

# WHO'S WHO

UNDER

40

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE LEADER: THE PRODUCTION ALLIANCE

FEATURING A BUNCH OF UP-AND-COMERS



# inside:

VOL: 01, NO. 01

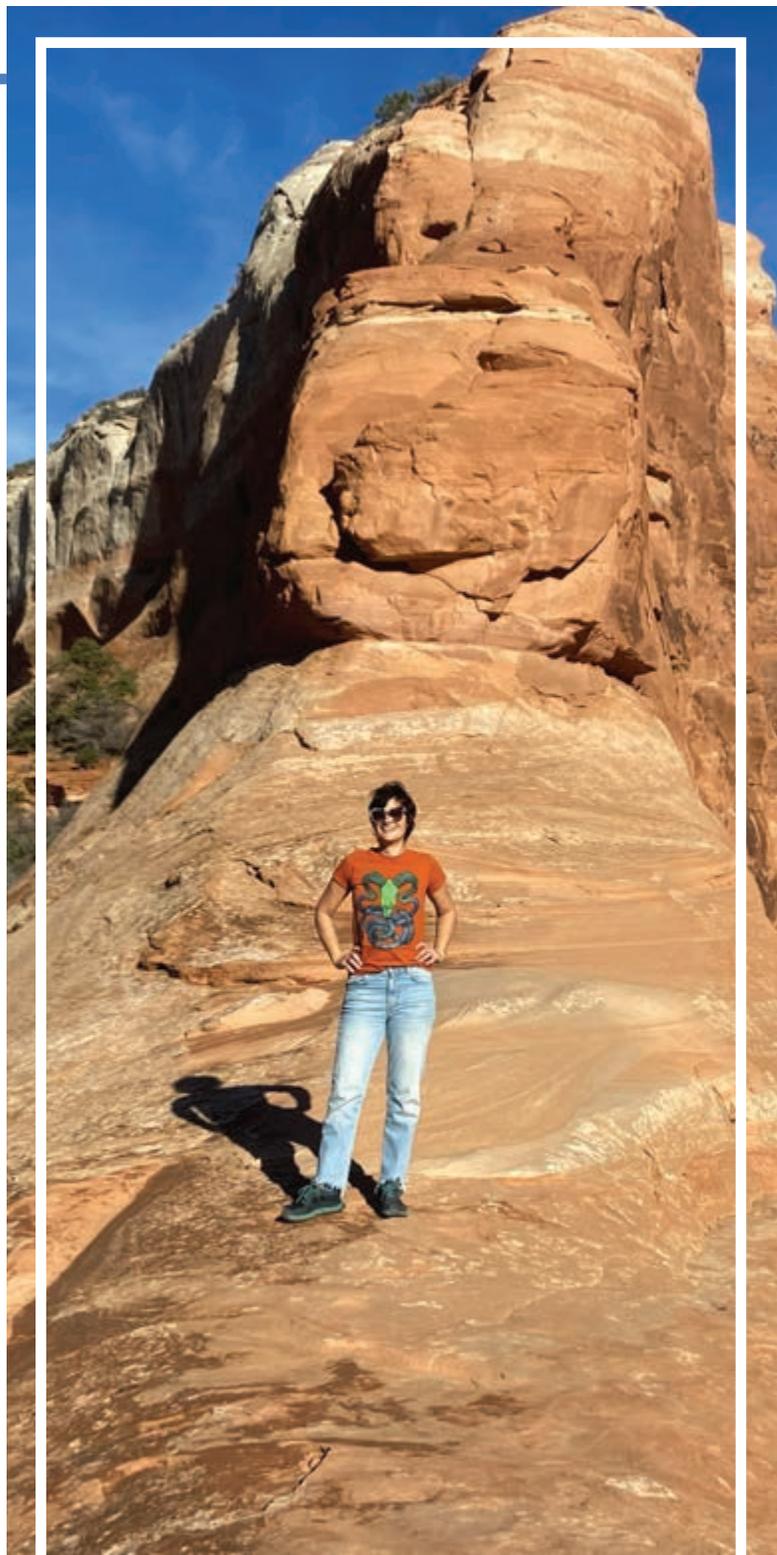
**ON THE COVER: MELISSA MCCOLLAR**  
**STORIES BY KIRK BOXLEITNER**  
**PHOTOS & DESIGN BY LLOYD MULLEN**

## *a. publisher's note*

Just who are Jefferson County's young leaders? That's a question The Production Alliance and The Port Townsend Leader wanted an answer to early this year. After putting it to the community in January via online nominations, nearly 100 folks aged 40 and younger were elevated as young people of note in the county.

There is no one way to be a leader, but the nomination committee tasked with whittling down candidates to the top 15, and comprised of folks from Quilcene, Chimacum, and Port Townsend, had their work cut out for them. Whether in arts, healthcare, entrepreneurial pursuits, law, or activism, a common language emerged for these young ambassadors: "Dedicated," "brave," "hardworking," "kind" were on many nomination forms. But true to our county, there were some originals: A "communitarian," a "steward of forests," an "intergenerational bridge builder," a "song carrier," and someone described as an "open hearted presence." Those, Jefferson County, were your words, and this is your publication.

Whether you celebrate in style at The Castle with the nominees on April 27, or recognize a new face and their contribution to our greater community, it's an honor to publish this tribute, and a joy to partner with The Production Alliance to bring recognition to our Who's Who Under 40 heroes.



