



Clallam County Behavioral Health Advisory Board

Minutes for May 12, 2026 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Clallam County Courthouse
Board of Commissioners Meeting Room 160
223 E. 4th Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362

Voting Members Present: Kristine Johnson, Kristina Bullington, Bruce Fernie, Anne Grover, Wendy Sisk, Tanya MacNeil, Matthew McKnight, Stephanie Aiken, and Dale Jarvis

Non-Voting Members Present: Amy Bundy, Kirsten Poole, Jody Jacobsen, and Jenny Oppelt

General Attendance: Christine Dunn, Commissioner Mark Ozias, Heather McRae-Woolf, Nancy Israel, Teresa Miller, Nick Mobly, and Sandra Schroeder

1. Welcome and Introductions

- The meeting was called to order at 3:00pm.

2. Request for Modifications/Approval of Agenda

- Majority approved the agenda as presented.

3. Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes for March 10, 2026

- Majority approved the minutes as presented.

4. Public Comment for Agenda Items

- No Public Comment

5. Old Business

• Position Vacancies:

- Tribal Representative
- Services for the Homeless Representative
- Private Provider of SUD Services not contracted for funding
- Opioid Settlement Funds Discussion Recap – Jenny Oppelt provided a recap for those who were not in attendance at the last meeting. At the previous joint meeting between the BHAB and BOH, several categories rose to the top: outreach, law enforcement co-response and aversion, prevention programs/youth services including preventing prescribing issues, and opioid use disorder treatment services which included detox services. HHS is currently working on definitions for these categories. More to come.
- 2025 Data Report update – Philip Ramunno (private epidemiologist contractor) is handling the reporting for the 1/10th of 1% funds. He is

currently creating a publicly available data dashboard which will be available soon.

6. New Business

- Program update – Clinical Services – Madison Gallentine and Tamara Vanover provided a program update for the Clinical Services program in the Clallam County Jail. This program allows those that are incarcerated to get connected with case management, behavioral health and substance use treatment, and provides a warm handoff at release. The aim is to reduce recidivism, overdose risks, and reduce gaps in community care. An additional benefit seen is the shift of cost burden from the local tax payers to Medicaid.
- Program update – The Benji Project – Heather McRae-Woolf and Nancy Israel provided an update. The vision of this program is that young people are able to thrive, navigating life's ups and downs with resilience. The program offers upstream prevention in the form of tools and resources to young people. They use the Mindful Self-Compassion for Teens developed by the Center for Mindful Self-Compassion. Currently they are working on creating connections in Clallam County in Port Angeles and Sequim with the intention to expand access across the county.
- By-laws update – workgroup. The position for the Tribal Representative is described in the by-laws in a way that may be preventing applicants from coming forward. There may be other edits or additions required. Request for a workgroup to make edits to bring back to the BHAB for review. Kristine Johnson, Kristina Bullington, Dale Jarvis, and Stephanie Akin volunteered to assist.

7. Future Agenda Items

- Program updates
- By-laws review
- Medicaid changes

8. Updates & Announcements

- Stephanie Aiken from Reflections stated that they have officially moved to 214 E 1st Street, Port Angeles. They also will be adding an anger management for youth and adults starting in June.
- Wendy Sisk provided an update on the North View Project.

9. Public Comment – Please limit comments to three minutes

- Teresa Miller provided public comment.

10. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 4:44pm.

Next Meeting: July 14, 2026 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Behavioral Health Advisory Board Voting Members: Abigail Barnett, Bruce Fernie, Kristine Johnson, Kristina Bullington, Wendy Sisk, Vanessa Lea, Anne Grover, Tanya MacNeil, Matthew McKnight, Stephanie Aiken, and Dale Jarvis

Behavioral Health Advisory Board Non-Voting Members: Amy Bundy, Jody Jacobsen, Kirsten Poole and Jenny Oppelt

ACRONYMS

ACH Accountable Community of Health

ASAM Criteria used to determine substance use disorder treatment

BHAB Behavioral Health Advisory Board

BH-ASO Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization

BOCC Board of County Commissioners

BOH Board of Health

CMS Center for Medicaid & Medicare Services (federal)

DCFS Division of Child & Family Services

DCR Designated Crisis Responder

DDA Developmental Disabilities Administration

DSHS Department of Social and Health Services

EBP Evidence Based Practice

HARPS Housing and Recovery through Peer Services

HCA Health Care Authority

HIPAA Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act

ITA Involuntary Treatment Act

MAT Medical Assisted Treatment

MCO Managed Care Organization

MOU Memorandum of Understanding

OCH Olympic Community of Health

OPT Opiate Treatment Program

ODU Opioid Use Disorder

PATH Programs to Aid in the Transition from Homelessness

RCW Revised Code Washington

R.E.A.L. Recovery, Empowerment, Advocacy, Linkage

RFP, RFQ Requests for Proposal, Requests for Qualifications

SAPT Substance Abuse Prevention Treatment

SBH-ASO Salish Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization

SUD Substance Use Disorder

VOA Volunteers of America

WAC Washington Administrative Code

WM Withdrawal Management

Re-entry Update

1115 Waiver

What is it?

