

Thank you for the invitation to present a narrative to 100+ Whidbey Women!

SPiN Café stands for Serving People in Need. People in Need in our communities include homeless individuals and families, near homeless people and people who need **something** but don't exactly know where to start.

We operate several programs in Oak Harbor that are open to everyone:

- Day Center at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 555 SE Regatta Drive, Oak Harbor, Open M-F 6:30 am to 5:30 pm
- Lunch M-F at SPiN's Day Center or at Hal Ramaley Park on the weekends with the help of several local churches
- Hot Dinner service Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 4:15 to 5:30 pm at SPiN's Day Center
- Laundry service at Dutch Maid Laundromat, 75 SE Barrington Drive, Oak Harbor on Thursday mornings from 6:30 am to 8:00 am. This service is provided to anyone in our communities who can't afford laundry. We pay for the machines and provide detergent
- Showers at the John Vanderzicht Memorial Pool, 85 SE Jerome Street, Oak Harbor on Tuesday mornings from 6:30 am to 8:00 am and at other times (sign up for showers is at SPiN Café—no drop-ins)

The staff at the Day Center are caring people who treat everyone with dignity and respect. We welcome everyone to the Center and find out what their needs are. Everyone's needs are different--sometimes all they need is a place to rest and hang out, out of the weather. Sometimes they need food, beverages, a place to clean up, feminine hygiene products, socks and/or underwear. Sometimes they need to be able to sleep because they have been out walking the streets all night (it is illegal to sleep on a park bench or on the streets.) Sometimes they need internet access or to use the computers to write resume's, check their email or check in on social media so that their friends and family know they are alive and well.

Many times people come to SPiN because they don't know where to start to get services or even what services they need. All they know is that they can't pay their bills, are going to get evicted, they can't afford food, they can't afford to renew their driver's license, they need gas money. Our staff is trained to be able to help people access the right services according to their needs.

Sometimes people need help obtaining Island County services. Many people that come to SPiN Café are fighting drug or alcohol addiction—we help them connect with social services and support them in their quest to get into short and long term treatment. SPiN is a drug and alcohol zone.

One of the most important aspects of SPiN Café is that we are a community center for people with nowhere else to go. We facilitate community. We encourage people to play games with each other, to do artwork together, to converse with each other. We even have a group of guests who have started a garden, planting flowers and vegetables. They take pride in their work and have developed a beautiful space.

One of the biggest challenges we have as an organization is paying for staffing. We are open 11 hours a day, 5 days a week and need 2 staff members present most of those hours. We encourage volunteers and are slowly building our volunteer base which has been difficult post-Covid as those with time to volunteer typically are retired folks who may still be reluctant to get out and about.

SPiN Cafe's long-term goal include:

- Find another location where we can be open 7 days a week, that has a commercial kitchen or has the capacity for a commercial kitchen
- Increase our volunteer base
- Grow our donor base and grants to fully fund our programs and operation
- Provide 3 meals a day to anyone in our community who needs a meal, not just our community
- Continue to grow our Laundry and Shower programs
- Continue to meet the changing needs of our community

The homeless population on Whidbey Island does not look like what you see in Seattle, Everett or Bellingham. Through services offered by Island County, Whidbey Homeless Coalition and SPiN Café and others we can care for our homeless population unlike other communities. We will never help everyone, but we can help many of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

I have attached a slide show that I recently used in a live presentation. It shows the following:

- SPiN Café—Serving People in Need
- Church on the Rock and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church joined forces in January of 2020 to serve hot meals three days a week.
- The Covid pandemic closed indoor spaces so SPiN Café joined forces with Partner Churches to serve lunch 7 days a week at a downtown Oak Harbor park
- The pandemic was particularly hard on homeless individual as it closed drinking water resources, public restrooms and the existing shower programs in our communities
- In February of 2021 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Oak Harbor allowed SPiN Café to open the Day Center using their parish hall
- Staff and some volunteers
- Pictures of individuals at the Day Center
- Worldly possessions of homeless people
- Activities
- Other entities that support SPiN Café
- New Dinner service on Tues-Wed-Thursdays
- Be the Change you want to see in the world
- SPiN Café Goals
- Ways you can help
- All are Welcome
- Spring Fling Fundraiser

I appreciate the opportunity to be considered for support from 100+ Whidbey Women. Together we can change the world.

Michele Chapman

Executive Director, SPiN Cafe