# Acclimating To Port Townsend

3-20-23

Living here I have developed  
Both the habit of reflecting on the past  
And friends outside my peer group

Sometimes a sense of stifling  
Comes over me, like being in a library  
And an exhilaration in the absence of that feeling

I'm also acquiring  
A taste for subtle pleasures  
Like the subdued excitement of the porch-swing

by:

**jimmy  
pavlicek**



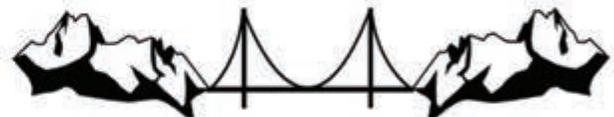
# PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

B U S I N E S S   B R I D G E



**Wednesday, May 24**  
**5pm to 7pm**  
**Brigid's Loft in Port Townsend**  
**280 Quincy Street**  
**Above Bazaar Girls Yarn Shop**

We are an informal group of business professionals who gather monthly for connection, collaboration, and community. To learn when and where we're meeting next, email [contact@emilycaryl.com](mailto:contact@emilycaryl.com) or join our Facebook group: [www.facebook.com/groups/businessbridges](https://www.facebook.com/groups/businessbridges)



**Business BRIDGE**

Connect - Collaborate - Thrive  
Olympic Peninsula

*“... a community leader.”*

***jasmine***

Jazmin Rhaine Van Lelyveld-Gifford was born and raised in Port Townsend, and after a few years of travel after high school, the 23-year-old returned to her hometown a year ago, to share and develop her skills as a performing artist.

Although she mainly attended public school, Van Lelyveld-Gifford graduated from the OCEAN program in 2018, after dancing with the O’Meara Performing Arts Academy from ages 6-19 years old, and also teaching at the studio from ages 16-19.

“Dancing and coaching remind me to enjoy the little joys in life, when I sometimes forget to,” Van Lelyveld-Gifford said. During the spring, summer, and fall of 2022, Van Lelyveld-Gifford worked with her fiancé Jared to bring their craft art into the community, through venues including the Port Townsend Farmers Market, Olympic Pride, and the THING and Departure festivals.

Van Lelyveld-Gifford has also been teaching dance to children and adults at Port Townsend Ballet for the last year, “and through that, I’ve been rediscovering what movement, and being an educator and coach, all means to me.”

In addition, Van Lelyveld-Gifford has been studying at the Port Townsend School of Massage, with her graduation currently slated for the spring of 2024.

“Long story short, I love all my jobs, and the communities we get to create within them,” Van Lelyveld-Gifford said.

Teaching movement through dance is Van Lelyveld-Gifford’s way of providing a safe space to the community’s youth, so they can “express themselves in healthy ways during their formative years,” something which helped Van Lelyveld-Gifford during her own younger years.

“Having a place to build relationships, self-expression, confidence, inclusion, team-building, and self-discipline is so important, especially as a young person in an age when addiction, depression, and ever-evolving technology are so prominent,” Van Lelyveld-Gifford said. “The arts provide a solution to the disconnect and post-lockdown isolation that many of us feel.”

Van Lelyveld-Gifford worries that a combination of encroaching social media and emerging from pandemic protocols can leave today’s youth lonely and anxious, which she fears could lead the community to become more separated and less diverse.

Van Lelyveld-Gifford sees shared creative activities as one remedy, and encourages practicing outdoor recreation, fostering job opportunities, and taking part in “team-oriented play” scenarios.



“Also, finding housing as a young adult in this community is nearly impossible,” Van Lelyveld-Gifford said. “A lot of youth are left either living with family, moving away, or working an unmanageable amount of hours to make ends meet.”

Van Lelyveld-Gifford acknowledged this also applies to county residents of all ages with low incomes, and she called for more affordable co-housing opportunities, especially for those aged 18-30, along with ways to “recognize our underrepresented community members. Extending a hand to someone with fewer resources, or being a listening ear, is always helpful.”

*"...an inspiration to other young immigrants, women and people of color."*

# *nikki*

Before she moved to Port Townsend seven years ago, Nikki Skipper hailed from Manila, in the Philippines, whose society she considered more competitive, but among the youth of her American hometown, "It's not about competition, but cooperation."

The 30-year-old executive chef of Tommyknocker's Cornish Pasty was introduced to Port Townsend when she visited in-laws in town eight years ago, before she and her husband Thomas opened their restaurant with only four employees three years ago.

"For 90 percent of our staff, this is their full-time job," Skipper said. "We keep to our hours and don't close, so customers can rely on us, and our employees can provide for their families and pay their bills."

Skipper fell in love with Port Townsend's "unique picturesque setting, charming atmosphere and amazing people that live here," so she sees her and her husband's restaurant as a way of giving back to that community, not only by employing 15-20 people in the summer months, along with providing housing for a few, but also by contributing time, effort and resources to various area charities.

During COVID, the Skippers donated free meals to children who'd lost their school lunches to the pandemic, and they've also supplied donations ranging from food to money, and even auction items, to the Rotary Club, Dove House, Olympic Pride, Key City Public Theatre, OlyCAP and others, in addition to helping sponsor local soccer team Northern Peninsula Football Club and the East Jefferson Rivals high school athletic teams.

As Skipper has grown more familiar with the local youth through such activities, she's

found it "amazing" that so many of them have focused as strongly on the arts as on athletics, citing how many she's met who have learned to play musical instruments in school.

"What's also amazing about the youth of Jefferson County is that they stand up and support each other, especially in times of need," said Skipper, whose own concerns include finding ways for the community to support its own more strongly during the winter months.

"Most people here have a very hard time making it through the winter, and depend on the summer months to save enough to get through," she added, before suggesting solutions to drive business and increase em-

ployment year-round, including an ice-skating rink at Pope Marine Park, and events such as a winter concert series.

