

THE FRONT PORCH

IN THIS ISSUE

- Accessibility at Finch Green
- HRB residents at work
- Ericksen Community right on schedule
- Blackbird Bakery is looking out for all of us
- Meet the Independent Living at Home program director

Meet Misty Mountford, HRB's Independent Living at Home program director

"When I am invited to provide a home assessment, it's not just about identifying immediate needs. I think about what comes next and what other resources I can provide. So yes, I might install grab bars, a comfort-height toilet, accessible door handles, or any number of modifications to ensure my client can live safely, independently, and comfortably at home. But I don't stop there. I connect them to services, such as veteran benefits or medical equipment donations, or I recommend a vision screening or movement class. Above all, I provide consistency, respect, and caring that stem from truly getting to know my client.

When I am not in people's homes, you might find me presenting in the community about aging in place, ageism, and dementia awareness. I am a strong believer in spreading awareness and in the power of community and a sense of belonging to foster healthy aging."



Independent Living at Home is available free of charge for income-eligible households and for a fee for households that are over income. Learn more at www.housingresourcesbi.org.



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THE FRONTPORCH

HOUSING RESOURCES BAINBRIDGE

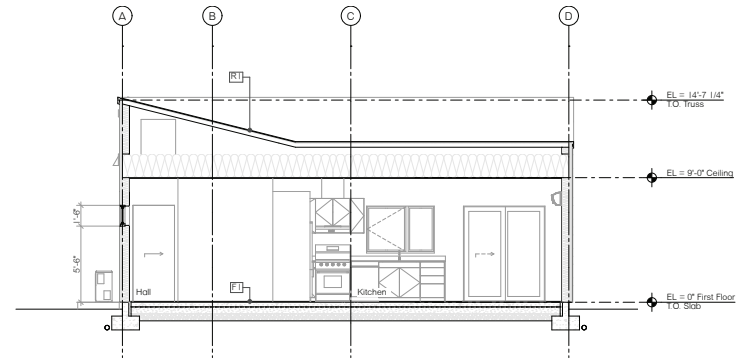


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Come in! Finch Green welcomes all

Finch Green, a community of 22 single-family homes to be built on land donated by Bethany Lutheran Church, will be 100% affordable for income-eligible families. It will also be 100% visitable. What do we mean by "visitable"? All 22 homes will have zero-step front entries and an accessible bathroom on the ground floor, extending an architectural welcome to people with mobility impairments and sending a broader message of inclusion. Survey your own neighborhood. If you have no issues getting around, you might be surprised by the quantity of stairs, let alone rocky paths, high thresholds, and poorly placed curbs.

"As developers and designers, it's our responsibility to learn the perspective of people with mobility issues," said Marja Williams, an HRB consultant and the project manager for Finch Green. "We have a responsibility to understand all the ways people use and experience spaces."



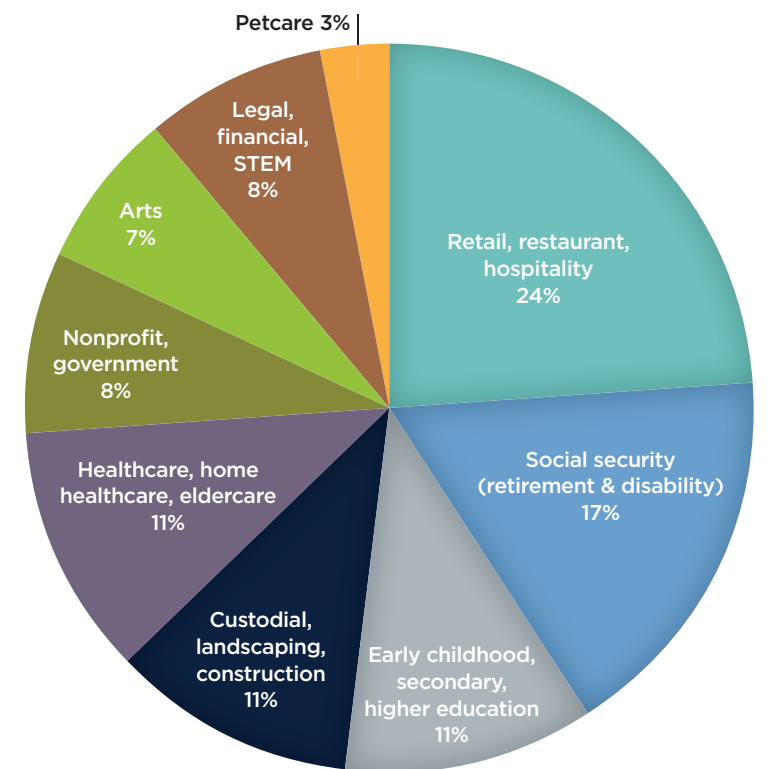
Seven of the Finch homes will be accessible, incorporating the specifications and flexibility that make for high-functioning and comfortable living spaces for people with disabilities. But good design benefits all, regardless of ability, with the classic example of a curb ramp that serves not only the wheelchair

(continued on page 2)

Breaking it down: HRB residents and their work

HRB residents support an array of vital services and industries. This graphic shows the sectors in which they work, rather than their jobs. For example, someone working as an administrative assistant at a childcare agency would be counted as "Early childhood, secondary, higher education."

Note: HRB renters are income certified every year, which means their most current employment is reflected here. HRB homeowners, however, share their employment information at the time of purchase only.



