



**CHARITABLE  
CONTRIBUTIONS**

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**TulalipCares.org**

# Funds Distribution Report

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**Recipient Organization:**

**Farestart**

**Address:**

700 Virginia St  
Seattle, WA 98101

**Contact:**

(206) 443-1233  
<https://farestart.org>

**Organization's General Goals:**

FareStart transforms lives, disrupts poverty and nourishes communities through food, life skills and job training.

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**Date of Award:**

2025 Q2

**Level:**

\$2,501 to \$5,000

For more information, please read the attached report from Farestart.

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## MARI'S STORY: 'THIS IS MY SECOND LIFE'

August 18, 2025



Mari made her mother's dreams come true. She became a musician, playing the violin in an orchestra in Ōita, Japan. She cared for her mother through dialysis and Alzheimer's. She got married.

That was a lifetime ago. Because in Japan, Mari believes, once women get married, they lose any agency or life of their own: "They are dead."

Not one to stay dead, today Mari (she/her) is a single mother of two, a FareStart graduate with a job and a woman on a mission to improve people's health through medicine and food.

Mari began to make her own way, after filing for divorce. She often worked three jobs at once—insurance sales, taxi driver, fortune teller, supermarket deli worker, hotel server, private cook—because in Japan, women make one-third the pay of men. She took online courses through Brigham Young University. She hoped for a way to study in the United States.

A relative living in Auburn, Washington, invited her to come visit. The relative often hosted international students attending Green River Community College. Mari became one of them and ended up taking classes for a year. She also entered into an abusive second marriage that required her to eventually drop out of school, seek a protection order, and a bed at [Jubilee Women's Center](#).

### A life-changing program

It was a friend from Jubilee who told her about FareStart. She applied in January 2025 and began the [Food Pathways Program](#).

FareStart provides students with a \$1,200 monthly stipend, which "felt like a miracle," Mari said. The money restored her sense of agency, her positive outlook and her dignity. She could pay her own rent and eat well. Beyond that, she could study and otherwise focus on rebuilding her life without the constant stress of survival. "It gave me the emotional space to dream again," Mari wrote.



Mari was amazed to find such a well-regarded program. She also appreciated FareStart's attention to food safety and hygiene: the sanitary bucket; the different colors of cutting boards for meat and vegetables. (She can't believe Seattle restaurants are allowed to operate with an "okay" food safety rating—and that people still eat at them.)

Mari was also drawn to moments of quiet leadership, such as everyone working together to protect the food during a power outage at FareStart's [Community Meals](#) kitchen in Interbay, where meals are made for local nonprofits.

She loved the excitement of working alongside professional chefs on [Guest Chef Night](#) and what she learned in the classroom training for job interviews.

But most importantly, Mari said, FareStart taught her about herself.

The kindness, consistency and encouragement of the chefs and instructors showed Mari her potential. “Everyone here has a very positive and welcoming heart, a good mindset. That helps me A LOT,” Mari said. “I learned that I’m resilient. Even after hardship, I can grow, lead and help others.”

She found it empowering that FareStart students are not just receiving help but, through the food recovery and community meal aspects of the program, also helping others.

“It reminded me that I still have value, and that by participating in this program, I can be part of a larger effort to create change,” Mari wrote. “That shift—from being a recipient of support to becoming someone who can *give back*—has been one of the most important transformations in my life.”

### **‘Zeal in my heart’**

Today, Mari is working as a line cook at a highly rated cafe. She can see running her own restaurant someday (with an “excellent” food-safety rating, of course), in part to earn the tuition for medical school.

“I strongly recommend FareStart to everybody,” Mari said. “They don’t have to be a chef or cook. It’s not just job training. It’s life training.”

She’s also back in school, studying public health online at BYU. “When I’m studying global health or food, I feel zeal. I want to know more, more, more,” Mari said. “When I feel zeal in my heart, that’s my mission.”

Her interests could combine into any number of careers, but her mission is clear.

“The community deserves good food and good service and good health,” Mari said. “I want to provide those things.”

Mari also knows what she doesn’t want: to be the maid of a husband or be typecast by gender in any area of her life.

“This is my second life,” she said. This time, Mari will make her own dreams come true.

