At The Daily Herald, we believe independent, fact-based reporting and holding those in power accountable are essential to healthy communities and a healthy democracy.

Our trained journalists perform due diligence in assessing the credibility of our sources and pursue an unwavering commitment to the truth. We provide in-depth news and information with a focus on Snohomish County to help you stay informed, understand the issues and connect with your community.

This annual impact report highlights how The Daily Herald, as your local newspaper, served the public good with trusted journalism throughout 2023.

We are grateful to be the community watchdog and storyteller for Snohomish County — a role we have been fulfilling for more than 120 years. With your support, we'll continue to have an impact for years to come.

Phillip O'Connor, Executive Editor
In your words

The truth is this: The impact of The Daily Herald’s local journalism on our community is immeasurable. Often, we never hear how the stories you read helped you learn something new, prompted you to take action or encouraged you to reach out. But sometimes, you tell us about the difference we make.

“I very much value The Daily Herald as a watchdog over our city and county government. Without it, we are in trouble.”

— Michael Mallahan
In April 2023, Herald sports editor Zac Hereth wrote about the staggering turnout for the Lake Stevens track and field team and how that creates many challenges the Vikings’ coaches are happy to take on in an article headlined “Viking army: Lake Stevens track and field team boasts 344 members.”

“I’ve been meaning to compliment you and thank you for the great story you wrote about our program. We’ve had a lot of articles written about LS track over the years, but I’ve never heard from so many people about an article before. I think it’s the best one ever — truthfully. Well done, and again, thank you.”

— Jeff Page, Lake Stevens track coach
In October 2023, Herald reporter Jenelle Baumbach wrote about the growing need for Spanish language ballots in Snohomish County and the fact that the county did not meet the threshold mandating Spanish-language ballots. She also included the views of some who felt they should be standard anyway.

Because of that story’s impact, an amendment was made a few weeks later during the Snohomish County Council’s budget deliberations to allocate $30,000 to create Spanish-language voters’ pamphlets. And Baumbach wrote a new story about the change: “Snohomish County funds Spanish voters’ pamphlets, but not ballots — yet.”
The Daily Herald helps readers make informed decisions.

When reporter Joy Borkholder wrote in May 2023 about an Everett son’s struggle to get his mother into assisted living, a Daily Herald reader described how that story would inform and inspire others to make decisions.

“You’ve described the nightmarish, complicated, and confusing journey of Mr. Stejer very well. I believe many readers will be shocked by his story, and perhaps motivated to start learning about how they will pay for their care in their final years. Mr. Stejer’s experience and your article will no doubt help many people he will never meet.”

— Christine B.
In December 2023, Daily Herald business reporter Janice Podsada wrote about Gifford Horses, a Snohomish rescue that retrains and rehomes thoroughbreds from around the country. Kaisa Gifford “puts her heart and soul into these animals,” and readers reacted to what she does — and the role the Daily Herald plays in creating awareness.

“Your story about Kaisa Gifford was moving. You brought forth the story of a woman helping the most vulnerable horses. One reading the story wonders, “how can I help?” YOU helped by writing. Thank you for writing an excellent story. I hope you continue to use your talents to help causes, bring awareness, and shine a light on people who are doing good work. Well done.”

— Hazel Moore-Travison
The Daily Herald helps us understand the issues.

Telling the stories about our community’s challenges helps us understand the issues and step toward change. When area experts about healthcare came together in September 2023 to talk about provider shortages, rising costs and health care barriers, Sydney Jackson, Herald health reporter, was there to cover the discussion.

“...you really nailed the essence of the complex discussions that took place. Your piece has provided a meaningful platform for our panelists to share their experiences and insights.

These conversations are tough but necessary - and having them out in the open is a big step towards making positive changes. I’m so grateful for your help in making that happen.”

— Wendy Poischbeg, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County
The Daily Herald serves as a community watchdog.

