

REGIONAL ACTION INITIATIVE

Engaging Oregonians in a
New Level of Civic Leadership
2008-2013

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Regional Action Initiative was made possible by many people including OCF board directors, staff, contractors and volunteers who dedicated time, energy and enthusiasm for the five-year statewide effort. A complete list of the regional volunteers is included on page three.

The following people deserve special recognition for making this Initiative a success:

Eric Lindauer, former OCF Board Chair; Greg Chaillé, former OCF President; and Dan Wieden, co-founder of Wieden+Kennedy, for developing the idea of the Regional Action Initiative and sharing it with the OCF board of directors in 2008.

Lead staff: Melissa (Durham) Freeman, Statewide RAI Coordinator; Jessica Currier, Central Oregon RAI Coordinator; Tiffany Hegarty, Eastern Oregon RAI Coordinator; Annette Leong, Southern Willamette Valley RAI Coordinator; Molly Roman, Metro Portland, North Coast and South Coast RAI Coordinator; Rachelle Schaaf, Southern Oregon RAI Coordinator; and Maureen Thomas, Northern Willamette Valley RAI Coordinator.

Evaluation report prepared by Juliette Mackin, Ph.D. and Judy Weller of NPC Research.

www.oregoncf.org/rai-summary

Published October 8, 2014



Bill Swindells participates in a parenting education gathering at the Oregon Zoo.



**THE OREGON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Founded in 1973, OCF works with individuals, families, businesses and organizations to create charitable funds to support the community causes they care about. Through these funds, in 2013 OCF awarded nearly \$70 million in grants and scholarships.

SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

“I’ve had the chance to do a few things in my life that I am particularly proud of and working with the RAI is at the top of the list. Good people doing great things for others is my remembrance of the RAI.”

Will Boettner, Central Oregon
RAI Committee Member



Suzie Smith, Knappa School District, with students during a Project GLAD™ training.



A child poses with his pottery at the Jefferson County Kids Club in Madras.

The OCF board of directors launched the Regional Action Initiative (RAI) in 2008 to engage Oregonians in a new level of civic leadership and empower them to improve lives in their regions.

To support the Initiative, the board provided a special one-time allocation of \$1 million to each of OCF’s service regions, including Central Oregon, Eastern Oregon, Metropolitan Portland, Northern Willamette Valley, Southern Oregon, Southern Willamette Valley and the Coast. The Coast region split their \$1M allocation between the North and South.

Each of the eight OCF regional volunteer Leadership Councils led a process to investigate the needs of their communities, identify a focus area, engage community members and fund successful strategies for change. The results from this five-year Initiative are included in this summary.

Overarching Goals

- Create long-term beneficial change
- Foster innovation
- Increase awareness of community needs
- Increase ties within and between the OCF Leadership Councils
- Leverage resources

Focus Areas

- Improving Children’s Dental Health
- Enhancing Education through Community Schools
- Improving Literacy through Teacher Training and Access to Books
- Strengthening Educational Attainment through Mentoring and Youth Enrichment Programs
- Increasing Access to Parenting Education



OCF volunteers welcome other grant makers to Pendleton.



South Coast volunteers at a Ready to Smile event in Bandon.

“The RAI funding provided staff the opportunity to go out into the Lake County communities to develop partnerships with other youth-serving organizations.”

Kathy Miles, Lake County Youth Mentor Program

Civic Leadership and Community Engagement

All of the regional Leadership Councils formed a subcommittee of interested volunteers who wanted to work on the RAI. During the five-year initiative, RAI Committee volunteers traveled to various communities within their region to host focus groups and learn about the community's needs, hold educational summits on the various topics, and form partnerships with local service clubs, businesses, government entities and other philanthropic organizations to support the work.

