

LEADERSHIP COLLECTIVE

Visibility ~ Advocacy ~ Leadership ~ Knowledge

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The Arc of Snohomish County

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ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

The Kumar family from Bothell are taking their first steps into the advocacy world in order to advocate for their son, Shastha. Shastha has cri du chat syndrome, and lives with his parents, Kumar Gounder and Sumangala Kumar. Shastha's older brother Lakshin is also an important part of his advocacy family.

During The Arc of Snohomish County's Legislative Forum series, Sumangala Kumar and her family took their first advocacy step in hosting the forum for the 1st Legislative District. Here their entire family shared their story and the concerns they have regarding services to the legislators and candidates who attended.

Supported by Arc Staff Jessie Moore, they were able to tell their story in an extraordinarily powerful manner, and were phenomenal hosts. The inclusion of their entire family in the process and telling of their story really helped show how much work is needed by everyone in a family when there are a lack of supports and providers for individuals with IDD.

The Kumars have had several issues with Shastha's care, among those being simply living here, away from family. Not having family around to help has placed the onus of care exclusively on their shoulders, with little chance of natural respite. Sudden changes of schedule and plans abruptly needing to be cancelled have also been a challenge to explain to friends when they occur.

However, several things have been very positive. Shastha is making a lot of progress in his therapy sessions. School has been a positive for him as well, with the support and service he needs being provided there. Most importantly, upon diagnosis, Shastha was given very low expectations for his development – expectations he has easily blown out of the water, to the delight of his family.



QUARTERLY FOCUS

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

On the second Monday of January every year, the state of Washington begins its annual legislative session. The Arc of Washington State, among other organizations, promote and encourage advocating as this is the best way to impact positive change in the community.

The 2023 Legislative session is around the corner and The Arc of Washington State is once again running their weekly Advocacy Day series. Every Wednesday during the Legislative session, The Arc of Washington State has a theme for each day to address with your legislators. By having these themed days, all of our legislators are hearing about the same issues at the same time, joining your voices together and combining for a more powerful message.

The Advocacy days for 2023 are as follows:

January 18 - Briefing on IDD issues and Legislative Reception

January 25 - Housing Crisis and RHCs

February 1 - Employment Services and Rates

February 8 - Community Inclusion and Day Programs

February 15 - Supported Living

February 22 - Out-of-Home and In-Crisis

March 1 - TEFRA and Waiver Services

March 8 - Education Cap and Restraints

March 15 - Family and Senior Supports

March 22 - Caseload Forecasting in the Budget

March 29 - Workforce Shortage

April 5 - Residential Habilitation Centers

For more information on these topics reach out to Jake Murray

Jake@arcsno.org 425.258.2459 x 105

Each Advocacy Day begins with a virtual meeting in the morning to discuss the topics of the day, and to provide more information to discuss with legislators. To register, and to see recordings of the morning Advocacy Day meetings, <https://arcwa.org/advocacy-days/>



"It's always
impossible, until it's
done"

-Nelson Mandela-

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ELECTION RESULTS

On November 8, Washington state held their general election. Many legislative seats were up for election, including several open seats in the state House of Representatives. Here are your incoming Snohomish County legislators for the upcoming 2023-2024 legislative biennium.

1st District – State Representative Pos. 1 – Davina Duerr (D)
State Representative Pos. 2 – Shelly Kloba (D)

10th District – State Representative Pos. 1 – Clyde Shavers (D)*
State Representative Pos. 2 – Dave Paul (D)

12th District – State Representative Pos. 1 – Keith Goehner (R)
State Representative Pos. 2 – Mike Steele (R)

21st District – State Senator – Marko Liias (D)
State Representative Pos. 1 – Strom Peterson (D)
State Representative Pos. 2 – Lillian Ortiz-Self (D)

32nd District – State Senator – Jesse Salomon (D)
State Representative Pos. 1 – Cindy Ryu (D)
State Representative Pos. 2 – Lauren Davis (D)

38th District – State Senator – June Robinson (D)
State Representative Pos. 1 – Julio Cortes (D)*
State Representative Pos. 2 – Mary Fosse (D)*

39th District – State Representative Pos. 1 – Sam Low (R)*
State Representative Pos. 2 – Carolyn Eslick (R)

44th District – State Senator – John Lovick (D)
State Representative Pos. 1 – Brandy Donaghy (D)
State Representative Pos. 2 – April Berg (D)

Asterisks(*) denote new members

These legislators will be starting the new legislative session on January 9, 2023. As this is the first year of the 2023-2024 biennium, the legislator has a "long" session that lasts 105 days. Session will adjourn on April 24, 2023. All members of the state House of Representatives will serve their two year terms and be up for election again in 2024. The senators from the 1st, 10th, 12th and 39th will also be up for election that year.

"Disability only becomes a tragedy when society fails to provide the things needed to lead one's daily life" – Judith Heumann

"Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact, It's an opinion. Impossible isn't a declaration, it's a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary. Impossible is nothing."
-Muhammed Ali-

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ELECTION RESULTS NEW LEGISLATORS

With the results of the November 5 election, we have several new legislators in Snohomish County. Here, in their own words, is a brief introduction from our new legislators.

