



UPBEAT
Mended Hearts Newsletter
Chapter # 130 – Oct 2026
Olympia, WA

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

Meeting Notice

Program: Hospital Visitor Program
Date/Time: 2nd Thursday, October 8, 2pm
Location: MyMedSupplies
6149 Martin Way East
Lacey, WA

ZOOM Meetings, contact Michael Blonden at mblonden@msn.com for a link

Upcoming Dates

Oct 1 -Board Meeting

Oct 8-Chapter Meeting

Oct 31-Halloween



President's Message
Michael Blonden

Mended Hearts, Inc. (MHI) will hold an online symposium in early October, and I hope you can attend. As mentioned at the last Member Meeting, MHI's World of Support fundraiser runs from September 1st through December 31st to fund services for our Chapters. Our Chapter is responsible for raising \$500, and even a few dollars contributed during collections at Member Meetings can help us reach that goal. Online, you can join our Chapter 130 Team for contributions and steps. Thank you if you have already contributed. The World of Support also encourages members to exercise. This year, members who contribute \$75 and walk 75 k steps will have their names added to the Wall of Hearts on MHI's website. As we discussed, walking 75 k steps over four months is a reasonable goal. We began the year by talking about exercise; let's end it by completing the 75 k steps challenge. We already have two members from the Chapter on the Wall of Hearts. It would be nice to have several more members join us on the Wall of Hearts.

We recently took two photos of our Chapter members at the summer picnic. The first photo showed that about half the group consisted of new members. The second photo, taken at our last meeting, showed that new members made up about two-thirds of those attending. Thank you to our new members for joining us. I also hope to continue connecting with members who have participated in our group for several years.

At our September meeting, Dr. Waggoner enjoyed speaking with us and greatly appreciated the Mended Hearts jacket and hat presented by the Chapter. He has been a strong supporter of our group for several years. This may be a good time to address recurring speakers and subjects. Meetings with Dr. Waggoner are always different because members ask a wide range of questions. Other speakers may cover familiar subjects, but each speaker presents a different perspective.

President's Message (Continued)

At our October meeting, we will discuss our hospital visitor Program, which will include the benefits of visiting patients, the growing number of visitors, expanded outreach to patients at St. Peter Hospital. and how to get involved as a visitor.

At our November meeting, Sierra Sanchez (Physician Assistant) will be speaking on Diabetes and Heart Disease. Many of you met Sierra at the picnic and enjoyed socializing with her. She joined us in the group picnic photo. Finally, this year will culminate with the annual member meeting luncheon at a new venue at the Lacey Community Center. I hope to see all of you at these events.

World of Support-Diane Caputo

Mended Hearts, Int. is in full gear of its yearly fundraiser. It runs until the end of the year. This is their only fundraiser and the donations go toward things like visitor training, discussion guides, printing and shipping of educational materials, Bravery Bags, etc.

There is a 75,000 step challenge during this time. For anyone who accomplishes the 75,000 steps over the next few months, and donates \$75, their name will be added to MHI website's Wall of Hearts. There is a chart on the website which can be downloaded and printed out to help track your daily steps.

Our chapter wants to raise at least \$500. We will have a special World of Support collection jar at each meeting until December for anyone who wants to slip some funds in the old fashion way. We can keep a running total in the newsletter. We are off to a good start. September meeting we collected \$65.00.

There is also a Trivia Night planned for Oct. 20th. We will post any updates we get about that. Check our local chapter website for all the details on how to participate and donate.

Listed below are options for giving:

Website: givebutter.com/world-of-support-2026

Call: 888-432-7899 Text: WOS2026 to 53-555

Mail check to: The Mended Hearts, Int. 1579 US Hwy. 19
Leesburg, GA 31763

Be sure to mark Chapter 130 on any donations so it will be credited to our team.
Thank you!

Did You Know (DYK)

We tend to think of heart disease as something that happens “later in life”—somewhere between retirement and our first serious argument about whose turn it is to change the thermostat. But increasingly, heart problems are showing up much earlier. The American Heart Association reports that many young people already have heart-disease risk factors by the time they reach age 18. These can include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Younger adults are also experiencing cardiovascular events, making early prevention more important than ever.

So, what’s happening? Part of the answer is that several familiar risk factors are appearing earlier. Young adults are often juggling school, jobs, family responsibilities and plenty of screen time. Healthy meals, regular exercise and adequate sleep can easily get pushed to the bottom of the “maybe tomorrow” list. Tobacco use—including vaping—remains another concern. There’s also a sneaky problem: high blood pressure and high cholesterol often don’t make you feel bad. A young person may feel perfectly healthy while these conditions quietly affect the cardiovascular system for years. Recent research presented by the AHA even suggests that having higher blood pressure during young adulthood may be linked to greater heart and kidney disease risk later on.