- Enables states to waive certain federal Medicaid rules to better meet local needs
- Allows Medicaid coverage to begin up to 90 days prior to release from incarceration
- Funds pre-release services, including:
 - Care coordination / case management
 - Behavioral health and substance use treatment
 - Medication initiation and continuation (including MOUD)
 - Supports warm handoffs to community providers upon release
- Aims to reduce:
 - Recidivism
 - Overdose risk
 - Gaps in care continuity

Benefits for jails and counties

- Shifts cost burden from local taxpayers → Medicaid (federal/state funding)
- Allows jails to bill for services that were previously unfunded
- Improves public safety and community health outcomes
- Strengthens partnerships with:
 - Community providers (PBH, NOHN, etc.)
 - Managed Care Organizations (MCOs)
- Supports a structured transition from custody to community care

What is the process?

1. Intake & Initial Engagement (Day 1-2)

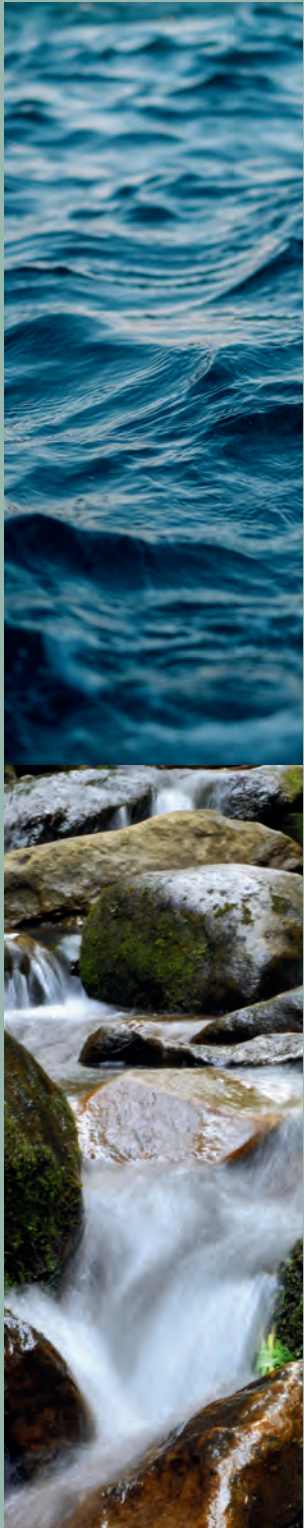
- Conduct two points of contact over two days
 - Complete comprehensive assessment:
 - Medical needs
 - Behavioral health / SUD
 - Mental health
 - Social determinants (housing, clothing, transportation, etc.)
 - Begin Medicaid eligibility verification / enrollment review
-

2. Care Plan Development

- Develop individualized Reentry Care Plan based on identified needs
 - Prioritize:
 - High-risk medical and behavioral health conditions
 - Medication continuity
 - Housing instability
 - Document goals, services, and responsible parties
-

3. Service Linkage & Referrals

- Initiate referrals to:
 - Primary care providers
 - Behavioral health (e.g., Peninsula Behavioral Health)
 - Substance use treatment programs
 - Social service partners
 - Schedule post-release appointments in advance
-



What is the process?

4. In-Custody Engagement

- Start telehealth mental health services while incarcerated
 - Coordinate in-person visits from community-based “trusted helpers”:
 - Build rapport and trust pre-release
 - Begin continuity of care relationship
 - Identify and confirm discharge needs
-

5. Pre-Release Resource Coordination

- Community partners assist in preparing release-ready resources, including:
 - Clothing
 - Tents / sleeping bags
 - Hygiene supplies
 - Ensure alignment with identified social needs from assessment
-

6. Reentry Packet & Documentation

- Compile a client reentry folder including:
 - Medicaid information
 - Scheduled appointments
 - Primary care provider details
 - Pharmacy information
 - Personalized resource list
 - Ensure all forms are complete, accurate, and client-specific
-



What is the process?

7. Medication Continuity

- Nursing staff:
 - Reconcile medications
 - Prepare 30-day supply (as applicable)
- Ensure prescriptions align with:
 - Community pharmacy
 - Ongoing treatment plans (including MOUD if applicable)

8. Release Coordination (Day of Release)

- Coordinate handoff at release:
 - Reentry team and/or community partners present when possible
- Provide client with:
 - Medications
 - Reentry folder
 - Essential supplies