"This would be amazing for locals and tourists alike, and hopefully keep shops, stores and restaurants busy," Skipper said. "Also, more Christmas lights on the trees, kind of like what the Seattle Zoo does with zoo lights. If we, as a community, can accomplish things like this, I believe our future is bright. The worst-case scenario is not doing anything, and things staying exactly how they are now, without progressing. Things will be more affordable if we operate as a year-round community, which I believe is possible, if we try."



*"...inspires me through her work, but also through her art--including her photography and storytelling."*

# *bonnie*



Ever since a barely-remembered family connection led Bonnie Obremski to make Port Townsend her home nearly a decade ago, she's contributed her talents to the community in an eclectic variety of ways.

When she was between tall ship sailing contracts, Obremski visited a friend, Gaia Thurston-Shaine (now married, and Gaia Marrs) in 2014.

"I walked by Hasse & Co. Port Townsend Sails, and a memory rose to the surface," Obremski said. "I stepped inside Carol Hasse's office, and asked if she'd designed sails for my ex-father-in-law in 1985. She pulled his file from her cabinets, we got to chatting, and a week later, I was working there as a

sailmaking apprentice."

Two and a half years later, a repetitive motion injury compelled Obremski to return to her career roots with a communications job at Centrum in 2016, and after two more years, she'd developed aspirations that she fulfilled, in part, by founding an annual storytelling festival and magazine called "Heart Stories," which managed to stage two shows in downtown Port Townsend before the pandemic hit.

"Live performances went on hiatus," Obremski said. "I lost my gigs waiting tables at Finistère, pouring mead at the Mead Werks at Wilderbee Farm, acting at Key City Public Theatre, and playing Concerts on the Dock with my band, led by George Rezendes."

Obremski had also helped design the "She Tells Sea Tales" chapbook with the Northwest Maritime Center, and contributed her time and talents to the Port Townsend Wearable Art Show, marketing the event one year and modeling in it for six consecutive years, during which it broke its fundraising record.

After the COVID lockdown ended, Obremski left Port Townsend for eight months, living out of her car and traveling what she estimated to be more than 16,000 miles by land, sea and air.

Obremski's return to Port Townsend saw her connect with a new mentor, as she took a writing class by Anna Quinn, author and former owner of Imprint Books, who helped Obremski achieve her lifelong dream of completing the first draft of a novel.

Obremski also landed a dream job as a web and digital communications specialist at Jefferson County Public Health in 2021, through which she scored \$200,000 in federal grants to improve equity, enabling the county to train staff in anti-racist literacy and partner with the YMCA's Family Resources Navigator program, so as to better understand and serve the county's marginalized populations in turn.

Obremski remains as proud of "Heart Stories" as she is of her work with Public Health, although as she turns 40 on April 15, she's still got other irons in the fire, having won a spot in a juried photography show at Northwind Art that's running through April 30, which includes images of hot springs at Yellowstone National Park, that she took on her extended road trip.



Lillian Akemi “Lilly” Powers seeks to keep her clients out of the criminal justice system not just by employing her legal know-how, but also by connecting them with whatever resources might help them avoid winding up in court to begin with.

The 31-year-old public defense attorney moved with her husband to Port Townsend from Seattle in 2017 when she was offered a job by Jefferson Associated Counsel, after honing her skills in civil legal aid.

“It wasn’t quite a Green Acres moment, but I was quite shocked when I saw news about bison on the loose in *The Leader* one day,” said Powers, who now resides in Cape George.

Powers advocates for poor and disenfranchised clients, regardless of the crimes they’re accused of committing, but this also means navigating and accessing resources and services that can help leave her clients better off than when she met them.

“I really appreciate when I can work therapeutically in the legal system, whether that’s in our therapeutic courts, like drug court or behavioral health court, or offering sentencing alternatives to jail or prison time for clients with addiction or behavioral diagnoses,” Powers said. “The goal is never to see the client again, not because I don’t enjoy working with them, but because the only time they’d see me is if they’re accused of a crime.”

Powers believes the entire community ultimately suffers whenever anyone is incarcerated without addressing the root causes of why, because whenever that person is released from incarceration, it will likely be without any tools to change their life or behaviors, and without a job or housing, among the other “collateral consequences that come from a criminal conviction.”

To avoid people’s circumstances cycling them through the criminal justice system in the first place, Powers believes structural changes need to be made to society as a whole, but in the meantime, she’s proud that she can guide them through a system they would be unlikely to navigate successfully on their own, without counsel.

Powers lamented a lack of industry, housing and infrastructure to support younger people and families, as she called for more childcare, entertainment and community resources in residential neighborhoods and near workplaces.

While Powers knows some younger people are able to get by in Jefferson County by living frugally in accessory dwelling units of existing single-family homes, “it’s almost impossible to make the transition” to living conditions that can accommodate getting married or having kids, unless they’re among “the few higher-paid professionals, or those benefiting from generational wealth.”

Powers would welcome more low-income and entry-level housing in the county’s urban areas, in addition to creating

# *lillian*

*“...never gives up even in the face of great adversity.”*

and attracting more businesses tailored toward families younger than 50, to avoid becoming a vacation spot for the rich.

“We can attract younger generations and diverse people of all kinds, then keep them as they grow families, or settle down in their 30s-40s, while also retaining our roots and character,” Powers said.

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# *rebecca*

She came to live in Jefferson County through her relationship with the man who would become her husband, even though they both hail from the Midwest, but Rebecca Sornson has made a significant impact of her own on the health of her new hometown of Port Hadlock, and beyond.

The 36-year-old naturopathic doctor, founder and clinical director of Hearth Natural Medicine, a nonprofit community clinic south of Port Townsend, married her husband Josh in Fort Worden, while they were attending graduate school and living in Seattle, a decade after Josh had moved to the Olympic Peninsula at 25, and fell in love with the area after his first summer in PT.

