

Volunteer Story: **Diana Rhodes** By ED STOVER

DR. DIANA RHODES LIKES TO HELP PEOPLE. "I like to do it one on one, helping people individually, making that little difference in someone's life," said Rhodes, 61, Chair of the Anatomy Department at Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences, PNWU, in Yakima.

It's the small things that can help people get through the day with their individual challenges. "It's also nice to connect with another person," she said.

That's why Rhodes decided to become a volunteer with the Yakima and Selah Neighbors' Network. She became intrigued when she saw a story in the Yakima Herald-Republic about YSNN. "I decided to explore it some more. I reached out."

That was probably a year before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, and the subsequent shutdown with its masking and social-distancing requirements. In those days, Rhodes enjoyed the personal contact with YSNN members:

"Before COVID hit, I really had a good time taking people to appointments and grocery shopping. During these COVID times, I have helped a bit with more outside tasks. I shoveled some snow, pulled weeds, and did some mowing. They're small things, but I'm glad to help the members."

Before COVID, she also enjoyed the in-person potlucks where she could get to meet the members and listen to the programs.

While COVID has curtailed personal contact with members, Rhodes still answers the call when it comes and does those things for members that she enjoys doing.

"It not only satisfies my personal desire to help people when I can, it also fits with the mission of PNWU, which is all about helping rural and underserved communities. That fits with the organization's (YSNN) mission to help people stay in their homes longer. That's what we're hoping to do through the health care system, too. So, if I take an hour off during the day to help someone, the university will support that."

Being a volunteer is pretty easy, said Rhodes, adding that YSNN program manager Chrissy Schott knows her schedule. "She'll send me an email and ask if I'm available." That makes it convenient for the volunteer.

Rhodes said she is looking forward to doing more with the organization as she gets more time. "I'm trying to retire, hopefully next summer," she said, adding that her husband, Jim, who taught microscopic anatomy at PNWU, is already retired. The Rhodes's have one daughter, Jessica, who currently is working on her Ph. D in genetics. The couple have been in Yakima since 2010 and are active outdoors people. They like to hike and recently acquired an inflatable kayak for lake paddling.

Interestingly, Rhodes also has a degree in veterinary medicine and thinks it would be a great idea if YSNN could find a way for its cadre of volunteers to help members with their pets.



Photo: Dr.
Diana Rhodes
and her dog
Kepler.

TO ALL OF OUR VOUNTEERS!



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www.yesneighbors.org Email: **ysnn.wa@gmail.com**

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ovember Month of Giving

By Mary Lou Rozdilsky



FALL BRINGS OUR “MONTH OF GIVING” -- your chance to let us know that you want the Yakima and Selah Neighbors’ Network to be here when you and your neighbors and friends need it.

The Pandemic has given us new incentives to reach out to each other and to this community. Our in-person outreach has been limited to safe, masked encounters but our commitment to connecting to our members, volunteers and supporters has deepened, making our Network stronger.

Zoom programs and small groups give us opportunities to tell stories, laugh, and learn together. We stay active with zoom balance class, walking partners, and walks at Kissel Park. We continue to offer rides and phone check-ins. In the summer when air quality allowed, we held outdoor picnics and set up booths at the at the Summer Sunset Concert Series at Franklin Park and the Farmers’ Market. We look forward to the time we can safely gather in person.

Our wider community is supporting us in new ways. We received a grant from the Legends Community Contribution Fund for a marketing contract to raise our Network’s profile, and we are pleased to have five sponsors: Tri-Ply Construction, Conover Insurance, Brumback and Ottem, the YMCA, and Thompson Audiology. A collaboration with the Farmworkers Clinic made it possible for 50 of our members, volunteers and supporters to get their Covid-19 vaccines in early February when access to vaccines was confusing. The Yakima Valley Community Foundation donated KN95 masks allowing us to offer safe services.

Despite the caution, anxiety, depression, loss of friends and separation from families many of us have experienced in the last year, a heartening generosity has still come through. That has allowed our Neighbors’ Network to come this far, even though the Pandemic may have slowed our pace. I recently heard this compelling African proverb:

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Our greatest challenges in the year ahead are reaching and including new neighbors, and stabilizing our financial base. Our Board, volunteers and active members are helping move us forward towards these goals. As we celebrate the ways we have become stronger in the last year, your donation towards our \$20,000 “Month of Giving” goal will help us move into 2022 with confidence. **Won’t you join us in making our Neighbors’ Network vision a reality?**

HOW TO DONATE? Mail (make checks to YSNN):
YSNN P.O. Box 11691, Yakima WA 98909
or
Call our office: **509-853-1917**
or
Go to website, Donate tab -www.yesneighbors.org

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Member Highlight: **Becky Johnson** By ED STOVER



SOME YEARS AGO WHEN BECKY JOHNSON was still a youngster in her late 50s, she got in the on the ground floor of what would become the Yakima and Selah Neighbors' Network.

"I didn't see myself as old, but I saw that it would be important

to have an organization that could help us stay in our own home (when we did get old)," said Johnson, referring to her husband, Ron.