9. Warm Handoff to Community

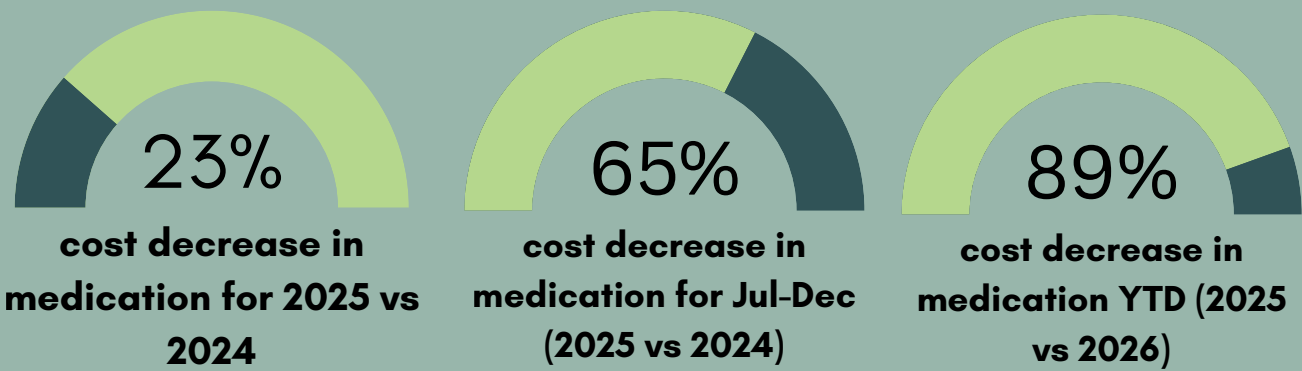
- Ensure direct connection to:
 - Case managers / care coordinators
 - Behavioral health providers
 - “Trusted helpers”
 - Confirm:
 - Transportation plan
 - Appointment awareness
 - Immediate post-release support
-



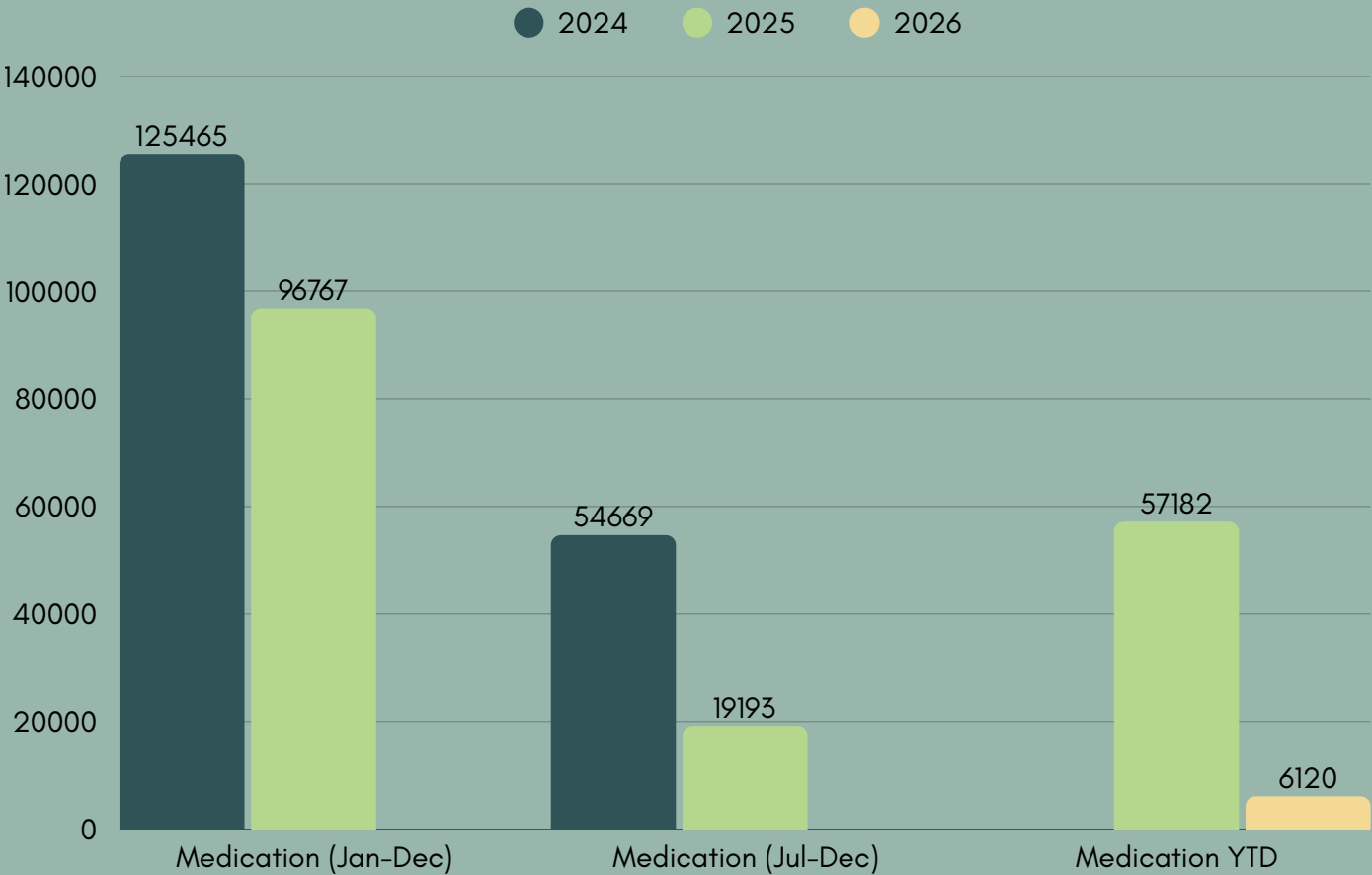
Re-entry Update

Billing Reimbursements

July 1, 2025 – March 2026 received over \$320,000 in billing reimbursements.