Serving as the community watchdog is a core responsibility of the press. Investigative reporters and editors can spend months on a single story to surface the information that citizens in a democracy deserve to know. Such reporting holds those in power accountable and can foster reform that benefits a community. Often, an investigation begins by simply asking a question.

“A $695K salary? Overtime pay at the Snohomish County PUD has soared”: This story written by Herald editor and reporter Jake Goldstein-Street in September 2023 examined why overtime had nearly tripled in six years at the utility, as it dealt with staff attrition and growing electricity demand.

It was the sixth most-read story of 2023 on HeraldNet.com.

“How does an investigative story begin at The Daily Herald? Discover what reporters and editors consider when making decisions about what to cover and how they approach their work. Watch the video: heraldnet.com/investigating-the-investigators.
Throughout 2023, the Herald ran an occasional series of articles exploring TV shows and movies filmed in Snohomish County, including projects shot in Everett, Monroe and Index. In September, Herald writer Eric Schucht wrote about even more projects, from reality television to low-budget indie films, that readers pointed out had been missed from previous entries. The final story, “Even more films and TV shows filmed in Snohomish County,” included Richard Pryor's 1981 comedy “Bustin’ Loose” and celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay's visit to Everett in 2013 to film an episode of “Kitchen Nightmares.”

The biggest feedback we received from readers about the last article in the Hollywood in Snohomish County series was that you loved it! Your clicks to view it online at Heraldnet.com made it the third most-read Herald story of 2023.
One of the things a local newspaper like the Herald does best is connect people with others so they know they are not alone.

The Herald’s second-most read story in 2023, written by reporter Andrea Brown, helped to foster a community of support. It was about Ashley Morrison, who was known worldwide as the “Youngest Old Cat Lady” for her life centered around cat rescue, fostering and adoption. Ashley, who grew up in Everett, openly shared her struggles with mental health. She died by suicide on April 6, 2023, at age 31.

“Your article in today’s Herald about Ashley Morrison & her mom’s quest to keep her daughter’s legacy alive was truly beautiful. I belong to a Facebook group that was created after Ashley’s death for her followers to express their grief at her loss & to show how her work has inspired them (In Memory of Our Youngest Old Cat Lady - Grief & Compassion Support). You would be amazed at the outpouring of love contained on the page from people all over the world. Today I posted a comment there with a link to your article & everyone has commented that it was a wonderful tribute to her memory. You have touched the still-grieving hearts of Ashley’s followers far & wide.”

— Barb I.
The Daily Herald gives us information we can use in our daily lives.

In November 2023, environmental reporter Ta'Leah Van Sistine introduced Trash Talk, a new column on waste that was inspired by readers’ questions. The first article in the series focused on recycling in Snohomish County with the intent to help clear up confusion about waste guidelines. After Van Sistine addressed the question, “What can you recycle, really?” her inbox filled with positive comments from readers.

“Thank you for your article about recycling, which, indeed, is an issue many of us wonder about.” — Julie L.

“Thank you for choosing this topic. It’s not glamorous but people need to know.” — Gabriella G.

“Thank you for writing this column about a most important subject for our world.” — Mike C.

“Thank you so much for Trash Talk. I enjoyed today’s article and look forward to more.” — Pam H.

“I’m looking forward to your series on recycling! Walking through my neighborhood on garbage day makes it apparent that people are confused about what and how they can recycle.” — Linda W.
In February 2023, the Marysville School District was running the “most critical levy” in its history, according to the school’s chief. Levy stories tend to be straightforward, because they are typically renewals of longstanding tax measures. However, after a double levy failure the year before led to significant budget cuts, Herald reporter Mallory Gruben dug into the facts about what would happen if the levy failed again. Because school funding can be extremely confusing, we explained as clearly as possible why schools ask for levies, what they fund and how they work.

“Thank you for outstanding reporting that is thorough, factual and local issue centered ... You did your (extensive!) homework, and I learned a lot from you. Love that!! Plus the quotes were perfectly placed from multiple, credible sources. Keep up the good work, and please keep a watch on Marysville.”