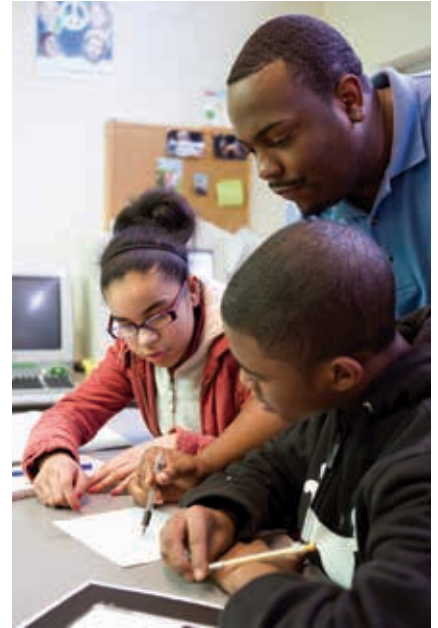
Lasting Impact

When surveyed, RAI Committee volunteers reported forming strong relationships with other volunteers in their regions and felt more knowledgeable about specific needs in their communities. In addition, volunteers reported an increased understanding of OCF and its processes and noted how the RAI was a great learning experience and experiment for OCF.

The OCF board and staff now have a better understanding of the issues the volunteers focused on for their initiatives, and children's dental health has become a strategic priority for the Foundation to address statewide. In addition, many of the RAI grantees reported securing substantial funding during and after the RAI and attributed it to the funders' awareness of OCF's requirements to be a RAI grantee, including participation in trainings, quarterly evaluation reports and in-depth grant reviews by local volunteers.

Highlights by the Numbers:

- OCF funds committed: \$8 million
- Total grant dollars awarded statewide: \$6.3 million
- Grantee organizations: 74
- Total cash donations leveraged by OCF for the RAI (through grants, individual donors, service club and business contributions): \$1.24 million
- Community partners: 1,713



Self Enhancement Inc., a Metropolitan Portland RAI Grantee.

RAI REGIONAL COMMITTEES

117 OCF volunteers committed their time to attend several meetings a year, with some driving up to four hours one way to participate. These volunteers listened to diverse voices from their communities, developed strategies to solve regional problems and designed fair processes for investing in their communities.

CENTRAL OREGON

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Teresa Bowerman
Stephen Hillis
Lonnie James
Terry Juhola
Molly Kreuzman
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Keith Seaber
Jordy Skovborg
Trish Smith, Chair (2011-2013)

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Sam Tucker
Ann Vloedman
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Brent DeMoe
Cynthia Easterday
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Jodi Hack
Alison Kelley
Marilyn Kennelly
Krina Lemons
Sue Miller, Chair
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Denise Swanson

SOUTH COAST

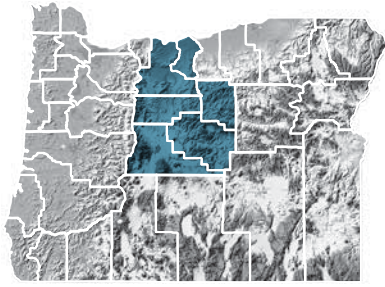
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Christine Nichols
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Hope Pressman
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Frank Simpson
Ann Smart
Marty Smith
Jean Tate
Carmen Urbina



CENTRAL OREGON

Crook • Deschutes • Jefferson • Sherman • Wasco • Wheeler

Improving Education and Community Engagement by Developing Community Schools



A student making a turkey at Mitchell Community School.

“The middle school tutor reported that this has been another great session; all students had a great time and the tutoring was beneficial to the students.”

Debbie Starkey, Spray Community School Coordinator



Students at Vern Patrick Elementary Community School.

Research shows that an integrated focus on academics, social services and community development results in better student performance, stronger families and healthier communities. For these reasons, the RAI Committee supported the development of community schools through the RAI. The community school model provides high-quality instruction for students outside of normal school hours, as well as access to social services and educational programming for children, parents and community members. The Committee announced a competitive application process and awarded large multi-year grants to community schools in Spray, Mitchell, Fossil, Sisters and Redmond. In addition, five afterschool programs were funded in Crook, Jefferson and Wasco Counties. Northwest Area Foundation partnered with OCF by providing \$60,000 to the Initiative to support financial education courses offered through the community schools. In an effort to foster long-term sustainability for the afterschool programs, the RAI Committee established the Central Oregon RAI Challenge Fund, which provided a 2:1 matching grant up to \$10,000 per program each year for any newly secured cash donations. This provided an incentive for programs to conduct outreach to new donors.

