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No: 88.31% (204 votes)   
Yes: 11.69% (27 votes)

## Gold Star Families Memorial Monument unveiled at Veterans Park in Lynnwood



Backside of Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at Veterans Park in Lynnwood. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**LYNNWOOD**—Hundreds gathered at Lynnwood's Veteran's Park on November 2 for the unveiling of the City's new Gold Star Families Memorial Monument – a tribute to Gold Star Families and relatives who sacrificed their lives while serving in the military.

Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments are two-sided tributes crafted in black granite that provide Gold Star Families – families who have lost a loved one in military service – a permanent place to pay tribute to their loved ones. The memorial demonstrates Lynnwood's commitment to veterans and the love one's they left behind, letting them know the community cares for them and appreciates the family's enduring sacrifices.

There are a total of 200 Gold Star Families monuments throughout the United States and only three here in Washington State including today's monument. Lynnwood was the chosen site of the

monument after careful consideration between four other cities. The other monuments in Washington are located in Walla Walla, and Forks, respectively.

"It was our past mayor [Nicola Smith] that really got involved in veteran's initiatives and Hero's Cafe and our signage in our city that just spoke volumes as to what veterans mean to Lynnwood," Mayor Christine Frizzell told the Lynnwood Times regarding why she believed Lynnwood was the chosen site of the monument over other cities.

The monument was crafted by Oregon Memorials and paid for entirely by individual donations completely covering the \$60,000 price tag. The Foundation raised a little over \$70 thousand and plans to use the surplus funds for its next monument.

Monica McNeal, Gold Star mother who has been with Gold Star Mothers since 2011, a year after her son, Lance-Corporal Eric Ward, was killed while serving in the United States Marine

Corps, told the Lynnwood Times she is proud of the neighboring communities and their donations.

"We are a service organization, we got out and serve, it's not about us it's about going out and making other people's lives better remembering them," McNeal told the Lynnwood Times. "The community really rallied together [to get this monument erected]. We had everything from a \$10 donation to a \$30 thousand donation. We had no fundraisers it was really just community effort so I want to thank, once again, the neighboring communities."

Although all 200 Gold Star monuments across the country are similar on the front-facing panel – reading, "Gold Star Families Memorial Monument a tribute to Gold Star Families and Relatives who sacrificed a Loved One for our Freedom," the back side panels are all unique. What's even more unique to Lynnwood's monument is the use of a process called "glass art," the first monument to utilize this process, which melts glass straight into the granite resulting in an image that will

never fade or be weather-torn, Andy Lopez, USMC Vet and Board Member for Wine Country Marines, told the Lynnwood Times.

Lynnwood's back panel features five images, representing the "homeland," the "family," the "patriot," the "sacrifice," and the "legacy." The monument also has sand from Iwo Jima, water from Belleau Wood, and challenge coins buried underneath its foundation furthering its unique and powerful symbolism.

"I know that Woody is looking down right now and he's excited," Lopez told the Lynnwood Times.

The Lynnwood monument is also unique in that it honors death by suicide, specifically, in which 22 veterans are lost by suicide a day. To honor them, surrounding Lynnwood's Gold Star monument, are 22 benches honoring these veterans.

Continued PAGE 12 >>

# Somers, Fortney, Krajcar sign historic 4-year public safety labor agreement



Signing of the 2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Snohomish County Dave Somers (left), Sheriff Adam Fortney (middle) and Snohomish County Deputy Sheriff's Association President Jonathan Krajcar (right) on November 2, 2022. Photo Courtesy of Snohomish Sheriff's Office twitter page.

By MARIO LOTMORE

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**—Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers, along with Sheriff Adam Fortney, and Snohomish County Deputy Sheriff's Association (DSA) President Jonathan Krajcar signed a new four-year labor agreement for the County's approximately 250 commissioned officers on Wednesday, November 2, 2022, in a united commitment to public safety.

"The Snohomish County Deputy Sheriff's Association would like to extend our gratitude to Sheriff Fortney and the Snohomish County Government for the collaboration on the recent labor contract," DSA President Krajcar told the Lynnwood Times.

"Snohomish County's top priority is public safety, and this agreement with DSA will ensure we are doing everything possible to retain our law enforcement professionals and attract others to the Sheriff's Office," Snohomish County Executive Somers told the Lynnwood Times. "This contract is one part of an overall strategy to ensure we are addressing street-level crimes, working to counteract the fentanyl crisis, and helping to move people out of

homelessness into a more stable life. All of these pieces work together to improve public safety and help some of the most vulnerable members of our community."

The 2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement between Snohomish County and the DSA is the largest in over two decades according to Sheriff Fortney. To see the video of the historic signing, click here.

"Thank you to Executive Somers, the Snohomish County Council and our county government team for supporting public safety in Snohomish County," Sheriff Fortney said.

To mitigate the officer shortage's impacts to the county resulting in slower 911 response times and an increase rate of officer injuries, Sheriff Fortney announced on June 6 that some special unit officers would be reassigned to patrol. He and other law enforcement leaders attributed recent staffing shortage to a lack of support from Washington State's elected officials, recruitment and retention challenges, and low wages.

Krajcar is optimistic that the new contract will address staffing shortages

and provide a better work-life balance for deputies. He stressed that the Sheriff's Office is facing an unprecedented staffing shortage coupled with an increasing population has deputies doing more work with less personnel.

"We are optimistic this contract will help hire and retain the best deputies," DSA President Krajcar said.

With over 75% of the County's General Fund budget spent on law and justice agencies, including the Sheriff's Office, the signing of the 2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement signifies the commitment to public safety for county leaders. Sheriff Fortney is hopeful that the agreement Executive Somers, DSA President Krajcar and he signed, and the Council approved last month, will "Lead the Way" to a safer Snohomish County.

"We are looking forward to hiring new or lateral deputies, so Lead the Way, [and] apply today," Sheriff Fortney said.

For details about qualifications and to apply to the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office, visit Sheriff.Snoco.org/jobs.

The new contract includes significant pay increases and additional incentives for retaining existing law enforcement professionals and recruiting new ones to address public safety in the County.

The new agreement calls for a 4% increase in wages effective April 1, 2021, an 8% increase effective April 1, 2022, a 6.5% increase effective April 1, 2023, and a salary increase equal to 100% of the CPI-W for the Seattle area of a minimum of 1% to a maximum of 5% effective April 1, 2024. It is common practice for governmental entities to use CPI-W in cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for employees who are part of collective bargaining agreements.

Effective immediately, all Sheriff Deputies will receive a 12% increase in pay to an annual base salary of \$74,890 to \$98,055.72 (this does not include any incentive pay increases). Sergeants will now make a base annual salary between \$111,423.10 to \$113,598.10.

Effective January 1, 2023, and a first for the County, it will contribute one dollar for every dollar contributed by the County Deputy or Sergeant. The County's matching contribution will not exceed 2% of the monthly base salary.

Additional incentive pay increases agreed upon include:

- Up to 6% for no more than two specialty assignments
- 3.5% for Associate, 7% for Bachelor's, or 9% for Master's degree.
- Longevity ranging from 2-11%.
- Deputies may receive a take home vehicle

Specialty assignments now include the Office of Neighborhoods and the Courthouse Security Unit. Also, employees shall have the option of receiving either longevity pay or college incentives but not both.

## SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL STATEMENTS

The Snohomish County Council unanimously authorized the County Executive to sign the 2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the County and the DSA on October 18, 2022. Vice-Chair Jared Mead made the motion to approve with Councilmember Nate Nehring seconding to carry the motion forward.

Continued PAGE 12 >>

## 2022 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BREAKDOWN

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEND LETTERS TO  
Lynnwood Times, 12918 Mukilteo Speedway C23, PMB-162 Lynnwood, WA 98087 or email [editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com](mailto:editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com).

### LETTERS POLICY

The Lynnwood Times welcomes letters to the editor of no more than 400 words. Letters will be printed as promptly as possible, as space allows.

To be considered for publication, letters must include a **first** and **last name**, **address** and **phone number** for verification purposes. We also reserve the right to edit letters as necessary for brevity, grammar and decorum.

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# 2022 Midterm Election results mixed across the country

By MARIO LOTMORE

For detailed statewide election results, scan the QR Code to the right.



For Snohomish County election results, scan the QR code to the left.



To read John T. Woolley's *The 2022 Midterm Elections: What the Historical Data Suggest*, click the QR code to the right.



The Lynnwood Times will be updating election results on its webpage page by 6 p.m. each day until Monday, November 14, 2022.

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**—With 68 percent of Americans saying the country is in the wrong direction according to aggregate RealClearPolitics polling, a 38 percent job approval rating for President Joe Biden, a 40-year record inflation, rising crime and increasing geopolitical tensions, initial midterm election results show little change in the balance of power across the country and in Washington state.



39th LD Representative Carolyn Eslick along with Snohomish County Councilman Representative-elect Sam Low at their victory party in Lake Stevens on November 8, 2022. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore

According to analysis by John Woolley, historical data from 1936 to 2018 would indicate a Democratic Party loss of power in both houses of Congress.

“From 1936-2018, near the midterms, six presidents have had approval ratings in the range of 40-45%—like Biden,” wrote Woolley. “Those cases involved wide variation in seat loss or gain. The range of outcomes in the Senate was between -9 and +2 seats. The average was a loss of 4. In the House, presidents with approval between 40-45%, saw their party lose between 63 and 13 seats, with an average loss of 36 seats. There have been no instances of House seat gains for Presidents with approval as low as Biden’s.”

Below is a summary of the balance of power across the country based on 2022 midterm election results as of 2 p.m. on November 9 according to Reuters:

- U.S. Senate (51 needed for majority): 48 Democrat (+1 gain), 48 Republican
- U.S. House of Representatives (218 needed for majority): 187 Democrat (flipped 4), 207 Republican (flipped 14)
- Governors (26 needed for majority): 22 Democrat (+2 gain), 24 Republican

Polling across the country appears out-of-step in the Senate races of Arizona and Pennsylvania, and the gubernatorial races of Arizona, Kansas, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Besides the fiasco in the Arizona elections where up to 20% of Maricopa County’s 223 voting centers experienced tabulation malfunctions, overall, it initially appears that midterm elections went smoothly across the country.

Here in Washington state, ballot return statistics as of Election Day morning were down 5.56 points when compared to the 2018 midterm election on the same day according to the Secretary of State’s Election Division. In counties such as Grays Harbor and King it was as high as 11.98 points and 8.31 points

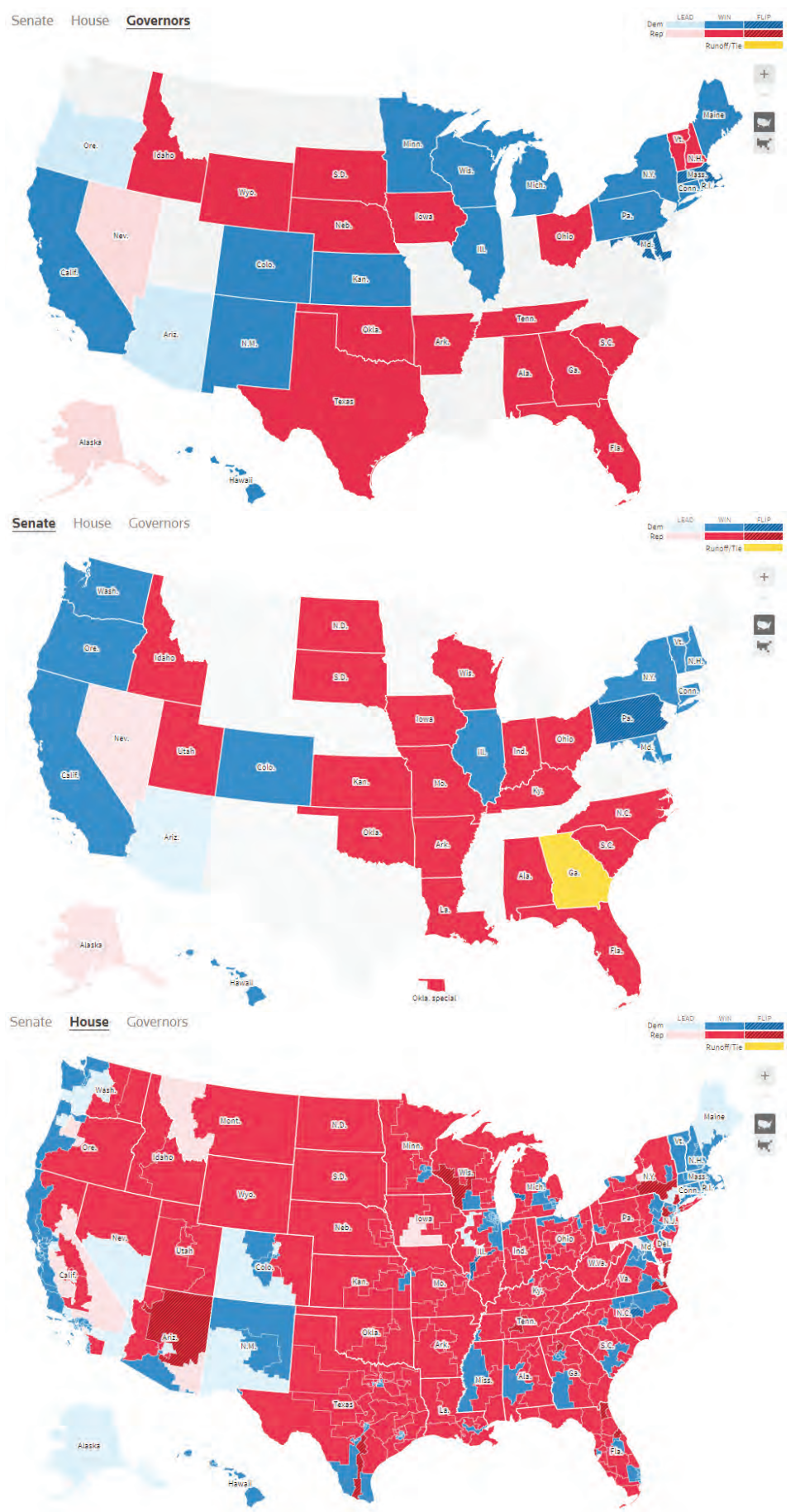
respectively. In the high-stakes Clark County elections, the ballot returns were down 5.39 points.