Prior vs. Current Year Expenses: Inmate Medications



2026 ADULT RE-ENTRY DATA

2026
NEW ARRESTS

379

RELEASED <24
HRS

167

ENROLLED IN RE-
ENTRY PROGRAM

150

OPTED OUT

34

2026 JUVY RE-ENTRY DATA

2026
NEW ARRESTS

68

RELEASED <24
HRS

10

ENROLLED IN RE-
ENTRY PROGRAM

42

OPTED OUT

9



2025 ADULT RE-ENTRY DATA

2025
NEW ARRESTS

763

RELEASED <24
HRS

377

ENROLLED IN RE-
ENTRY PROGRAM

297

OPTED OUT

73

2025 JUVY RE-ENTRY DATA

2025
NEW ARRESTS

114

RELEASED <24 HRS

35

ENROLLED IN RE-
ENTRY PROGRAM

48

OPTED OUT

10

Referrals

2026 Adult	
60	Peninsula Behavioral Health
48	REdisCOVERY
22	Olympic Personal Growth
17	North Olympic Healthcare Network
10	Reflections
10	Jamestown
4	Klallam Counseling
4	Healthy Families
5	Olympic Peninsula Community Clinic
10	Veterans

2026 Juvenile	
26	Peninsula Behavioral Health
27	Olympic Personal Growth
3	Olympic Peninsula Community Clinic
15	North Olympic Healthcare Network
13	Work Source
1	Klallam Counseling
1	Children's Clinic

2025 Adult	
131	Peninsula Behavioral Health
41	Continued with PBH after release
53	REdisCOVERY

2025 Juvenile	
17	Peninsula Behavioral Health
18	Olympic Personal Growth
11	Other facilities

Total Referrals since 7/1/25 thru 3/26/26 = 185

Number with follow up post release = 51 (28%)

Successes

- A client requiring Crohn's Disease medication costing \$6,922.62 twice a month received full Medicaid coverage, getting him access to necessary medications and preventing the expense from being billed to the county.
- Two clients requiring specialized HIV medications costing \$8,856.43 each (totaling \$17,712.86) also received Medicaid coverage.
 - For individuals living with HIV, maintaining a viral load under 200 is critical, as viral suppression means the virus is not transmissible ("Undetectable = Untransmittable").
- Patients received Hep C testing and treatment.
- Discovered cancer in 2 separate inmates. Started them on treatment and connected them with primary care for continued care once released from jail.
- By preventing gaps in medication access, the program reduces the risk of community transmission and supports long-term public health stability.
- A drug court participant enrolled in the Re-Entry Demonstration had been incarcerated seven times in the four years prior to program reorganization.
 - Clinical Services connected the client to coordinated community-based treatment and supports to augment drug court services.
 - The client is now 8 months sober, has completed Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOP), leads group discussions, and is planning to start a business.



The Benji Project



Vision: Young people thrive, navigating life's ups and downs with resilience.

Origin Story

The Benji Project was
founded in 2017
by Cynthia Osterman,
in memory of her son
Benji Kenworthy,
a Port Townsend teenager
who died by suicide
at age 15.



The Offering: Mindfulness + Self Compassion

Mindfulness.

Paying attention on purpose, to the present moment, without judgment.

Self-Compassion.

Treating yourself with the care you would give a good friend.



In FY 24-25, we served **518** students, ages 11 to 19.

With a total of 4,123
student contact hours.