In the three years and change since they moved to Jefferson County, Sornson’s clinic has made its mission to provide “accessible, holistic” primary care to fellow county residents, with three naturopaths and a counselor currently serving all ages of patients, and accepting as many insurance plans as possible, including Apple Health Medicaid.

“That turned out to be a huge need here, as more than 80 percent of our patients are on Apple Health plans,” Sornson said. “Almost 1,000 people have walked through our doors since we opened in the summer of 2020. It’s an honor to provide this kind of medicine to the community.”

Sornson’s clinic includes a meeting space for groups including “Thriving Together,” pro- **...continued in two pages**





....continued from two pages ago.

viding pregnancy and postpartum support, and she hopes to offer more educational and community events in the years to come.

Sornson's clinic also aims to become more connected to its surrounding community by stocking local herb growers' products in the clinic dispensary, and subletting its space to two other businesses: Oak and Well Acupuncture, and Raices Midwifery.

"Both businesses share our commitment to accessibility, and are run by absolutely lovely people," Sornson said, referring to acupuncturist Sean Guinan and midwife Meshell Orozco.

Sornson sees the community as "alive with lovely, interesting and hard-working young people, many engaged in meaningful pursuits that don't make a lot of money," or else "choosing purposefully to live simpler lives, close to the land."

As a parent to two young children, Sornson feels grateful to the community's "wonderful, forward-thinking" early childhood programs, including nature schools, small in-home programs, and established preschools.

"Our libraries put on amazing programming for young children, and provide a welcoming environment for rainy days," Sornson said.

As a physician, Sornson is concerned with how many young families among her patients have moved because they could not find "affordable, consistent" housing, even as she's heartened by the attention and efforts that have become focused on creating more options for housing.

"I'd love to see more programs help young people become first-time homeowners," she added. As a mom whose kids enjoy the outdoors, Sornson is also concerned with the county's forestry and other environmental practices, as she advocated banning the herbicide glyphosate, "given its links to cancer, neurodegenerative conditions and autoimmune disease."

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# tate

When 29-year-old Tate Mack and her wife moved to Jefferson County two years ago, they immediately felt welcomed by their newfound community, and those feelings of homecoming and acceptance are among the gifts that they've sought to reciprocate for their friendly neighbors, especially the next generation.

While Mack's wife currently works for Jefferson County as a code compliance specialist, to help protect the community's environmental health, she also volunteers for Olympic Pride.

"She's been so supportive of my work," Mack said of her wife. "I started working for Olympic Pride as youth coordinator in June of last year, and I've had such an amazing experience with both the organization and the community as a whole."

Back when it was still "Jefferson County Pride," the organization hosted its second-annual "Pride in the Park" event in 2019, which featured entertainment, community recognition, vendors and participants from throughout the Olympic Peninsula. Olympic Pride has outlined its mission as supporting the LGBTQ+ community on the Olympic Peninsula through awareness, education and community engagement, and this year's Pride event is coming up June 10.

As youth coordinator for Olympic Pride, Mack focuses on providing events for LGBTQ+ and "questioning youth" within their community, by organizing virtual and in-person happenings and activities, with quarterly calendars of such get-togethers that youths aged 12-18 can attend, which are designed to furnish them with "fun safe spaces."

Mack noted that the RainShadow Youth Collective recently hosted Olympic Pride's first-ever "Queer Expressions" art show, which displayed a gallery of art pieces submitted by 12-to-18-year-olds.

***"...created a safe space for these LGBTQ+ youth to be themselves."***

"It was an amazing experience to see young artists get recognition from their peers and their community," Mack said. "I'm proud to be part of an organization that can provide support and enrichment for an under-represented segment of our community."

Mack, who now resides in uptown Port Townsend, expressed a hope similar to that of many of her peers profiled in this year's "Who's Who Under 40," when she wished that more people realized how passionate local members of younger generations are.

"We truly care about our community, and are proud to be a part of the continuing growth of our beautiful and quirky corner of the Olympic Peninsula," Mack said. "Whether it's my generation of millennials, or the Gen Z youth with whom I work, I know so many individuals working to help make our community more equitable and sustainable. It's awesome to see the dedication that the younger generations have within our area. I've never lived anywhere like that before."

When Mack considers the best-and-worst-case scenarios for Jefferson County's future a decade from now, she sees the best-case scenario as "the continued growth of equity within our community," whereas for her, the worst case would be "future generations losing their passion for this beautiful community."

Mack concluded, "I truly believe that the younger generations have the tenacity to continue that momentum."



*“...believes in his core that EVERYONE is worthy of love and belonging.”*

Brian Richardson and his partner settled in Jefferson County seven years ago because it reminded them of the rural Alaska community that had previously been their home, and since then, he’s sought to provide less fortunate folks with extra chances to turn their lives around.

Richardson’s partner originally hailed from the Puget Sound area, so they took a 10-day bicycle tour around the Olympic Peninsula to decide where they should move, to be closer to family, before they chose Jefferson County for its natural beauty and career opportunities.

While his partner started the Port Townsend School of Massage, Richardson — who’d worked in youth mental health in Sitka, Alaska — did stints at Gray Wolf Ranch and Safe Harbor Recovery Center, the latter as a substance-use disorder counselor, before interning at Dove House Advocacy Services, where he helped start the drug-and-alcohol-free Recovery Café.

“Everyone is in recovery from something,” the 32-year-old Port Hadlock resident said. “It’s not our job to ‘fix’ people. There is an incredible stigma regarding substance use, mental health issues, homelessness and other life traumas. The shame we carry isolates us from community. Recovery Café is a place to rebuild community. Meaningful belonging is essential to recovery.”

