

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

## Upcoming Community Events

*Faith Leader Luncheon of Fellowship & Solidarity*

### Quarterly Faith Leader Luncheon

Thursday, August 7, 2025

12:00PM-1:00PM

August's Host: Center for Spiritual Living, Tacoma

**PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT**

### Project Homeless Connect

Thursday, September 11, 2025

11:00AM-3:00PM

First Christian Church, Tacoma

Questions? Contact Sandy Windley at [sandyw@associatedministries.org](mailto:sandyw@associatedministries.org)

You can now give using your camera or an iPhone/Android QR code reader application!



**THANK YOU**  
FOR PARTNERING  
WITH US TO END  
HOMELESSNESS.

Hover over this code and it will open our donation page. >>>

### AM's Board of Directors

#### Officers

President: **Carolyn Read**, St. Leo Catholic Parish  
Vice-President: **Ahlmahz Negash**, Muslim Community  
Past-President: **Diane Powers**, Peace Lutheran Church  
Treasurer: **Candy Watkins**, Baha'i Community  
Secretary: **Craig Huish**, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

#### Directors

**Helen Boyer**, Bethany Presbyterian Church  
**Rabbi Keren Gorban**, Temple Beth El  
**Ron Martinez**, Harbor Christian Church  
**Yuni Medlin**, United Methodist Church  
**Rev. Malando Redeemer**, Shiloh Baptist Church  
**Rev. Paul Lebens-Englund**, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
**Stacey Soltoff**, Temple Beth El  
**Imam Dr. Abdul-Hakim Mohamed**, Muslim Community  
**Bishop Dr. Lawrence White**, Tacoma Ministerial Alliance  
**Dan Grey**, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

**Thank you to the following partners for supporting our communities!**



Associated Ministries is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, tax ID #91-0847534. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. No goods or services were provided in exchange for your generous financial donation.

# Together

Working Together So All Are Housed, Healed and Whole

**an** ASSOCIATED MINISTRIES

ASSOCIATEDMINISTRIES.ORG | 253.383.3056 | SPRING 2025

## Announcing Systems Navigation: AMs New Initiative Helps House Families

Too often, households facing homelessness feel alone and overwhelmed by the complex process of accessing services or obtaining the necessary documentation to become housing-ready. AM's newest program, Systems Navigation, pairs families with a skilled and compassionate staff member who provides the support they need to navigate these obstacles. Now there is a clear link to hope. Households not immediately diverted from homelessness due to the lack of an immediate housing option are connected with a dedicated advocate and resource expert, who offers guidance through the often-confusing systems that impact those experiencing homelessness.

Systems Navigation provides intensive case management for the most vulnerable households within the Prioritization Pool — our community's "waitlist" of those awaiting housing referrals when opportunities become available. Staff work closely with these households to gather necessary documents so they can be move-in ready and to assess additional needs they have to help ensure their long-term housing stability.

Tiffany Williams, who has been appointed to lead our Systems Navigation program, describes this role as her calling. As a former Housing Specialist in our Rapid Rehousing Program, she came into her new position equipped with essential resources

and knowledge. But what she discovered in this role was something even deeper: her work provides people with hope. This realization has reaffirmed her belief that this is the purpose God has given her. Yes, families need tangible support, but hope is what keeps them going. Knowing that the struggle will end, that there is light at the end of the tunnel, offers strength and resilience in even the darkest moments.



Tiffany Williams, Systems Navigation Program Manager

This work is both challenging and rewarding. We often ask ourselves, "How did we get here? How did we get to a place where families are sleeping on the streets?" Through Systems Navigation, we are committed to providing the tools, resources, and support households need to take the next step toward safety and security. Above all, we are connecting one human being to another and offering hope. In times of crisis, hope is what helps people keep moving forward, and that is what we are giving to those experiencing homelessness through Systems Navigation.

With the support of friends like you we are able to empower amazing people like Tiffany to do the life-changing work she does every day. We hope you feel a sense of joy knowing that you are the "wind beneath the wings" of the AM team when you provide the resources needed to make efforts like our Systems Navigation program possible. Thank you!

## ■ **An Inspiring Success Story: Moving from Homelessness to Hope**

We love sharing stories of success with our supporters. But what we love even more is letting our program participants share their own stories! Following are excerpts from a recent interview with a community member that successfully graduated from our Family Permanent Housing program (we're referring to them as 'PG' at their request).

**Q: What were some of the main challenges you faced while experiencing homelessness?**

PG: Some of the most challenging things I dealt with were carrying around the constant worry about eating, sleeping, bathing, etc. It felt as if our unfortunate circumstances were a bother to the very people we needed support from. In addition to that, it made it very difficult to focus on bringing in income, which we desperately needed.

