



UpBeat

Mended Hearts Newsletter

Chapter #130 – January 2026

Olympia, WA

**It's Great
To Be Alive
And
To Help
Others!**

Meeting Notice

Program: Heart Failure

Date/Time: Thursday, Jan 8, 2pm

**Location: My Med Supply
6149 Martin Way East
Lacey, WA**

Upcoming Dates

Jan 2-Board Meeting

Jan 8-Chapter MTG

Happy New Year!

President's Message

Michael Blonden

In 2026, Mended Hearts will mark its 75th anniversary, alongside Heartbeat Magazine celebrating 25 years in publication. Mended Hearts Inc has expanded globally in recent years, and members can access a range of valuable resources on the organization's website, which is set for updates in 2026. Offerings include webinars, community support groups, and meetings tailored to specific heart conditions, such as Heart Failure. Members also have opportunities to participate in clinical trials. Over the past three years, our Chapter has shown strong support for National Mended Hearts by contributing at least \$500 annually.

Our Chapter has grown substantially, from an initial 40 members to approximately 300 today. With this influx of new members, it's essential that our speakers and heart education programs address topics relevant to everyone's needs. We'll begin next year with a January meeting focused on Heart Failure—a condition that poses higher risks to older adults and those living with heart disease (one in four Americans over age 40 are now projected to be at risk during their lifetime). The lifestyle changes we encourage, along with insights from our January speaker, will help you reduce your chances of developing this diagnosis.

President's Message (Continued)

Michael Blonden

We encourage you to make a New Year's resolution to prioritize your health by participating in our member meetings. In March, we plan to survey meeting attendees to discover which subjects you're most interested in learning about. Additionally, we'll begin supporting Providence Basecamp, a new program based in Portland, Oregon, designed to assist members or patients who live outside the Olympia area and find it difficult to attend our meetings.

St Peter Cardiac Rehab has already begun promoting Providence Basecamp, which is completely free. Next year, our website and other communications will feature information about Basecamp, which offers in-person, on-demand, and virtual classes.

Heart Failure

Suzanne Upfield, MSN

Speaker, January 8 Chapter Meeting



I am the Heart Failure Program Coordinator for Providence Health in the Southwest Washington area, and I've spent more than 25 years working in cardiac care—14 of those focused on heart failure. I hold a Master of Science in Nursing with a focus on Clinical Leadership.

Over the years I've worked closely with Providence leadership and our cardiology team to build a program that truly supports patients living with heart failure. What drives me is helping patients and families feel empowered to take charge of their heart health. I'm excited to share some insights with you today and hopefully give you tools that make a real difference.

Did You Know?

January 2026

And, HELLOOO 2026!! We've arrived!! New Year...new resolutions... or perhaps recommit to a few that petered out last year...? Did you know what the four most popular resolutions are

1. lose weight
2. learn a new language
3. spend less
4. travel more

Unfortunately, they're also among resolutions that rarely make it past the first few months of the year.

According to a 2019 study conducted by physical exercise tracker Strava, people are most likely to give up their New Year's resolutions on January 19—otherwise known as “Quitters Day.” By the second week of February, a whopping 80 percent would have thrown in the towel trying to achieve those resolutions they so earnestly committed themselves to just weeks before.

Do you know why we make New Year's resolutions—only to break them? “Because it's the easier thing to do,” says Jon Edward B. Jurilla, MD, Section Chief of Psychiatry of the top hospital in the Philippines Makati Medical Center (MakatiMed). “Change is hard. It takes you out of your comfort zone and requires effort to produce the desired results. If you made a resolution, but are accountable to no one but yourself, then there are no apologies or explanations needed when you fail or don't even try”.

So, maybe it's time to wade through the plethora of online suggestions to find your 2026 opportunity for new beginnings. The best “Healthy” New Year's resolutions should focus on sustainable habits like prioritizing sleep (7-9 hours), drinking more water, eating whole foods, increasing physical activity (even short bursts), and practicing mindfulness/stress reduction, and popular goals including reducing sugar/alcohol, quitting smoking, and getting regular health checkups, all best achieved by setting “SMART” goals and finding support.

Do you know what “SMART” goals are? U of CA has drawn up the following guide:

S stands for Specific. What will be accomplished?

M stands for Measurable. What data will measure the goal?

A stands for Achievable. Is the goal doable?

R stands for Relevant. How does the goal align with broader goals?

T stands for Time. What is the time frame for accomplishing the goal?

The new year has arrived fresh with new possibilities, so let us all start the New Year “SMART”!!

National Glaucoma Awareness Month (January)

You may have heard glaucoma called "the sneak thief of sight." That's because it often has no symptoms until it has progressed to advanced stages, where vision loss may be irreversible.

As the leading cause of irreversible blindness worldwide, glaucoma remains a major public health concern, particularly as populations age and access to care varies globally. This January, organizations like the National Eye Institute (NEI) and Prevent Blindness are emphasizing the 2025 theme "See the Future Clearly," urging early detection through dilated eye exams to protect vision.

Today, more than 3 million Americans are affected, with about 2.7 million of them aged 40 and older—though half remain undiagnosed. Globally, around 80 million people live with the condition, and projections indicate it will impact 111.8 million by 2040, disproportionately in Asia and Africa due to aging demographics and limited screening. In the U.S., glaucoma causes about 120,000 cases of blindness, with rates 6–8 times higher among African Americans than Caucasians.

