



GIPSON GAZETTE

NEWS FROM THE CARL GIPSON CENTER

MARCH 2023 | MEMBER & PARTNER EDITION | VOL. 14

GIPSON SPOTLIGHT

Member
**JUANITA
COMEAU**



"Mom and Dad had a huge garden every year: carrots and peas and other vegetables. But the corn on the cob, that was a big deal. We'd take a wagon and go around the neighborhood and sell fresh corn on the cob, 20 cents an ear. All the money we made went toward going to the Minnesota State Fair. When the Fair came around, we had a day, and the whole family would go."

Juanita Comeau, her nine siblings and two parents would check out the tractors, the animals and the rides. Once a year Juanita would get cotton candy.

The Comeau family had to be thrifty, and that DNA persists in modern day Juanita: she does not waste words or actions. She is precise and thoughtful, without pretense or spectacle. In a word, Juanita Comeau is Mid-Western.

The third in line of ten kids in a Catholic family, Juanita was born in Hoven, South Dakota, population just over 300. When she was three, her Father, Dean, and Mom, Beann, moved the family to Roseville, MN. *"It was wonderful. We had a farm, and acreage all around us; it had a pond and hills. In the summertime my Mom*

would give me breakfast and then she wouldn't see us until dinnertime. You'd play in neighborhood baseball games, ride your bike. When it snowed, we could sled and toboggan in the hills."

Juanita was younger than her older siblings, Becky and Gary, but spent much of her childhood looking after Vicki, Steve, Richard, Patty, Nancy, Susan or Jennifer. When she could get away, she *"... preferred to be outdoors. I liked to climb trees, and I was in Girl Scouts. I babysat as much as I could so I could raise \$54.00 to send myself to Girl Scout Camp for a week each summer."*

When Juanita was 16 the Comeau family moved to Milwaukee, so her Father could start "Edward's Pipe & Tobacco." When she wasn't studying at Pius XI Catholic School or taking care of her brothers and sisters, she helped her Dad in the store.

After college at University of Wisconsin-Stout, Juanita needed to spread her wings. She bought her boyfriend's blue 1972 Ford Galaxy in January of 1977, and headed to a job in Washington state, where she'd never been.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

Here we can begin to see the thread that runs through Juanita's life: she takes care of people.

In Vocational Rehabilitation, she took care of disabled veterans and adults with developmental disabilities. In the Everett School District, she coordinated Vocational Education across the District, advocating for opportunities for all kids, especially those who didn't have parents with deep pockets.

In 2001, when her parents needed her, she moved back to Wisconsin to take care of them.

In higher education, she took care of students who needed extra help to get to college, and those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Along the way, she took care of her girls: Roberta, born 1985, and Marisa, born 1994.

In June of 2021, after moving back to Everett, Juanita found herself in new territory. *"For somebody who took care of multiple people, now it's just me and my two dogs."* Lucy is the Sheltie, and Ricci is the Border Collie mix, and those two get at least two walks a day, plus regular visits to Loganberry Dog Park.

"I didn't really know how to go out and make friends." A Gipson Center presentation in her community reunited her with Gipson Center Operations Manager Gul Subaykan, whom Juanita has known since Gul was a kid.

Now Juanita is a regular at the Carl Gipson Center, and rarely misses Cora's 9:30am Forever Fit class, Monday through Thursday. *"I never imagined that I'd be going to a senior center."*

"I come for the friendships."



On February 22nd we celebrated two of our best:

Clayton Olsen turned 95 on 2/23/23
Jean Kiniry turned 90 on 2/15/23

If you see them in Cora's 9:30am Forever Fit class, tell them to pick up the pace & stop slacking!



NEWS AND NOTABLE

In the Fall of 2021, at the request of Snohomish County government, VOA agreed to serve refugees in a “Welcome Center” model on Fridays at the Carl Gipson Center.

Our Welcome Center provides food, a sense of community, and multiple services from multiple partners. These services include housing and utility assistance; access to education; medical and dental triage services; employment support; household goods & clothing donations; and now opportunities to learn English

We’re now serving over 100 Ukrainian refugees each Friday. To find out how you can help, reach out to Operations Manager Gul Subaykan at gsubaykan@voaww.org.



Olga Wiley

Member Services Lead



2600

Refugees from Afghanistan & Ukraine who received services at our Welcome Center on Fridays in 2022.



With degrees in Practical Psychology and Journalism, Olga held many different positions in her native Ukraine before moving to America over a year ago. Our team got to know Olga as she began volunteering with Ukrainian refugees at our Center each Friday. She’d translate for Ukrainian refugees, build relationships, and help where ever she was needed. Impressed by her resourcefulness, work ethic and dedication, Operations Manager Gul Subaykan hired Olga, who is now training at the Center for her new role.

