

## **CHAPTER HISTORY OF WHIDBEY BEDSIDE SINGERS**

### **Chapter Beginnings**

The Whidbey Bedside Singers began in 2008, born from the shared vision of five women: Linda Edling, Netsah Zylinsky, Susan Berg, Christa Straub, and Rohini. Each had traveled to established Threshold Choir chapters—four to Anacortes and one to Seattle—where they first encountered the Threshold community. Their paths converged at a Pacific Northwest retreat, where the idea of forming a Whidbey chapter took shape. Today, two of the original founders, Netsah and Christa, remain active members.

### **Membership**

The chapter has grown into a vibrant community of 15 singers, with 12 members regularly offering bedside sings or participating in song baths. Seven of the original members continue to sing with the group, a testament to the chapter's enduring sense of connection and purpose. Three members have contributed original songs that the chapter actively sings, enriching their repertoire with homegrown music. One singer participates in more than one Threshold chapter, and another joined the group after moving from a different Threshold community.

### **Singing and Service**

The Whidbey Bedside Singers provide an average of six bedside sings each month, responding to the needs of hospice clients, friends, and residents of local care facilities. While the chapter does not currently offer song baths, it maintains a steady rhythm of weekly rehearsals to keep their harmonies strong and their presence unified.

### **Growth and Community Presence**

In its early years, the chapter expanded through local outreach. Articles in the community newspaper and postings on Drewslist helped spread the word, drawing in singers who resonated with the mission. New members are welcomed thoughtfully and only when the group feels the timing is right. At present, the chapter is at its maximum comfortable size of 15.

### **Leadership and Structure**

The Whidbey Bedside Singers operate as a shared leadership model, sharing responsibilities and decision-making collectively. This collaborative model reflects their values of equality, mutual support, and shared purpose.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

The pandemic brought significant challenges, yet the chapter adapted with resilience and care. Chapter members practiced outdoors and wore masks to protect one another. When bedside access was restricted, members continued to sing—sometimes from outside clients' windows. One of our own song sisters transitioned during this period, and the group honored her in the only way possible at the time: by singing to her from outside, offering comfort through glass and distance.

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