

The Importance of a Vibrant Community

by Dave Earling

We are all proud of and value the "quality of life" in Edmonds. We know that few communities in the Puget Sound have our natural seaside setting which has so many varied and quality family neighborhoods and businesses. From Lake Ballinger to Puget Sound to Meadowdale, we provide a cross section of diversity which enriches the Edmonds "experience".

We know we have quality schools, health care, access to recreation, an outstanding arts community and we place great value in the variation of our demographic; youth to seniors, acceptance of varied religious, cultural and racial differences.

We are a caring community. We know we have an endless list of folks who volunteer for many different community events, private, public and religious organizations. We have several local churches who provide meals for the less fortunate or homeless. We have the largest food bank in South Snohomish County and we provide shelter on cold nights at the Edmonds Senior Center.

Over the past five plus years, I believe we have seen a new energy in the community which has dramatically evolved. Our community has changed in a variety of very healthy ways from age, to ethnicity, to cultural, to healthy life styles, to even fully committing to being enveloped in technology!

While we have a strong senior population, many of them have become believers of staying physically and mentally engaged through educational opportunities such as the Creative Retirement Institute at Edmonds Community College. Others are choosing to work beyond "retirement" age. (Myself included)

Along with the strong senior community, and exciting to me, is that we are also seeing younger families move to the community. Certainly the quality public and private schools are an attraction. Additionally, we also provide a safe place to raise families. Beyond that, with the variety and quality of our parks and waterfront, the Boys and Girls Club, the varied City of Edmonds young people programs and the many youth sports opportunities, we should appreciate and continue our efforts to attract young families.

We are also experiencing growth in a narrower, but important age group. The 20-40 year old, single or professional couple without children age group is of growing importance. We have many who work here in Edmonds, but they also have an easy commute to other nearby communities. The strong, diverse restaurant and night life availability also adds interest for late gen xers and millennials. Remember this is the age group who want transit, who want the option of walking to shop, work and play in their community... simplifying their lives.

The final point in the evolution I mention above is acknowledging the growing and vibrant business community. Whether Highway 99 and the International District, the expansion of Swedish Hospital and their growing campus, the expanding vitality of Westgate, or the now alive and vibrant downtown; we have grown within our several communities with a newer, alive and more energetic committed business districts. They work long and hard hours and serve our city well.

All of the rambling preceding paragraphs, while attempting to talk about our evolving community, segue back to the top and title of this column, "The Importance of a Vibrant Community." What is it that brings our community together and causes the vibrancy, the interconnection of young, old, differing viewpoints and priorities?

For me it is quite simple, it is the people of the community! It is you and I, your neighbors and businesses. The vibrancy comes from the collection of 40,000 people who are committed to the community and care about the past, present and future of this treasure, Edmonds, Washington founded in 1890 by George Brackett. We bring the vibrancy, we are the energy!