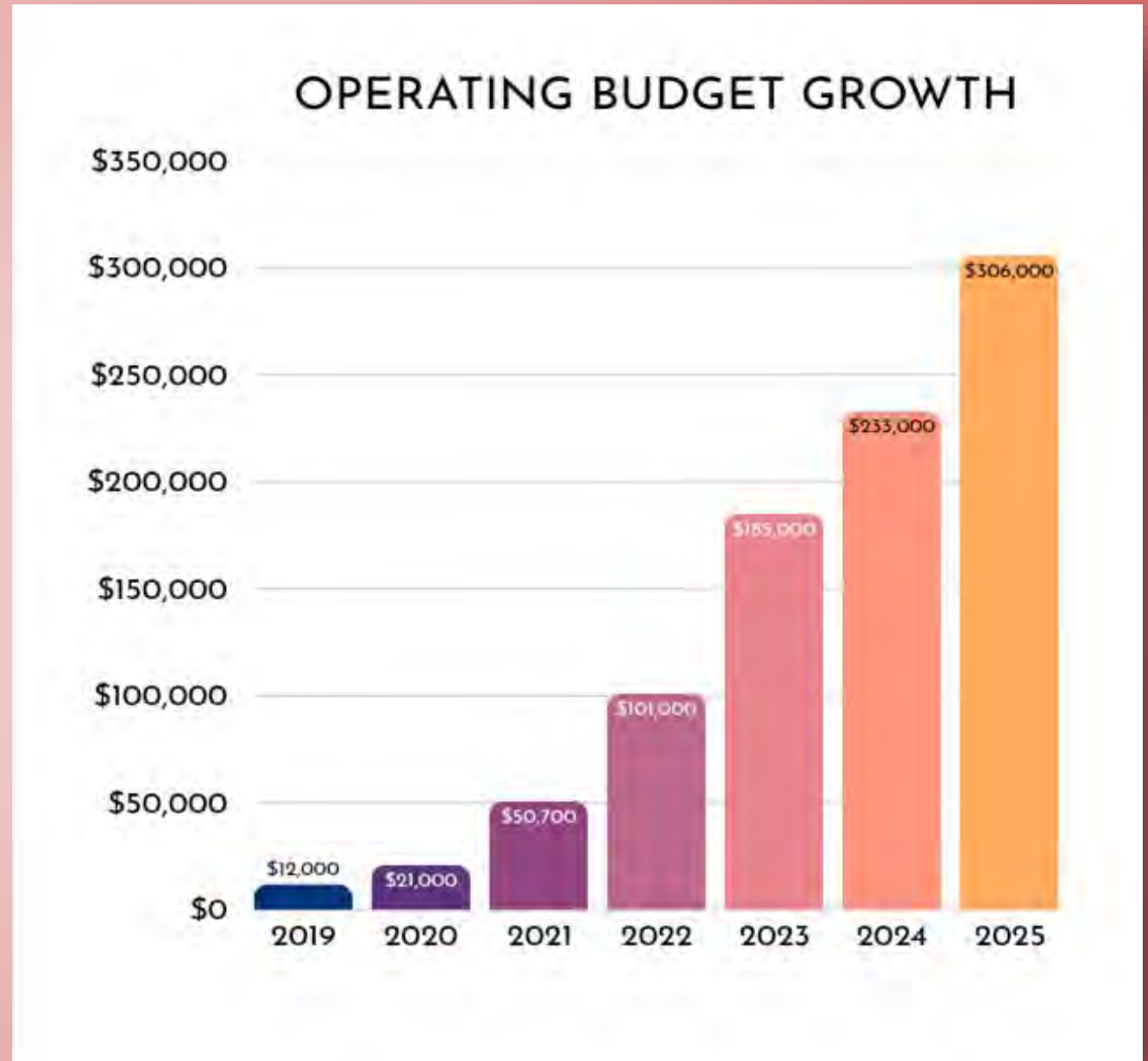
In-school: 441
After-school: 40
Summer camps: 28

Our Growth

We became an independent non-profit in 2023, after five years of fiscal sponsorship.

We now have four staff positions, and four contract instructors.

We are about to launch a hiring process for a Clallam-based Program Coordinator and more Clallam-based instructors.



Our Team

- Our instructors are trained in the **Mindful Self-Compassion for Teens** curriculum. They receive ongoing professional development sessions on topics like meeting the needs of neurodivergent students and incorporating somatic practices for nervous system regulation.
- *Connection and community:* We hold quarterly planning meetings, along with regular community of practice sessions organized by the instructor team. We strive to practice the mindfulness and self-compassion principles that we teach.



The Need

In the statewide 2025 Healthy Youth Survey, **19.2% of Clallam County 10th graders reported having four or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**, compared to a state average of 14.0%.



In 2023, **30.5% of 10th graders in Clallam County felt so sad or hopeless for two weeks or more that they stopped doing their usual activities.** This is compared to 25.9% at statewide.

Meanwhile **8.3% of 10th graders reported that they had attempted suicide** in the last 12 months, vs. 5.5% statewide.



Phase 1, January-June 2026

- *Conduct community dialogue to understand community needs and prepare for program launch.*
 - Attended the Nourish and Connect Family Resource night, hosted by the Port Angeles Family Navigator Team.
 - Attended the Salish BH-ASO regional event, "Stengthening Youth Behavioral Health, A Community Conversation."
 - Gained insights into middle and high school needs through the Student Assistance Professionals (SAP's) in Sequim and Port Angeles.



Partnership Development

- *Build partnerships with Clallam County schools, Tribal communities, and community organizations:*
 - Led introductory sessions with the Wellness Club at Stevens Middle School (approx. 35 students), and the Wolf Awareness Club at Sequim High School (approx. 12 students).
 - Held initial partnership conversations with the Boys and Girls Club, the Olympic Peninsula YMCA, and the Resilience Project, with more discussions planned this spring, including with Neah Bay Schools.



Student Experiences

At Stevens Middle School, we worked with the Wellness Club to host a sensory booth for the whole school. This reached at least 150 7th and 8th graders, who explored mindfulness through activities like creating a mandala with nature objects and tasting jelly beans!



Spring Arts Intensive



Funded in part by a two-year grant from the Washington State Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, The Benji Project launched a Spring Arts Intensive in March 2026. This culminated with a public art installation, "Making Room." Students from **Stevens Middle School and Sequim High School** designed fabric banners that were incorporated into the installation.

We look forward to hosting an event for next year's Arts Intensive in Clallam!

Summer Camp



Summer 2026 is the 8th year that we are offering summer camp opportunities, and the fourth year for our unique Pride Camp for LGBTQ+ youth and allies, designed and led by local queer-identified instructors.

