

# Connecting Community

FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS

DESIRE TO  
BE A PART  
OF MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE

BECAUSE OF  
THE WORK  
THEY DO WITH  
CHILDREN

SPEND SOME  
'FUN' TIME  
SUPPORTING  
COMMITTEES

IT'S MY HONOR  
AND MY  
PRIVILEGE

CITIZENS  
HELPING  
CITIZENS

GET  
FULFILLMENT  
FOR MY NEED  
TO SERVE



The Columbian

# SENIORS HELPING SENIORS AND FINDING NEW FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY

SHIBA stands for Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors. SHIBA Volunteers provide free, unbiased, and confidential help with Medicare choices. SHIBA Volunteers who counsel clients about Medicare are trained and certified by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner's consumer protection services. They help consumers evaluate and compare Medicare plans and programs, help clients apply for subsidies that may help with Medicare costs, speak with 1-800-Medicare on clients' behalf, and collect and report possible Medicare fraud complaints.

In Southwest Washington, Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington (AAADSW) partners with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner to support an active, committed team of

SHIBA Volunteers who help hundreds of our community members every year.

Medicare choices can be overwhelming, and there's so much information out there for consumers to sift through. People want to know, "Can I still see my doctor? Which plans will cover my medications? What's the most affordable option for me?" It's a relief for clients to have someone to talk with about these questions; someone who is caring, knowledgeable, and committed to providing trustworthy information to make well-informed choices.

SHIBA Volunteers serve people of all ages and backgrounds including people with disabilities, seniors and pre-retirees, uninsured Washingtonians, people from rural communities, people of various races, ethnicities, and languages, LGBTQ+ clients,



Gretchen Frasier, SHIBA volunteer (extraordinaire)

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**If you have a passion for helping others, volunteer with SHIBA!**  
**Help people in your own community navigate Medicare! We'll train you!**




Contact Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of SW Washington, your local SHIBA office, at 360-694-8144 or 1-888-637-6060.

AREA AGENCY ON  
**Aging & Disabilities**  
OF SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

## Volunteer Drivers Needed



Give the gift of mobility by volunteering your time to drive a Clark County neighbor. Training and fuel costs provided. Can't drive? Donations help provide trips.

**360.735.3680 | [CommunityInMotion.org](http://CommunityInMotion.org)**



*Volunteers in Motion* ●

Veterans, and anyone who is looking for reliable, accurate information about Medicare.

“Volunteers are the heart and soul of SHIBA,” says Pamala Monahan, SHIBA Program Coordinator, AAADSW. “Without them, this crucial community resource would not exist. In addition to our SHIBA Volunteers who counsel clients about Medicare, we have SHIBA team members who offer presentations, do community outreach to let people know Medicare help is available, and share their administrative skills.”

Gretchen Frasier is a SHIBA Volunteer Counselor. Gretchen and her husband moved to Vancouver in 2009 to support his elderly mother who was beginning to need help. Gretchen’s background includes working with families who are surviving the death of a child and counseling domestic violence victims. When they moved to Vancouver, Gretchen joined the SHIBA program to continue using her counseling skills.

As a SHIBA counselor, Gretchen works with clients who have questions or problems with their Medicare coverage and options. She says volunteering for SHIBA is very rewarding and meets her goal of using her skills in counseling. “I am surrounded by other volunteers working with SHIBA who have become good friends. Staying current with the Medicare changes challenges me several times a month. So, I continue to grow and expand my resource base,” Gretchen said. “Most of our clients are extremely grateful that we are there for them. They often come to us thinking we are brokers and are surprised and delighted to find that we can go much deeper and further than the broker can. Brokers have their place in the insurance world, but we also help people who are very low income or are disabled and unable to do their own research.”

Pamala Monahan says a person doesn’t need to be a Medicare expert to volunteer with SHIBA and that training is provided. “In fact, SHIBA Volunteers cannot be licensed insurance agents, brokers, or have any financial incentive to work with clients,” Pamala said. “SHIBA Volunteers come from all walks of life and bring a wide variety of skills to their volunteer work. SHIBA

Volunteers have been teachers, counselors, financial advisors, medical professionals, human resources professionals, government employees and family caregivers who recognized the need as they helped a loved one navigate Medicare. In addition to the formal training volunteers receive, new SHIBA Volunteers are mentored by longtime team members, and enjoy the support and camaraderie of others who are passionate

about this work.”

**If you’re interested in becoming a SHIBA Volunteer, contact Pamala Monahan, SHIBA Program Coordinator, Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington; Pamala.monahan@dshs.wa.gov, (360) 759-4676.**



(With her infectious smile and enthusiasm,) SHIBA Program Coordinator, Pamala Monahan, dresses up for a Halloween volunteer event