Richardson believes the privileges he’s enjoyed in his own life obligate him to improve the lives of others, even as he cites his family’s history of “behavioral health challenges.”

According to Richardson, most of his family members “have been able to access treatment, self-help meetings and family support, to help them maintain their recovery.”

He added, “Most of us are socialized to believe in the myth of meritocracy, that our fortunes or misfortunes are directly and solely the result of our efforts. I recognize how lucky I’ve been to have had a family who loves and supports me, safe and stable housing my entire life, access to education and healthcare, and opportunities to develop skills that are monetarily valued.”

Richardson concluded, “I’m grateful to play my part in creating a place for folks to build peer support for their recovery, whether they have the same kind of resources my family has or not.”

To that end, while Richardson describes Jefferson County as “a vibrant community” and “an amazing place to live,” he’s concerned with what is being done to prepare the area so that it can accommodate an influx of “climate refugees” — since the local climate “is better suited to global warming than other places” — especially as it struggles to serve its existing population.

“It’s challenging to adopt Jefferson County as a home if you can’t afford a home, let alone child care,” Richardson said. “And what are we doing to create a community that’s more welcoming to non-white folks than has historically been the case? There’s strength in diversity.”

*"...outspoken yet humble; she learns from everything she does and everyone she works with..."*



# katie-rose

Katie-Rose Fischer-Price's five years in Jefferson County have been animated by her passions for caring for victims of sexual assault and tending to the health of women overall, plus a belief in the need for art and culture.

The 32-year-old Chimacum resident serves as the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program coordinator for Jefferson Healthcare, and as a Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) nurse for Jefferson County Public Health, in addition to running her own modest pottery business, K2 Clay.

Fischer-Price became part of a group interested in bringing a SANE program to Jefferson County shortly after she moved to the area from Seattle, since the only option for a victim of sexual assault at that time was to travel to a hospital more than an hour away.

"Because of the work of myself and my team, victims of sexual assault receive the care they need, right here in town," Fischer-Price said.

After Fischer-Price was hired as the SANE program coordinator, the program itself launched in the summer of 2019, and has since provided care to more than 30 victims of sexual assault.

"Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners are trained in collecting forensic evidence from, and providing care to, victims after a sexual assault," Fischer-Price said. "Through this work, I'm also a member of the multi-disciplinary team that meets monthly with the Jefferson County Prosecutor's Office, Child Protective Services, law enforcement and other community partners, to review cases of child abuse in our county."

Jefferson Healthcare's SANE program is currently only able to serve patients

aged 13 years and older, although its team coordinates support for younger local victims by connecting them to services elsewhere.

Fischer-Price's second nursing job, through NFP, is an evidenced-based home-visit program, meant to support first-time, low-income families.

"We partner with vulnerable families during pregnancy, and stay with them until their child's second birthday," Fischer-Price said. "The goal is to empower new families to transform their lives, by creating better futures for themselves and their babies."

Fischer-Price balances the intensity of her nursing jobs by "playing with clay" in her spare time, making and selling whimsical art through K2 Clay, which can be found online at [k2clay.com](http://k2clay.com) and on Instagram @K2.clay.

Fischer-Price credited the mentorship and guidance of Todd Stephens, at Millbrook Clayworks in Port Hadlock-Irondale, with aiding her own artistic journey.

Fischer-Price has witnessed, and contributed to, what she deemed the strength of local community partnerships through her nursing work, in which many of "the most influential and impressive" changes on behalf of vulnerable populations are being made by "the younger generations, from the bottom up, rather than the top down."

But even as she cited Jefferson County's rich history of fostering artists and creators, Fischer-Price expressed concerns that a lack of affordable housing could make it increasingly difficult for "young creatives, entrepreneurs, families, and victims of trauma and systemic oppression to live here," if the community winds up "driven by profit rather than diversity."



*“...willing and able to dive into an array of projects and passions, and seeks to learn and question.”*

## **cameron**

Jones elaborated that advocating for social and racial equity can also mean calling for equitable affordable housing and access to food and land, as well as fiscally sponsoring projects, through Black Lives Matter of Jefferson County, “by BIPOC, for BIPOC,” that he noted are “often unsupported by the larger community,” or else “overlooked or tokenized by larger funding organizations.”

Jones lamented that more people aren’t aware of how “connected” younger generations are, “not only more connected interpersonally, but also connected to the heaviness of our current times, when it comes to social and racial justice, and climate change.”

Fortunately, Jones sees his peers and successors as possessing “a real drive and desire to creatively address the numerous and often existential crises we’re facing,” as well as “an abundance of hopeful, creative and healing energy in our community, that still has not been tapped into, and is often minimized and ignored.”

Jones hopes such efforts will be enough to avoid what he sees as the community’s potential descent into gentrification, inaccessibility “white supremacy and colonized thinking.”

Jones believes this can be avoided, “if our community starts behaving more in alignment with its values,” so that “it thinks and acts holistically, with regard to considering what life would be like, seven generations into the future.”

Jones regards the current era as “a nexus of great climate change, and social and racial shifts,” that will require people to respond to such shifts “relatively quickly, in order to ensure that our progeny will not only still be here, but they will inherit a community that’s better off than where we currently are.”

Ever since 34-year-old Cameron Jones followed his family in moving to Jefferson County a decade ago, he’s sought to serve the community by advocating for social and racial equity.

Jones’ mother and stepfather moved to the county in 1999, but while Jones and his brother would visit their folks growing up, Jones himself didn’t move to Port Townsend until 2013.