This year our camps are located in Jefferson County, but we provide transportation from Discovery Bay, especially for students from Clallam. Next year we are exploring some new locations in Clallam...

thebenjiproject.org/camp



“Honestly, I think our whole family’s emotional and mental health awareness has improved because of our daughter’s participation in The Benji Project program.”

-Rachel, parent

With Your Help...

To support our expansion into Clallam County, we welcome:

- Suggestions of partnership opportunities.
- Referrals for Clallam-based instructor and program coordinator candidates, as we launch that search process.

We look forward to lifting up young
people
in all of our communities, together.

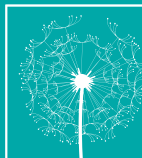




BUILDING RESILIENCE

SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Benji Project FY2024-25 Impact Report



The Benji Project



VISION

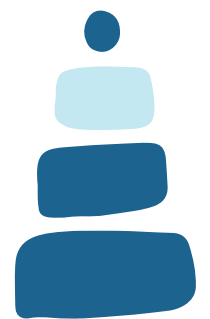
Young people thrive,
navigating life's ups and
downs with resilience.



BUILDING A TEAM

LEANING INTO LISTENING

In 2024-25 The Benji Project expanded. We deepened our relationships with schools and community partners across East Jefferson County. We doubled the number of students that we served, and we developed multi-layered youth leadership opportunities, providing peer support in our after-school and summer programs.



Two of our instructors, Nancy Israel and Eden Trenor, came on board as part-time staff, in addition to their instructing roles. We developed a rhythm of learning together as a team. This year we articulated listening as an area of focus. The invitation to slow down and notice, to be mindful, allows for deeper connection to one's self and to others. In this year of building, our team leaned into listening as a way to build understanding of ourselves, each other, and our community. We didn't always do it perfectly, but we put our hearts into it. And we kept growing.



This year we
articulated
listening as an
area of focus.

BUILDING PROGRAMMING

BREADTH & DEPTH

BREADTH

Our programs in mindfulness and self-compassion reached **518 students**, compared to 344 in the previous year.



DEPTH

We offered **4,123 student contact hours**, compared with 2085 contact hours in the previous year. On average, each student participating in a Benji Project program received more hours of instruction this year.

We seek to offer multiple touchpoints for students throughout their middle and high school journeys. Mindfulness and self-compassion become useful tools through practice. They take root through repetition.

By working in 19 classrooms this year, we met many students for the first time, and encountered some students for the second or third time. When a student has attended an after-school or summer program, and then Benji Project instructors appear in their classroom at school, they have a sense of recognition and familiarity. Meanwhile, some students who encounter us first in the classroom decide that they want to go deeper with these concepts, so they enroll in an after-school or summer program.

518
Total student participants
50%
increase from last year

4,123
Total student contact hours

Twice as many as last year!

SUMMER CAMPS

ACCESSIBILITY & COMMUNITY

We offered two weeks of summer camp, serving 20 young people. One camp, Mindfulness in Motion, was open to all middle schoolers, while the other week, Pride Camp, was specifically for LGBTQ+ youth. During both camps, students explored beach and forest trails, and used art as a means of mindful self-expression. At the end of each camp, we hosted a Family and Friends Open House. These open houses supported the integration of students' camp experiences into the rest of their lives.



One of The Benji Project's core values is that we are dedicated to fostering a sense of belonging among all youth in our community, especially those whose voices are less often heard. Listening intentionally to teen and family input is a key part of our program planning. We take the time to hear and incorporate feedback that makes our programs more accessible, welcoming, and engaging.

For example, we increased the accessibility of our summer camps by providing transportation for students whose families did not have easy access to private vehicles and by extending the hours of camp to accommodate working parents. The extended time also deepened the camp experience.

We take the time to hear and incorporate feedback that makes our programs more accessible, welcoming, and engaging.

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

FROM PE TO HEALTH CLASS



Blue Heron
Middle School



Chimacum
Junior and
Senior High
School



OCEAN
Alternative
School



Chimacum Pi
Program



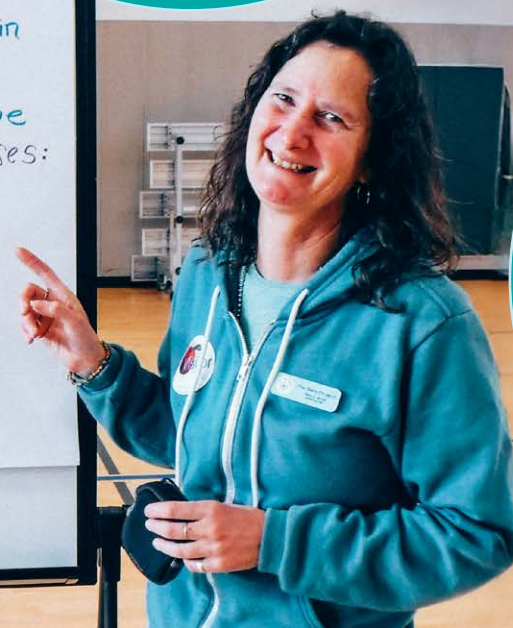
Port Townsend
High School

Our programs build young people's capacity for listening. We offered in-school sessions through both new and longstanding school partnerships. For the first time, we worked with 6th graders in the physical education (P.E.) classes at Blue Heron. We adapted the curriculum to incorporate more movement and age appropriate games. We encouraged students to slow down and listen, even in a gymnasium.

