

SORS Newsletter – March

Southern Oregon Success (SORS) is a collection of organizations committed to the success of the children, youth, and families of Jackson and Josephine Counties, from preconception to age 24. SORS weaves together the talent, expertise, and resources of the entire community to promote the health, academic, and life success of our children, youth, and families. SORS envisions a community in which all our families provide stable and nurturing homes for our children; all children are ready for kindergarten; and all youth are succeeding in school, transitioning successfully to meaningful adult lives, and contributing to a thriving economy. Learn more at <http://www.southernoregonsuccess.org>.



Welcome!

Excuse our dust! This newsletter is still under construction, so feel free to offer suggestions. Contributions to this newsletter in the form of stories or story ideas, photos and graphics are welcome. To find out more about SORS or to contribute to this newsletter, please contact Seth Kaplan at Seth_Kaplan@SouthernOREgonSuccess.org.

Southern Oregon Success Staff Hired

Concluding a search and interview process conducted by the Southern Oregon Success (SORS) Process and Planning Team, Peter Buckley and Seth Kaplan have been selected to facilitate the collaborative efforts of the over 100 organizations working together as a regional achievement collaborative in Jackson and Josephine counties. Peter and Seth have been hired as employees of Southern Oregon Education Service District, and agreements have been reached with fiscal partners

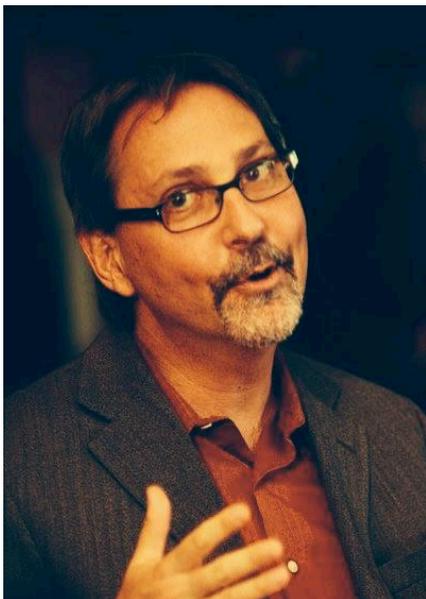
Gordon Elwood Foundation, Health Care Collaborative of Southern Oregon, Jefferson Regional Health Alliance, and Rogue Workforce Partnership to distribute funds to SOESD designated for backbone support. SOESD is serving as the employer and fiscal sponsor for SORS, providing office space and technical support, as well as synergy with the Southern Oregon Early Learning Services (SOELS) early learning hub and the College and Career for All (CC4A) movement at SOESD.



SORS establishes and supports partnerships among early learning organizations, K-12 school districts, higher education, healthcare organizations, social service agencies, government agencies, community groups, workforce and economic development partners, and business leaders. SORS weaves together the talent, expertise, and resources of the entire community to actively improve the well-being, academic, and life success of children, youth, and families.

According to SOESD Superintendent Scott Beveridge, "Our ability to hire full-time professional staff at this point is only possible because of the significant contribution and accomplishments of many volunteer leaders and part-time consultants who have worked since 2011 to grow this regional collaborative. Now with the full time efforts of Peter and Seth, this significant community movement is poised to accelerate positive outcomes for our children, youth, families, and communities.

Peter Buckley is completing his sixth and final term in the Oregon House of Representatives this year. First elected in 2004, he served in House leadership positions since August of 2005, including serving as the House Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means for the past eight years. During his time leading the budget process, he has helped to bring Oregon through the recession and into recovery, with a focus on reinvesting in education, helping to increase access to quality health care and social services, and smart reforms in public safety. Prior to his legislative career, he worked for over 20 years as an actor, writer, director, teacher and administrator in west coast regional theaters." Working with Southern Oregon Success is the perfect way to continue my passion for serving our communities in a way



that has a meaningful and lasting impact on public health, education, and the economy,” said Peter Buckley.

