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SOUTH SOUND BUSINESS

THE
ADVICE
ISSUE

"We need to be confident, adaptable, and humble. Embrace change, and always strive to make the world a better place for generations to come."

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SARAH MOOREHEAD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE THURSTON
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Desiree Stinson

General Manager,
Harbor Heights Apartments

It is not uncommon for a young person to want to run away with the circus. But for Desiree Stinson, general manager of Olympia's luxury senior living complex Harbor Heights Apartments, the urge to do so lasted long into adulthood, taking her on a unique career path through live performance, adventure, travel, and fashion.

"When I was about 5 years old, I was getting people to come to the circus in my backyard," she recalled of her earliest career endeavors.

After a brief foray into fashion, Stinson indeed joined the circus. "I never thought it was crazy to join Cirque — at 24, I already had a great career but was ready to risk it all," she said. Stinson became the marketing director of Cirque du Soleil's first U.S. tour in 1987, and later worked as the director of theater operations for Cirque du Soleil and the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

It was at the MGM that Stinson got the opportunity to branch into the hospitality industry, which eventually led to her current job at Harbor Heights, which is owned by Vine Street Group and managed by Columbia Hospitality. Stinson oversees all staff and residential operations, strategic developments, and marketing projects.

With a knack for wowing audiences, Stinson now has the chance to entertain and create new experiences for her residents every day while also cultivating relationships with other small businesses in Olympia. "There is so much opportunity for us here," she said. "Between bringing in events and private entertainment, engagement of community, and rooftop weddings, we've barely scratched the surface."

Residents at Harbor Heights are between 55 and 90 years old, with an average age of 70. "It's a very warm, friendly atmosphere," she said. "They're walking into an experience and a lifestyle where they can make new friends and have a network here to support them."

Meanwhile, that love of adventure that drew Stinson to the circus remains a constant in her life; when she's not working, she participates in open-ocean canoe racing.

"It's a very warm, friendly atmosphere. They're walking into an experience and a lifestyle where they can make new friends and have a network here to support them."

Midnight

7 a.m.
The morning starts with a mindful moment at home as I contemplate the day ahead.



9 a.m.
Receiving large packages has never been so easy with our state-of-the-art Luxer ONE delivery system.



9:30 a.m.
The morning walk-about includes reviewing the new security camera system. Our staff and residents really value the investment we make in safety and security.

6 A.M.



10:30 a.m.
Residents and team members appreciate our complimentary coffee bar: 24 hours, seven days a week — hot chocolate and chai included.



10:45 a.m. Our Columbia Hospitality team members make every day a great day at Harbor Heights. Thanks to Robin, our community manager; Linni, our housekeeper; Mark our custodian; and Britten, our facilities manager.

11 a.m. So excited about the final install of our four giant fire pits for our residents. It is a great addition to our 10,000-square-foot Sky Terrace.



12:30 p.m.
I set aside time for my weekly Zoom leadership meeting with Columbia Hospitality. Our motto is, "OMG! (Own the values, Make it fun, and Get it done)," and it is always a given.



Noon



Noon Lunchtime with our awesome resident, Loren. We have barbecue available 24 hours, 7 days a week, rain or shine.

2 p.m.
Midday walk around the block as I take in one of our four amazing views from the Sky Terrace.



3:30 p.m. My first podcast interview. I am discussing the benefits of a 55-plus community; I could talk about this subject for days.



4 p.m. Bayside Market does a great job welcoming our residents with gift bags. We can't wait to start cooking classes and have them share their expertise with our residents in all things culinary.

6 P.M.



6 p.m. A full day but time for a stop in our lobby at Cynara for happy hour and delicious grilled artichokes.



7 p.m. Home again and winding down with my "assistant" Leo as we take a final look at the new 3D floor plans in development on the website. ■

Midnight