

# FISHline

News from GHP FISH Food Bank & Community Services



## The future is 376 feet away!



## Community's support meets the need when it matters most – Thank You!

It is at times like these when we most need each other. True to form, Gig Harbor has really stepped up to make sure our neighbors are being taken care of during these uncertain times.

People are coming together to help each other: young people initiating food drives in their neighborhoods, community members making face masks for volunteers and clients, new volunteers providing additional staff while the “regulars” who can’t work due to health considerations help from home, financial donors providing aid to help folks stay in their homes with the electricity on. Lots of people are asking “what can I do to help?” Uncertainty is always difficult, but when your neighbor is walking by your side, the journey is easier.

The current situation has made it crystal clear that GHP FISH must be ready for the unexpected. Being able to adapt to changing circumstances is key to serving our community. While our primary focus continues to be meeting the needs of our neighbors during this crisis, we also are looking ahead to the future and moving forward on plans for a new facility next door.

The future is 376 feet away! [Read all about it on page 2.](#)

Thankfully yours,  
Ron Coen, Board President

### Summer 2020

While coronavirus restrictions have kept us from gathering for our annual Thank You Luncheon and annual meeting, we are more grateful than ever for your support. We hope to celebrate in person when the time is right.

Read on to see how GHP FISH is providing food, financial aid and encouragement in this extraordinary season of uncertainty and hardship and planning for an even more effective future.

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**Our mission:** Neighbors helping neighbors in need with food and other assistance as they move toward self-sufficiency.

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### GHP FISH Food Bank And Community Services

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Mailing address: PO Box 154,  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335

[www.ghpfish.org](http://www.ghpfish.org)  
Office: (253) 858-6179  
Financial Aid (253) 851-8800

## The future is 376 feet away for a workable new facility

The need for Gig Harbor Peninsula FISH Food Bank and Community Services is greater today than it has ever been. Without question, the Food Bank needs a workable home in Gig Harbor that can support the ever-growing and urgent needs of the area. Normally it would take four to five years to plan and build a new facility, but we need a new home in *less than two years*. This is an unprecedented, pressing challenge in an unprecedented time. Fortunately, important work has already begun, as you can see from the architectural rendering on the previous page.

The first step was to secure land for a new home. GHP FISH accomplished this in January of 2020 when we signed a long-term, \$1-per-year lease on property only 376 feet from our current front door. At the same time, meetings began with the City of Gig Harbor to address land-use and development requirements. The building committee worked closely with Ratcliffe Gagliano Architects on plans for an attractive, practical 10,000-square-foot building. It will have ample, secure space for donation drop-offs, food and clothing shopping/distribution, administrative offices and committee meetings.

The costs of these early efforts have already been covered by several local families who see GHP FISH's needs as critical. Additional funding has been acquired through efforts of Representative Michelle Caldier and Senator Emily Randall, who have provided valuable assistance in obtaining state funds.

We submitted our site design to the Gig Harbor Design Review Board in mid-June and are awaiting word on a hearing date. These are our next steps leading to a grand opening by summer 2022:

- Design and permitting work will move ahead over the coming months. The Food Bank's operating funds will continue to be focused on serving those in need, with the expectation that the demand will only increase in the months ahead.
- Spring of 2021: Begin on-site clearing and grading the land.
- Fall or early winter of 2021: Weather permitting, and with the help of the City of Gig Harbor, we will start construction on a new and more functional home for Gig Harbor Peninsula FISH.
- Spring or early summer of 2022: if all goes according to plan, the new Food Bank will be finished and ready to serve from a facility that is functional, efficient and friendly for many years to come.

Making all this happen will take the help and commitment of many. The seed has been planted by a few generous friends. Now Gig Harbor Peninsula FISH needs the community to help it germinate and grow as quickly as possible.

### **GHP FISH clients served in FY 2019**

Total people served: 9,850

Number of meals possible: 206,800

Financial assistance: \$79,250    Education aid: \$17,350



## GHP FISH adapts procedures and expands its outreach during pandemic

Throughout these first months of Coronavirus-related shutdowns and safety measures, GHP FISH Food Bank has continually adapted to better serve community members who need our services.

Two medical professionals monitor health advisories and update our procedures to protect our clients and volunteers. These include frequent sanitizing and handwashing, masks for volunteers and clients, and social distancing. Volunteers pre-pack bags of groceries and take them outside to waiting clients, who receive perishable and non-perishable foods, along with other grocery items as available. They

also deliver food to some clients who are in poor health.

Even as the county moves into successive phases of the state's Safe Start reopening plan, precautionary procedures will likely remain in place and a return to self-shopping will be some ways off.

Scores of new volunteers have come forward to temporarily replace the regular volunteers who can't work at the food bank right now due to health considerations. At the same time, donors have made extraordinary efforts to provide much-needed food, and cash donations increased dramatically during April and May.

These additional funds have been especially important. With unemployment at record levels, rental assistance requests have more than tripled. Because of the community's generous donations, we have been able to meet those needs—providing more than \$35,000 in May alone. Many of the food and financial aid recipients have never needed our help before, and said their needs were COVID-related.

We have reached out in multiple ways to let people know we're safe, well-stocked and eager to help. That information has been translated into Spanish and a Russian version is in the works.

Our new volunteers; generous donors; and local stores, businesses and organizations have done more than put food on neighbors' tables. They have shown there is hope for a brighter day and a new tomorrow.

### Volunteers' smiles say 'welcome' in any language

THANK YOU for all you are doing. Thank you so much for your great volunteer spirit, for the kindness you show to the English Language Learners' families and for your beautiful, energetic leadership style. I know how difficult it can be to communicate with someone who does not speak your language. Your volunteers always find the way (sometimes just with a friendly smile) to make our families feel welcome and part of the Gig Harbor community.

Margarita Leas  
Family Outreach, Peninsula Public Schools



**Gig Harbor Peninsula FISH**  
**Food Bank & Community Services**  
PO Box 154  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335

**Or current resident**

***Our future is just  
376 feet away!***

**See inside for big  
news about our  
new home.**

### **Catch the latest FISH news online**

Follow us on Facebook (GigHarborPeninsulaFISH) and on Instagram (@ghpfish). See something you like? Please share it with your friends and groups.

For in-depth stories and information, go to our website ([www.ghpfish.org](http://www.ghpfish.org)) and click on:

[Feature articles](#) under the 'About Us tab'

How to [Help](#)

[Donate Now](#) You can also help by mailing a check or dropping off your gift during open hours.

GHP FISH volunteers thank everyone who has helped care for our neighbors in need. To remove your name from this mailing list or share your email address, please call (253) 858-6179 or email [ghpfishmedia@gmail.com](mailto:ghpfishmedia@gmail.com)

### **Hours we're open**

Monday  
9:30 AM – 3:30 PM  
Tuesday – closed  
Wednesday  
9:30 AM – 6:00 PM  
Thursday  
9:30 AM – 6:00 PM  
Friday  
9:30 AM – 3:30 PM  
Saturday/Sunday  
Closed

### **Holidays Closed**

President's Day  
Memorial Day  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Veteran's Day  
Thanksgiving  
Christmas  
New Year's Day