Outcomes

OCF's investment in five community schools and five afterschool programs leveraged \$605,486 in cash donations and more than \$1.9 million in in-kind support, largely through donated space by school districts and by engaging professional volunteers to teach the courses before and after school.

In 2013, The Ford Family Foundation committed \$392,000 over three years to continue the community schools that were supported by the RAI.

School-day attendance was at an all-time high for the community schools in 2013. Parents whose children received tutoring and homework assistance through local afterschool programs reported a reduction in family stress, as well .



EASTERN OREGON

Baker • Gilliam • Grant • Harney • Malheur • Morrow
Umatilla • Union • Wallowa

Improving Youth Education through Mentoring and Enrichment Programs

“The RAI has helped to attract new relationships with funders, including an award from a foundation that had never previously awarded funds in Eastern Oregon.”

Eastern Oregon RAI Grantee



Participants at the Eastern Oregon Rural Partnership Summit.

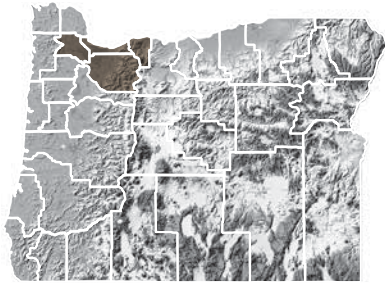


Students from Malheur Education Service District.

The RAI Committee agreed that youth issues were the region's number-one priority, and research showed positive results of mentoring and enrichment programs to improve education. They announced a competitive request for proposals to launch or sustain programs in the region, with the aim of improving academic success, student attendance and community engagement. Eight grantees were awarded three years of funding throughout the region, ranging from a community school to outdoor school programming to teaching youth about entrepreneurship. In 2012, a second round of small grants was offered to organizations helping youth access higher education and career trainings. In June 2012, the RAI Committee organized a two-day Eastern Oregon Rural Partnership Summit in Pendleton. Representatives from eighteen philanthropic organizations traveled from Portland to meet nonprofit leaders and learn more about the region. The Summit offered “speed dating” sessions with funders and training opportunities for nonprofit leaders, including advanced grantwriting and volunteer management courses.

Outcomes

Thousands of youth were engaged in enrichment and mentoring programs, hundreds of volunteers contributed their time and all grantees worked hard to develop collaborative partnerships with organizations in their communities. Hundreds of community events were held each year to engage students, their families and community members. These programs are credited with increasing student engagement in school, and more youth are receiving academic support, leading to success in school. The RAI grantees have become solid community partners, and volunteerism has increased across the region.



METROPOLITAN PORTLAND

Clackamas • Hood River • Multnomah • Washington

Improving Access to Parenting Education



Kathy Minden, Metropolitan Portland RAI Committee Member.

Parents are a child's first teacher and they play a critical role in their child's early brain development. Therefore, the RAI Committee wondered how best to go about increasing awareness about a parent's role. They decided to start by commissioning research from Portland State University and Dovetailing, Inc., to better understand the needs, gaps and opportunities in the region. Findings included the need to improve 211info's database, a comprehensive phone-based information and referral system for social services. First, they funded the expansion of 211info throughout Hood River County. Next, they provided a grant to increase parenting education resources within the 211info database and funded a parenting expert to provide education and support to parents over the phone. The research findings also pointed to a need for expanded quality programming for all – particularly underserved populations including communities of color, rural parents, fathers and grandparents raising grandchildren. A Metro Small Grants program was developed to support the expansion or enhancement of proven programs and increase parent and family members' understanding of the learning and development of young children through group classes and/or home visiting. Ten applicants were selected and received multi-year grants.

“The RAI challenged Committee Members to reach out to other philanthropic organizations and to learn how complex social problem solving can be.”