“At that point, I was in the Army Reserves, and my unit was deployed without me, so I took that as a sign to move out here and start a new chapter,” Jones said.

Jones works in Port Townsend as an instructor for the Mystic Monkey Yoga studio, and as the assistant manager and community outreach coordinator for Mad Hatter and Company Hats and Fantastical Accessories, but he’s most proud of helping to found the Black Lives Matter chapter of Jefferson County, on which he now serves as a board member.

“It’s a small but intentional organization, working toward a more actively anti-racist community,” Jones said. “I’m proud of our impact in supporting resilience in the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) community, and how that support can continue to grow.”

# ***liz***

In the five years since Liz Revord and her husband moved to Jefferson County, their search for affordable housing went from a personal concern to her community cause.

The now-37-year-old and her husband moved to Jefferson County in 2018 for his job as director of the county Department of Emergency Management, but she was the one who decided the community was right for them, after sampling its culture and scenic beauty.

“We’re both avid bicycle riders, so seeing lots of bikes was a sign for me,” Revord said. “Also, I grew up in Michigan, on the Great Lakes, so another requirement for me to live somewhere is a large body of water nearby.”

Revord’s stint as director of The ReCyclery non-profit bike shop in Port Townsend suited her and her husband’s shared interests, but after a few years, she’d grown frustrated over continually bidding on what could have been their first home, only to be beaten by all-cash offers each time.

“Among our friends, we were nearly the only ones who lived in a traditional, stick-built home in the area, with indoor plumbing,” said Revord, who subsequently met with Kellen Lynch and Justine Gonzales-Berg, then the team behind the Housing Solutions Network. “That kick-started my work educating people on the housing crisis, and devising community-based solutions that could allow those who work here to live here too.”

Revord acknowledged that local affordable housing has already “been looked at from 100 different angles,” but as the network director of the Housing Solutions Network, she credits her graduate studies in environmental policy, community advocacy and social justice with honing her brainstorming and problem-solving skills to address complex issues through those lenses and venues.

In addition to how HSN has engaged with the community through “education, resources and advocacy,” Revord takes pride in re-establishing the youth mountain bike team for two seasons at The Recyclery, as well as in supporting bicycle donations to youths who haven’t had access to bikes for recreation or transportation.

“I don’t have kids, but I genuinely care about their options here,” said Revord, who supports lights around the Port Townsend Skate Park and a pump track at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. “Watching the kids come into the mountain bike club during COVID was a real eye-opener. They wanted a place to spend time with friends, learn from others, and find companionship and mentors.

***“...is compassionate,  
intelligent, organized,  
adaptable, direct,  
passionate, principled,  
faces issues head on,  
stands up for what’s right.”***



Those relationships make a difference.”

Revord lamented that the average age of a first-time home-buyer in Jefferson County is 38.

“If you have the means, sell your house to a teacher, a nurse or a non-profit worker, so they can live here,” Revord said. “If all you create is more market-rate housing, you’re going to lose the nurses who care for your elderly, the teachers who educate your kids, the firefighters who come to your rescue, and the barista at your favorite coffee shop. You’ll lose the artists, the boat-builders and everyone else who contributes to the character of this community.”



*"...you just keep thinking how much better you are for knowing her."*

genevieve

In the four years since 27-year-old Genevieve Barlow came to Port Townsend from Seattle, she's worked multiple jobs, not only to support herself, but also to help sustain the physical and spiritual needs of others.

"I'd visited Port Townsend when I was little, and I always liked the idea of living here," Barlow said. "After I graduated from college, I had an opportunity to work in theater here, which I did until the pandemic, when a friend asked if I would help coordinate children's meal distribution for the YMCA of Jefferson County."

With the need for summer meals increasing substantially due to the pandemic, Barlow served the next two years as the YMCA's food security coordinator, focusing on access for families in south Jefferson County, which connected her to several other local organizations also addressing hunger in the community.

Following her time at the YMCA, Barlow directed a Chiacum-based production of Shakespeare's "As You Like It" last August, before she began working for both KPTZ and Centrum this past fall, while also co-founding the local theater company Saltfire.

"My passion and purpose in the arts was only strengthened by my time working in food security," said Barlow, the artistic director of Saltfire, who's also the director of promotions for KPTZ, and the alumni network coordinator for Centrum. "When you don't know where your next meal is coming from, being able to afford tickets to a concert or play isn't a consideration. I want

to feed the minds and souls of Jefferson County, as well as their bodies."

Barlow sees Saltfire as a safe space for collaboration and co-creation, and hopes to help theater change others' lives as profoundly as it's changed her own.

"Theater should be as healthy for the people creating it as the audience receiving it, and the community supporting it," Barlow said. "I'm very proud of creating ways for people to do all three in our community."

Barlow aims to make the community more aware of the desire and drive that younger generations possess to participate and engage, even when they all-too-often lack the resources or the time to do so.

"So many of the things that make Jefferson County exceptional are only available to those with discretionary time and income," said Barlow, who advocated addressing "the needs that are present now in our community," and working toward building enduring, long-term solutions from there.

She added, "We live connected to each other, and that is powerful and precious. We are coming up though a time of staggering isolation and loss, and remembering why we live in connection is the first step in helping us achieve our best potential. People investing in the land, in the arts and in each other are what make Jefferson County thrive, and if we hold onto that, then I feel very excited for our next decade."

# jack

Jack Range has spent the past 27 of his 36 years calling Jefferson County home, and it's left him unafraid to speak his mind about the community.

The Port Townsend High School Class of 2004 alumnus grew up in town starting in 1996, and while he was away to attend the University of Washington, plus serve as an intern and investigator for Seattle public defenders, Range remains old-school PT enough to take pride in having worked for Bill Kush, "the man himself," when Kush ran the recreation program the city outsourced to the Jefferson County Family YMCA.

