YMH) is a support group for heart patients from young adult to 55 years old. During informal meetings, YMH offers a safe place to talk about the challenges, concerns and successes you experience as you and your family navigate a heart journey you hadn't expected.



Come out of hiding, we'd love to see you!

When:

Monthly (4th Wednesday)

November 25, 2026 @ 6:00 pm
December 16, 2026 @ 6:00 pm

(Special Dinner Party Evening)

Where:

Hospital – Physician's Dining Room near cafeteria. Check in at East Tower and ask for directions

Contact Us

Message Line

(360 788-6928

www.MendedHearts-Bellingham.org

Speaker Spotlight: Emergency Department Update



Join us on November 14, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the PeaceHealth Education Center (HEC) for an informative and engaging update from Emergency Department Medical Director, Dr. Arielle Filiberti.

Dr. Filiberti will give us a look at what's ahead for the PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center Emergency Department, including upcoming changes and what improvements are being made to improve the patient experience.

Arielle Filiberti, MD
PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center
Medical Director – Emergency Department

All meetings are open to the public at no charge.

Health Education Center (HEC)
3333 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham

December 12, 2026
Meeting at 12:00 Noon
Lunch begins promptly at 12:30 PM



Please join us for our annual Holiday Celebration and bring your favorite dish to share. This is a time to enjoy good food, fellowship, and the opportunity to connect with friends in the Mended Hearts community as we celebrate the season together and reflect on our accomplishments in 2026.

Just bring a dish to share—we'll provide the plates, utensils, napkins, coffee, and water!

TOYS FOR TOTS GIVING EVENT

Mended Hearts of Bellingham's annual giving event is here. Monetary donations are being accepted now for the Marine Corp's Toys for Tots Program.
(See page 4 for details)

Medicare Changes

Open Enrollment

October 15 – December 7

What's Changing in 2027

- Prescription Drug Costs
- Medicare Advantage Plans
- Prescription Drug Premiums
- Lower Prices on Certain Medications

Medicare Support

The Baldwin Group
504 Front Street
Lynden, WA 98264
(866) 733-5111

D&D Insurance
1740 Labounty Dr., Suite 5
Ferndale, WA 98248
(360) 392-8159

Visit www.medicare.gov or
Call 1-800-633-4227

Sharing the Joy of Christmas – Toys for Tots

Help Us Make the Holidays Brighter for Local Children!



Each holiday season, Mended Hearts of Bellingham proudly supports the **Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program**, which helps bring the joy of Christmas to children in need throughout our community. For those who may be new to our chapter, Toys for Tots is a wonderful program organized by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve that collects and distributes toys to children whose families may be experiencing financial hardship. Our chapter has been supporting this meaningful program for 14 years, and we hope to continue this tradition of generosity with the help of our members.

We are collecting financial donations only — no toys, please. Your contributions will help support the local Toys for Tots program and bring smiles to children this holiday season.

Please make checks payable directly to "Toys for Tots" — NOT Mended Hearts.
You may bring a check to our November or December general meeting or mail a check to:
Mended Hearts - Bellingham, c/o Volunteer Office, 2901 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham, WA 98225

Every contribution, no matter the size, can make a difference. Thank you for helping us share the spirit of giving and bring a little extra joy to children in our community! Our goal is to match last year's amount of $700.

💔 Helping Hearts Wanted!

Your time. Your talents. Your heart. Our mission.

Data Management/Clerical Support Volunteer
Are you organized and comfortable working with spreadsheets in Excel? Help keep our chapter running smoothly by maintaining membership records, tracking hospital visits, and assisting with required Mended Hearts reporting.

Board Secretary
Are you detail-oriented and enjoy keeping things organized? Help support our Board of Directors by recording meeting minutes, preparing meeting agendas, and assisting with other administrative duties as assigned.

Volunteer Visiting Scheduler
Do you enjoy coordinating schedules and keeping things running smoothly? Help organize our hospital visiting program by overseeing volunteer visitor schedules and creating and maintaining scheduling calendars. Your efforts will help ensure heart patients and their families receive the support they need.

Cardiology Clinic Volunteer
Do you have a friendly smile and a compassionate heart? Help welcome and reassure patients and their families in the Cardiology Office lobby before and after cardiac procedures. Your warm presence and words of encouragement can make a meaningful difference during an anxious time.