Seth Kaplan has assumed leadership positions in corporate, small business, nonprofit, and government systems for 30 years, much of that time as a consultant with a focus on connecting resources across systems and sectors to improve efficiency and effectiveness. He believes that the complex issues we all want to resolve require deep and committed collaboration, and that the people we serve should be at the center of our collective efforts. “I believe SORS is a model for this collective impact approach and I am excited to help the organization move forward in service to Southern Oregon,” said Seth Kaplan.

Community Voices: Diana Cooper



Anyone who hears even small parts of Diana Cooper's story can't help but be inspired. Her story is filled with courage, perseverance, and love for family. It also offers lessons and insights about how systems and services designed to help people in need can be sometimes life saving and sometimes just another barrier. Diana says, "If you want to know what's working, ask consumers." We did, and here is one story. After years of substance abuse, Diana and her husband Matt reported themselves to DHS to get needed services for themselves and their children. As Diana says, "Before we had a chance to change our mind DHS drove us over to OnTrack and we were in rehab." OnTrack works closely with the Family Nurturing Center and, while OnTrack focused on "the best possible recovery for us as adults and parents," the Family Nurturing Center "truly nurtured us." Diana noted that LuAnn from FNC "stood by us in a way no one has ever done," providing funds for laundry and getting the tires replaced, and coming to visit every day once Diana and Matt were out of residential rehab.

While DHS was a tremendous help in getting the family needed services, Diana and Matt struggled with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) requirement that they engage in 55 hours of job related activities every week. Diana and Matt had decided that Matt would take care of the kids while Diana earned an Early Childhood Development degree and worked part-time. "With all the change in our lives, Matt and I thought it important that one of us was with the kids at all times--that the kids saw us as a family no matter where we lived or what we were doing."

In order to make this work, Diana had to search for a job 55 hours a week and go to school. She believes successful participation in a post-secondary vocational program should count towards work credit. "I talk to a lot of people who are in my situation, and most of us want to improve ourselves through post-secondary education, but the barriers are too great. For us, we decided TANF wasn't worth it."

A troubling obstacle arose when Diana was offered a child care position at the Rogue Valley Y and learned she would never be allowed to work with children because she had self-reported her drug use to DHS. "I was never arrested--I was doing the right thing. I didn't see that coming." That realization dashed a lifelong dream and led her to drop out of the Early Childhood Development program. She was offered another job at the Y and changed her degree emphasis to Family Support Specialist at RCC.

Another challenge was the transition from a supportive recovery setting to being more on their own. "It's a tough transition," Diana recalls. We lived with bed bugs--really substandard housing."

Diana recently received her certification as a Community Health Worker, which qualifies her to do home visits to other families with similar circumstances to hers. She loves working the front desk at the Y because so many people come in not knowing where to go for services, and with her personal experience, she has great insight on what programs are most helpful. One of her favorites is the Maslow Project, which she says "helps more than anyone. They have less red tape than other programs. Their doors are always open."

As Diana thinks about her community and the role she wants to play, she reflects: "I don't know if the drugs cause the poverty or the poverty causes the drugs, but the drug use and poverty in Southern Oregon are outrageous. I'm grateful my family is out of that and I want to do what I can so less people experience the challenges we have."

AllCare Is Latest Partner to Respond to Call for Funding

In response to the call for full-time SORS backbone staff at the October Key System and Organizational Leaders Summit, AllCare CCO responded with a contribution of \$20,000. This brings the total one-year SORS revenue to \$150,700 toward a needed goal of \$298,700. Prior funding had been pooled from grants contributed to the Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon, Jefferson Regional Health Alliance, Rogue Workforce Partnership, and Southern Oregon Education Service District. SOESD is also contributing in-kind office and equipment, staffing support, and Information Technology to the project.

Significant progress has been made in the evolving SORS effort in recent years. Volunteer leaders supported by occasional paid staff have nurtured a cross-sector collaborative environment across two, and sometimes three counties. The work of so many has brought needed resources to our region.



The Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub now serves as the early developmental pillar for SORS, while preparing almost 20,000 children for kindergarten. The College and Careers for All pillar has helped obtain significant grants for aligning dual high school and college credit, creating STEM curriculum and cross-sector organizational partnership, and other potential grants for collaborative career pathways programming.

SORS is helping to meet the needs of youth by identifying, encouraging, and seeking to replicate cross-system strategies being introduced through the Central Medford Community Partnership, Josephine County Community Network, Rogue River High Reach-Out, Phoenix-Talent School District Collaborative Problem Solving and Trauma Informed practice engagement, and the Successful Transitions program for migrant and Latino parents. These efforts are helping the systems we represent learn from the people we seek to help.

We are now embarking on efforts to strengthen our collective impact by embracing Trauma Informed Care and formalizing a Systems of Care model. With the support of full-time professional staffing, we will engage with partners across sectors at deeper levels, strengthen and formalize our governance structure, work across systems to meet the needs of children and their families, and use and share data to learn what is and isn't working.

We are poised to accomplish so much to benefit our region, but we need your help. Many are supporting this effort in different ways, and we also need everyone who can to support it financially. If you are able to help, please contact Seth Kaplan at Seth_Kaplan@SouthernORegonSuccess.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Seeing Color Uses Story to Connect

SORS is concerned with surfacing and addressing the real needs and barriers standing in the way of success for so many Southern Oregon children, youth and their families. One way to express need and improvement is through data: graduation rates are too low, drug abuse rates are too high. Our work is to move these and other metrics in the right direction.

Another, and equally important way to understand what people need is to hear from the people who have been impacted by system barriers, gaps, or misalignments. One of the best ways to engage in meaningful connection with people who appear different than us is through story telling.



This concept was demonstrated with great impact at two recent gatherings of "Seeing Color - A Community Storytelling Event," presented by the DHS Diversity Committee in partnership with Southern Oregon Health Equity Coalition (SO Health-E), Jackson County Health and Human Services, Southern Oregon Goodwill, and The Hearth--an organization committed to community-based personal storytelling events.

More than 400 people attended capacity-filled sessions in Medford and Grants Pass last month to hear and react to stories about race from community members. Jennifer Ware was one of the principal organizers of the events in her role as SO Health-E Coordinator, operated through the Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon. Jennifer explained that "we wanted people to come and be open to learning something they didn't know, something that might contribute to a more inclusive community. And we wanted people to examine what that means. At these events, the storytellers are the experts. Rather than going out with a clipboard and a bunch of questions we want targeted people to answer, we let people tell us what they want us to know."

Both events followed the same format with six storytellers from different races telling a personal story of how they have been affected by intended or unintended racism. Jennifer told a story of how

her mother said, "I'm putting your armor on," as she read her books by James Baldwin, Malcolm X, and Maya Angelou. An African-American man told the story of a police officer putting a gun to his head when he was 16, and how he thinks about that every time he "sees the headlines justifying the killing of some young black boy or girl by the police." A lifelong resident of Southern Oregon talked about growing up in the 1950s when Medford and Grants Pass were called "sundown towns" because people of color would be picked up if they were in town after sundown.

Following the stories, audience members gathered in circles to share reactions to the stories and thoughts on how to move forward.

Jennifer said SO Health-E has used this format before to better understand the public health needs of under-served communities, although they have never taken it to this scale. They also are available to facilitate cultural competency trainings for organizations or groups. "To some extent, we always learn the same thing: we all want a place to belong and feel welcome, and that allows us to be healthy and well."

According to the recent ACE Interface Study entitled Key Informant Interview Findings Curry, Jackson, and Josephine Counties, almost everyone interviewed who's trying to improve lives in Southern Oregon expressed a deep desire to engage and learn from people with lived adverse experience.