The encouraging news? **Heart health isn’t an all-or-nothing game.** Getting blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar checked, staying active, eating reasonably well, avoiding tobacco and getting enough sleep can all make a difference. And perhaps that’s the best advice we can pass along to our younger generations: Tell them don’t wait until you become a “heart patient” to start treating your heart like it’s worth keeping around. Because, as those of us in Mended Hearts know well, it definitely is!

The Apple Will Take 31 Years to Reach the Store

An apple breeder plants for customers who have not been born yet. In 1998, at a Washington State University research orchard, someone hand-pollinated a Honeycrisp blossom with pollen from a Cripps Pink -- the variety sold as Pink Lady -- and then waited. Fruit from that cross should reach grocery stores in 2029, 31 years later. The new apple with the long journey will be called Sunflare.

The delay is built into the biology. Every pollinated seed inside an apple flower is genetically distinct, and the tree it becomes can bear fruit that resembles neither parent. Breeders raise thousands of trees to find one worth keeping. Bruce Barritt, the retired breeder who started the program in 1994, has described the work as simply doing what the bees do.

What came out of the wait looks worth it. According to WSU, the fruit is crisper and juicier than Cripps Pink and slightly less so than Honeycrisp, with sweetness and acidity landing between its two parents. The skin is a pink and red blush over yellow. It holds its texture after months in cold storage, and cut slices resist browning -- the one trait that decides whether an apple belongs in a salad.



Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO)-Ann Monaghan

What is Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO), has it become more common and can it be treated?

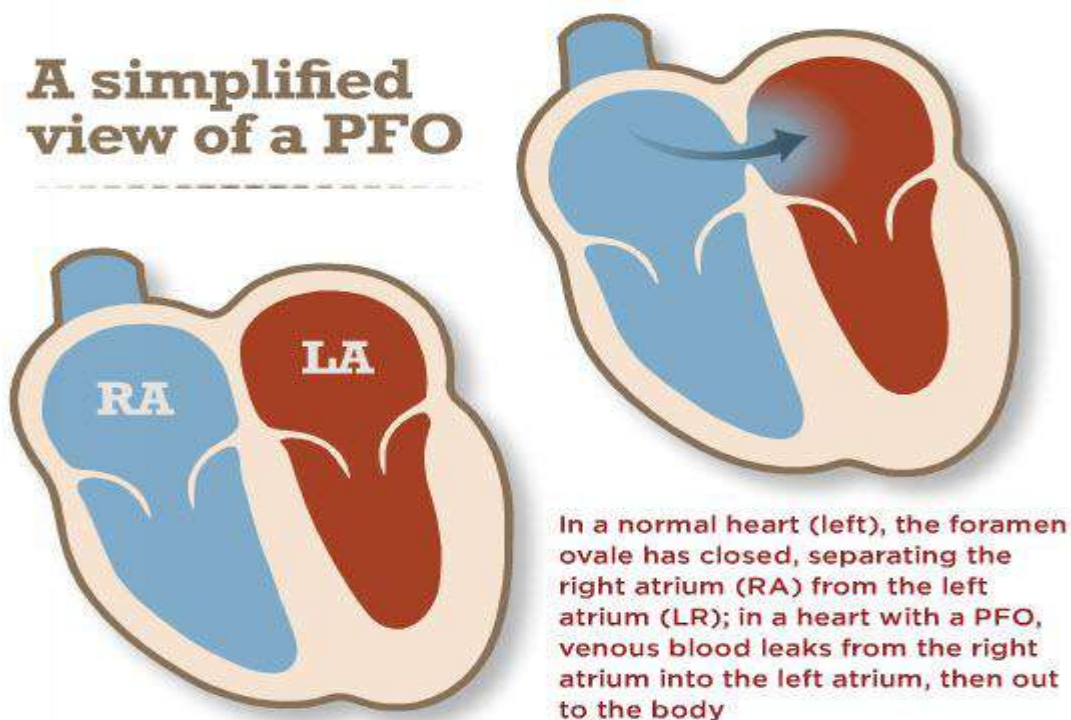
A small hole in the heart called a Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO) affects about 1 in 4 people. For most people, the PFO does not cause problems and treatment is not needed. Before birth, everyone has a small opening in the wall between the chambers of the heart. It helps blood flow around the lungs, which are not yet being used for breathing before birth. After birth, this opening usually closes on its own. In about 3 out of 4 people, the opening closes within the first few months after birth. When it stays open, it is called a Patent Foramen Ovale. ("Patent" means open). For most people, a PFO does not cause problems and treatment is rarely needed. A small amount of blood may pass through the opening, but it usually does not affect how the heart works.

In some cases, however, changes in pressure in the heart can cause blood to move in a different direction. In rare cases, if a blood clot passes through the opening, it could travel to the brain and cause a stroke.

Sometimes, in people with complex congenital heart disease, a PFO can actually help the heart work better. It may allow blood to reach areas that need it.