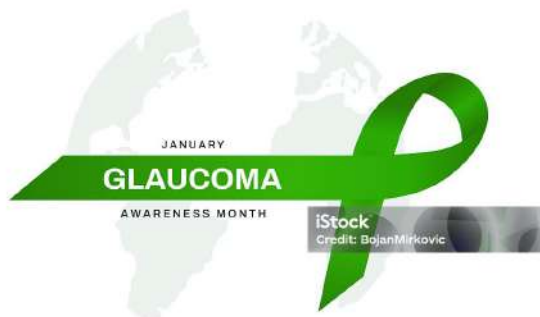
The cornerstone of glaucoma management hasn't changed: regular comprehensive eye exams with dilation. The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) now recommends baseline screening at age 40 for all adults, or earlier (starting at 20) for high-risk groups, with follow-ups every 1–2 years based on individual factors. Most optometrists and ophthalmologists incorporate eye pressure measurement, optic nerve imaging, and visual field testing as standard. If any red flags appear, immediate referral to an ophthalmologist is key. Early intervention can halt or slow progression in 90 percent of cases, preserving quality of life for driving, reading, and independence.

While the most common forms — primary open-angle glaucoma — still primarily affect those over 40, glaucoma strikes all ages, including about 1 in 10,000 newborns in the U.S. Pediatric screening is vital during routine vision checks, especially for eyeglass fittings. High-risk groups include:

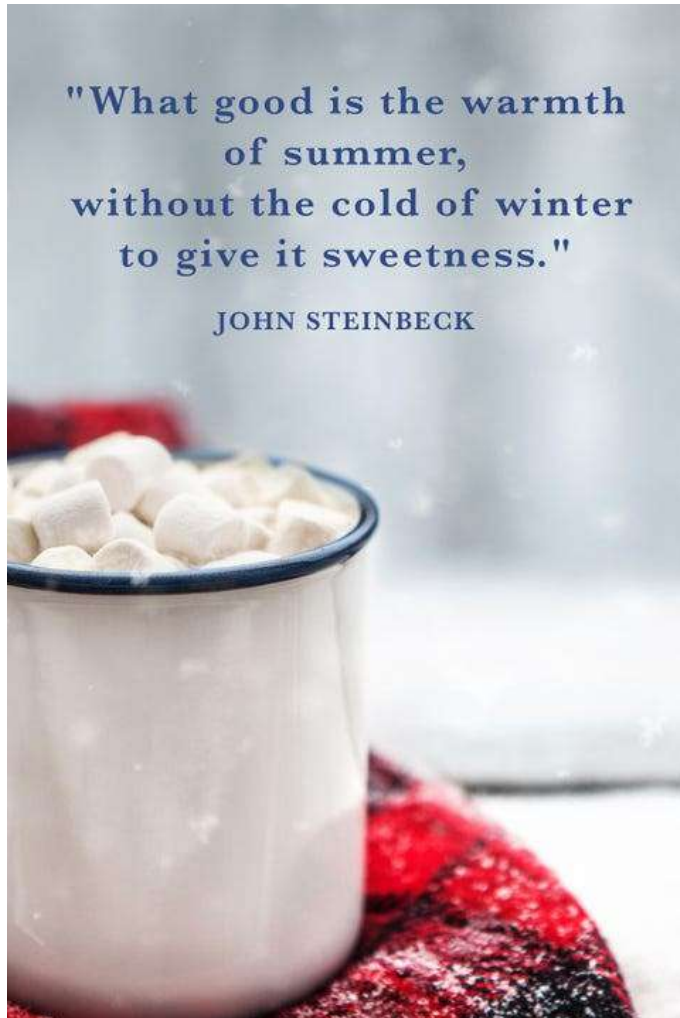
Severe Nearsightedness (Myopia): High myopia increases optic nerve stress.

Poorly controlled blood sugar; Elevated eye pressure

Other Emerging Factors: Low blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, CKD, corticosteroid use.



January Quote



"What good is the warmth
of summer,
without the cold of winter
to give it sweetness."

JOHN STEINBECK

Chapter #130 Officers

President: Michael Blonden
Mblonden@msn.com
360-491-8869

Vice President: Vacant

Health Officer:
Ann Monaghan 360-250-2075
monaghanda@comcast.net

Secretary: Kristi Wells
360-807-4411
klwells41@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Bob Sherwood
360-438-3873;
sherwoodjr@comcast.net

Visitor Coordinator:
Diane Caputo 360-705-1271
dianecaputo0304@gmail.com

Special Projects: Vacant

Member Relations/Sunshine:
Cheryl Hougham 360-357-4987
dkhcmh@comcast.net

Newsletter Editor:
Michele Scott 360-561-1550
basquema@live.com

Chapter 130 Website Address:
<https://mendedheartsthurstoncounty.org/>

Mended Hearts National Website:
<https://mendedhearts.org/>

**To Make suggestions, go to
Suggestion link below:**
[Suggestion Box](#)

Facebook Webpage Address:
[https://www.facebook.com/Mendedheartsthurston
county](https://www.facebook.com/Mendedheartsthurstoncounty)

Chapter Board Meetings

Chapter Board Meetings are open to all Chapter Members. We are currently meeting via ZOOM. If you are interested in attending, contact Michael Blonden at Mblonden@msn.com for ZOOM link.

If you are feeling great and would like to help others, why Not make a donation to our Chapter (Mended Hearts of Thurston County). Mail donation to:

**Mended Hearts Chapter 130
PO Box 5551
Olympia, WA 98509-5551**

Every Dollar Helps. Thanks!!