

May 1, 2021

To: 100 Women Who Care About Whidbey

The HUB Youth Central  
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### **Mission Statement**

**The HUB Youth Central seeks:**

- To engage youth by providing innovative programs, nutritious meals, and a safe place to socialize
- To honor youth by offering support, acceptance, and a sense of purpose
- To build coalitions which advocate for youth, family, and community
- To prepare youth for independent life by developing leadership and life skills

### **Our Story**

**Who We Are and What We Do:** The HUB Youth Central located in Langley, is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit youth development agency offering a free year-round drop-in center each weekday afternoon for middle and high school students between the ages of 12 and 18. Our organization was founded in 1989 and is dedicated to providing healthy meals for teens, along with mentoring and social support for underserved, disadvantaged, and at-risk rural youth. Our critical focus in the community is providing food. In an area of extreme economic inequity, The HUB seeks to provide a safe and enjoyable haven for all youth to gather for an afterschool meal and adult guidance.

Serving 20-60 students each weekday afternoon during the school year, the numbers of youth needing our services has increased tremendously the past few years due to the appeal of our programs. In 2019 (pre-pandemic), we served 5,185 meals to 285 unique students in our center, which is over 20% of the middle- and high school students on South Whidbey Island. In 2020-2021, our center was closed for over a year during state mandates due to COVID19. We implemented a home food delivery service to the neediest HUB families in our community that continued until April 1, 2021. During this difficult time, our staff delivered an amazing **12,284** meals to the homes of teens and their disadvantaged households in weekly deliveries. Our youth center reopened April 5, 2021 and we will resume our general programs as students return.

**Who We Serve:** While many of our HUB youth come from supportive homes, a surprising number of Whidbey Island teens have invisible needs: they face tremendous poverty, neglect, lack of adult supervision, and food insecurity in their homes, along with a sizeable group of teens that struggle with domestic instability, gender identity, and mental stress. A number of our teens live in relative care, primarily with grandparents on fixed incomes, or custodial care due to parental incarceration, drug abuse and addiction. This leads to problems that increase at-risk behavior for our kids, a situation we work to eliminate with timely intervention and strategic programs. The needs of these teens are completely underserved within our community, particularly our LGBTQ teens, except at The HUB.

Poverty is a significant factor in our program and in our community. Prior to the pandemic, 58% of The HUB's Pre-COVID attendees were low-income Whidbey Island families. During the pandemic, 100% of the participants in our COVID Youth and Family Hunger Relief food delivery program were low income, living

under 133% of the federal poverty line, and representing the neediest of our HUB teens and their households. Understanding the implications of food insecurity in families that live in poverty is a challenge because it is not just about food and the logistics of feeding people. It is also about education, economic inequity, early intervention, the family unit, and understanding the society and culture of a community. We work with our HUB families to overcome these obstacles and prevent future generational poverty.

### Testimonials From Youth and Families

“Food from The HUB helped my family thrive during the pandemic. With a tween and teen to feed and my family’s income cut in half due to layoffs, the weekly bags of food were not only welcome but essential. A few times I almost cried with relief upon seeing a HUB employee deliver goodies to my home – no easy thing for a Dad who tries to be a solid support for his kiddos. So my family, especially my two youths are deeply appreciative of the support. Thank you!” *Family #16*

#### The HUB Youth Central COVID RESPONSE 2020

Meals Served in Youth Center	1/1/20 - 3/13/20	1,094
Meals Delivered to Homes	3/18/20 - 12/31/20	9,185
<b>Total Meals for 2020:</b>		<b>10,279</b>

**Families Served: 25**  
**Students Served: 84**



“Shelly Benton and The HUB are a tremendous blessing to our South Whidbey Community. My family had a teen in transition stay with us this past year. The food we were gifted weekly (during COVID) was a huge gift to offset the additional 2-5 kids I fed. Our community needs all the resources it can

get to offer assistance to our kids who have challenged circumstances. Thanks again, The HUB, you’re very much appreciated!” *Family #10*