Although Range served as a Port Townsend planning commissioner from 2012 to 2015, he's been a Jefferson County public defense employee since 2010, first as an APR 6 law clerk until 2015, when he became an attorney at Jefferson Associated Counsel, the local public defenders' office, which he described as providing "constitutional legal support for the county's underclass and mentally ill, targeted for control and punishment by our criminal legal system."

He added, "These are the folks Leader subscribers read about in the paper's police reports."

Range feels pride when he's "listening in awe" to his clients' "self advocacy, bravery and defiance in the face of punitive coercion," and he urged the community to take part in the process.

"Come to criminal court," Range said. "Track cases. Bear witness. Post bail for the poor, on [nwcombailfund.org/court-watch](http://nwcombailfund.org/court-watch). And pressure everyone, myself included, to push beyond the unjust status quo."

Range is even more outspoken in condemning what he deemed the worsening inequality of the county's housing, "an emergency and existential crisis for working families in this community on par with World War III."

Range's ideal future would see the county's "gerontocracy defeated by a band of neo-Trotskyist 1980s Volvo drivers," with its criminal justice system "reformed from reactionary punishment to social science and evidence-based restoration," along with free public school lunches.

But he admitted his additional dreams of affordable housing for all will not happen if the community's current course continues.

"Through the mirage of high-quality lifestyles that this county provides for a niche well-to-do crowd, the reality for working families can be brutal without adequate childcare, housing or other supports, which healthy communities



***"...is a dedicated public defender, social justice warrior, friend of the environment and sustainability, seeker of truth and fairness, father, husband, and a ll-around amazing guy."***

provide," Range said.

Range has been "quite impressed" with local efforts toward more public housing models, as well as the county's support for transitional housing.

"Housing first, then other needs fall in line," Range said. "I've seen this truth time and again through my clients' successes with behavioral health court-supported housing."

Range called for the county and city to announce a housing emergency, as former Port Townsend City Council member Brent Butler advocated more than 15 years ago, so the city might reduce its red tape for workforce housing developments, akin to Towne Point and Cape George, "where double-wides and stick-built homes mingle."

Otherwise, Range warned, "Our current trajectory favors development by high-financed conglomerates, like those who terraformed Cook Hill — all for what benefit to our community?"



# cosmo

Cosmo Rapaport has spent the past two of their 28 years in Port Townsend, treating their new home community to their own fluid, lively expressions of gender and art alike.

Rapaport's titles include co-director of the Salish Sea Butoh, with their creative partner, Iván-Daniel Espinosa, hosting bi-annual workshops and festivals to bring international and local artists in the Japanese-derived dance form of Butoh to Port Townsend, to teach classes and "share new tools for creative exploration."

Rapaport has also been a curator and resident performance artist, "along with my drag family Bobby4Bobby," at the White Lotus Farm "Barn Jam" in Port Ludlow, "a unique space that bridges electronic music community dances with interdisciplinary pop-up performances" from local and visiting artists.

Rapaport further co-founded Interdisciplinary Artists in Motion (IAM), which "facilitates practice, performance and co-creation opportunities for dancers, visual artists, musicians, academics, writers, dreamers, and storytellers in the Pacific Northwest."

Rapaport also sits on the Port Townsend Arts Commission, currently chairs the Public Art Subcommittee, and over the past two years, has been part of organizing, performing at and producing more than 40 events throughout East Jefferson County, in particular by building platforms to share local and touring artists' "unique visions" to "an ever-changing world."

Such themes resonate with Rapaport, who identifies "as a non-binary transgender human, and I experience my gender identity as an ever-evolving opportunity to love deeper, and accept the radical transformation my spirit goes through in this life."

After moving to Port Townsend in the spring of 2021, Rapaport questioned what actually constitutes a "gathering space" after such a pandemic, how artists' and audiences' "senses" had been changed by COVID, and "How can a community re-meet itself?"

Rapaport's own time "tucked away" in relative isolation forced them to admit how many "community conversation spaces (had) largely disappeared," while "digital echo chambers had become barriers to building bridges across differences."

*"... has grown the arts and culture scene throughout the county."*

As such, Rapaport has since focused on creating artistic experiences accessible to audiences and participants drawn from broadly diverse backgrounds of generations and socioeconomic, to counter the "great disparities" they've witnessed within the community.

"For a city with so many talented artists and crafts-folk," Rapaport wishes "the municipal budget (would) reflect the value we place on art created by working artists who live in East Jefferson County."

Rapaport cited the housing crisis, the "economic instability" of small businesses, and the continued clearcutting of legacy forests as hindrances to art and community alike in the county. "We need to create spaces to grieve, imagine and grow our compassion, if we are to live well in our community," Rapaport said. "Imagination shapes our world, and access to resources shapes what is seen, heard and felt."

They added, "We can no longer rest on an image of being a 'hippie community' that loves and accepts historically marginalized communities, such as POC, trans, the working poor and unhoused. Our intersectional experiences of living in Port Townsend differ from the quaint quirkiness that those who have access to resources continue to enjoy."



Ave Avelino was born at the Jefferson County Hospital, overlooking Admiralty Inlet, 21 years ago, and ever since they've been brought up in Port Townsend, the Jefferson County Public Health clerk hire in inclusivity systems has worked to make sure that the community's youth are being represented and taken care of through the county's school-based health clinics.

"This has consisted of constructing a student feedback survey, that will collect the input of all students who have access to

the school-based health clinics," said Avelino, who explained that this, in turn, should "create a student-led media team to educate high schoolers about what resources are available to them, and encourage connections between the school-based health clinics' staff members and high schoolers."