Dear Neighbor,

Like many of you, I have my favorite spots on Bainbridge Island where the baristas and clerks have become a part of my life's cast of characters. There is a richness to community when the people who keep local businesses running, ensure that our schools remain caring, effective places to learn, and keep our city infrastructure in good repair live in the community where they work. But as we know, housing costs have made that impossible for many, and it hurts not only the tired and excluded commuter, but the entire community.

But I fear that our focus on housing this subset of people has become so narrow that we've lost sight of how Bainbridge is an island geographically only, that we are indeed connected by ferry and bridge, as well as need, desire, and responsibility, to the surrounding region. If one requires open-heart surgery, it will not take place on Bainbridge but likely at one of the world-class hospitals in Seattle. And how many of us shop at Trader Joe's in Silverdale, take in a Mariners game in Seattle, or purchase produce at the Bainbridge farmer's market grown in Poulsbo? The nursing assistant, cashier, actor, farm intern, and all those who don't work on Bainbridge Island but still ensure that we are fed, healthy, and entertained need an affordable place to live too, and why shouldn't Bainbridge be that place?

Who will live in affordable housing is an important conversation, but it's worth noting that we don't subject residents in market-rate housing to the same scrutiny. They are free to move here with or without a local job, no questions asked. As it happens, about 85% of employed HRB renters work on the island, and most homeowners purchased an HRB home because they live and/or work here. Moving is not a matter of whimsy, but a deeply personal and practical decision. HRB is proud to house these essential local workers, and we are proud to house anyone who meets our income and rental qualifications.

With gratitude,
Phedra Elliott
Phedra Elliott
Executive Director



Phedra Elliott

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user, but the child on a bike and parent with a stroller. With two to four bedrooms, the homes at Finch were designed with families in mind, and with enhanced accessibility, they will have special appeal for intergenerational families.

The project benefits from the expertise of Williams, who is working with Building Ohana, a mixed-income intentional community in development in Spokane for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and caregivers. But the commitment is also fueled by HRB's desire to do better with each development. "Including accessible units has become standard practice for us," said HRB Executive Director Phedra Elliott, "but Finch Green will be the first time that we consider the accessibility of an entire neighborhood rather than isolated homes, adding another layer of inclusion to what we achieve with affordable housing."

WHO WILL LIVE AT FINCH GREEN?

Households earning 80% area median income and below:

\$79,600 (2 people)	\$99,450 (4 people)
\$89,550 (3 people)	\$107,450 (5 people)

WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

-  One adult working as a ferry operator assistant (\$51,000) and one as a bank teller (\$47,000) with two children.
-  A teacher early in their career (\$77,000) with one child.
-  One adult working as a veterinary assistant (\$39,000) and the other as a library technician (\$50,000) with one child.
-  An architect (\$107,000) with a stay-at-home partner and three children.

Salaries are based on median wages for the Bremerton-Silverdale metropolitan area from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Washington State Office of Financial Management, and Bainbridge Island School District data.

Ericksen on the way

It takes years to plan and fundraise, but the building goes quick. The Ericksen Community, a permanently affordable 18-home building with 1- and 3-bedroom rentals, will finish this summer—right on schedule.



WHO WILL LIVE AT ERICKSEN COMMUNITY?

Households earning 50% area median income and below:

\$43,550 (1 person)	\$55,950 (3 people)
\$49,750 (2 people)	\$62,150 (4 people)

WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

-  One adult working as a Bainbridge Island School District bus driver (\$40,000) and one working half time as a grocery cashier (\$19,000) with two children.
-  A childcare worker (\$38,000).
-  A person with a disability receiving social security (\$22,000).
-  A legal administrative assistant (\$52,000) with two children.

See salary sources on page 2.

Blackbird Bakery is looking out for its workers

After a quarter century of baking on Winslow Way, Heidi Umphenour and Jeff Shepherd, the owners of Blackbird Bakery have been witnesses to change. Some of it, touchingly human. The children who once pressed their faces and hands against the pastry case to taste with their eyes are now grown with children of their own, who do just the same. And some of it, the heartless economics of a high-priced housing market, which threaten to erode the community Jeff and Heidi have cultivated in the kitchen and with their customers.

Just four of Blackbird's 24-person staff live on the island, and each has some kind of special circumstance, perhaps a working spouse or a childhood bedroom, that makes it possible. Those that commute from more affordable towns contend with expensive, often grueling drives that can lead to burn-out. Blackbird has lost a few good staff this way. And then there are the folks they never even had the chance to hire, the ones who chose to deploy their talents closer to home.

If they don't push back with incentives like health insurance and an inviting work culture, then Blackbird will lose a little of what makes it so special. "You won't get somebody who grew up somewhere where they're bringing food elements and sensibilities, which really enliven our business and enliven our awareness of possibilities," says Jeff.



You can tell a lot about a food business and its values when you look at the kitchen, adds Heidi. Is it all men or all women? Are their queer folks and people of color in the mix? Multigenerational staff? Diverse representation contributes to the health and richness of a work environment. "We're all working, and we're creating delicious things to eat," she says, "but we're also talking to each other about our lives and politics... I have to say, I'm very thankful for that. To be able to hear a point of view that's different than my own and to understand people's lives and how they arrive at that point of view."

Read the full story at www.housingresourcesbi.org/news.