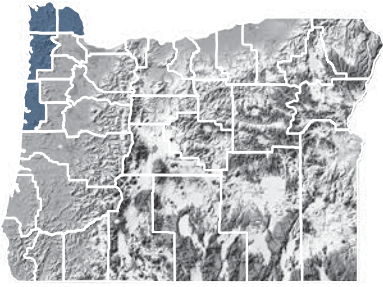
Metropolitan Portland RAI Committee Member

Outcomes

Funding for 211info enhanced their capacity and catalyzed the development of a new department for the organization called 211info Family. It is specifically targeted toward parents and those raising children who seek assistance and resources. Over the grant period, 211info Family provided assistance through calls, texts or emails to over 2,200 families. Callers sought support on many issues, including their child's education, behavior and discipline; recreational activities for families; and parenting classes. In addition, staff conducted outreach to community members through 386 events including presentations, trainings and community fairs. 211info is working with Oregon's Early Learning Hubs on the possibility of expanding 211info Family statewide.



A family at Oregon Child Development Coalition.



NORTH COAST

Clatsop • Columbia • Lincoln • Tillamook

Improving Literacy Through Professional Development for Teachers



Teachers observe as students participate in a Project GLAD classroom demonstration.

The RAI Committee quickly identified literacy as their focus area and awarded \$25,000 each to four community colleges serving their region to provide scholarships for students. Further community research led the Committee to develop a unique strategy to improve literacy in their region by investing in teacher training. After interviewing local superintendents and surveying teachers on their professional development needs, two research-based models of training were identified: Project GLAD™ (Guided Language Acquisition Design) and SIOP® (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol). The models promote language acquisition and academic achievement, especially among English language learners. OCF awarded a grant to Lincoln County School District to provide SIOP® training and coaching for teachers, and grants were given to school districts in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties to cover the cost of Project GLAD™ training and follow-up coaching for teachers in their schools.

“This has been the most powerful instructional workshop I have taken in twenty years. It takes some of the best teaching strategies and incorporates them into a powerful teaching structure.”

Project GLAD™-Trained Teacher,
Scappoose School District

Outcomes

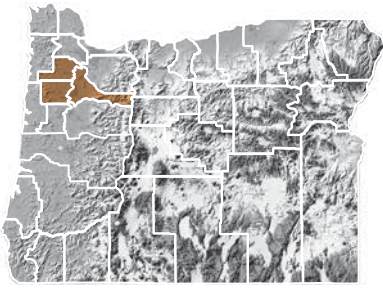
Over 130 teachers in 13 school districts in the region participated in the comprehensive trainings. Fifteen administrators participated in a special workshop specifically tailored for them to understand how to support and evaluate Project GLAD™-trained teachers. Teachers participated in nine Saturday refresher workshops to continue enhancing their skills, and small development grants were awarded to teachers to purchase materials and supplies. An estimated 3,000 students were reached during the first year of implementation, but because of the continuous nature of the training, even more students benefit each year.

The RAI Committee developed a video to describe the Project GLAD™ model to raise funds for the effort. The video has received over 5,000 views on YouTube.

A team of four teachers from Clatsop and Tillamook counties are currently in the process of becoming certified Project GLAD™ Trainers, with the intent to provide ongoing trainings, coaching and follow-up workshops to teachers throughout the four-county region. Developing a team of trainers on the North Coast will create a sustainable model for the region, enhance the capacity and expertise of the school districts and reduce the need for outside consultants.



Louise Johnson, Rainier School District, creates materials for use in her classroom during a refresher workshop.



NORTHERN WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Marion • Polk • Yamhill

Improving Literacy by Increasing Access to Books

“The project gave us the opportunity to learn about the literacy needs and how to best address them in the community. We’ve learned that making books accessible to the community is important and valuable and this will continue.”

Brent DeMoe, Polk County
Commissioner for Children and
Families



Read for the Record Campaign.



Marion County Commissioner Sam Brentano awards medals to young readers.

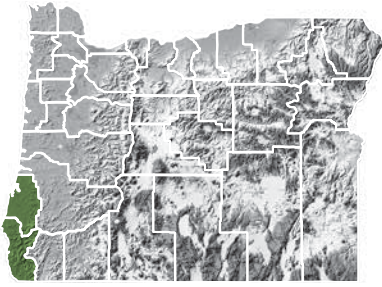
The RAI Committee envisioned local communities in which children develop basic literacy skills before entering kindergarten, parents understand the central role of literacy in early child development, and community members support literacy programs. To achieve this vision, the Committee collaborated with Marion, Polk and Yamhill County Commissions on Children and Families to improve literacy in the tri-county region and promoted the Reading for All model, a broad-based community mobilization effort designed to increase awareness of literacy and the importance of reading for the entire family. Each county hired a facilitator to implement Reading for All and developed local community action teams to organize activities in each region. Activities included holiday book drives; family reading nights; free book exchange programs in businesses and healthcare settings; and conferences and events for early childhood professionals and parents.



Outcomes

Over three years, Reading for All collected, sorted and distributed more than 150,000 books to individuals and lending libraries in the three counties. In addition, Reading for All staff participated in 1,172 community events that reached thousands of children and parents and engaged hundreds of volunteers in their activities.

Each county continues to implement Reading for All strategies and activities to sustain the momentum built during this Initiative. In addition, foundations from around the country have contacted OCF to learn more about the community mobilization model.



SOUTH COAST

Coos • Curry

Improving Children’s Dental Health



A student in Myrtle Point learns how to brush her teeth properly.

After local public health, hospital and school administrators all pointed to the problem of untreated decay linked with school absenteeism, the RAI Committee decided to focus on improving children’s dental health. They determined that coordination was the critical component to building a sustainable model. Within 18 months, the Committee funded the development of a comprehensive dental health promotion program called Ready to Smile in partnership with Coos County Public Health. A program manager was hired to coordinate the delivery of prevention, education and treatment services to elementary and middle school students throughout Coos and Curry counties. The RAI Committee formed a Steering Committee for the program, engaging local dentists, public health officials, school nurses and more. Now, children in every school district in the region receive dental screenings, sealants, fluoride varnish, dental supplies and oral health education, as well as access to treatment in a local dentist’s office, if urgent needs are identified. The Ready to Smile program is in its fifth year and has become the primary children’s dental program on the South Coast.



“Ready to Smile is strong in itself, it is bigger than any one person. Each person involved brings skills that help keep the program moving forward.”

Katrinka McReynolds, Ready to Smile Program Manager

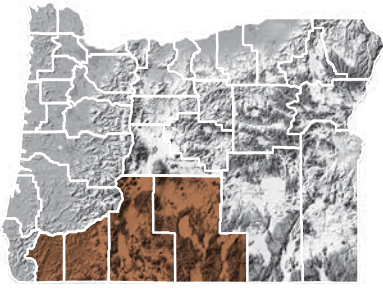
Outcomes

Over the past four years, Ready to Smile has provided nearly \$700,000 in dental services to students at no cost to the student. In grades 1, 2, 6 and 7, over 3,400 children have been screened and received preventive services. Over 5,800 dental kits have been assembled by volunteers and distributed to students. Supplies include a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss and two-minute timer so the child knows how long to brush their teeth.

The RAI Committee considered sustainability early in the development of the Ready to Smile program. They invested \$450,000 of their RAI allocation in a permanent fund at OCF and raised funds from the community and through grant applications to operate the program. The fund has grown to over \$650,000 in five years, and the hope is that it will eventually be large enough to fully support the program in perpetuity.



A Ready to Smile dental hygienist and his patient.



SOUTHERN OREGON

Jackson • Josephine • Klamath • Lake

Improving Education through Youth Mentoring



College Dreams staff present an award to a student in Grants Pass.

The RAI Committee focused on improving education by connecting youth with caring adult mentors. Through a competitive application process, they selected and supported four effective mentoring programs in Jackson, Josephine and Klamath Counties and funded the development of a new mentoring program in Lake County as one did not previously exist. The Committee also invested in strengthening the local and regional systems for connecting adult mentors with youth. They supported the RU Ready Campaign and provided financial support for a Youth Mentoring Coalition in each county to support their local programs by offering training and support for program staff and volunteers.

Toward the end of the Initiative, the RAI Committee collaborated with Citizens for Safe Schools and Oregon Mentors to present a conference in Klamath Falls called "Investing in Youth for Economic Recovery and Prosperity." Approximately 100 business, government, philanthropic and education leaders attended from as far away as Portland and Burns. The RAI Committee was also the lead sponsor for the Oregon Nonprofit Leaders Conference in 2012 and provided funding for RAI grantees to attend.

"I think mentoring has a huge impact on young people's lives. It's one of the things that keeps people on a path for a good life."

Chip Massie, Southern Oregon RAI Committee Member

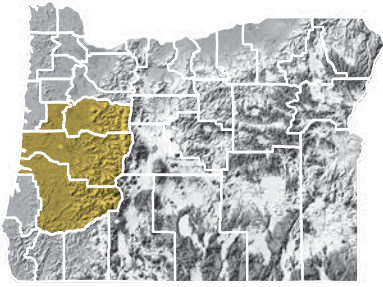
Outcomes

Over 26,000 volunteer hours were contributed to the programs through mentor and mentee matches, community events and program support and hundreds of partners were engaged throughout the region. The RAI Committee issued a 1:1 matching grant opportunity with the intent to challenge programs to increase awareness of their work to new donors. \$30,000 was leveraged through this effort.

Programs reported that most of their mentor/mentee matches were a success and the youth who participated in the programs had better school outcomes and missed fewer school days than those who did not participate.



After school basketball with Kids Unlimited.



SOUTHERN WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Benton • Douglas • Lane • Linn

Improving Children's Dental Health



Students color pictures of their mouths as part of a program's oral hygiene education.

Children's dental health emerged as a significant problem when the RAI Committee investigated issues in their region. Findings indicated that one-third of all hospital emergency room visits were dental related, cavities and oral bacteria are communicable between parents and children, and 50 percent of all preschoolers suffer from tooth decay by age 5. Most importantly, the Committee learned oral disease is largely preventable.

To address the problem, the RAI Committee convened oral health advocates, including representatives of dental care organizations, public health, early childhood organizations, schools, dentists, hygienists and more to discuss effective strategies for reducing dental disease. They also commissioned an oral health needs assessment and community resources scan in 2010 for their four county region. After significant research, the RAI Committee decided to invest in prevention, education, treatment and advocacy for the region and offered a competitive funding opportunity to organizations that improved access to care for children. In addition, RAI funding was awarded to the Oregon Oral Health Coalition to support First Tooth, a training for primary care physicians and other medical staff to conduct dental screenings and apply fluoride varnish to children ages 0 - 3 during well-baby checks.

"More than one parent expressed they had no toothpaste at home, let alone new toothbrushes or dental floss; it was wonderful being able to fill those needs."

Staff Member, Umpqua
Community Health Center

Outcomes

Grantees served more than 11,500 children in the four-county region. Two new dental clinics staffed by volunteer dental professionals were built for underserved children, and 300 primary care providers received First Tooth training. Thousands of toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste were donated and distributed by corporate sponsors, including Bi-Mart, local service clubs and private donors. Communication was improved between grantees as a result of their participation. All grantees are continuing to serve students.



Volunteer dental professionals provide access to care.

RAI GRANTEES

The following organizations received RAI funds. RAI Committees emphasized the importance of collaboration, developing partnerships and leveraging resources to sustain the grantees' efforts. They were exceptional partners in fulfilling the goals of the RAI.

211info

Astoria School District

Athena-Weston School District

Baker High School

Bend-La Pine School District

Boys & Girls Club of Albany

Building Healthy Families

Catholic Charities

Citizens for Safe Schools

Clatskanie School District

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon

Community Health Centers of Benton and Linn Counties

Coos County Public Health

Crook County 4-H Leaders

Dovetailing, Inc.

Eastern Oregon University

Education Northwest

Enviromedia

Eugene School District

Families First of Grant County, Inc.

Grant County Education Service District

Grants Pass Family YMCA

Health Policy Research Northwest

Hermiston School District

High Level Trainings

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization

Jackson County Commission on Children and Families

Jefferson County School District

Jefferson County Youth Organization

Josephine County Commission on Children and Families

Kids Club of Harney County

Kids Unlimited of Oregon

Klamath County Commission on Children and Families

Knappa School District

LaGrande High School

Lake County Education Service District

Lincoln County School District

Lost & Found Youth Outreach

Malheur Education Service District

Marion County Commission on Children and Families

McNary Heights Elementary School

Mercy Foundation, Inc.