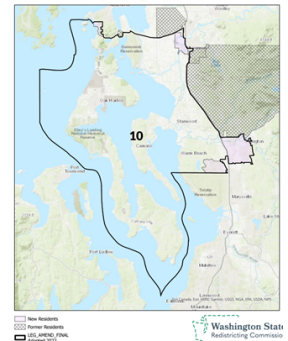
10th District, position 1 – Clyde Shavers

Clyde Shavers is a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and U.S. Navy Veteran, non-profit leader and volunteer, and environmental law advocate. As the son of a police officer and U.S. Marine, Clyde grew up in Washington in a family dedicated to public service. His father served as an undercover narcotics detective placing his life on the line for over two decades. His mother worked hard to raise Clyde and his sister by instilling in them the value of independence, compassion, and commitment to life-long public service. Public service was never a question of if, but only a question of how.

<https://clydeshavers.com/>



2022 Adopted Legislative District 10

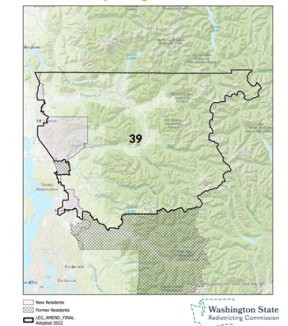


39th District, position 1 – Sam Low

Sam and his wife Mariah were both born and raised right here in Snohomish County. Prior to being on the Snohomish County Council Sam was a successful small business owner for 10 years. His wife Mariah is the General Manager for the Lake Stevens Sewer District. Together they have five children and two dogs, Auggie a Silver Lab and Sarge a Golden Retriever. Sam holds two college degrees, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theology; and a Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership from MBU. In 2013 Sam was elected to the Lake Stevens City Council and was selected to be Council President in 2016, where he served as Mayor Pro-Tem. During this time Sam also served on the Snohomish County Board of Health and was selected Chair of the Health District in 2015. Sam was elected to the Snohomish County Council in 2016 and re-elected in 2017 and 2021. Sam is active in community service both personally and through his local Lake Stevens Rotary Club where he served as President in 2016-2017.

<https://electsamlow.com/>

2022 Adopted Legislative District 39



ELECTION RESULTS

NEW LEGISLATORS

38th District, position 1 – Julio Cortes

My family immigrated to Washington from Mexico when I was just 5 years old; setting roots in Wapato, Washington. Wapato is a small agricultural town, a close-knit community of primarily immigrant farmworkers, where I really learned the meaning of community and service. My parents were part of the immigrant farm working community and taught my sister and I the meaning of hard work, perseverance and pride. My experience has led me to the call to serve in a greater capacity and to advocate for a community who has given so much to me. I am a forward thinking, innovative, inclusive and environmentally conscious leader who places great emphasis on collaboration and equity. As your representative, I will continue to place transparency at the forefront of all I do by actively listening to constituents and placing their needs above all else.

<https://electjuliocortes.com/>



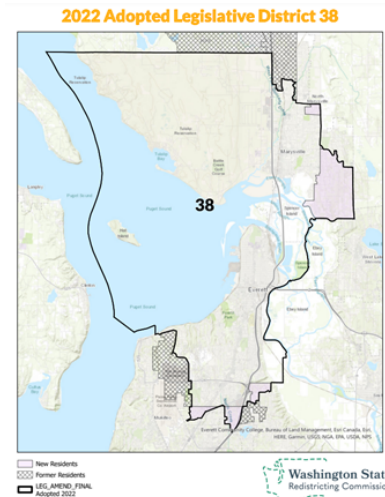
"What lies behind us
and what lies before
us are tiny matters
compared to what
lies within us."

–Ralph Waldo
Emerson–

38th District, position 2 – Mary Fosse

With two decades of business and public service experience, Fosse currently serves on the Everett City Council. A mother of two, wife of a veteran, an educator, survivor, small business owner, former Neighborhood Chair and Everett Districting Commissioner, Fosse is known for her dedication to community advocacy and volunteer service. Born into low-income housing to a single mother, Fosse says she knows the barriers families face and what life is like for so many others in similar circumstances, "I want everyone in Snohomish County to have the same opportunities that I did – to have a job, make a career, to have a safe home to raise their families, and to be able to give back to their community."

<https://www.maryfosse.com/>



"Take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly, and try another. But by all means, try something."

-Franklin Roosevelt-

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NEWS AROUND THE ARC

EVERETT POLICE DEPARTMENT ADVOCACY

The Everett Police Department recently asked The Arc of Snohomish County to speak to their officers about Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Courtney Criss, Leadership and Advocacy Manager, and Doug Wennerberg, an Arc trained leader and self advocate, gave three one-hour long presentations to officers about what Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) are and provided some scenarios when an officer might encounter someone with IDD. Courtney and Doug also suggested some strategies the officers or first responders could use when approaching a person with IDD and how to interact with them. For example, Doug requested that eye contact not be required and questions should be asked one at a time. Courtney, thinking about her own children with Down syndrome, noted that some people with IDD do not understand what is safe and could bolt into the road; it is important to remove as many agitators as possible to calm the individuals. Acting as a partner with law enforcement, The Arc of Snohomish County hopes to share this information with more police officers and departments.