Grants Support College and Career for All



Following on the heels of the \$585,000 Southern Promise grant received in late 2015, Southern Oregon ESD received several new grants totaling \$863,432 which will significantly enhance the work of Southern Oregon's College and Career for All (CC4A) Movement. The grant awards

acknowledge the richness of the regional collaboration across Jackson, Josephine and Klamath counties, and the partnership between the Klamath Promise and Southern Oregon Success Regional Achievement Collaboratives. The new Oregon Department of Education grants include \$125,000 to support the region's STEM Hub, \$250,000 to design real-world math courses, and \$488,432 to revitalize Career Technical Education in Jackson and Josephine counties. In addition, Klamath County School District also received a \$390,605 Career Technical Education Revitalization grant that will provide opportunities for students in Klamath County. The STEM Hub grant expands capacity for regional, cross-sector partnerships that promote career paths in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) across Jackson, Josephine and Klamath counties. STEM Hubs are designed to drive individual and community prosperity through increasing access to hands-on learning that connects students with future career opportunities, improving math and science achievement, and increasing post-secondary STEM degrees and certificates.

The STEM Hub grant award establishes the Southern Oregon STEM Hub as part of the statewide network and qualifies Southern Oregon to receive additional grant funding. The STEM Innovation Math in Real Life grant is an example of that additional grant funding. The Math in Real Life grant provides opportunities in Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath counties for high school teachers and college instructors to design real-world mathematics courses in partnership with business and industry. The Career Technical Education Revitalization Manufacturing by Design Grant is part of a regional collaborative project with SOESD, Grants Pass School District, Medford School District, and ScienceWorks to revitalize Career Technical Education (CTE). The cutting-edge project provides mobile classrooms containing state of the art manufacturing and design equipment that can travel between schools and events, as well as industry-standard equipment in Grants Pass High and North Medford High schools that will dramatically expand student access to quality CTE experiences aligned with Southern Oregon's economic development plan, as well as state and national high-



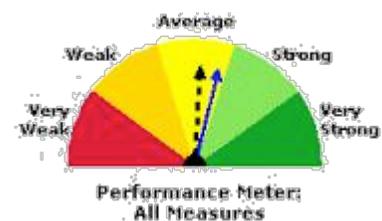
wage, high-demand, and high-skill jobs. Through partnership with ScienceWorks, children of all ages will engage in out-of-school activities during summer that stimulate interest and provide early learning experiences in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. High school students will simultaneously earn college credit leading to certificates and degrees in targeted career paths. The Career Technical Education Revitalization grant in Klamath County will increase opportunities for Klamath County students by renovating the CTE wing of Henley High School. Students will be better prepared for post-secondary education and careers in the fields of agriculture, welding, fabrication, business and marketing. By expanding the technology and equipment to the industry-standard and beyond, students will be exposed to a variety of learning opportunities to increase local job opportunities and career training. The renovation will also allow instructional expansion to middle school students and bring additional College Now courses to Henley High School thanks to local partnerships with Klamath Community College.

These grant awards are a result of Southern Oregon's College and Career for All Movement, a regional collaborative effort between Southern Oregon ESD, school districts, colleges and universities, business, industry, and community partners across Jackson, Josephine and Klamath counties to provide hands-on, project-based learning experiences for students aligned with high-wage, high-demand, and high-skill career paths.

According to SOESD Superintendent Scott Beveridge, "The College and Career for All Movement promotes relevant learning experiences and accelerated college credit that can propel students past high school graduation into college and career paths aligned with our region's workforce needs, as well as high-wage, high-skill, and high demand jobs across the state and the nation."

Moving the Dial on Key Indicators

Planned Pregnancy: It wasn't too long ago that practitioners started asking women at prenatal appointments in Southern Oregon if they had planned to become pregnant. About 6 in 10 women asked by local practitioners said their pregnancy was not planned. This mirrors national data, which indicates that over half of US pregnancies are unintended. A Jackson/Josephine County Preconception Health Campaign began in 2014 at public health clinics, WIC visits, community health centers, private health clinics, and even dental clinics. Using the One Key Question pregnancy intention screening, women of reproductive age were asked,



“Would you like to become pregnant in the next year?” Based on their responses, women were offered contraceptive services and/or preconception health services. (These include counseling on nutrition, exercise, substance use, folic acid, medication review, and prenatal care.)

For women who do NOT wish to become pregnant, contraception is essential. Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) – which include IUDs and Implants, are the most effective contraceptives available. For this reason, one of SORS’ key metrics for Preconception Health is an increase in the use of LARCs among women at risk of unintended pregnancy. Data from Oregon’s State Reproductive Health Program shows that the number of LARC insertions in Southern Oregon increased by 76% from 2014 to 2015, compared to a 12% statewide increase.

The proportion of clients with a LARC insertion grew from 5.7% to 10.5%. This is a dramatic increase, that can be attributed to the collaboration between CCOs, Health Departments, and Community Health Clinics working to promote Preconception Health and decrease unintended pregnancies in our community.

Kindergarten Readiness: Another key indicator is kindergarten readiness, measured through the annual Kindergarten Assessment. The Assessments measure children’s readiness to enter kindergarten based on Approaches to Learning, Early Mathematics, and Early Literacy. It is not a graded test, but a means for educators to gauge school readiness. This year, the Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub has been working with schools in Jackson and Josephine Counties to provide resources to parents to incorporate learning into family activities. Kindergarten Launch is a promotional campaign to enroll kindergarteners during the week of March 7 – early enough for schools to assign services and supports to those children who need them. READY! For Kindergarten, operating in Grants Pass is a package of resources for families. None of this would have been possible without the cooperation and support of Southern Oregon Education Service District and superintendents throughout the region. Hub Director Mary-Curtis Gramley says, “Parents are a child’s first and most influential teachers. We know that what they do at home to prepare children to learn will make them more successful.” This should bear fruit as we track



Kindergarten Assessment, its relationship to grade-level reading, high school graduation, and other key indicators in the years to come.

Peter's View on the Legislature

The 2016 legislative session was dominated by the effort to raise the minimum wage, and by the housing crisis that exists in many areas of the state, but there were several other actions of interest to SORS partners.

Given the potential of two citizen initiatives on the minimum wage going to the November ballot, Governor Brown convened labor and business groups to see if a compromise could be found that would work better than the ballot measures. When a compromise was not able to be reached, the Governor proposed what she saw as the outline that came closest to agreement. Legislators who had been working for over a year on an analysis of what a sustainable income is in different regions of Oregon then adjusted the Governor's proposal to create a three-tiered approach that raises the hourly wage to different levels in the regions over the next six years, stepping up to \$14.75 in the Portland metro area, up to \$13.50 in middle-income counties and up to \$12.50 in lower income counties on the coast and in eastern Oregon.



The supporters of the two ballot measures (one calling for a \$13.50/hour minimum wage in three years, and the other for \$15/hour in two years) have now pulled their proposals off the November ballot.

There continue to be concerns from small businesses and nonprofit organizations on how the higher wages will impact their workplaces, and legislative leadership has pledged to monitor and address possible impacts over the next six years.

The legislature added a \$10 million expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit beginning in 2017. This is another positive step toward addressing poverty in our state, but there is still much work to be done.

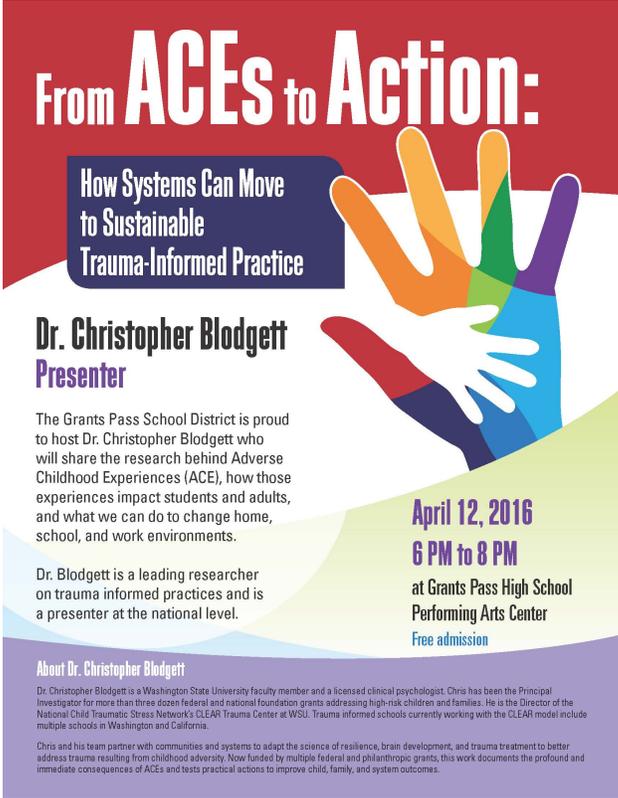
For the housing crisis, an investment of \$10 million into emergency housing and rental assistance was passed as part of the budget re-balance, and a package of four bills aimed towards rental protection and affordable housing were passed. In addition, \$40 million in bonding for affordable housing projects statewide will take place over the next year and a half.