One possible reason for the lower-than-expected early voting ballot returns could be the strategy of Republican activists who believe the 2020 election was stolen from former President Donald J Trump advocating to voters to hold onto their ballots until Election Day. If this is the case, Republican candidates across the state could be seeing a surge over the next few days.

The races of Congressional District 3 between Joe Kent (R) and Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D) and Congressional District 8 between Matt Larkin (R) and Kim Schrier (D) should tighten along with the U.S. Senate race between 30-year incumbent Patty Murray (D) and Tiffany Smiley (R), and Legislative District 10 Position 1 race between Greg Gilday (R) and his opponent Clyde Shavers (D) who was caught in an eleventh-hour election scandal regarding his military record and lying about being an attorney.

In Snohomish County, Councilman Sam Low (R) defeated incumbent Rep. Robert Sutherland (R) in 39th Legislative District and County Councilman Strom Peterson (D) has won re-election in the 21st Legislative District – both will now serve in the Washington State House and on the Snohomish County Council, a historic first.

Newly appointed Brandy Donaghy (D) of the 44th Legislative District has won re-election. All of the Lynnwood delegation (LD-32) for the State have retained their legislative seats.





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# 2022 Mukilteo Community Awards Gala winners

By MARIO LOTMORE

**MUKILTEO**—The Mukilteo Chamber of Commerce hosted its second annual Community Awards Gala on Friday, November 4, at the Rosehill Community Center where local businesses were recognized for their commitment to improving Mukilteo through giving, programs, and volunteerism.

Community award winners of the night were the following:

- New Business winner Taqueria Puebla
- Small Business winner Mukilteo Ace Hardware
- Large Business winner BECU
- Non-Profit winner Leadership Launch
- Community Member winner Sean Drought, owner of Tapped Mukilteo

Approximately 150 attendees enjoyed live music by Engage, dinner provided by Red Cork Bistro, a photo booth, photos by John with Watkins Photography, and both a live and silent auction.

President and CEO Kandace Barnes, shared with the Lynnwood Times the importance of the Chamber recognizing local businesses and members in the community.

“They really are the backbone of the community,” Barnes said. “When you

think about special occasions, where does one go? You go to restaurants.

“When you think about celebrating a birthday or purchasing a home, you utilize businessowners. They are the ones who constantly support our community. They buy t-shirts for our football teams. They donate items to auctions at our schools.

“The opportunity to recognize those people who really are the backbone of our community. We are just so thankful for them.”

Barnes, her team, and many volunteers hosted wine fests, Music at the Beach concerts, a Mukilteo Car Show, a Beer Garden at the Lighthouse Festival, Spooktacular for Halloween, and a luncheon series this year all of which are returning for 2023.

“We have wonderful buildings and public spaces,” Barnes said. “It is determining what the community wants to enjoy.”

To learn more about volunteering for or being a member of the Mukilteo Chamber of Commerce, visit <https://mukilteochamber.org/>.

### WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

The Lynnwood Times wants to know what issues you would like us investigate Email [editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com](mailto:editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com).



Mukilteo Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Kandace Barnes at the 2022 Mukilteo Community Awards Gala. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

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# Hidden heroes: The many faces of Snohomish County's veterans

By KIENAN BRISCOE

Snohomish County is a region that is immensely proud of its veteran community. With over 50,000 veterans living in our area, according to census data, it is a community that is rich, diverse, and incredibly proud of defending the many freedoms our nation provides. Many of our veterans have continued their public service, after their military careers, through positions in law enforcement, government, or starting their own businesses, utilizing the intense training, education opportunities, and myriad life skills the military taught them considered invaluable.

Oftentimes these faces blend in with the crowd, their service fading into the past while they begin their next life's chapter. Oftentimes, to them, undertaking roles in the public sector is just as much their duty as serving our country. As we celebrate this year's Veterans Day, it's important to remember that sometimes the man or woman standing next to us is the reason our country continues to be so great and has so many liberties often taken for granted.

In this special Veterans Day feature, The Lynnwood Times reached out to a handful of our community vets to share their stories, their experiences, and what their time served meant to them.

## MUKILTEO POLICE CHIEF CHEOL KANG



Mukilteo Police Chief, Cheol Kang, is known for his people skills - a trait he widely attributes to picking up while serving in the United States Navy from 1999 until 2020. Kang spent his career with five years in Active Duty, straight out of college, and the remaining 16 years as a Drilling Reservist. Throughout this time, he was deployed in support of Iraqi Freedom in 2003, and in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2009. He retired in 2020 as a Commander working as a Public Affairs Officer where he learned many of the people skills he brings to his role as Police Chief.

"The military is a huge melting pot of people, ideas, cultures, all into one organization for a common cause," Chief Kang told the Lynnwood Times. "Your ability to work with, and engage, and manage, and lead people in a people-driven organization is what [ultimately] leads to the success of your mission.

Just a few of Kang's awards include a Meritorious Service Medal in Naval Special Warfare for setting up the Reserve Public Affairs unit for all of Special Warfare, three Navy Accommodation Medals, and three Navy Achievement Medals. Kang decided to join the Navy, over other branches, based on his adoration for the ocean where he's lived by all of his life, immigrating from South Korea, growing up

in Tacoma, and eventually settling in the Oceanside community of Mukilteo.

To Kang, being a Korean immigrant granted him a unique perspective of patriotism and the American Dream at large. Through witnessing his parent's acclimation to American life he developed a rich sense of what it means to be an American and the importance of defending one's rights that come with the title.

"Having the opportunity of coming from nothing, to come to this country with nothing...To be in the position to serve and rise up in the ranks, to me it's the stereotypical American Dream," Chief Kang told the Lynnwood Times. "It shows that with determination, with the right work ethic, with the right purpose in mind others can do the same thing as well."

Looking back Chief Kang said he would, no doubt, serve again adding that the choices he made, his experiences, both in and out of the military, shaped him into the man he is today.

"It was an amazing ride that's continuing. We'll keep enjoying it while we got it," Kang said.

## MARK JAMES, MARYSVILLE COUNCILMAN



Before Marysville Councilman, Mark James, entered the world of politics he served in the United States Army from 1982 until 1990. Being raised in a military family, moving from base to base, his years of civilian life has actually just recently surpassed his years of service life.

"The military never leaves you. You always have it in your blood. The discipline, the integrity, the honor, those things you need to be able to progress and be the best you can be. Those are the things you retain," James told the Lynnwood Times.

James entered the Army as a Medic straight out of High School. Although he underwent basic training in Missouri, he returned to Washington on his first duty assignment at Fort Lewis. From there he was sent to Germany, where he finished his Active-Duty status before returning to Spokane as Active Reserves. Upon being honorably discharged in 1990 James began his civilian career in Marysville as a certified Ophthalmic Medical Technologist, utilizing many of the skills he acquired through his time served.

In addition to growing up in a military family, James also met his current wife while they were both serving in the Army, in Germany, where she was working as a Lab Technician. The two have now been married 34 years, have three sons, and their own publication business, Hometown Values Savings Magazine, which they have been printing for the last 18 years.

