

## Your Support of OPAL Helps Orcas Thrive

One of the many benefits of having a stable supply of affordable housing on the island is that the majority of the people who own and rent that housing also work to support themselves at jobs we all need to have done.

A recent survey of OPAL homeowners and tenants provided a snapshot of the importance of OPAL residents

to the local economy and our community's health.

OPAL staff asked households to tell us where they work and what they do. The jobs were color-coded by occupation, and each one was plotted on a large map of Eastsound.

The results were eye opening!

**Among OPAL**

**residents, 130 working adults hold down 171 different jobs. In addition, 19 are retired, and 11 are disabled.**

It's no surprise that the majority of jobs - 93 - are in and around

Eastsound. On any given day, there are dozens of OPAL residents working in restaurants, stores, schools and offices and providing healthcare and other services, including folks at Orcas Center, Orcas Recycling, the Senior Center and OPAL.

In addition, there are 53 other jobs being performed island-wide - people working in landscaping, construction, healthcare and as artists and event planners. Plus another 15 jobs in Deer Harbor, Orcas Village, Rosario, Olga and Doe Bay.

**While many OPAL residents are self-employed, 60 Orcas businesses and organizations depend on employees who live in OPAL homes and apartments.** The top two employers of OPAL residents are Island Market and the Orcas Island School District.

**What are the top occupations of OPAL residents?** Restaurants (25), grocery/retail (21), healthcare/wellness (21), teaching/childcare (19), artist/musician (14), construction/infrastructure (13), landscaping (13) and office (11).

**Without OPAL and your support of affordable housing, it's safe to say that a lot of work that's essential to the quality of life of everyone who lives here just wouldn't get done!**



*Recently the jobs of OPAL residents were color-coded and located on a map. It shows how many folks work in Eastsound, and how many more have jobs that take them island-wide. If you'd like to study this map in person, along with one that shows all the OPAL properties, stop by the OPAL offices. Both maps are hanging just outside the conference room in the "Reddick House" - Building A.*



## Edith Macefield House

This summer OPAL attempted to raise funds through an online campaign in order to move this iconic building from Ballard to Orcas. The campaign did not succeed, but OPAL received a lot of publicity, made some new friends, and learned about using online fundraising tools. We applied donations received toward the purchase of a lot where we hope to locate another moved house in the future.

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## Stories of Gratitude and Transformation

Board member Suzanne Olson and local videographer Erin Bennett, who grew up in an OPAL home, recently teamed up to produce OPAL's first video featuring homeowner interviews. The video's debut brought both heartfelt applause and tears at OPAL's annual gala on September 19. Here are a few glimpses of what homeowners had to say. To view the video, go to: <https://vimeo.com/138764882>



**“We realized that we, as renters, never really could decide our fate ... even if we thought it was stable, the reality was we weren't making those big decisions. I didn't know that it would make as much of a difference as it has ... when you're unpacking the boxes, when you decide where things are going to go ... you're really making decisions for laying down those roots ... [they're] decisions that are going to last until you decide to change them.”**

*Jami Mitchell, her husband, Fabrice, and their sons, Leonai and Tiemo, have lived in their home in Wild Rose Meadow for six years. Jami is Orcas Senior Center manager and Fabrice works in construction as a painter.*



**“A big part of this experience has been the expansion in my mind of the sense of community. So many people have done so many kind things to help me and asked absolutely nothing in return. And I don't have a way to repay those people except I can pass it on – I can pay it forward.**

**“I can't say enough about my gratitude and the marvelous goal of this organization.”**

*Meg Bailey is the new owner of a scattered-site house on Seaview Street, one of 10 houses that OPAL has moved and remodeled. She works as a cashier at Island Market.*



“The thing about this OPAL home that gives me peace is knowing that I can afford to live here for the rest of my days, and that I have neighbors who care about me, and who I know well. We don’t live in each other’s laps ... we give each other privacy ... but we’re there if the chips are down. And that’s a great feeling.”

“OPAL feels to me like part miracle and part just the right thing to do.” - Molly Roberts

*Molly Roberts has been a homeowner in Opal Commons since 1997. A retired nurse, she is still active as a volunteer.*



“I feel like I’ve become more me because of being able to express [myself] through my home and the way that I live. My gratitude towards OPAL and the people that work within OPAL and the people that contribute to OPAL to make this possible knows no bounds.”

*Mandy Troxel, with daughters Molly and Lucy, lived in OPAL’s Reddick Apartments before qualifying to buy a house in Opal Commons. Mandy is a co-owner of Bossy’s Feltworks and a talented musician and songwriter.*



## Bequests and the OPAL Legacy Circle

The purpose of the OPAL Legacy Circle is to ensure OPAL’s future. Any bequest, written into a will, becomes part of our Stewardship Endowment, a permanent fund fostering the mission you, as an OPAL supporter, believe in.

Bequeathing a set amount or a percentage of your assets to OPAL can be a transformative experience, offering a deeply meaningful sense of ongoing connection with the Orcas community.

For additional information visit our website: [www.opalclt.org/donate/planned-giving/](http://www.opalclt.org/donate/planned-giving/)

## Business Plan: Pathway Forward for Community Loan Fund

With grant funding from the Orcas Island Community Foundation, Washington Federal Foundation, Islanders Bank, the National CLT Network, and designated donations from a few islanders, OPAL contracted with Alex Conrad to lead a business planning process for launching a new

nonprofit community loan fund. The goal of the loan fund would be to perpetuate lending that has gone on for decades – from one islander to another, but instead of the lender and borrower needing to know one another, or the lender needing to evaluate the borrower’s capacity and

then service the loan, staff members of a nonprofit organization would do that work. The business plan indicates it could be viable, but there are many complicated steps that the OPAL board will be evaluating during its annual planning retreat in November.



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## Rental Housing on North Beach Road



Rendering courtesy of  
Environmental Works  
Community Design Center

In June of this year, OPAL entered into a purchase and sale agreement for 3.8 acres on North Beach Road, across the street from Children’s House and north of the orchard.

The need for rental housing is broad and deep. It includes people with physical and

developmental disabilities, seniors, singles, families with children, and people with annual incomes ranging from less than \$13,000 to more than \$80,000.

We held many meetings and conducted a market analysis (available at [www.opalclt.org](http://www.opalclt.org))

under the “In the Works” tab). Through a series of design workshops, the architects developed a plan for Phase I with 30 residences in seven buildings, plus a commons house. OPAL’s building committee set goals for the construction to be 30 percent more energy efficient than current building code.

OPAL has applied to the WA State Housing Trust Fund for a \$3 million grant, and if that is awarded, OPAL will apply for \$4.1 million in Low Income Tax Credits. If those are awarded next spring, we will proceed with the next level of design and local fundraising to close the gap.

Visit us online at [www.opalclt.org](http://www.opalclt.org)