Coronavirus threat alters local lives

Resident working at home, ‘reprioritizing’

By Gordon Weeks
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Keri Davidson, a member of the Shelton School District Board of Directors, is working for her pharmaceutical company at home. With schools closing statewide due to the coronavirus threat, both her daughters are also home.

“My husband is a pharmacist, so he is working his normal schedule and taking extra cleaning precautions at work,” Davidson said. “My daughters and I are staying positive and coming up with some routines at home so that they can continue to do some learning while I am on work teleconferences and keeping up with school board business by email or phone.

“We are also having some fun, taking hikes and bike rides in the sunshine and offering to help our older neighbors in any way that we safely can. We have seen many neighbors out on a walk and it helps to not feel so isolated during this time we are all at home. Safety for everyone and their families is so important right now. All our actions have an impact.”

Davidson is among the Mason County residents who shared how their lives have changed with the spread of the coronavirus.

For Shelton accountant Cheryl Williams, the crisis has “taught us as a family what we really need and more importantly, what’s not vital.”

“My husband prepared our household for this,” she said. “But loss of habits will be bad: I don’t have to get ready for work at H&R Block because I’m on a self-imposed quarantine. (Daughter) A.B. has no school. I’m planning a lot of scavenger hunts and walks to fill up the time.”

The crisis has “brought us closer as a family,” Williams said. “We have time that we didn’t have before. We get to hunker down, and together we’ll benefit as a family and be better prepared.”

Williams offered this piece of advice: “Be your best human self right now.”

Karen DeWitt, director of safety and security for the Shelton School District, was attending daily emergency meetings with the state Department of Health. Now she’s working from home, participating in meetings through online video conferencing platform Zoom.

“My trip to Panama during spring break was canceled,” she said. “I continue to run first thing in the morning at home and get outside as much as possible, walk the dog. I am only in close contact with my husband for the most part. I have stopped to see my son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter briefly. I found myself washing my hands before picking up my granddaughter. I continue to wash my

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hand sanitizer.

Linda Finzellez, who creates graphics for the Shelton-Mason County Public Health Facebook page, said the latest outbreak on her 89-year-old mother, who has dementia, has made her feel anxious. "My mother has locked down the facility as well and I'm unable to reach her from using her phone," she said. "I have been asked to stay in their rooms." When Finzellez last saw her mother on Sunday, "I explained the situation, but she was still not well," she said.

"It's a good sport about things," she said. "I hope they get better quickly." She said her mother is going well, and she was able to keep her in the loop. At least until she gets better.

"We are lucky," Finzellez said. "We have to keep reminding ourselves that we are serving the elderly neighborhood - our community is doing their part." She added, "I hope it clears up soon. I am still serving the public."}

“Stacey Anderson said her first concern is for her students, after their school was closed on Friday. "Many of them rely on school for social interactions and find other ways to keep in touch with friends and family," she said. In addition, Anderson said he is worried about how this will impact graduation for his seniors."