



Remarks on the Occasion of Salishan Phase 2 Ribbon Cutting  
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Mother

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A little over three years ago my three kids and I were living in a one bedroom apartment in downtown Tacoma- and my working fulltime was BARELY keeping a roof over our heads, and against every fiber in me I applied to receive public housing and live in Salishan. And while the idea of rent based on my income sounded appealing the idea of moving into Salishan scared and depressed me - I have lived in Tacoma my entire life and Salishan's shady reputation weighed heavy on me. Furthermore, one of my children was showing signs of the whole gangster deal - and the shame I felt would only further entice her. Yet, the day I got my keys I was THRILLED - it was like being on extreme home makeover- shiny -new house, new house smell, AND big-big big. And WOW I could afford the rent. LIBERATION!

I made a firm resolve to keep to myself- deadbolt the door and create the best home compound ever by myself. An isolated Eden! As it is, when you have kids and live in a neighborhood with kids you have to build a community with your neighbors, unless you can afford enough classes, sports teams, video games or other spendy activities for your kids that allow you the luxury of selecting your children's friends based on their mutual interests.

And as it stood, that wasn't an option -for me or most of my neighbors and actually not part of the culture that they come from. I stand here before you REALLY

glad to have not stayed isolated. Going out and meeting the neighborhoods has changed and enriched my children and my life more than I can say.

Living in Salishan I have met and learned more about the diversity of our world - the beauty of the differences - yet how much alike we really are as parents and neighbors. I don't speak Samoan or Russian or Cambodian- but I know when a parent is giving her kid a good tongue lashing or when I need to shmoosh up to the Samoan family who does THE BEST BBQ in Salishan and who will feed anyone who smiles at the smell while walking by!

In Salishan I learned how to talk to strangers even when you don't speak the same language. We have a community garden where I learned from my Korean friends how to grow weird little onions. I met a lady that has lived in Salishan for dang well 40 years. Her Dad worked in the railroads. She has seen the Salishan through ALL the stages and says "it's such a nice place to raise kids and flowers." We hold a community kitchen twice a month in which at least 30 of us (and growing) cook and eat together -sometimes these days -with food we have grown in the community garden (unfortunately my weird little onions didn't pan out). But I cook with people I would probably have NEVER even sat and ate with had I not lived here.

Our Salishan Community Association received a grant and brought in over 200 goats to eat TONS and TONS of blackberries and EVERYTHING they could get in their mouths to rough in the walking trail we are going to eventually have by First Creek - the kids loved that- actually we all loved it! When do you see grazing goat and sheep with real sheppards and sheep herding dogs in EASTSIDE TACOMA for god's sake?

We have had treasure hunts, free movie nights, neighborhood cleanups- .neighborhood patrols. There is a new Farmers Market. We even have one of the few communities anywhere in which the home owners and the renters WORK TOGETHER.

Not to mention all the up and coming endeavors which you can check out for yourself - there is a booth and a website and ALOT of connections to be made with all of you!

I could go on and on but I am not here to sell you on Salishan- it isn't for sale. The most priceless things are the things you'll never get to see unless you live here. It's me forgetting to take my trash bin to the curb but my neighbor has my back and takes it out for me. It's having my neighbor bringing me over food 'cause I need some meat on my bones! It's hearing kids tell other kids to PICK their trash up or to stay out of the flowers-after you swear you telling them fell upon deaf ears. It's watching the kids skateboard through the streets-doing tricks, showing off, laughing, BEING KIDS.

Two winters ago it was really snowy -there must have been 15 kids in laundry baskets sledding down Salishan boulevard in the moonlight- it was SOOO Norman Rockwell-ish. I have felt more community with people with whom I don't even speak the same language - or even the people who do speak the same language but I can't figure out for the life of me where they come from - and knowing when I need to- I have people within the Salishan Community Association and the Tacoma Housing Authority that have my back too when I ask, and who want to see what we all know now not to be just a HOPE Project but to be true - and TO BE HAPPENING AS I SPEAK

Salishan translates from Salish to mean "People of Many Colors". THIS IS THE COMMUNITY OF THE FUTURE UNFOLDING RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW!