

## A Local Alternative to Long-Term Care

### The Silver Tsunami

Jefferson County has the highest median age in the state. However, we are not alone. There is a wave of humanity reaching old age and impacting the world in a way that is metaphorically referred to as the “silver tsunami.” The statistics are impressive – for the first time in history we have created a new demographic by which the old outnumber the young.

### Locally Grown Home Care

The increased demand for senior care services has led to a massive caregiver shortage crisis. One local group has a unique solution to this problem – a home care agency owned and governed by the caregivers. Peninsula Homecare Cooperative has been in business since 2016, serving eastern Jefferson County from Port Townsend south to Port Ludlow. EDC Team Jefferson helped the co-op secure startup funds through the Local Investing Opportunities Network. Kippi Waters, founding director, says the co-op was started by a local group of caregivers. “The idea to start a caregiver cooperative was inspired by our love for our work and community. The seniors we care for have a rich and deep history - they are woven into the fabric of Jefferson County. They are our neighbors, former teachers, and old family friends. It is a privilege to care for them.”

### Caregivers as Owners

The cooperative model is one where groups of individuals band together to run a business. Members share in both the management and profits of that business. “Because profits are distributed to the caregivers, our clients can rest assured that the money they spend on their long-term care goes back into the place they call home. They are contributing to living wages and meaningful careers for their children and their grandchildren’s generation. It’s an absolute win-win,” Waters said. Statistically, caregiver-owned agencies have a much lower staff turn-over rate – less than half the industry standard. Waters explained the low turn-over rate is a direct consequence of employee empowerment. “Being a worker-owner means we have a broad range of career opportunities. We serve on the Board of Directors and special committees, participate in many aspects of operations, and develop communication and leadership skills as members of client-based teams.”



Caregiver and board member, Robby Kilcullen, preparing dinner for Jim Daubenberger in Jim’s kitchen.

Robby Kilcullen has been a caregiver with PHC for over a year: “My experience with PHC, as a member of strong, collaborative teams, has been the best employment experience of my life. I have grown in my capacity as a team member, a leader, and caregiver. Most importantly, I know the collaboration and cohesiveness of our care teams allows us to provide the best possible care to our clients.”

**Open House**

Peninsula Homecare will be hosting an open house on April 16<sup>th</sup> between noon and 5pm. They are located downtown Port Townsend in the Flagship Landing Building - 1007 Water Street. Members of the cooperative will be available to share their experiences and answer questions. Caregivers looking for meaningful careers, and seniors looking for a local alternative to long-term care are encouraged to attend.