

Local Spotlight: Pamala Joy, Founder of Ashland Food Angels

For the Love of Service: Living with Joy; Loving Ourselves and Others

By Jordan Pease - November 2021 Issue of Locals Guide Magazine- Ashland, Oregon



The **Ashland Food Angels** is a community service organization with a long history here. For over two decades, **Pamala Joy** and a team of volunteers, hundreds over the years, have diligently worked to help provide food security for families. Pamala exemplifies service in all aspects of her life, a living example of caring for the Earth and our community in ways small and big, while fostering joy and friendliness everywhere she goes.

"You've lived in Ashland for a long time- certainly you've seen it change. What's the best and worst thing about Ashland?"

Big questions. I moved here in 1992 from Hawaii, by tuning into inner guidance, and I loved the natural beauty here and the caring and awareness of many people I met, two of the best aspects of Ashland. The worst is the accommodation problem: how expensive it can be to live here; how difficult it can be to find an affordable place to live.

"What led to the founding of Ashland Food Angels? Please describe the operation you manage?" In 1995 I became aware that two landfills had recently closed and discovered that a great deal of food was being thrown away while many struggled to have enough to eat. Wanting to serve the cause of the hungry as well as the environmental imbalance, I asked bakers and market managers to let me deliver unwanted food to organizations that would distribute it to those in need. For five years I did this alone, with only the help of my adolescent daughter, and the project grew to a seven day-a-week commitment of working four to six hours a day. I needed help and the first volunteers were among the single mothers I had been delivering food to.

Over the years as the **Ashland Food Angels** grew, we delivered food to nearly two dozen other organizations, school projects, and individuals and families in need. Over the past two decades hundreds of different people volunteered on this project, and I often see former Food Angels when I travel around town. **Scott Reeder, Rick Schmitt, and Andre Angermann** are part of my Core Group, and **Allan Widmeyer and Anne Chambers** contribute a great deal of help as well. Most years we collected and distributed over a quarter-million pounds of food annually, and for the past dozen or so years, clothing, furniture, and household items have also been part of our donation program.

Currently, we pick up food five mornings a week, three afternoons and every evening, with the most of it going to the **Ashland Emergency Food Bank (AEFB)**, the **Peace House** for their free meals programs, and **Gospel Mission** in Medford. I work daily and the dozen or so volunteers put in four to six hours per week each. Recently I decided that organizing the non-food items is taking too much time and effort, so Food Angels is moving back to focusing just on food. We work closely with **Uncle Food's Diner** and **AEFB**, to help meet their needs for fresh food. Since the beginning of this project, my

intention was to provide fresh, live food and I am extremely grateful to the produce departments of the **Ashland Food Co-Op** and **Shop 'N Kart**, and to the local organic farmers who generously support those of us who provide food for those in need.



"Beyond food security and homelessness issues, which causes are important to you?" I live a fairly "green" lifestyle and have taught many people ways to conserve resources, help the environment and live more simply. I am also very concerned with the impact of technology on humans and the environment and the push of the telecommunications industries to constantly upgrade systems, despite mounting evidence that electromagnetic frequencies can have a harmful effect on many, many people, as well as on wildlife, especially birds, bees, and trees. I believe that people need to educate themselves about this very real hazard. I am part of **Oregon for Safer Technology** which has the aim to bring this awareness to people, and to help stop the alarming roll-out of 5-G technology, which I believe to be extremely toxic to living beings.

I am also an advocate of self-health care and very wary of the efforts of large corporations, especially the pharmaceutical industry, to take personal power away from individuals by encouraging us to be dependent on their non-natural products. We can support our own health through living closer to nature, including spending time in natural surroundings, as well as learning how "real" food sustains our bodies, how herbs can help us maintain balance and health, and how our thoughts affect us on all levels. Living with joy, loving ourselves and others, focusing on appreciation and gratitude, engaging humor and laughter, keeping active through movement, maintaining strong social support systems, and basing our lives on caring, sharing and giving to others - these natural ways of being will enrich and enliven us and allow us to stay strong, healthy and happy.

I also believe that it is important to keep fear to a minimum, trusting in the love and support of the Higher Beings in our lives, whether we call them Angels, God, Spirit, the Universe, or simply the Spirit of Love. Our bodies have natural healing abilities; we are wired for joy and happiness; and serving others can be the golden pathway to finding health, happiness, joy and love.

"What's something people would never guess about you?" Despite the fact that I have been on stage since age six, have traveled the world as a performer for much of my adult life, often have had to speak out in public, have taught performance skills in over a dozen countries, and have delivered lively singing telegrams to many people in this valley as Angelica the Singing Angel, I am really quite a quiet and shy person. I like being quiet and would prefer curling up with a good book or movie than socializing, partying or delving into a conversation.

"Have you ever had paranormal experiences? What's your take on Metaphysics and Spirituality?" I have been psychic since childhood, although I wasn't aware then of what this meant. I just knew things instantly that others didn't seem to know. I have seen and felt Angels around me since adolescence,

have seen what appeared to be alien spacecraft, often know who is on the phone before I see the caller ID, and have dozens of nature spirits in my garden.

I lived at the **Findhorn Community** in Scotland for a number of years, and one of my earliest experiences there was hearing a disembodied voice tell me that I would have a child. Since I was set on not having children, this was a bit of a shock and I ignored the voice, only to have it return days later with much more power and intensity. A year later at Findhorn again, I saw the man I knew would be the father and despite my attempts at avoiding the issue, I got together with him, and my very remarkable daughter was born less than a year later.

I believe that we are all spiritual beings, surrounded by both recognizable and mysterious aspects of spirituality. Whether we ignore it or not, I believe that our lives are continually affected by the metaphysical world. How we interface with it depends very much on how open we are to accepting that there are other realms here on Earth which operate alongside our physical realm. I have been doing various forms of Energy Healing for several decades and I know that everything is interconnected and that the energetic world is as real as the physical. I have witnessed healings, transformations, and what could be referred to as miracles, all from non-physical sources.

"What's your best talent- silly and serious?" Many have said that I am very funny as a clown and mime, which I began at age 22 and which took me around the world. I love being able to make people laugh, and my clown character is spontaneous, creative, and endearingly comic, even though I am really quite a serious person. My clown self, **Heart Fool**, is my alter ego. My best serious skill is organizing; events, items, people, a skill I have that has been put to good use managing an arts center and restaurant in central London; initiating performance theatre events and groups; and founding and directing the Food Angels project here in Ashland.

"What advice do you have for the young people in our community?" Always go inside to ask what your aims are and follow your heart, not the money, not your parents' wishes, not the cultural standards. Following my heart is what has brought me the most happiness. I believe that if you do what you love, you will find a way to earn money doing it, if that is what you need. Know that you will be helped along your journey. Trust yourself beyond anyone else. There are no wrong choices, only differing lessons. Base your life on Love.

"How are you doing on your bucket list?" I have done a great deal of what I wanted to do in my life. I don't really have a bucket list because I live more in the present moment and follow my guidance day by day. I know I have many more years to live and I am excited for any future adventures, but since ALL of life is an adventure, I am open to what unfolds before me.

"What are five words to describe the rest of your life?" Healthy, fulfilled, loving, committed, passionate.

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