



# STATE OF LOPEZ

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24  
SPRING

Lopez Island Family Resource Center's Mid-year report. Take a look at the amazing work your contributions and support make possible.



**Lopez Island Family Resource Center**

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# Mid-year *review*

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## **Dear Lopez Island Community,**

With the arrival of spring, comes a renewed sense of hope and possibilities.

It is with great pride and deep gratitude that I share this year's State of Lopez report with you. It serves as a testament to the dedication, passion, and collaborative efforts of countless amazing leaders, supporters, and partners. Your generosity is what makes LIFRC's transformative work possible.

You all play pivotal roles in advancing our mission to provide the resources and guidance necessary to meet the basic needs of the entire Lopez community, to build foundations of well-being, to provide educational and engagement programs, and to advocate for a more just and equitable community.

Through an unwavering commitment to innovative community-driven solutions, together we are nurturing inclusion, equity, and belonging here on Lopez.

*Barbara*

Barbara Schultheiss  
*Executive Director*





# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT, PREVENTION & LEADERSHIP

*Leading Lopez in safety and prevention.*

Efforts to bring about greater equity in a community are generally driven by adults. And, very often, these adults don't share the racial, cultural, and generational identities of the youth for whom they are designing solutions or interventions. This means adult-driven designs typically lack the voice and input of the young people these efforts are meant to serve.

Not surprisingly, this absence of youth's perspectives and experience limits the potential effectiveness of these efforts.

Authentic partnership, on the other hand, can be transformative for both youth and adult allies.

***"I know that if these prevention groups keep happening, we are going to create a safer community."***

LIFRC is partnering with Lopez youth to implement programs that envision and create youth-adult design partnerships in service of greater equity and engagement.

Once a youth-adult design partnership has sprouted, it becomes critical to cultivate the conditions for it to grow and become stronger. Designing with, not for requires building relational trust and recognizing and working creatively with dynamics around power, identity and difference that will naturally arise.

Together, we provide programs such as: Bilingual Youth Leadership, Indigenous Learning Programs, One to One Mentors, Outdoor Small Group Mentors, Peer to Peer Mentors, School-based Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Youth Prevention Coalition and LIFRC's Youth Advisory Council.

# YOUTH LEARNING & ENRICHMENT

*Creating safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging environments*

In today's rapidly evolving world, creating safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging environments is crucial for fostering growth. These environments serve as the bedrock upon which youth thrive, collaborate, and innovate.

Both the early learning and youth learning programs at the LIFRC know this to be true, which is why we constantly seek to cultivate rich exposure through a variety of different experiences.

***"I love that we don't have the same thing every day and we can have fun."***

29 tots join Parent-tot mornings, filled with movement, music, and crafts thanks to support from Amerigroup/Anthem Foundation.

37 regular "campers" participate in the After-School Program thanks to an OSPI 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, and 6 reading interventionists work with 12 different students in grades 1-4. We seek to reach as many children and youth as possible through as many routes available.

Activities range from singing, dancing, and making crafts for the tots, to building storytelling skills, learning to work as a team, cultivating social-emotional skills in the Dungeons and Dragons Club, as well as a variety of STEM activities for elementary and middle school youth.

What we've found is, when you give children and youth the agency to organize and direct their own activities and projects, they resiliently learn how to plan, problem-solve and reflect along the way. As they do so, the more deeply they engage.





# BILINGUAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

*Connecting community through dinner discussions and story.*

Over six weeks on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, families gather around tables, talk, eat and share. They also spend time downstairs in the conference room that's been transformed into a cozy living room space, fireplace and all. The room gets quiet as kids ranging from 6 months to 11 years old settle in for an evening of Prime Time family reading, one of the newest additions to the LIFRC learning programs.

Supported by a Humanities WA grant and 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grant, Prime Time is designed to strengthen families and communities by harnessing the humanities through mindful discussions and is being held with two different age groups: pre-school and elementary.

Both the pre-school and elementary Prime Time evenings are 100% bilingual.

Each week these 25 families read a story in both Spanish and English, and then discuss it as an inter-generational, intercultural group.

***“Mama! I love learning Spanish at the Reading Party – do you know ‘gato’ is ‘cat’?”***



# HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE

*Providing equitable access to household support.*

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Imagine, just for a moment, that you have no idea where, or when, you'll find your next meal.

In San Juan County, according to data from the 2023 United Way of the Pacific Northwest ALICE Report, 37% of our neighbors have insufficient income for a basic survival budget. This is an increase from 35% two years earlier.

That's why The Lopez Food Share, along with 15 other community organizations, are collaborating to cultivate a resilient food alliance.

Forging partnerships with local farmers and community organizations, they are working to prioritize the nutrition and health of our island.

At The Family Resource Center, we are committed to assisting and empowering clients to get the resources they need to thrive.

Whether it's access to healthy food, utilities, housing, medical or dental appointments, counseling sessions, or ferry tickets, we can help.

***"I am a senior living on a small social security income. The Lopez Food Share is a wonderful supplement to my pantry and pocketbook, and gives me the sense of being cared for by my community."***



# COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELL-BEING

*Community Health Workers are building bridges in our community.*

According to renowned Therapist Ester Perel, “The quality of our relationships determines the quality of our lives.”

Thanks to a grant from North Sound ACH, the Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center obtained funding to expand their Community Health Worker (CHW) program to Lopez. LIFRC has a team of five Spanish speaking Community Health Workers known as *Promotoras*.

## **Las Promotoras have:**

- Completed training with the WA State Department of Health
- Launched two needs assessment surveys
- Hosted monthly advisory meetings that 12 people attended
- Hosted numerous community health events

*“I decided to pursue a CPR instructor Certification because I want to serve the whole community and so the Hispanic community feels like they are part of the whole community, not separate.”*

During their feedback sessions, they have learned that the needs and concerns include hormonal health, mental health, nutrition, wellness and exercise, emergency preparedness, and what to do in the case of a fire.

Through their amazing work, we are reminded that our community is not just a collection of individuals, but rather a system of support.

That system is built of bridges and the Community Health Workers are laying down the infrastructure to bring us closer together and improve the overall health and well-being of all of the members of our community.





# COMMUNITY-ORGANIZED LEADERSHIP

*Creating space for community members to lead us into the future.*

Community organized leadership empowers communities to become agents of change. It fosters a sense of solidarity, collective responsibility, and mutual support. But what does it look like in practice?

With support from an Inatai Foundation grant, a diverse group of Lopez leaders are demonstrating what is possible.

Voices and Visions, a community led group representing BIPOC, LGBTQIA2+, and Disability Rights, has been turning visions for racial justice and equity into reality with community driven-solutions.

## ALIGN

Advocates on Lopez Island Gathering for Neurodiversity (ALIGN), an emerging nonprofit, is, through awareness, advocacy, and education, working to create a society that enables and values the neurodivergent and/or disabled.

Through support groups and training sessions for families and Lopez School and LIFRC staff, they are bringing about systemic change in learning environments with best practices using Universal Design Learning. Their work is supported by a 2 year DSHS – Dan Thompson DDA Grant.

*“Lasting equity doesn’t happen overnight, it’s a long game and it happens through small paradigm shifts.”*

## INDIGENOUS LEADERS

What started out as a celebration to help tribal members return to their ancestral lands, Indigenous Celebrations Day has led to a number of powerful shifts in the Lopez community.

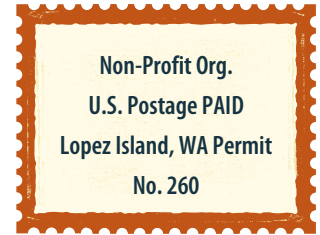
Through gatherings and workshops, Lopez youth have had the opportunity to work with and learn from tribal elders. Tribal members have been hired to translate and teach *Since Time Immemorial*, a curriculum taught to all Lopez Island School District students. And they are currently working on a Tribal Mural, and Sign and Canoe Painting projects to recognize and honor tribal lands and contributions: past, present and future.

## SPANISH SPEAKING LEADERS

Since their first Children’s Day Celebration, 2 years ago, the number of both young and adult leaders has risen exponentially, from helping three different women launch new food businesses, to supporting a 100% bilingual youth-led prevention coalition, the Spanish speakers of Lopez are leading the way to a safer, healthier, more connected Lopez community.



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*Serving the entire community at every stage of life*

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