



FRANKE TOBEY JONES
Enjoy your age



Jana Wennstrom – Senior University Coordinator

Lifelong Learner | Community Connector | Champion of Curiosity

Since January of 2018, Jana Wennstrom has brought warmth, professionalism, and an inspiring love of learning to her role as Senior University Coordinator at Franke Tobey Jones. Originally from Yakima, Washington, Jana came to Tacoma for college, attending the University of Puget Sound before transferring to the newly opened University of Washington Tacoma, where she earned a degree in Comparative U.S. Studies, a liberal arts program that fed her intellectual curiosity and passion for inclusive, community-centered education.

Before joining Franke Tobey Jones, Jana developed enriching adult programs at the LeMay – America’s Car Museum and Tacoma Art Museum. It was in these roles that she honed her skills in creating meaningful, high-quality educational experiences that continue to serve her well today. She brings the same level of thoughtfulness and polish to Senior University, carefully curating courses that reflect the interests and passions of the older adults in our community.

Jana is a true lifelong learner. She finds joy in spending her free time reading, researching, and discovering new ideas, often preferring those activities to more passive forms of entertainment. That same enthusiasm fuels the diverse and dynamic programming she develops at Franke Tobey Jones. When choosing courses and presenters, she draws inspiration from the residents and community members themselves, reaching out to a wide network of local experts, artists, and academics to bring their knowledge to the classroom.

One of the hallmarks of Jana’s work is her deep respect for the learning environment. She brings a sense of university-level formality to each class, thoughtfully introducing every speaker and ensuring they feel welcomed, supported, and honored. That attention to detail helps build rapport with presenters and sets the tone for an enriching, respectful experience for all involved, participants and instructors alike.

A moment that has stayed with Jana was witnessing a normally quiet, non-verbal resident become animated and talkative after a class featuring a living history portrayal of environmentalist Rachel Carson. The resident, familiar with Carson’s work, was deeply moved, offering a powerful reminder of how transformative and personal learning can be at any age.

For Jana, a class is successful if even one person is impacted. She measures success not by numbers but by meaningful moments of connection, engagement, and growth. That ethos shines through in everything she does.

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What sets Senior University apart, Jana says, is its depth and breadth. “There’s really nothing else like it,” she shares. “It’s robust, it’s thoughtfully curated, and it’s open to the public—which is such a generous and special offering.” The public nature of the program fosters vibrant social connections not just within Franke Tobey Jones, but throughout the greater Tacoma area.

Jana first learned about the opportunity at Franke Tobey Jones while working at the Tacoma Art Museum, and she’s been grateful ever since to be part of a community that values lifelong learning as deeply as she does. One upcoming class she’s especially excited about is focused on the art of cartooning. A lighthearted, creative course that she hopes will inspire residents to connect with their grandkids in new and meaningful ways. For Jana, it’s a perfect example of how Senior University programs can spark joy, foster connection, and encourage personal expression.

In her office, Jana keeps a library Great Course, which recorded lectures from leaders in their fields. Just another sign of how deeply she values access to learning in all forms. When she brings in a well-known expert or scholar to teach, she lights up with pride. “There’s a prestige to this program,” she says. “And I don’t think people always realize the caliber of speakers we’re able to bring in. It’s something really special.”

For Jana, lifelong learning isn’t just part of her work; it is a personal philosophy that fuels everything she does. She believes it is what keeps us engaged, growing, and connected to the world around us, and she encourages others to nurture their curiosity throughout life.