More people are being diagnosed with a PFO largely due to advanced imaging and echocardiograms and a growing medical focus on finding the cause of unexplained strokes, especially among young people. Recently a minimally invasive PFO closure device using a thin tube to place a small plug across the tiny hole in the heart has been developed.

A simplified view of a PFO



Updated Medicare Information

Somewhere in the mail is a document that sets what your health care costs in January. It arrives in a thick envelope and looks like junk.

Medicare Advantage and stand-alone Part D drug plans are required to get an Annual Notice of Change, or ANOC, into members' hands by September 30 -- 15 days before Open Enrollment opens. The notice lists every change the plan is making for the coming year: premiums, deductibles, copays, which drugs are on the covered list, and which doctors and pharmacies stay in the network.

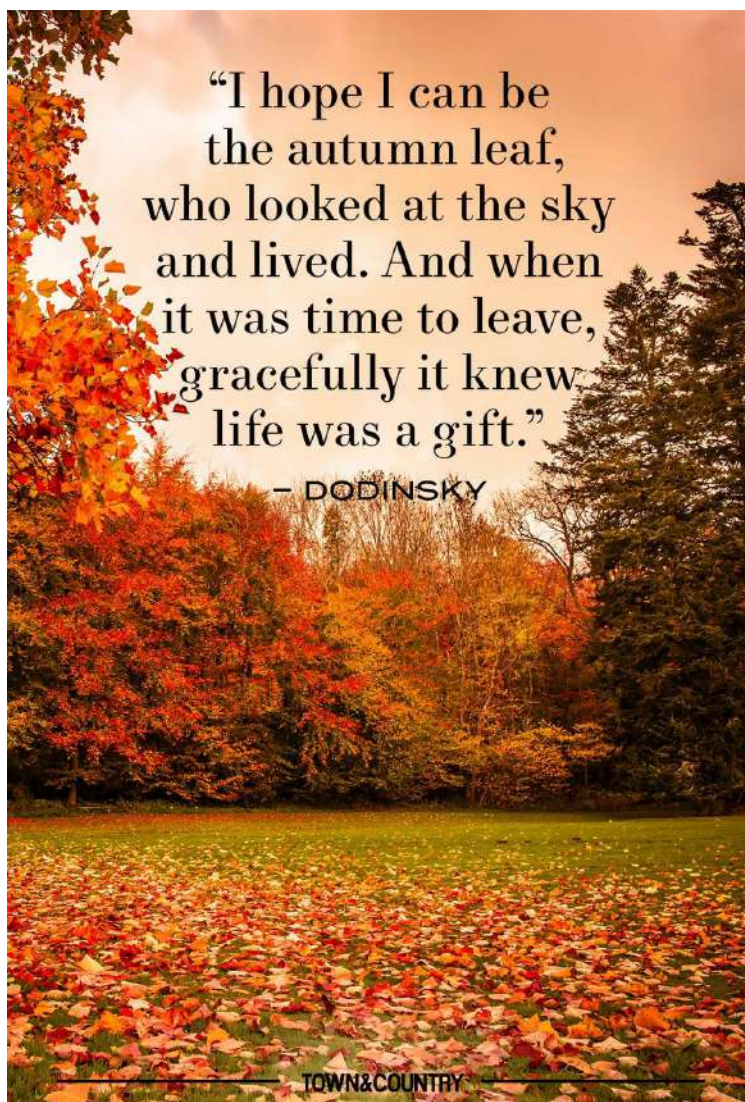
Not everyone receives one. People on Original Medicare and people carrying a Medicare supplement policy do not, because those plans do not change this way. For everyone in a private plan, though, the envelope is coming, and what is inside is not minor. A prescription covered in December can be off the list on January 1. A doctor of many years can be out of network.

A second document usually arrives with it. The Evidence of Coverage is the long version, with the full rules. The ANOC is the short one, and it is the one to read. Here is the part that catches people. Doing nothing is a decision. A plan that is still being offered simply renews at the new price, with the new drug list, whether or not anyone opened the envelope.

Open Enrollment runs October 15 through December 7, and anything changed during those weeks takes effect January 1. Every state also runs a free counseling service, the State Health Insurance Assistance Program,.



Fall Season Quote



"I hope I can be
the autumn leaf,
who looked at the sky
and lived. And when
it was time to leave,
gracefully it knew
life was a gift."

— DODINSKY

TOWN&COUNTRY

Chapter #130 Officers

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

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
360-488-3873
sherwoodjr@comcast.net

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

Special Projects: Vacant

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

Newsletter Editor: Michele Scott
360-292-2401
basquema@live.com

Chapter 130 Website:
<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/mendedheartsthurstoncounty>

Chapter Board Meetings

Chapter Board Meetings are open to all Chapter Members via ZOOM. If you are interested in attending, contact Michael Blonden at mblonden@msn.com for a 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!!