Johnson got involved. She and Ron were among the founding members of YSNN, and Johnson is still on the YSNN board, serving as secretary. Now 66, Johnson still doesn't see herself as old, but she learned in dramatic fashion recently that you don't have to be old and frail to need help.

"This year, last March, I was scheduled to have shoulder replacement surgery on my right shoulder," she recalls, explaining that she and Ron had the post-operative routine all planned out. "It was no big deal. My husband would drive me wherever I needed to go."

Unfortunately, three weeks after the surgery, Ron experienced a detached retina in his right eye. "Most people would still be able to see out of their (remaining) good eye, but my husband had a detached retina in his other eye six years ago and is virtually blind in that eye." This meant, of course, that Ron was unable to drive even himself. Actually, he had to be transported to Bellevue for the eye surgery, then stay there overnight for follow-up appointment. Becky, meanwhile, was homebound.

"My right arm was in a sling and that prevented me from driving," she said. "I couldn't drive myself to physical therapy. I couldn't even pick up a prescription. I couldn't take my husband anywhere. This help I thought I wouldn't need for 15 or 20 years, well, suddenly I needed it."

The new reality was a tough pill to swallow. The Johnsons are independent, active people. Before retirement, Ron, now 70, was a firefighter with the Yakima Fire Department; Becky worked for the state Department of Ecology, No, being incapable and dependent on others was not part of the plan, not this soon.

Johnson admits feeling overwhelmed at first: "There was a bit of despair—oh-my-god, what am I going to do? Then after about 24 hours of processing, I realized we had good friends who would help."

That's when the YSNN cadre of volunteers pitched in. There currently are about 40 on the roster who are available to drive members to appointments and help with other needs.

"YSNN took care of our transportation needs, and we had friends in our church who cooked meals, and our daughter Jessica here in town helped as she could though she works at the Farm-workers Clinic and was neck-deep in the COVID crisis."

Johnson said her experience is a good example of how YSNN volunteers can help.

"I sent off a message to Chrissy (YSNN program manager Chrissy Schott) explaining that I needed help with transportation. My husband's surgery was on a Friday and I had my own appointment the next Tuesday. On Friday, I emailed that I needed help with transportation and over the weekend people (volunteers) were scheduled to transport me.

"It was very comforting," she said.

Fortunately, the Johnsons' personal health crisis had a good outcome: Becky's shoulder has healed, and Ron's eye healed so he can see out of his right eye again. Meanwhile, Johnson says she still occasionally needs the YSNN volunteers. Once, she had car trouble when Ron was fishing, and a volunteer picked her up at the dealership so she didn't have to hire a cab. She adds that her experience gives credence to the old adage about Murphy's Law that what can go wrong will go wrong.

"There's that old saying that we're all one illness or accident away from needing help and that certainly proved true for me," said Johnson. "It helped me see the benefits of a group like this (YSNN)."

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connect and engage with YSNN –Chrissy Schott Program Manager

Social Events | Interest Groups

Through YSNN, members and volunteers connect and engage, discover and learn and enjoy each other's company through group activities and interest groups. As a member-led organization, our program committee-- working with staff—creates events and activities that reflect the shared interests and requests of our membership.



Social Events via zoom or in person

We invite everyone to join us (open to all) in interesting Zoom Talk Presentations and workshops, weekly walking group, seasonal events like Music in Franklin Park, Downtown Farmers' Market, picnics, potlucks and more. This is our chance engage with the community.

Check the calendar on our website and look for emails for the most current activities and dates.

Interest Groups via zoom or in person

Groups are organized and led by members and volunteers who have special interest in an activity or topic. Participants gather together usually on a weekly or monthly basis. They get together frequently -- morning coffee groups for conversation and support, story share, balance class, and more. We email a weekly calendar of programs and events to all members and the calendar can be found on our website.

The possibilities for interest groups are limited only by member and volunteer interests and enthusiasm. Contact us to find out more about joining one of these groups, or for assistance with starting a new one. Ph: 509-853-1917 or email ysnn.wa@gmail.com

Testimonials from members:

Walking Group (Social Event-open to all) at Kissel Park- Friday morning finds many members, volunteers and friends meeting to walk. Although our walking speeds vary, we all share an appreciation for exercising outdoors. As well as improving our fitness levels, friendships have formed and a strong sense of community surrounds this group. The walking path is hard-surfaced and mostly flat with opportunity for short or longer circuits. We welcome new-comers. Meet the group at the north end of the parking area. One of us will connect you with a walking partner– Barb Heinzen, member and volunteer.

Coffee and Conversation (Interest Group) -This is one of the many interest groups that YSNN offers. This is an informal discussion group where topics can range from gardening to art and everything in between. There is no set agenda, just a chance to share various topics and ideas with others. The discussions tend to be lively, open and nonjudgmental. In addition, you get to know people from various backgrounds and lifestyles along with some great conversations. Try it! You'll like it! – Toby Hastie, member

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Becky Johnson-Secretary

Susie Lattomus

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