The legislature also invested \$5.4 million in Head Start, \$5.3 million in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, and over \$17 million in high quality preschool programs.

Two other policy bills of note are SB 1515 to tighten oversight of our foster care system, and HB 4002 on absenteeism and pilot programs for trauma-informed approaches to student issues.

Newsletter Briefs

The Grants Pass School District is proud to host Dr. Christopher Blodgett who will share the research behind Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), how those experiences impact students and adults, and what we can do to change home, school, and work environments. Dr. Blodgett is a leading researcher on trauma informed practices and is a presenter at the national level. From



From ACEs to Action:

How Systems Can Move to Sustainable Trauma-Informed Practice

Dr. Christopher Blodgett
Presenter

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April 12, 2016
6 PM to 8 PM
at Grants Pass High School
Performing Arts Center
Free admission

About Dr. Christopher Blodgett

Dr. Christopher Blodgett is a Washington State University faculty member and a licensed clinical psychologist. Chris has been the Principal Investigator for more than three dozen federal and national foundation grants addressing high-risk children and families. He is the Director of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network's CLEAR Trauma Center at WSU. Trauma informed schools currently working with the CLEAR model include multiple schools in Washington and California.

Chris and his team partner with communities and systems to adapt the science of resilience, brain development, and trauma treatment to better address trauma resulting from childhood adversity. Now funded by multiple federal and philanthropic grants, this work documents the profound and immediate consequences of ACEs and tests practical actions to improve child, family, and system outcomes.

ACEs to Action will be held on April 12, 2016, from 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the Grants Pass High School Performing Arts Center. Admission is free.

[You can download this event flyer by clicking HERE.](#)

Since 2003, the Southern Oregon Latino Scholarship Fund (SOLSF) has given college scholarships to over 150 youth totaling over \$400,000. SOLSF is an investment in the future of our region because recipients are all local students with deep roots in our community — they have plans to settle here and give back! The power of crowd fundraising is that no one has to donate a lot for our community to have a huge positive impact on our future! The goal is to raise \$30,000 by the end of April. Go to <http://www.solsf.org/donate.html> or <https://www.razoo.com/us/story/Southern-Oregon-Latino-Scholarship-Fund-2016> to make a donation. Help if you can.

The Rogue Workforce Partnership has released the draft **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Local Plan for 2016-2020**. The vision, goals and strategies in the draft plan incorporate the feedback RWP has received at numerous meetings, forums and discussions over the past 18 months or more. You can view or download this draft document at:

<http://rogueworkforce.org/research-data/latest-news/>

The Simple Dollar has created a comprehensive guide and budget calculator designed to help students learn how to manage their personal finances. They do this by providing advice from financial experts, thoroughly researched data, and helpful tips that guide students through financial planning, budgeting, identifying the risks of overspending, and the dangers of credit cards. Here's a link to the student credit guide and budget calculator:

- <http://www.thesimpledollar.com/best-student-credit-cards/#student-budget-calculator>
- <http://www.thesimpledollar.com/best-student-credit-cards/#how-students-get-into-credit-card-trouble>