James has continued his public service after his military careers through being President of the

Sunrise Rotary club from 2018 to 2019, as well as volunteering, on a weekly basis, with his wife at the food bank, Salvation Army, and various local service groups.

"The heart of service is just who I am. I'm not sure if that's something the military instilled in me or it's just who I was and that's why I gravitated to the military, a chicken and egg sort of question I suppose but it was just natural to get into politics," James said.

## WILL STUFLICK, MARYSVILLE SAFETY AND RISK MANAGER

Transitioning into civilian life for Will Stuflick, Safety and Risk Manager for the City of Marysville was seamless from all of the training he received in the military, including his master's degree which he completed while serving.

"I walked out doing the same thing I was doing while I was in the service," Stuflick told the Lynnwood Times. "I started working with the Department of Transportation designing roads and culverts and things like that. It was really smooth."

Stuflick served in the United States Air Force, as an engineering assistant, from 1992 until 2006, through two wars including Operation Provide Comfort.

Right out of the service Stuflick began working at the Department of Transportation before transitioning to education, working at a Community College in the Midwest teaching Mechanical Design and AutoCAD before becoming Dean. He eventually transferred to Everett Community College and began working for the city of Marysville early 2021. His position, as Safety and Risk Manager, will be the last job he works before retiring in a couple years just shy of 55.

While serving in the Air Force, safety was always a big part of Stuflick's work as a Squadron Trainer. He was referred to the position of Safety and Risk Manager by another combat veteran he met in a group.

"I was always in civil engineering, around tradespeople, so it was really nice to come back to a group that was similar to my military days where we have street crew, Wastewater Treatment plant groups. It's kind of come full circle which is nice," Stuflick said.

Stuflick told the Lynnwood Times his military training has helped in his professional, civilian, life in many ways including bringing punctuality, integrity, and hard work ethic to his job every day.

"The military taught me to be punctual and respectful and to work hard. Service before self is what the Air Force always said so being in the public sector, being able to serve the citizens of Marysville, I take a lot of proud in that," Stuflick said. "It was just a natural fit with the skillset the military instilled in me to continue to serve the public."

In addition to the list of skills he picked up from his service, Stuflick noted that being in combat, really puts life into perspective realizing that "life really isn't that bad in the United States." Stuflick continued that when you're not sure if you'll be coming home at the end of the day it makes the time you share with your loved ones that much more cherished.

"Nobody's shooting at you when you're doing your normal job," Stuflick said.

Stuflick decided to join the military after high school, feeling "rudderless", as he put it, not knowing which direction to take. His guidance counselor, a Marine Corps Vet, steered him on the path of joining the service. He told the Lynnwood Times he doesn't regret it at all and to have the ability to serve the country that had been so good to him was an absolute

pleasure.

“If you’re looking for a sense of purpose, if you’re looking to give back to the greatest country in the world and you feel blessed enough to be able to do that, I’d say join the military - whatever branch that might be,” Stufflick said. “It’s just an amazing group, the sense of family that it gives you and the sense of purpose and belonging is second to none. It’s gonna be hard, it’s gonna be dangerous, but you’re going to be looking to your left and your right and know that those people are going to be doing whatever they can to have your back and you’re going to be doing the same or them.”

**MICHAEL DIXON, PRESIDENT/OWNER OF DIXON INSURANCE AGENCY AND MUKILTEO DEI COMMISSIONER**



Mike Dixon is standing in the front row, first person to the left..

Although Mike Dixon, President of Dixon Insurance and a Mukilteo DEI Commissioner, grew up in a military family his decision to join the Army Reserves as an infantryman stemmed from a desire to challenge himself. He maxed out on the ASVAB, he said, so he could have gone anywhere but infantry was always his prerogative. The way he saw it is if he could be successful as an infantryman, he could be successful with anything.

“Infantry was hard. But by doing that, achieving a very tough physical challenge it gave me a stronger sense of confidence,” Dixon said.

Dixon served in the Army Reserves for six years, enlisted in Infantry School at Fort Benning in September of 1987, and served as a Reservist while he was in college at MIT. He was commissioned as a Quarter Master Officer during his Junior year, in 1989, and drilled through his Senior Year continuing in his native Virgin Islands until 1993. After leaving St. Thomas he entered Individual Ready Reserves expecting, and willing, to be called to action but was never called for combat.

“That was the extent of my service, it was brief, I didn’t conquer the world, but it was a good formative experience. I have a lot of military family, so it was meaningful to me,” Dixon told the Lynnwood times.

Following Dixon’s time in the military he continued his public service as Utility Commissioner, served as President of the Alderwood Wastewater District

Board, worked in city government as Associate Director for Policy of the Office of Management and Budget in the Virgin Islands, was President of the African American Forum at General Electric Company, serves on the Board of Advisors at the Mukilteo YMCA, and most recently was appointed as a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commissioner for the City of Mukilteo.

“The military has always been helpful for me as an indicator of my character,” Dixon said. “It’s sort of like a fraternity, you mention it to other people and people respect it and admire it. They call your demeanor your military bearing, so the ability to dress properly, conduct yourself properly, the decorum is something that you learn in the military. Just as an enlisted person in infantry school I learned to conduct myself in a different way particularly in difficult situations.”

**STEPHEN DOHERTY, INFORMATION SERVICES DIRECTOR, CITY OF MARYSVILLE**



Stephen Doherty is seated in the middle-left.

Stephen Doherty, Information Services Director for the City of Marysville, served in the U.S. Air Force from 2002 to 2004 and was honorably discharged as an E-4 working as a Radio Communications Specialist. He was deployed in the middle East controlling airspace for Navy Aircraft Carriers during Operation Iraqi Freedom and was awarded an Air Force Achievement medal for Meritorious Service among others.

Following his military career, Doherty spent 17 years working with the Tulalip Tribes in their IT Department working as a fiber-optics technician, which is what he was trained and certified in while serving in the military. His training in the military, and the invaluable skills he learned, made his transition to civilian life seamless, he said. In June of 2022, he joined the City of Marysville as its Information Services Director where he also utilizes many of the communication skills he developed while serving.

“A lot of the skills I built up in the military transferred over and really helped ground myself, and built my work ethics,” Doherty told the Lynnwood Times.

Out of all of the skills discipline the military brought him, attention to detail is perhaps the biggest takeaway Doherty gained from the military in regard to his work life he told the Lynnwood Times.

“Traveling around the world really allowed me to see what I took for granted back home. It really builds your core values. In just my short time I really picked up a lot of life lessons and saw a bigger picture I never did growing up,” Doherty said.

During Doherty’s service he fought in two wars, convoyed into Kuwait from Iraq, did airport surveillance for the President in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, volunteered at the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, among many other unforgettable memories he wouldn’t trade in for the world.

Although Doherty told the Lynnwood Times he would do it all over again in a heartbeat he added that if there were one thing he would do differently, it would have been to join an ROTC program and enter the military commissioned.

**WILL CENA, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR THE CITY OF LYNNWOOD**



Will Cena, Director of Information Technology for the City of Lynnwood, retired from the Air Force Reserves as an E-7 Master Sergeant in 2020, after 22 years. Throughout his career he was deployed twice in the middle east during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn working as Air Transportation loading and unloading cargo from passenger flights.

