

Health Ministries Network Ask a Nurse Program





Nurses pose at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center



Faith Community Nurses at Sonlight Church



Nurse Norma serves at the East County Health Fair

Ask-A-Nurse program comes to Nooksack Valley Food Bank

Bringing in services

By Racquel Muncy
Staff Reporter

EVERSON — The Nooksack Valley Food Bank has joined forces with the nonprofit Health Ministries Network to have an Ask-A-Nurse program once a month take blood pressure for food bank clients.

Executive Director of Health Ministries Network Ali de la Bruere said the organization has faith ministry nurses who serve in their congregations and is a national program, but having these nurses out in the community is unique to this area.

She said the goal is to bring health care to health care deserts and underserved communities.

They do this by doing general healthcare screenings, answering health-related questions, doing blood pressure checks and referring to Unity Care NW which takes all insurance and does not turn patients away. They also have resources for getting insurance.

"It turned into almost a Band-Aid," de la Bruere said of the services. "This is not supposed to be a fix all service."

The blood pressure checks can be enough to alert of a larger issue and get patients to a doctor for



Alex Reed gets his blood pressure taken by Pam Colyar during his visit to the Nooksack Valley Food Bank. (Racquel Muncy/Lynden Tribune)

resources are also available in Spanish and Russian for those in need.

de la Bruere said hav-

ing the materials available in other common languages for the area is one more way the program is

working to break down barriers to healthcare.

"We're trying to break down barriers, whatever

they may be," she said.

The nurses are at the Nooksack Valley Food Bank on the third Thursday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. during food bank hours.

The food bank is at 100 East Second St. Everson.

The Ask-A-Nurse program is also at the Bellingham Goodwill once a month and the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center twice a month.

"We're always trying to expand in places with need," de la Bruere said.

The work is done through grants and support from Aging Well Whatcom, Chuckanut

Health Foundation and North Sound Accountable Community of Health.

Recently, thanks to a grant, A1C testing has been available at select locations. This allows the nurses to detect diabetes and pre-diabetes.

Other community partners have helped to augment the program including the Whatcom County YMCA, Mount Baker Foundation, NAMI of Whatcom County and Dementia Support Northwest.

— Contact Racquel Muncy at racquel@lyndentribune.com.



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The Everson Ask a Nurse Program featured in the Lynden Tribune



Nurse Carol takes a blood pressure while Interpreter, Julie, interprets and holds the mother's baby



Nurse Joni poses with nursing students this past spring



Ali de La Bruere
healthministriesnetwork.net
director@healthministriesnetwork.net