**Q: How did experiencing homelessness affect your physical and mental health?**

PG: I became depressed, anxious, and fearful. My brain couldn't shut off. I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders, being consumed in a constant state of fight or flight.

**Q: What kind of support did you receive once you entered our Family Permanent Housing program?**

PG: I received housing assistance, furniture and bedding, food assistance, and emotional support. AM also offers assistance for vehicle repairs. During the holidays, they let me pick out a few toys for my daughter, as well as hand-delivered holiday meals and plates.

***My housing specialist Shannon has been an absolute pleasure to work with, as her dedication to giving back to the community does not go unnoticed!***

PG: Don't be ashamed or afraid to reach out for help! Whether it be your local food bank, shelter, or programs such as AM. It takes strength to ask for help. It's also important to understand everyone goes through hardship. You are human, you are important, and you matter.

Thank you, PG, for sharing your story with us! PG and her family now have permanent housing, full time work, and she is exploring future opportunities for education! We are so proud to be a part of this and many similar stories of success across our community. Thank you for helping make these stories a reality through your support!



Shannon Ice, Housing Specialist, FPH

**Q: How has your life changed since completing the program?**

PG: Our lives have become stable, peaceful, and fulfilling. We can make new, happy, and refreshing memories.

**Q: What advice would you give someone currently experiencing homelessness?**

## Director's Corner

### Moving Forward in a Time of Uncertainty

By Michael Yoder, Executive Director

Since January, nonprofits who partnered effectively with our government for many years to serve those in need have faced ongoing uncertainty about their ability to continue those services. One of the agencies navigating this chaos is Associated Ministries.

AM relies on diverse sources of funding to accomplish our mission, ranging from the federal and state governments, to private foundations, faith communities, businesses, and many generous friends like you. If federal assistance is threatened, some of our most vulnerable clients stand to be impacted the greatest.

A few months ago we wrote to our supporters and many stepped up to provide some initial resources to help ensure that we could continue to assist our neighbors in need no matter what happens on the national level. I wish I could say that since then the

uncertainty has passed and that we have all the resources we need to remain resilient no matter what we might face.

As if life in general isn't challenging enough for us all these days, families facing homelessness face more burdens than most of us could ever imagine. That's why Associated Ministries is not retrenching in this time of uncertainty, but instead we are moving forward! At our recent Lead the Way Home Breakfast we announced the launch of a new program to come alongside households in a valuable new way!

In this issue of our newsletter you can read about our newest program, Systems Navigation. It provides a clear link to hope by pairing houseless families with a skilled and compassionate staff member who provides the support they need to navigate the obstacles.

To say we are living in a time of uncertainty is an understatement. But despite the situation we are navigating, AM's commitment is unwavering towards the families we serve. The late spiritual teacher Ram Dass once said: "Whether it is the beginning of the apocalypse or the beginning of the Golden Age, our work remains the same: to love one another and to reduce suffering." Thank you for the support you provide that allows us to continue loving and serving our neighbors in need.

## ■ **Investing in Transformation: Celebrating a Legacy of Love for our Community**

An exceptional long-time friend of Associated Ministries, Rev. Art Schmidt, passed away at age 85 on March 8. After his ordination in the Lutheran Church, Art dedicated his career to helping those experiencing grief and suffering. He worked in mission congregations, hospitals, and treatment centers, including 30 years at St. Joseph Hospital in Tacoma, where he deeply impacted many lives.

Art's family was his greatest joy. He was a loving husband to Margaret Ann, father to five children, and grandfather to seven. Even after retiring in 2008, Art continued to offer guidance and served on various community boards, including the Pierce County Ethics Commission and multiple terms on the Associated Ministries Board of Directors.

Art loved the vision of AM and he and Margaret Ann were involved in many ways for more than 30 years. In addition to Board service, Art helped lead our Moments of Blessing, and he was instrumental in AM's transition from an ecumenical to an interfaith

organization in the early 2010s.

Margaret Ann recently shared that she and Art were simultaneously mad and sad when they learned of the impact that impending Federal government funding cuts would have on organizations like AM, and one of the last things they decided together was to increase their financial support for AM. Margaret Ann also shared her commitment to maintain giving monthly to AM as a continuation of their shared commitment to our community.

Art Schmidt's legacy of love and care endures through the many lives he touched in his well-lived life, a legacy that Margaret Ann now carries on. We are so grateful for exceptional supporters and partners like the Schmidts!