Among the impacts Avelino is proudest of having within their local community are the connections they've helped foster between the younger population of Port Townsend and the town's professionals and mentors.

"Students at the high school have been able to identify the needs of our town in a proactive way, based on both firsthand experience and empathy for their peers," Avelino said. "This has both inspired Public Health professionals in Jefferson County and helped identify what needs to change."

Indeed, Avelino hopes to see high schoolers and other young adults gain more attention and credit for how much they've all worked to make a tangible impact on the inclusivity of their community.

"I often go to meetings for the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) Student Union and the Spectrum Alliance, for LGBTQ+ and allies, at the high school, and I notice how intelligent and motivated they are," Avelino said. "All they need are resources and mentors to keep this momentum going."

Avelino encouraged adults who are interested in making sustainable change, in areas ranging from social work and healthcare to community wellness, to reach out to them via email at [AAvelino@co.jefferson.wa.us](mailto:AAvelino@co.jefferson.wa.us), "so that we can chat about how you can get involved." If Avelino's neighbors and fellow community members take no action, Avelino worries about losing those communities' "amazing youth and young adult populations," due to a lack of affordable housing and living-wage employment within the county.

"So many young people I talk to see our hometowns as places they could not dream of living as adults, because of the cost of living and lack of jobs that align with their values," Avelino said. "If we don't make jobs or internships that integrate teenagers — a group that's constantly evaluating where they want to live, and what they want to do — into our workforce and advocacy, we could lose the hometown connection so many of us desperately crave, as well as miss out on an opportunity to empower them at this critical life stage."

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## WHO'S WHO NOMINEES





# joseph

At 20 years old, Joseph Molotsky is a “lifer” in Port Townsend, which suits the outdoor and wildlife enthusiast just fine. “It’s an awesome place,” said Molotsky, who enjoys Jefferson County’s opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking and kayaking. “The community is awesome, and so is the surrounding nature. The people here have been really nice, and given so much to me that I felt strongly about wanting to give something back. I’ve never had a reason to want to leave here.”

Molotsky’s chosen outlet for community service might seem unique for a young man his age, but what stands out even more is how long he’s been actively engaged in it.

Molotsky’s penchant for wildlife rehabilitation began with his affinity for birds, which he could identify in the wild from bird-watching books when he was 2 years old.

He began rescuing injured and orphaned wild birds more than eight years ago, around the age of 12, after “falling in love” with birds, becoming fascinated to learn more about them, and then discovering how he could apply that knowledge for

good, which he again deemed “amazing.”

Middle school saw Molotsky devoting his afternoons and weekends to such work, which had grown to more than 20 hours per week by high school — “Once I had the opportunity to volunteer, I never looked back” — as his commitment grew accordingly to encompass environmental stewardship, as well as educating others to care about the natural world.

“It’s where we live,” said Molotsky, who works for the Discovery Bay Wild Bird Rescue in Port Townsend. “And if there’s anything this community does well, it’s striving to do better.”

Given his own outsized history of community service for his age, Molotsky wishes folks in older generations would give members of younger generations credit for the passion and energy that he believes they can put toward important issues.

Molotsky touted his own membership in Students for Sustainability when he was younger, citing it as but one example of how the community’s youth can “change a lot for the better” at an early age, when they’re

armed with the proper know-how.

When Molotsky considers the future of Jefferson County as a whole, he wishes more area residents and organizations would focus on environmental stewardship, in particular protecting the wetlands and waterways that “so many animals rely upon, including humans.”

Molotsky would also love to see a stop put to the practice of clear-cutting forests, for which he recommended selective logging, which he deemed both more sustainable and more productive, by removing only the best timber, and leaving the rest in the stand.

If the county doesn’t address its current practices, Molotsky fears that birds and humans alike will find their health adversely impacted by over-logging, pesticides and herbicides, as what’s used for rodent control can leave vulnerable wild bird populations reduced through dehydration.

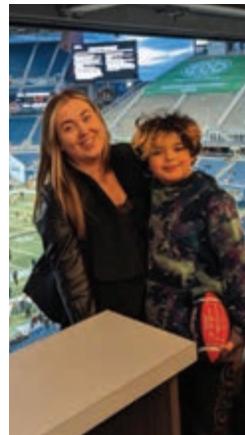


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Alexis Arrabito  
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Ave Avelino  
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Bonnie Obremski**

**Brian Richardson  
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Cameron Jones  
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Conner Bouchard-Roberts  
Conor Sisk  
Cosmo Rapaport**

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**WHO'S WHO UNDER 40**  
A social networking celebration honoring Jefferson County's up and comers  
**APR 27**



**JEFFCO JOBS & TRADES FAIR**  
Connecting local talent with our hometown job market  
**MAY 12**



**CHAUTAUQUA WEEK**  
3-Day weekend of arts, culture, history and civic engagement  
**MAY 19-21**



**ALL COUNTY PICNIC**  
Celebrating emergency preparedness and building community resilience  
**AUG 20**



**CAKE PICNIC**  
Celebrating community spirit with delicious artisan cake, live music, dancing, and performances  
**MAY 20**



**JEFFCO FARM TOUR**  
Celebrating locally grown food, fiber, and farm-made products  
**SEPT 16-17**



**FIELD DAY**  
All-ages, family-friendly summertime fun  
**JUNE 24**



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Celebrate the season, taste the region  
**OCT 13-15**



**BOATYARD BBQ**  
Celebrating the safe return of our fishing fleet and the maritime culture of Jefferson County!  
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An all-ages new year's eve extravaganza  
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