— A community member on the Best School Marysville committee and frequent board meeting attendee
Andrea Brown’s “What’s Up with That?” column attracted attention — and generated a lot of smiles — when the focus was on the flirtation between two signs on Rucker Avenue in Everett. Sometimes, focusing on the lighter side of life is just what our community needs.

“Andrea is the breath of fresh air we all need. I always look forward to reading her reports. Thanks, Andrea! And Thank You, Herald!” — Ron F.

“In this world that seems to have so much dismal news, it was a delight to read your upbeat article and see images of those signs, which I drive past nearly every day. Thank you!” — Larry O.
The Daily Herald helps our community prepare for tomorrow.

The Herald hosted two forums in 2023 that brought our community together to discuss issues impacting Snohomish County now that could also affect our future.

The first Herald Forum, held in May at the Snohomish Library, focused on access to mental health care, including workforce shortages, insurance coverage and crisis response.

The second forum in September brought a panel of experts to the Lynnwood Library for a discussion on affordable housing challenges.

Each time, audience members had an opportunity to ask their questions.

Here's what guests attending the Herald Forums said:

“I am in the industry and learned tonight.”

“I thought the program was excellent. It also validated the experience I've had in 'trying' to help a friend access behavioral health services.”

“Keep up the conversation once a year.”

The Daily Herald wants to ensure the future of Snohomish County includes trusted local news and trained individuals ready to become the next generation of news reporters. That’s why we work with student interns each year and support students interested in learning more about journalism with the Herald Scholarship Fund. It’s why we invited journalism students at colleges throughout Snohomish County to attend our special Behind the News Stories event in October 2023 to get a look behind the scenes at how news stories come to be.

It’s also why two Herald reporters — Ta’Leah Van Sistine and Sydney Jackson — spent time in November 2023 at Everett Community College talking about career opportunities and reporting challenges and skills with about two dozen journalism students and staff members from the student newspapers at both EvCC and Shoreline Community College. Jackson said about the visit, “We don’t just need reporters who are good at their job, we need creative minds to innovate and help ethical and true journalism survive.”

“I began to realize that I could represent a cause greater than myself and make a difference in the world.”

— Ann Duan, former high school intern and 2023 recipient of the Herald Scholarship Fund.
When you support local journalism, you support our community

Newspapers across the country are asking their communities to support the local journalism that supports the public good. The Seattle Times has led the way in this approach and now has a significant portion of its newsroom paid for by grants, sponsorships and individual donors.

Why do newspapers need support beyond what readers might already pay for a subscription? The financial model that used to put reporters on the streets no longer works. Newspapers once relied on advertising revenue to fund the newsroom, but now that big technology companies monopolize the advertising market, it’s tough for local news media to keep covering all the information that communities depend on.

At the Herald, we launched our first community-supported journalism fund in 2020 and we now have four. Each fund was developed in partnership with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor so you can make a tax-deductible donation that supports reporting we would not otherwise be able to do. You can designate your financial gift for health, education, investigative or environmental and climate change reporting — or all of them!

To learn more about The Daily Herald’s community-funded journalism initiatives and how you can add your support, go to: heraldnet.com/local-news-impact.

Questions? Contact SupportLocal Journalism@heraldnet.com.
Together, we make an impact

“I give to the Herald because I value a free press, real journalism and local news. In today’s world, local newspapers are struggling to survive. Real journalism incorporates standards and procedures to find and report facts accurately and independently with ethical standards. The Herald does an excellent job with local news, and the environmental reporting is outstanding.” — Paul Roberts

“As a former journalist, I applaud you for carrying the torch of great journalism in the days of nonsense. Bravo!” — Mark C.

“The Everett Herald is one of the last credible news sources in Snohomish County. My small donation is recognition of the important role you, and your fellow staff members play, in ensuring accountability and transparency.” — Kevin Kosche