Health class at Port Townsend High School is our longest running in-school program. After these sessions, students completed exit tickets about what practices resonated with them. Many of them shared self-compassionate actions that they might use in the future. For example, tuning into the senses: "I would listen to music if I'm having a hard time." Also, shifting the tone of self-talk: "I would try not to be as hard on myself," and "I would tell myself it's going to be okay." These exit tickets offered beautiful examples of setting positive intentions.

We teach the importance of setting an intention to be kind to yourself, whether on the basketball court or during a stressful test.

NJI PROJECT
N 4
an for day / Check-in
ols we learned
Gratitude Theme
through the Senses:
1 Activity
p, Go, Fall
g Gestures
Just Like Me
atitude ABC's



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

WELCOMING VENUES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

We partnered with the Jefferson County Library in Port Hadlock to offer an 8-week after-school program. Eight students, ages 10-17, attended. One student, who spends a lot of time on their own at the library, was grateful to have a program offered in that convenient and familiar environment.

At the end of one after-school class, a student said: "Now I feel like I have other people I can talk to who will support me." Another shared: "Now I have people I can think of when I'm going through something and know I'm not the only one."

487

Total teaching
hours

58%

increase from
last year

We developed a productive partnership with the Quilcene Community Center, offering drop-in sessions there during the Quilcene School District's spring break. Attended by 12 students, these sessions offered an exploration of mindfulness connected to nature and art activities. Students who came on the first day brought their friends to the second session!



MINDFULNESS AT SEA

SELF-COMPASSION IN THE BOATSHOP

By Emilia Ramsey, Summer Camp Youth Leader Alumna,
Program Advisory Committee Member

As a little girl, I dealt with a fear of failure. I could be very critical of myself and hesitant to step into challenges. By middle school, I was having a very difficult time navigating school life. When The Benji Project visited my class, it felt like a gentle hand on my shoulder, clearly affirming that mindfulness and self-compassion were things that I could possess and that I deserved.

In one of The Benji Project's newsletters, Nancy Israel wrote about her childhood experience aboard a tall ship, participating in an environmental studies program and learning mindfulness through shared moments of silence and connection to the natural world. It was a particularly powerful read for me, as Nancy was one of the instructors during my first couple of years on Bravo Team, a maritime and environmental studies program through OCEAN K-12 School and The Northwest Maritime Center. It is inspiring that Nancy builds anchors of mindfulness in young lives by carrying forward and building upon what was given to her.

Bravo Team was a safe space for me throughout my eighth grade and high school years. No matter what stress I might have felt throughout the week, I knew that on Thursday afternoon I would be rowing out onto the Port Townsend Bay with my teammates and having our moment of silence.

Afterwards we would share our observations and thoughts, and we'd read poetry and quotes to the sea and to one another. It always brought me back to my center; a place of balance, calm, and alignment with myself.

At the start of the pandemic I was learning remotely, and I missed my community deeply. The meditations I learned from The Benji Project in my health class were a support to me. It was through programs like Bravo Team, Girls Boat Project, and The Benji Project that I developed my connection to the natural world, my community, and myself.

Boatbuilding became a beautiful space for practicing self-compassion. I learned that mistakes are part of the learning process, and that you must have patience with the process and with yourself. I learned to find peace in tasks that seemed endless because I knew the goal was in sight. Slowly, I grew confident—not because I was perfect, but because I kept going. I learned that I am not defined by whether I can complete a task flawlessly. I am defined by how I show up, how I aspire, and how I treat myself along the way.

From maritime experiences and from The Benji Project, I learned that patience with myself was not weakness, but strength, and that kindness inward could ripple outward into community. When you are planking a lapstrake hull, each plank must bend, flex, and sometimes crack before fitting. The overlapping planks of the hull are like the overlapping lessons of life—each one resting on the last, each one strengthening the whole. No boat built by human hands is perfect and no two are quite the same. But you build with care, and in the end, you trust the boat to carry you.



BUILDING OUR NEST

We are grateful to all the individuals and organizations who supported The Benji Project during 2024-25.