Olga will open the Center most weekdays and oversee Saturday operations. Next time you’re in, introduce yourself and get to know our newest leader.

MEMBER
NEWS

Member Bingo

Special Prizes Each Monday in March
by Everett AquaSox



Sales open
@ 12:30pm



Program Update

We are discontinuing Community Bingo, which was the 3rd Saturday of every month. We'll replace it with a few special Bingo events throughout the year.

Stay tuned for more information.

Mandala Inspired Art

March 15th | 11AM-12:30PM | Mt. Adams



Provided: Supplies and a take-home art kit
Instructor: Mara Thornton, Schack Arts Center
Spaces: 10 Available | Registration required
Cost: Free!



voaww.org/gipson-center

Speaker Series: March 2023

3/1 | Christy Cowley
Sharing Wheels

3/8 | Larry O'Donnell
Everett Historian & Author

3/15 | Amy Wheat
Snohomish County Opioid Education

3/22 | Karlee Deatherage
Puget Sound Energy

3/29 | Nellie Kemp
Everett AquaSox



Lunch at 11:30 | Speaker at 11:45am

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PARTNER
HIGHLIGHT

When he was a kid growing up in Everett, **Landon McKeen** loved adventure. He'd look for crystals and fossils in his backyard, and he loved sports. When he wasn't in class at Whittier Elementary (K-2nd), Garfield Elementary (2nd-5th) or North Middle, he was playing basketball, soccer, lacrosse or volleyball. To this day, Landon's a huge sports fans and loves the SilverTips, LA Kings, NY Giants, and the Kraken.



Landon McKeen
GOAL Student



Now a student in Everett Public School's GOAL program (Gaining Ownership of Adult Life) housed at the Gipson Center, Landon brings joy, warmth and a great work ethic to helping out. *"I like helping Joseph out in the kitchen, serving milk and serving the seniors."* Like his classmates, Landon also cleans, sets up and takes down tables and chairs, vacuums, decorates the Center, and steps in wherever he's needed.

Lead Teacher Terri McAllister says, *"Landon is very kind and has a big heart."*

Landon loves being here at the Carl Gipson Center, and he'd love to get a job at Rodland Toyota, the Snoqualmie Falls NW Railway Historic Museum, or the Everett Station. If he does work at the Station, he'd like to *"... hand out tickets, greet customers, ask about their day, and tell them 'Have a nice trip!'"*

Landon and his class are here as part of an innovative partnership, where the GOAL students learn work and life skills while serving our community. If you see Landon around, say hi and *"Go SilverTips!"*



COMMUNITY
EVENTS



MARCH MADNESS CLOG DANCE WORKSHOP

**Saturday, March 11th
9:30AM-5PM**

Featuring workshops by
local instructors.
Easy to Intermediate level

\$10 for Gipson Members
\$15 for Non-Members



CARL
GIPSON
CENTER

Questions: Contact Activities Coordinator Cora Koffski

RESOURCES



Helping you keep the lights on

*Ask about PUD bill discounts
for income-qualified customers*



snopud.com/discounts

Volunteer Opportunities at the Gipson Center

We're looking for experienced, dedicated volunteers who can commit to leading one of these areas with an on-going basis at our Center:

- Tai Chi
- Mah Jong
- Writing
- Dance: Ballroom, Swing, or other styles
- Bingo Assistance & Calling (Monday afternoons)

Interested?

Contact Activities Coordinator Cora Koffski at ckoffski@voaww.org



Gipson Volunteer of the Month

Jim has been a volunteer at the Member Services Desk since November 2022. He's been an invaluable addition to the front desk team. Jim is always ready to take on any task and jump in where he is needed. Jim also took over the smartphone assistance class. In that class he meets with members and addresses issues they may be having with their phones or tablets.

Jim is always willing to help any of our members at any time. We are grateful for all of his contributions.

**JIM
HAGGLUND**



If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact our Operations Manager Gul to find out more.

Gul Subaykan

gsubaykan@voaww.org (425) 818-2744

A photograph of three women sitting at a round table, smiling and eating. The table is set with various food items, including trays of food, cups, and a smartphone. The background shows other people and a window.

GIVE THE GIFT OF GIPSON
One membership for a low-income senior is \$30 or \$120.

The logo for the Carl Gipson Center, featuring a stylized 'V' shape made of three parallel lines, followed by the text "CARL GIPSON CENTER".



2802 Broadway | Everett, WA 98201
(425) 818-2784 | www.voaww.org/gipson-center
M-Th: 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM | Sat: 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