“I like that this is a place that people can come and just enjoy life and leave their problems at home. We can hang out, we have music, pool, video games, Netflix, arts and crafts or sleep. We have a place that we can do all that. When somebody makes a mistake, you forgive them. You teach them a lesson. We need that in our lives. Some kids don’t have someone who teaches them. I have learned a lot from here. And you have zero tolerance for bullying. I really like The HUB!” *Student #219*

“The HUB delivers great food to my home every Thursday and never misses a beat. We don’t get many fruits and vegetables from the grocery store so we always look forward to the mandarin oranges, broccoli, peppers., etc. On top of that, you always give us a meaty meal and these meals are more nutritious than I’m used to. My body thanks you.” *Student #6*

### Regular Programs

**Hot Meals** Weekdays, 1:30 – 5:30pm *With many thanks to our supplemental food providers, The HUB is able to provide the large number of hot meals necessary to feed our local youth on a small food budget.*

**Magic: The Gathering** Monday, 3 – 5pm *This active program caters to a group of teens that have formed a club based on friendship and a wildly popular card game.*

**Youth Circle** Wednesday, 3:15 – 4:45pm *Youth Circle is a teen mental wellness program that offers our youth a safe place to share meaningful talk and learn interpersonal skills.*

**LGBTQ Teen Support Group** Friday, 3:30 - 5:00pm *When South Whidbey School High School discontinued their Gay-Straight Alliance meetings in 2018, The HUB knew that this was creating a profound unmet need for a number of island teens. With initial funding from PRIDE and PFLAG, our LGBTQ program was created. Inclusive of all gender identities, The HUB’s LGBTQ Teen Support Group is the only organization on Whidbey Island dedicated to our gay youth.*

### Program Staff

**Program Manager:** Shelly Benton has been with The HUB since January 2017 and facilitates daily operations and programs at The HUB. She is a licensed nurse and youth advocate and has spent her career working with kids in public schools, non-profit agencies, foster care and pediatric clinics. She has training in mental health trauma and suicide prevention strategies to assist teens who are at risk and to educate youth and their families about how and where they can get help.

**Kitchen Staff:** The HUB kitchen includes two (great!) afternoon professional cooks and a number of wonderful volunteers.

**Volunteers:** The HUB has 7 Board Directors and over 10 active program volunteers that provide art and music lessons, homework assistance, support, and kitchen/food prep help. The Board of Directors of The HUB is actively involved with providing assistance and input/recommendations to the program. In 2020, The HUB Youth Central received 1,014 hours of volunteer work from our community.

### Funding Request for Food and Fun Program

**Funding Use, Purpose, and Program:** Our funding request is for our **Food and Fun Program** to help cover the costs of food for the spring, summer, holiday, and winter breaks of the 2021-2022 school year. These meals keep kids healthy during school breaks and bridge the food gap for youth who rely on free school lunches. Additionally, we provide food packed to take home for a number of students.

The full cost of funding a weekday summer program, including spring and winter break, is estimated at *\$10,000 annually* for food, staff, and services, based on our current population trend and planned activities. In the summer of 2019 (our last summer vacation that we were open), The HUB Youth Central served an average of 19 youth per day, with siblings accounting for many additional meals. Our summer/school break programs target high-risk youth that may lack guidance and supervision when school is not in session.

### Impact of Funding

**To our Youth:** We have a responsibility to our rural island youth to make sure that they have nutritious food at all times.

**To our Community:** Healthy youth are the future of our community and the island. Servicing our youth and their families in proactive ways, and through the administering of basic human needs, is the goal at The HUB.

**Measurable Results are the Key:** The HUB appreciates *total transparency and reliable data*. We track results and meals served, posting that information publicly each month on our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/TheHUBafterschool](https://www.facebook.com/TheHUBafterschool)

In the Spirit of Youth, it is with profound gratitude that we thank you in advance for your generosity in providing crucial funding for The HUB. Your donation helps reduce the anxiety and uncertainty for our most needy families and their teens during these uncertain times.

Sincerely,



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