



**Philanthropic Family's message, in support of the Theler Wetlands and the Pacific Northwest Salmon Center, to the citizens of the North Mason area.**

It has been our great joy to embrace, both emotionally and financially, the project that is being presented to you tonight.

Although my husband spent his summers on Hood Canal and in fact became a marine biologist because of its influence, it was not until we built a house on the South Shore several years ago and started to spend all our holidays and vacations on the Canal, that we began to realize the true uniqueness and educational potential for this beautiful area of Washington State.

Initially we were delighted to find the fabulous environmentally protected Theler Wetlands and Nature Center. Here, we thought, was a community that understood the value of not only protecting their unique environment, but the importance of reaching out to the larger community and speaking to them about the importance of maintaining and enhancing such a special place. So many people were drawn to this area because of the center, and it was obvious that this community believed in the importance of preserving its heritage for future generations. Later, when we found out that the decision to save this land and build this center had been made by such a diverse and broad ranging group of people, and that so many different constituencies had come together to finalize this decision, we were hooked!!

Our first introduction to the concept of the Pacific Northwest Salmon Center occurred when we were introduced to one of the founders of the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group. His infectious enthusiasm led us to ask what long term hopes the Belfair area and its surrounding communities had for their future. After hearing about their various hopes, visions, and dreams, we began to understand your passion!

A wise person once said that different people, when they find this passion, are able to bring three different things to the table: Time, talent and treasure.

For us, it seemed that in order to move these dreams along, our greatest contribution would be in the form of treasure. Thus, our family decided to fund the concept design and preliminary phase of the Pacific Northwest Salmon Center. The plans before you tonight are a product of the time, talent and treasure of so many other people. How proud you must be of these farsighted individuals, and how proud you must also be to have the potential to develop a center that will speak so clearly of your continued commitment to your community's future. Along with the visiting public, this center could become a

mecca for students, teachers, researchers, fisheries, as well as state and national environmental experts.

Your decision to create this beautiful wetland preserve, to open the land to the public, and to support the Pacific Northwest Salmon Center will speak clearly and deeply of your commitment to preserve the environment of today, while educating the generations to follow. The advantage this project holds is that three critical elements are in one place: the environment is still so pristine, the enthusiasm of the supporters so high, and it's potential for affecting so many people is so clear.

There is a wonderful student thesis that was written about this area entitled "The Hood Canal Watershed Project: A Model for Environmental Education". **This project is truly a model for so many other communities, as well as other states and even other countries. What a unique opportunity you now have to finish the final chapter in this thesis and fulfill the community's potential. We hope that you will enthusiastically embrace this project and use your time, talent and treasure to make it a reality.**