



## A Place for Friends

Max Higbee Center is a recreational-based community center for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities and autism.



# Growing Group Programs and Community Partnership

- We continue to increase our capacity in group programs; reducing it from nearly 80 people to 16, bringing us to more than 220 active members.
- We recently created a Community Outreach Coordinator position to expand community partnerships in programs.

## A Few Examples of Program Community Partnerships

Whatcom YMCA  
Vital Climbing Gym  
Parks and Recreation

Western Washington University  
Outdoors for All  
Bellingham Public Schools

Animals as Natural Therapy  
Bellingham Public Library  
Community Boating Center



# One-on-One Services:

## Community Engagement Services:

MHC now serves 19 individuals per week under Community Engagement.

## Mentorship:

MHC provides individualized mentorship services to 23 individuals.

## Community Inclusion Services:

Community Inclusion started in March 2025, and we have one enrolled member and five additional referrals in the process.



# Weekday Programs

▶ Dance Classes

▶ Candle Making

▶ Yoga Classes

▶ Theater Production

▶ Art Classes

▶ Snowshoeing

▶ Animals as Natural Therapy

▶ Ice Skating



# Recent Investments in Recreation Equipment

- Art supplies
- Foosball table
- Ping pong table
- Sensory rocking chairs
- Two adaptive tandem bikes



# Benefits of the Max Higbee Center

Studies demonstrate that persons with developmental disabilities benefit from recreation and leisure in the same ways as their peers without disabilities. Yet, they have fewer recreational resources and opportunities to connect with others.

- **Physical Health:** Compared to persons without disabilities, the health of persons with disabilities is jeopardized due to lack of physical activity. 60% of participants surveyed in a longitudinal study reported low physical activity levels and nearly 25% rarely or never participated in moderate or vigorous activity.
- **Mental Health:** The rate of mental health conditions has been estimated as being two to three times higher than for the public at large. Interventions suggested to improve behavioral health include more time with friends and family, *more time outdoors, and access to community activities.*
- **Social Health:** Being socially connected is influential for psychological and emotional well-being, as well as having a significant and positive influence on physical well-being and overall longevity.
- **Quality of Life:** Friendship is virtually universal in theories on quality of life. Individuals with developmental disabilities often have fewer opportunities for friends, undermining their quality of life.
- **Justice:** The freedoms or valuable opportunities to lead the kind of lives people want to lead, to do what they want to do, and to be who they want to be.
- **Respite:** By providing affordable and trusted recreation for members, family caregivers (about 70% of members live with family) have time to work, rest, and enjoy their own pursuits and interests.



Thank  
you!