NEW HIRE

Hello I am Brandi Piecora the new Independent Living Coordinator at The Arc of Snohomish County. In the past I have worked in social services for a local non profit low income housing organization as well as stints in administration and real estate. Along with my husband of 29 years, Dan, I am honored to be raising three young adults Gabriel (22), Gideon (18) and Eden (17). Gabriel and Gideon are both on the autism spectrum and yet couldn't be more different. Gabriel is a non-verbal happy-go-lucky young man who enjoys time with his friends at Willow Place and recently got his first job at Kohl's. Gideon is working on getting his driver's license and would really like to work independently at McDonald's. He also is an avid boxer and physical fitness enthusiast. My beautiful daughter, Eden, will be graduating high school this year. Parenting is a marathon - especially with three very different kids - but I have to admit that this part is my favorite! Navigating community systems and resources for my sons has been challenging but I have learned a lot. I am excited to bring that knowledge and experience to The Arc.



Contact Brandi at Brandi@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 ext. 113 for help navigating Future Planning systems.

Get
Connected!

Be
informed!

Take
Action!

Learn

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TOOLS & RESOURCES

Legislative Alerts & Updates

The Arc of Washington State | arcwa.org/action-center

Sign up for legislative action alerts related to developmental disability. Receive the information you need to voice your opinions on bills during the legislative session. Alerts provide you with messages for your legislators that you can use as-is or edit using your own words. Enter your name and address and click! Your message will automatically be sent to all of your legislators. Email or call the toll-free Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000. Action takes less than five minutes!

Legislative District and Elected Officials

Washington Legislature | leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder

Find your legislative district and elected officials using the link above.

Legislative Advocates on Developmental Disabilities

The Arc of Washington State | tinyurl.com/3d293ce3

Some of the topics included:

- Tips for meeting with elected officials.
- How to create a short, clear advocacy message.
- The bill process – How a bill becomes a law.
- The state budget process.



Get Involved!

Your local government is looking for volunteers, committee members, and board members for projects throughout your community. For more information about what positions are available in your community, contact Jake@arcsno.org for a complete list. Sign up today to get involved and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

2023 Leadership and Advocacy Workshop

Coming back in 2023 is The Arc of Snohomish County's biannual leadership training! Join us on January 21st for the Leadership and Advocacy Workshop. This four hour course will help you build leadership skills, identify your disability advocacy goals, and connect with fellow leaders. All are welcome to attend. Participants will receive 2023 Arc Trained Leader certificates and Arc support with next steps in leadership and advocacy for the disability community. Register in advance by clicking [this link](#). Contact Rachel Kube at Rachel@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 ext. 107 for more information.



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GET INVOLVED!

I-CAN Women's Self-Advocacy Group

2nd Thursday of each month | 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Evergreen Branch Library, Meeting Room A

A group for self-advocates open to all women, ages 18 and up. The group meets in a casual environment that combines leadership and learning with fun experiences. The group shares resources and skills and holds the belief that everyone has something to contribute. Questions? Contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121, or Leigh Spruce at Leigh@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x103.

Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

2nd Tuesday of each month | 1 - 4 PM

A group for self-advocates focused on legislative change and open to all. SAIL is a statewide coalition of people with developmental disabilities that strives to shape public policies that affect people with developmental disabilities. Questions? Contact Jennifer Martin at Jennifer@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459.

People First of Snohomish County

4th Thursday of each month | 11 AM - 12:30 PM
Evergreen Branch Library, Meeting Room A

A self-advocacy organization by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. People First is focused on educating self-advocates and others, advocating for disability rights, and having fun! We believe we are PEOPLE FIRST and disabilities are secondary. Questions? Contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121.

Did you know?

Advocacy is easier than ever right now! While the upcoming legislative session will be a fully in-person session, virtual advocacy will still be utilized and welcomed. You can testify to committees virtually, and even meet with your local legislators virtually. We all know that commuting to Olympia is not a small task, and your legislators recognize that, and are willing to do what it takes to help better serve your needs. If you want to participate in Advocacy days, feel free to reach out to either Jake@arcsno.org or Rachel@arcsno.org. We would love to help you connect!

FEDERAL BILLS OF INTEREST

Right now, Congress is negotiating its "end-of-year package," a bill that includes money to fund the government and that has the power to uplift the health, inclusion, and civil rights of people with disabilities.

All year long, advocates from The Arc have been fighting for critical programs and life-sustaining priorities for people with disabilities. Don't let people with disabilities get left behind!

Decisions are being made NOW, and the last votes of the year will happen in the next few weeks!

Contact your members of Congress and urge them to include the following priorities:

- Increase asset limits for people receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) so people can save for emergencies instead of being forced to live in poverty. The asset limit has not been updated since 1989!
- Make the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program permanent to assist people with disabilities and seniors to move back home after time in a nursing home or congregate setting. This program has already helped over 100,000 people move back home, but it needs to be made permanent.