Native American Youth & Family Service

Neah-Kah-Nie School District

Nestucca Valley School District

North Central Education Service District

Northwest Family Services

Oregon Child Development Coalition

Oregon Nonprofit Leaders Conference

Oregon Oral Health Coalition

Pathfinders of Oregon

Pendleton School District

Polk County Commission on Children and Families

Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center

Portland State University, Child and Family Services

Improvement Center

Rainier School District

Redmond School District

Scappoose School District

Seaside School District

Self Enhancement, Inc.

Sisters School District

SOASTC (formerly Kairos)

South Lane School District

South Wasco County School District

St. Helens School District

Tillamook School District

Todos Juntos

Umatilla High School

Umpqua Community Health Center

Vernonia School District

Warrenton-Hammond School District

Waterfall Community Health Center

Yamhill County Commission on Children and Families

Youth Contact

One goal of the RAI was to increase awareness of OCF and its impact in communities. Here's a sample of media headlines from the past five years-

"SPANISH CLASS BRIDGES GAP"

February 9, 2011, *The Nugget*

"NEW CLINIC KEEPS 'EM SMILING"

September 12, 2012, *Cottage Grove Sentinel*

"COMMUNITY SUPPORT ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS"

May 25, 2011, *Albany Democrat Herald*

"SISTERS SCHOOLS FINE-TUNE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS"

September 27, 2011, *The Nugget*

"NEW 211 FAMILY INFO SERVICE HELPS PARENTS IN CLACKAMAS, MULTNOMAH, AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES,"

February 13 2013, *The Oregonian*

"PENDLETON VOLUNTEERS TO RECEIVE STATEWIDE RECOGNITION"

October 28, 2011, *East Oregonian*

"PROJECT GLAD GIVES TEACHERS NEW APPROACH TO REACH STUDENTS"

July 21, 2011, *Seaside Signal*

"ANOTHER GOOD REASON TO SMILE"

January 10, 2014, *The World*

"VOLUNTEER MENTORS STAND IN THE GAP"

December 8, 2010, *Rogue River Press*

"THE WALLS ARE DRIPPING WITH LITERACY"

July 30, 2010, *The Daily Astorian*

"DIG IN, STIR THINGS UP WITH A CLASS"

February 22, 2012, *Blue Mountain Eagle*

"BOOKS HELP PREPARE FOR FUTURE"

December 4, 2011, *The Statesman Journal*

"READING FORGES DEEP FAMILY CONNECTIONS IN ANY LANGUAGE"

December 7, 2011, *The Statesman Journal*

"MENTOR FORMS FAMILY-LIKE BOND"

December 29, 2012, *Herald and News*

"WHEELER COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL ENRICHES YOUNGSTERS AND OLDERS"

March 1, 2012, *Wheeler County News*

"CLINIC FILLS DIRE NEED"

September 13, 2012, *The Register-Guard*



Northern Willamette Valley RAI Committee members smile after coming to agreement that literacy will be the focus of their Initiative.

The mission of The Oregon Community Foundation is to improve life in Oregon and to promote effective philanthropy.

OCF works with individuals, families, businesses and organizations to create charitable funds to support the community causes they care about.

To create your legacy today, call your local OCF office, visit www.oregoncf.org or email giftplanning@oregoncf.org.



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1221 SW Yamhill St.
Suite 100
Portland, OR 97205
503.227.6846

BEND
15 SW Colorado Ave.
Suite 375
Bend, OR 97702
541.382.1170

COOS BAY
915 S First St.
Coos Bay, OR 97420
541.269.9650

EUGENE
440 E Broadway
Suite 160
Eugene, OR 97401
541.431.7099

MEDFORD
818 W Eighth St.
Medford, OR 97501
541.773.8987

SALEM
1313 Mill St. SE
Suite 203
Salem, OR 97301
503.779.1927