

## **Ellsworth Ranch-Nursing Home-Vashon Community Care Center**

Vashon Community Care Center has experienced a series of transformation from its beginning as the Ellsworth Ranch in 1908, to being the Goodwill Farm during the Great Depression of the 1930s, to the Herbert's Boarding House of the 1940s, which gradually transformed into Island Manor Nursing Home in the 1950s, and then became Vashon Community Car Center in the 1990s when the community rallied to save the nursing home from closing.



Ellsworth Ranch @ 1915

P.E. Ellsworth originally purchased the property along what is now Vashon Highway in 1908 and built the farmhouse, barns and other outbuildings seen in the 1915 photograph of the Ellsworth Ranch. Ellsworth sold the property to the Carnation Company in 1918, which operated the farm until 1928 when it was purchased by the Seattle Exchange Club and given to Goodwill Industries to operate as a working farm to provide, according to the Seattle Daily News, "employment and a program of rehabilitation for men and women in need of such help". The Exchange Club Goodwill Farm became an important support for the displaced as the Great Depression developed and deepened during the 1930s. Lena Johnson was the cook for the Farm from 1937 to 1944 and continued cooking for the Hebert's when they purchased the Farm for \$10,000 in 1944.



Herbert Nursing Home @ 1953

Leon and Nell Hebert began operating the farm as a boarding house, continuing to house many of the men who had been residents since the depths of the Depression. King County Public Assistance paid \$30 per month for each resident. Tom Hebert, who grew up on the farm, describe it as fully self-sufficient with "hogs, draft horses, rabbits, Vashon's only public stud bull – the famous Boeing Bull – milk cows grazing in the front yard, saddle horses, 1,000 chickens, a huge vegetable garden, and goats, goats, goats." As the residents aged, the Heberts gradually transformed the farm into a licensed nursing home by 1953, Called Vashon Nursing Home, and continued to operate it until 1957. The 1950s photograph shows the nursing home when the Herbarts operated it.



Island Manor Nursing Home @ 1961

Bruce and Dorothy Smith, who purchased the nursing home from the Heberts, renamed it Island Manor Nursing Home, added a new kitchen, a dining room, and the west wing. The 1961 photograph shows Island Manor with these new additions. The barn was demolished in 1963 to create a parking lot. In the 1970's Bill Ide purchased the nursing home and added a "Summerfest" BBQ that quickly became an Island Manor Tradition.

Mike McIntyre purchased Island Manor in 1977 and added a walking path to the facility. In 1980, Jim and Judy Alexander purchased the facility and instituted a series of renovations that brought the facility up to current building codes, rebuilt the kitchen, and performed major work on the sewage and water systems. The Alexanders formed a partnership with Regency Care Centers in the early 1990's with the intent of building a new facility and opening it in 1994. But a number of factors prevented the plan from being realized and the project was abandoned.

In 1995, the Alexanders, owners of the Island Manor Nursing Home, announced they were closing the facility because of rising costs and regulations, which made operating in the aged farmhouse difficult. The closing would displace the 36 residents, and as a result members of the Vashon community organized to save the Nursing Home. In an effort led by Ted Kutscher and Ted Claybaugh, thirty islanders pledged loans to guarantee the lease of the property and within two weeks organized a non-profit, Vashon Community Care, to keep the facility operating. The group quickly found that an entirely new facility would be needed within five years because of the deteriorated state of the original building and new building regulations for care centers. The Board of Vashon Community Care took on the challenge and enlisted the cooperation of Providence Health System to purchase the property and plan construction of a new facility. The Board contracted with Providence Mount St. Vincent to manage the new care center. The new building, with a 40 apartment assisted living facility, a 30-bed nursing home, and a five day-a-week adult day care program opened in August 2001.



Vashon Community Care Center 2009

The present Vashon Community Care Center photograph shows the new facility that was designed to maintain the lines and feel of the original 1908 building. The history of this site, moving from a working farm, to the Exchange Club Goodwill Farm, to the Hebert Boarding House, to the Island Manor Nursing Home, to a community sponsored care facility is a great example of what a community can do when confronted with a crisis. The community joined together in a volunteer effort to work for the common good of the community.

1915 Photograph – Courtesy of Vashon-Maury Island Heritage Association

1950s Photograph - Courtesy of Vashon-Maury Island Heritage Association

1961 Photograph - Courtesy of Vashon-Maury Island Heritage Association

Current Photograph – Terry Donnelly

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