Cena came from a military family, his dad and two uncles having served in the United States Navy for over 20 years, and another uncle serving in the United States Air Force before being medically discharged. In many ways his family’s involvement in the military steered Cena’s decision to join himself.

“I always had a want to serve,” Cena told the Lynnwood Times.

Since joining the city of Lynnwood in 2005 Cena has brought many of the skillsets he attributes to learning in the military, particularly adapting to change, regularly being thrown into a situation where he may not have all of the information, and leadership.

“I am where I’m at professionally because the military helped pay for college,” Cena said.

When Cena looks back on his time with the Air Force what really sticks with him is the brotherhood, the friendships, that he built, especially in his deployments. After being deployed to Iraqi, one year after 911, he met three friends in particular that he is still close with today. One of them was even his best man at his wedding. As a young adult entering the military, Cena told the Lynnwood Times the growth one experiences and the lessons they learn about themselves and life he thinks everyone should experience in one way or another.

“I had a lot of good mentors in the military with a lot of good examples of how to lead people, how to talk to people, how to coach,” Cena said. “I’ve taken that in my role as IT director for the city in terms of making sure the folks I work for are both taking care of professionally and personally.”

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# Local church vandalized with satanic symbols over the Halloween weekend

By MARIO LOTMORE

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE, November 2, 2022—Satanic symbols were spray painted on the front doors and windows of St. Pius X Catholic Church early Sunday morning shortly after midnight. Police are also investigating a second incident of a vandalized vehicle with spray paint on the property that occurred the same night.

Currently no one has been arrested, but seven juveniles with hoodies were recorded walking towards the vehicle and the front entrance of the church at approximately 12:22 a.m. Sunday, October 30. The estimated damage to the church is \$2,500.

Parishioners convened on Sunday to remove the graffiti and other local churches in the area were alerted of the malicious mischief.

There were no incidents at the parish's preschool nor its K-8 primary school. However, as a precaution, Mountlake Terrace police have stepped up patrols. Several months ago a rock was thrown breaking one of the church's windows around the time of the Roe v Wade Supreme Court decision.

"Someone targeted the catholic church because we are pro-life," Nancy Bowman told the Lynnwood Times. Bowman has been with the parish for 10 years and is currently its secretary.

"The people," Bowman replied when asked what she appreciates about her service to the parish. "It is a great job. At some point in life, I will retire."

St. Pius X Catholic Church, located at 22105 58th Ave. W. in Mountlake Terrace, is comprised of 2,100 families, or approximately seven



TOP: St. Pius Catholic Church. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore. Church. BOTTOM-L: St. Pius Catholic Church vandalized on Sunday, October 30, 2022. Photo courtesy of St. Pius Church. BOTTOM-R: St. Pius Catholic Church members removing the graffiti on Sunday, October 30, 2022. Photo courtesy of St. Pius



thousand worshipers. Father Roberto Saldivar is currently filling in for Fr. Cal Christiansen who is temporarily in Boston working towards his doctorate in Theology.

The church will be hosting a Holiday Bazaar on November 12 and 13 where there will be a bake sale, over 40 tables of handmade items, and craft tables.

If you have any information regarding either incident, contact the Mountlake Terrace Police Department and refer to case number 22-16525.

## Mountain Loop Highway seasonal closure begins Nov 9

EVERETT—With the winter weather picking up at higher elevations, Snohomish County Public Works, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office, will close Mountain Loop Highway on Wednesday, Nov. 9. The closure is for traffic in both directions and will be officially enforced from the Deer Creek Gate to the west and the Bedal Gate to the east.

"Snohomish County Public Works has worked in concert with the U.S. Forest Service, the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office, and many of the surrounding towns to make sure this is the right time to close the highway," Snohomish County Public Works Director Kelly

Snyder said. "This closure, prior to the predicted storms and potential snow and ice events in the coming weeks, is both prudent and practical. Our number one priority is to keep everyone safe."

Mountain Loop Highway Map. Courtesy of Snohomish County Public Works. The 14-mile road is closed each winter due to snow and road conditions between the Bedal Gate and Barlow pass. Each spring, the Public Works Road Maintenance Division coordinates with the U.S. Forest Service to perform any necessary maintenance on the road prior to its reopening.

During the summer months, more than

100 cars on average use this route each day with up to 200 cars traveling each day on the weekend.

View the Snohomish County road closures webpage to get up to date information on closed county roads.

### ABOUT SNOHOMISH COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

Snohomish County Public Works is responsible for approximately 1,600 miles of county roads, more than 200 bridges and manages about 200 traffic control signals. The department also processes nearly 600,000 tons of garbage per year. Its mission is to focus on safety and mobility while practicing

fiscal responsibility and preserving the environment.

Public Works has won numerous state and national honors for its work and is the largest department within Snohomish County government with approximately 500 employees plus seasonal staff.

Its main office is located at 3000 Rockefeller Ave, Everett, WA 98201. Visit the Snohomish County Public Works webpage or follow the department on Facebook and Twitter for more information about Snohomish County Public Works.

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# Andrew Brammeier: One man's battle to with cancer



Andrew Brammeier with his wife Rachel. Source: Andrew Brammeier.

You can donate to Andrew Brammeier and his family through their GoFundMe page by scanning the QR code to the right to help the family with medical expenses or contribute through Venmo at @andrew-bramm.



By KIENAN BRISCOE

**MUKILTEO**—Andrew Brammeier was an athletic man. He ate healthy, ran two to three times a week and even competed in a 5K marathon just months before the doctors gave him the news: he had metastasized testicular cancer.

Although 95% of people who develop testicular cancer survive at least five years after their diagnosis, and testicular cancer was one of the first curable cancers – Dr. Lawrence H. Einhorn developed a cure in 1974. Brammeier was given a 50/50 chance of survival and an even slimmer chance being able to walk again. This had less to do with the cancer itself and more the large tumor that developed in his back because of it – a tumor that required a complicated and life-threatening, spinal surgery.

“I asked the doctors at one point in time if there was any particular health thing, I did that caused me to get testicular cancer and they said no, it’s indiscriminate.” Brammeier told the Lynnwood Times. “If somebody smokes for twenty years and gets lung cancer it’s like eh, that makes sense, there’s a definite causation for that while with testicular cancer there isn’t.”

Towards the end of 2021, Brammei-

er visited his doctor regarding some non-specific back pain. Unable to find any issues with his nerve endings, his doctor recommended physical therapy and sent him home, but the pain did not subside. For the next few months, Brammeier’s pain intensified, eventually getting to the point where he could not stand, sit, nor lay down without insufferable discomfort.

Brammeier’s wife, Rachel, then rushed him to the Providence Emergency room where they heard the news.

On March 1, Brammeier underwent surgery to remove the tumor in his back, however as he waited until the post-surgery wound healed before beginning chemotherapy, his arm went numb. When Andrew returned to the hospital, it was discovered that his sixth vertical vertebrae had been eaten away by his cancer and that he would need neck surgery, which delayed his cancer treatment.

Between surgeries, Andrew sat in a chair, unable to get up. To make matters worse, he had lost his sense of touch.

Once again, Brammeier had to return to surgery, this time to remove the tumor that had regrown in his back. To the doctors’ surprise, Andrew was able to “walk” away un-paralyzed after surgery. Doctors then recommend he undergo chemotherapy while his wound healed – a difficult decision considering cancer rapidly attacks dividing cells such as hair and nails.



Andrew Brammeier with his daughter during his cancer treatment between surgeries. Source: Andrew Brammeier.

“I thought I was going to die,” Brammeier said. “They said there was a high risk in the surgery that I could die, that I could be paralyzed from the waist

Continued PAGE 12 >>

# County invests \$7.8 million to child care

By SNOHOMISH COUNTY GOV'T

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**—Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers announced that the County is investing \$7.8 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to increase access to child care, with a focus on children and families' social-emotional development and affordability programs. Through these investments, in the second quarter of 2022, YMCA of Snohomish County reported a 62 percent increase in staff who felt they now had increased strategies to support positive social behaviors among the children they cared for.

The initial package of \$7.8 million in ARPA investments includes:

1. \$2.9 million for school-aged child care and social-emotional development and mental health supports for enrolled children and families;
2. \$2.35 million for stabilizing every Snohomish County Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program (ECEAP) provider; and
3. \$2.5 million for child care vouchers and navigation support primarily for job-seeking families.

The \$7.8 million in ARPA child care investments was proposed by Executive Somers and appropriated by the County Council as part of the 2022 budget process. This funding is in addition to the \$12 million for child care investments Executive Somers proposed as part of the 2023 budget process, which, if appropriated, would bring total County ARPA child care investments to nearly \$20 million.

"When I talk with child care providers, they confirm that the pandemic has caused a serious uptick in behavioral health challenges among the children they're caring for. Without adequate resources and training, providers are being stretched beyond breaking point and children aren't getting the kind of support they need," said Executive Somers. "Through this program, we're supporting our children, providing tools to caregivers, and helping undo the harms caused by COVID-19. These investments are one part of our broader effort to expand access for communities across our county, particularly in places where child care is already extremely scarce."

"A plan to equitably recover from the impacts of COVID is incomplete without investing in child care, child care providers, and the young people who need mental and behavioral health services," said Council Chair Megan Dunn (District 2). "When schools were shut down and children learned remotely, parents, and in particular women, exited the workforce to stay home and care for their children. This support by the County to help get our child care system stabilized will pay off not just immediately, but for generations to come."

"Snohomish County's lack of affordable, quality child care is one of the biggest challenges that the pandemic exacerbated. With this investment, we are starting to take great strides in Snohomish County to address this gap and serve families. Improvements in this sector will continue to be a major focus point in my work going forward,"

said Vice Chair Jared Mead (District 4).

"Lack of child care is one of the most significant burdens to entering the workforce for many Snohomish County individuals. Our youth were also some of the hardest hit from the pandemic shutdowns. These investments will help bolster our child care system in Snohomish County and provide support for our children to make up some of the learning loss over the past two and a half years," said Councilmember Nate Nehring (District 1).

"Too often, people that want to work either can't find or can't afford quality child care. Making these targeted investments in our child care system will help us build an economy that works for everyone," said Councilmember Strom Peterson (District 3).

"Investing in child care and behavioral health services is critical so that there is improved access to these programs for Snohomish County residents. I am grateful we are getting these funds out to the families that need them," said Councilmember Sam Low (District 5).

Snohomish County invested \$2.9 million in school-aged child care subsidies coupled with behavioral health supports through partnerships with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Snohomish County and YMCA of Snohomish County. This program provides tuition subsidies for families at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) as well as social-emotional development and mental health services for children and families. These services help youth and families manage stress, increase coping skills, and reduce behavioral challenges. Through September 2022, this program has helped more than 2,300 families through tuition subsidies and/or behavioral health supports.

"The YMCA of Snohomish County is incredibly grateful of the partnership with the County," said Peyton Tune, CEO, YMCA of Snohomish County. "When our children have the tools to grow, their potential is boundless. At the Y, our child care programs use developmentally appropriate curriculums to foster physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth for every child. The ARPA funds have supported families with financial barriers, and allowed us to provide mental health support to youth and families in need during a very critical time. Removing obstacles to high-quality, affordable child care means more families can attend work and school with peace of mind knowing their child is safe in a supportive environment."

"Recently, a grandmother stopped into one of our Clubs after unexpectedly getting custody of her three school-age grandkids due to addiction challenges. Being the only wage earner in the household, she was worried that she would not be able to continue her retail job due to the lack of affordable child care. When she learned from a neighbor that we may be able to help, she was skeptical but decided to try. Her relief when she learned that we would indeed be able to provide safe and affordable child care was evident both in the tears and multiple plates of cookies she has brought to the staff," said

Marci Volmer, Chief Operating Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Snohomish County. "Thanks as well to the mental health staff funded by Snohomish County, Club staff report not only an obvious benefit to the youth but also to staff themselves. They feel more confident in supporting challenging behaviors and credit that change to the ongoing training and modeling of the Mental Health staff."

In addition, the County is issuing a total of \$2.35 million in stabilization grants to all 16 Snohomish County ECEAP providers across 26 locations. ECEAP providers are using these grants to sustain and expand services without disruption. ECEAP serves some of the County's most vulnerable children and families, and the cost of providing ECEAP services has significantly increased due to the pandemic, all while social-emotional developmental needs among children have also increased.

"Last year we were able to provide a summer program for students that were enrolled in our ECEAP program. Each of the 60 students that attended received over 100 hours of ECEAP programming, from the middle of June to the end of August. By utilizing these funds to maintain the growth that students have made over the course of the school year, we were able to combat summer regression and close the opportunity gap that can lead to an achievement gap for our students," said Matt Wyant, Early Learning Center Associate Principal, Lake Stevens School District. "I want to personally thank Snohomish County for recognizing the importance of early learning and supporting the children and families in our community."

"ARPA funding let us intentionally plan for staff, students, materials, curriculum, activities and parent engagement. We are able to create parent engagement opportunities throughout the summer, incorporate four field trips and end the summer program with an at-home Pizza Party that incorporated language, math, cognitive, social studies, literacy and social-development skills. Without this funding, we would not have been able to create such an in-depth, individualized and engaging

program that prepared students for the start of kindergarten," said Kim D. Parker, ECEAP Coordinator, Mukilteo ECEAP Preschool.

Finally, Snohomish County is investing \$2.5 million in child care affordability vouchers primarily for job-seeking families. The goal with these vouchers is to fill a significant gap in the system by targeting families who are not eligible for the State's Working Connections Child Care program.

In addition to vouchers, this program will offer several types of navigation support to families seeking child care assistance. Families will receive help navigating the child care funding system and locating a provider that meets their needs. They will also receive connections to other public benefits and community resources they're eligible for, including food, housing, employment, health, and other basic needs supports. The voucher program is not currently open to the public; the County and Opportunity Council will identify eligible recipients through partnerships with employment assistance organizations.

"Opportunity Council will be dedicated to connecting families with low incomes who do not qualify for state child care subsidy to maintain or access high-quality, licensed child care while families and caregivers participate in job training, perform job searches, and other employment related activities," said Wilanne Ollila-Perry, Assistant Director of the Quality Child Care Division/Early Learning and Family Services Department. "Navigators will also be connecting families with other county resources throughout their participation in the Child Care Choice Voucher Program to help them to stabilize and thrive as they pursue their work/life path."

In the coming weeks, Executive Somers will announce additional efforts using ARPA funds to expand child care services, including investments in new facilities.

To learn more, visit [www.snohomish-countywa.gov/recovery](http://www.snohomish-countywa.gov/recovery).

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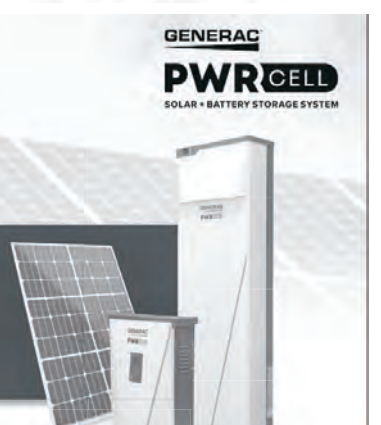
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# County to receive up to \$25.4 million to save lives ravaged by the opioid crisis

By **GEORGE FTIKAS, JR.**

Snohomish County is set to receive up to \$25.4 million from a resolution with the three largest distributors of prescription opioids. Attorney General Bob Ferguson brought McKesson Corp., Cardinal Health Inc., and AmerisourceBergen Drug Corp. in 2021 after rejecting a national settlement. In Ferguson's announcement, Washington state will receive a maximum of \$518 million — \$46 million more than the state would have received in the settlement — with the initial funds being distributed on Dec. 1.

"This is a major milestone — one of the largest resolutions in Washington state history — but we're not done fighting back against the opioid epidemic," Ferguson said. "This represents significant accountability for the opioid distributors that helped fuel the epidemic, as well as urgently needed resources to fight it. The crisis is far from over. Our fight to hold these mega-corporations accountable will continue."

In 2019, the Snohomish County Council under the leadership of Chair Terry Ryan (D), Vice Chair Nate Nehring (R), and councilmembers Brian Sullivan (D), Stephanie Wright (D), Sam Low (R) unanimously voted to file a civil lawsuit against manufacturers and distributors of OxyContin.

This latest announcement is another recent reminder of the ongoing opioid crisis. As was previously reported at the end of August, Snohomish County saw a spike in overdoses over a two-week period. Fentanyl was the most common drug, being present in 58% of the blood toxicity reports. Originally developed for pain management of cancer patients, fentanyl is 50-100 times more potent than morphine. Methamphetamine was the second most prevalent in the toxicity reports.

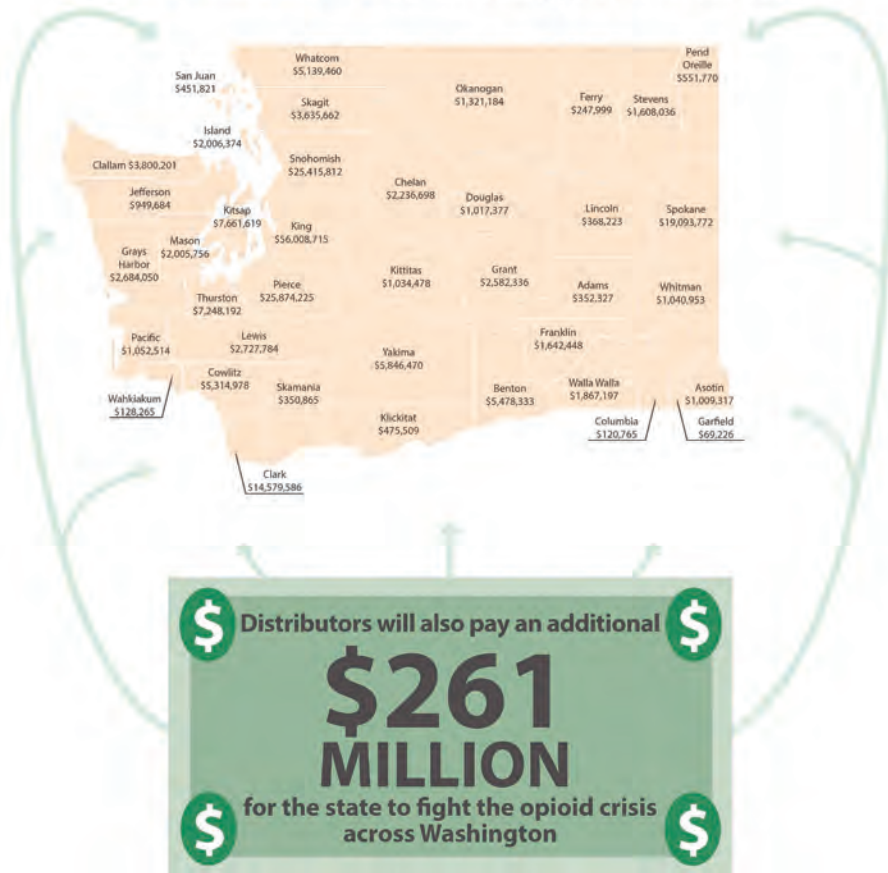
Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force Lt. David Hayes stated there was no new information about these overdoses from July 26 to Aug. 8. In the initial press release, Lt. Hayes stated that: "The presence of the dangerous drug fentanyl, in our community, continues to grow and threatens lives and public safety across our county and state. Members of the public should be aware of the prolific supply of fentanyl and methamphetamine in our community and take measures to protect themselves, friends, and loved ones."

This spike in overdoses in Snohomish County was around the same time the Pierce County Sheriff's Office reported that "rainbow fentanyl" was now in the Pacific Northwest.

More recently, a 46-year-old man was



Opioid distributors are required to provide **\$215 MILLION** to local governments\*



Source: Office of Washington State Attorney General

arrested by the Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force, with authorities seizing roughly 150 M30 fentanyl pills, \$524,000 in cash, drug packaging supplies and suspected stolen property. The arrest was part of a months-long investigation into those moving and selling fentanyl, involving over 360 arrests and 150 citations as well as the seizure of firearms, drugs and vehicles.

"While the data will show many arrests over the past several months, our goal continues to be implementing strategies that will lead to long term positive change in this area," Everett Police Chief Dan Templeman said. "This requires more than just law enforcement intervention, but also the support of our community, social service organizations and other stakeholders willing to partner with us to improve the conditions for those suffering from behavioral health issues as well as those who own and frequent businesses in the area."

This arrest is on the heels of the sentencing of Snohomish County drug trafficker, "Mac Wayne" as well as

drug distribution leader Rodrigo Alvarez-Quinonez. Sentenced to 10 years in prison, Alvarez-Quinonez was one of 12 arrested for trafficking fentanyl, heroin, meth and cocaine in August 2020, being convicted by a Seattle jury in June 2022. Law enforcement seized 7,500 pills "likely tainted with fentanyl," roughly six pounds of meth, 8 pounds of heroin, over \$100,000 in cash, four firearms, and several vehicles used for smuggling.

Snohomish Health District recently updated their online dashboard on opioid overdoses.

"With the increasing severity of the opioid crisis, it's incredibly important to have this kind of data at our fingertips to help guide decision-making," Sara Lidstrom, the epidemiologist who led the dashboard project, said.