Gratitude Gathering - *recognizing those who shared their time and expertise with a Mended Hearts thank you gift for being a speaker*

October 2026 Speaker

Jerry Marschke, MSHA
Executive Director of
Cardiovascular Services

Gift presented by
Dianna Konrad



The Nourished Heart – *Simple ways to care for your body, mind, and heart*



We are excited to introduce a new ongoing feature in our newsletter, The Nourished Heart, written by Young Mended Hearts member Lisa Heuple.

Many of you recently had the opportunity to see Lisa in action during her *Heart Healthy Swaps* food demonstration, where she shared yummy samples along with practical and approachable ways to make everyday meals a little more heart healthy. But Lisa brings much more than nutrition knowledge to the table.

With experience as a health coach and yoga instructor, along with a strong interest in the connection between the mind, body, and overall well-being, Lisa approaches heart health from a whole-person perspective. She understands that caring for our hearts is about more than what we eat. It can also include how we move, how we manage stress, how we rest, and how we care for ourselves emotionally.

Through *The Nourished Heart*, Lisa will share practical ideas, encouragement, and simple strategies that can help us make healthier choices without feeling overwhelmed. Topics may range from nutrition and movement to mindfulness, stress management, balance, and other ways we can support our overall well-being. We will be sharing her recipes in our newsletters and on our website. Our website will also include videos produced by Lisa. Look for her first article to appear in our January | February issue of Heart to Heart.

Nourish and Nosh – *Tasty ideas for everyday wellness*

HOMEMADE GRANOLA *by Lisa Heuple*

4 cups	Rolled Oats	½ cup	Olive Oil
1 ½ cups	Raw Mixed Nuts (walnuts, pecans, and pepitas are great choices)	½ cup	Maple Syrup - Pure
		1 tsp	Vanilla Extract
1 tsp/Tbsp	Cinnamon	½ tsp	Sea Salt
½ cup	Dried Cranberries (optional)		

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper: In a large bowl, combine the oats, nuts, salt and cinnamon. Stir to combine.
2. Pour in the olive oil, maple syrup, and vanilla. Mix well. Pour the granola onto the prepared baking sheet and spread into an even layer. Bake until golden, 21 to 23 minutes, stirring halfway through the baking process.
3. Let the granola cool completely, undisturbed, before breaking into pieces and adding dried cranberries, if using.





Suggestion: Serve over plain yogurt with fresh berries.

The Heart of Giving

Thank you to our generous donors. Your support helps Mended Hearts® bring hope and education to heart patients and their families. Every gift, regardless of size, helps strengthen our heart community!

Dan H and James H

The Mended Hearts, Inc.®

Our national organization offers a wealth of educational resources on its website. Be sure to look for the **E3 Series**—**"Empower, Engage, Educate"**—featuring links in our newsletters. These resources provide valuable information and practical tools to help you stay informed and engaged in your heart-health journey. *www.mendedhearts.org*

Young Mended Hearts: A New Way to Gather



Sometimes the best connections happen outside the meeting room.



In August, Young Mended Hearts traded the meeting room for a blueberry patch and enjoyed a memorable evening together at **Hannah's Blueberry Farm**. Young Mended Hearts members invited spouses, family members, and members of the Mended Hearts Board of Directors to join in the fun. In all, 17 people gathered for the evening, along with three very welcome four-legged guests.

Thanks to the generosity of Hannah's Blueberry Farm, everyone was invited to pick blueberries at no charge. After spending time in the patch, the group settled into picnic chairs, unpacked their dinners, and simply enjoyed being together. There was no formal presentation and no agenda—just good conversation, fresh air, blueberries, laughter, and the opportunity to connect in a relaxed setting.

The evening was a wonderful reminder that support can take many forms. Sometimes it is sharing information or talking through a difficult experience, and sometimes it is sitting outside with friends over a picnic dinner. For Young Mended Hearts, building relationships and creating a sense of community are an important part of what we do and our evening at **Hannah's Blueberry Farm** was a perfect example of just that.

If you no longer wish to continue receiving our materials, please call and leave a message on our message line at 360-788-6928. You may also unsubscribe from emails, and we can manage removing your email address from our system as well.

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Mended Hearts – Bellingham
c/o Volunteer Office
2901 Squalicum Parkway
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The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.

~ Coretta Scott