CIRCLE OF COMPASSION
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The Lynn R. & Karl E. Prickett Fund
Port Townsend Chiropractic
Port Townsend Kiwanis Club
Port Townsend Marathon Association
Quilcene Swim Club
Robert W. And Susan T. Brown Family Foundation
Saltchuk Aviation Shared Services Employer Match Program
Sirius Animal Services
Thomson Reuters Employer Match Program

GRANT FUNDERS

First Fed Foundation
The Food Co-op - Grow Fund
Give Jefferson
Jefferson County - 1/10th of 1% Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund
Medina Foundation
Olympic Peninsula YMCA - Spirit of Team Dennis Watson Memorial Fund
Rotary Club of Port Townsend
Salish BH-ASO

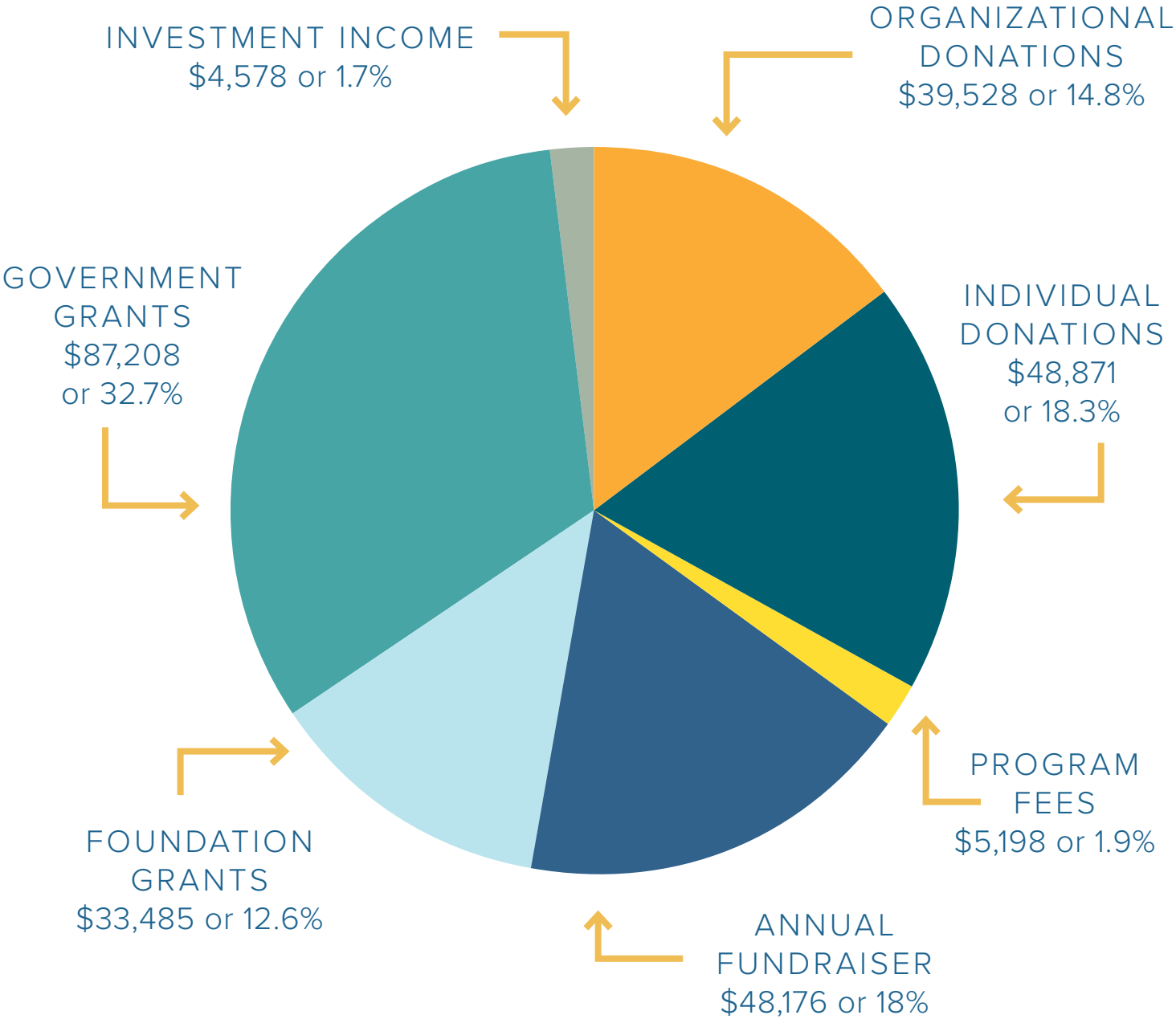
IN-KIND DONORS

BluJay Kombucha
Deja View Photography
Finnriver Cider
Jefferson Healthcare
Marrowstone Vineyards
Millbrook Pottery
Nikles Duo
Northwest Event Rentals
Northwind Art
Pan D'Amore
Planted
Port Townsend Garden Center
Port Townsend Vineyards
Short & Sweet Bakery
Social Fabric Brewing

IN MEMORIAM DONATIONS

Hollen P. Mitchell, III

INCOME SOURCES



This year, for our community programs and summer camps, about 50% of our students' program fees were covered by scholarships. Our school programs are partly funded by small contributions from school partners. Given the budget cuts facing school districts, we have not been able to increase that amount substantially. Instead, we have focused our attention on expanding our donor base and diversifying our sources of grant funding to ensure that we can continue to provide quality in-school and out-of-school programming, accessible to all.

SPREADING OUR WINGS



Thanks to the support of our community, The Benji Project's growth continues into 2025-26. Our plans for the year ahead include:



Pilot programs in Clallam County



Pilot sessions in fourth grade classrooms in Jefferson County



Spring Arts Intensive

Made possible, in part, by a grant from the Washington State Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts



We are
taking flight.