The data for Snohomish shows that overall opioid deaths drastically increased over the last five years, with fentanyl being the most common substance. The reported number of deaths almost doubled from 100 deaths in

2017 to 198 in 2021. Providence Regional Medical Center Everett reported treating 844 opioid overdoses from 2020-21 in the emergency department. This is up from 535 in 2017-18.

The treatment naloxone, or Narcan, is largely credited with saving lives. More than 75% of overdose patients had already been treated with naloxone prior to arrival at an emergency room. Most of these were administered by emergency medical services, but 18% of cases were administered by a family member, a friend or a bystander.

Naloxone is easy to use, with online forms available at [www.snohomishoverdoseprevention.com](http://www.snohomishoverdoseprevention.com) to request training.

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from page 1 **GOLD STAR**

The goal is to bring Gold Star Families memorial monuments to all 50 states originated from veteran Woody Williams, for whom the Woody Williams Foundation is named. The first monument was completed in Williams' home state of West Virginia in 2010.

Hershel "Woody" Williams was a United States Marine Corps Veteran and Congressional Medal awardee who passed away on June 29, 2022. His foundation, a charitable 501c(3) non-profit, continues to conduct Gold Star Families outreach, provides Living Legacy scholarships to eligible Gold Star Children, and advocates for educational benefits for Gold Star members in his name.

Wednesday's ceremony was led by Andy Lopez, Master of Ceremonies, USMC Veteran and Board Member of Wine Country Marines, featuring remarks by Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell and Michael Reagan, Vietnam Combat Veteran and Founder of the Fallen Hero Project, as well as keynote speaker Lieutenant General Mark R. Wise, retired United States Marine Corps.



**Andy Lopez presenting Monica McNeal, a Gold Star mother, with a quilt with of the image of her son, Lance Corporal Eric Ward. Whenever she misses him, she can wrap herself in the quilt knowing he is hugging her. Lynnwood Times.**

Before these speakers took the podium, McKenna Sessions, Lynnwood City Councilwoman Shannon Sessions' daughter, expertly sang the National Anthem prior to the crowd taking moment of silence in honor of service men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the Nation's freedom.

"If there's any doubt in your mind that we live in the greatest nation on the face of this earth, there shouldn't be because it is," Lieutenant General Wise said during his remarks. "It is because it's a beacon of hope. It is the single most nation that is sought after for the freedoms we enjoy and the security that we provide. When

you start to talk about our men and women who have served this nation and the importance of what they do, because they're not just standing up for your freedom, they're standing up for those who can't do it themselves. It's an awesome responsibility."

In attendance of Wednesday's ceremony were Lynnwood City Council members Dr. Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, Council President George Hurst, and Dr. Steve Woodard of Volunteers of America and Mountlake Terrace Councilman, to name a few.

"This is absolutely amazing and truly an honor to be here," Dr. Steve Woodard

told the Lynnwood Times. "I had the honor of working at Edmonds College at our veteran's resource center where I got to know some Gold Star mothers and Gold Star families. This is long overdue."

Concluding the ceremony, David Puente Jr., Deputy Director of YOUR WA State Department of Veterans Affairs read a letter from Governor Jay Inslee before the RS Seattle Marines performed the retiring of the colors, and buglers Glenn Ledbetter and Laurence Stusser played Taps.

"Words cannot encapsulate the extraordinary loss that Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Families have experienced, nor can a monument adequately demonstrate our utmost gratitude for their sacrifice. But today we gather to pay tribute to the soldiers and families that have demonstrated their profound sense of duty, dedication to service, and love of our country. Washingtonians, and indeed all Americans, owe these Gold Star families a tremendous debt... We honor you for your sacrifice and service to our state and nation," Gov. Jay Inslee wrote in a letter read by David Puente.

Veterans Park is located on the Civic Center campus south of the Lynnwood Library. In 1999, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1040 began development of the veterans' memorial in the plaza to honor veterans of past wars.

from page 2 **LABOR AGREEMENT**

"I was proud to vote for this new contract," Councilman Nehring told the Lynnwood Times. "The contract demonstrates that Snohomish County supports and appreciates our brave men and women who serve in law enforcement and keep our communities safe."

This was one of the first major votes for County Councilman Rep. Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds) who was appointed to the Council on September 29 following the resignation of Councilwoman Stephanie Wright who took a position as Executive Policy Officer.

"The first couple of weeks have been a bit of a whirlwind, but just like at the city and state level, Snohomish County has an incredible staff of dedicated public servants," Councilman Peterson wrote to the Lynnwood Times when asked to share how he is assuming his new duties.

"I am thankful the Council put forward a strong compelling contract offer that showed value, trust, and respect to our deputies and the great work they do here in Snohomish County on a daily basis," Councilman Sam Low wrote to the Lynnwood Times.

from page 10 **BRAMMEIER**

down. There are so many complications about surgery on the spinal column that my wife and I recorded goodbye videos to my kids that I still have on my phone; we didn't think I was going to make it."

Brammeier's response to the chemotherapy was mild with nausea, fatigue, and a change of appetite being the side-effects. While he used to love spicy Asian food, especially his wife's authentic Korean kimchi, he found himself only able to stomach bread and egg whites.

"At one point someone brought me a meal and the smell of the food just made my stomach turn," Brammeier said.

With some advice from fellow cancer survivors, Brammeier was able to avoid developing painful mouth sores by avoiding extreme hot, extreme cold, and dramatically textured food like popcorn or caramel. The doctors also had him wash his mouth with saline after every meal.

Aside from the change in appetite, Brammeier told the Lynnwood Times the most severe side effect to chemotherapy was the fatigue, that increased with each subsequent round. By the fourth and final session, he was sleeping for an entire week.

Brammeier's back wound never healed during his first two rounds of chemotherapy, which required doctors to routinely clean. Eventually it was decided to pause cleaning sessions, between the second and third round, to allow the incision to heal and resumed chemo that following summer.

Brammeier completed his last round of chemotherapy in July of 2022. He has since been home, carrying out physical therapy to regain the function of his legs. He routinely checks back with his doctors for the occasional computerized tomography (CT) scan.

"The first time is generally the worst because you just don't know what to expect. There are all sorts of reactions your body can have to all the medications they give you," Brammeier said. "The cancer journey is not as straightforward as we all might want to think it is."

Even though Brammeier has finished his treatment, he won't be considered "cancer free" for at least a couple years while doctors continue to monitor his progress. Typically, Brammeier's cancer won't be considered in remission until around six of chemotherapy.

Believing he was going to die, Brammeier now views life as a "second chance," thanking God, his friends, family, and church (Onnuri in Lake Forest Park) for the immense amount of support both spiritually and financially.

He also thanks the excellent Providence neurosurgery team that operated on him, the Providence nursing team that cared for him in his more than 100 days of hospital stays, as well as the Everett Clinic Oncology group that took care of his cancer care.

In the early days of his battle his friends banded together to create a "meal train" so Brammeier's wife Rachel did not have to cook dinner for months which he said was "huge early on."

Andrew Brammeier's story is just one of 1.9 million new cancer diagnoses projected by the end of 2022. An estimated 609,360 people will die of cancer in the United States by the end of this year according to the American Cancer Society.

When asked why he believed cancer awareness was so important, and what he would say to anyone beginning their fight with cancer, Brammeier's answers were all the same: "You're not alone."






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