

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.



Welcome!

This is the monthly newsletter of Southern Oregon Success (SORS). We weave 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.

Contributions in the form of stories or story ideas, photos and graphics are welcome and encouraged. To find out more about SORS or to contribute to this newsletter, please contact Seth Kaplan at Seth_Kaplan@SouthernOregonSuccess.org.

Friend Us on Facebook!

SORS is back and active on Facebook. Find out the latest about Self-Healing Communities, relevant events, or the doings of our many partners. We are happy to let others know about topical news from your organization as well. Find and friend us at www.facebook.com/SouthernOregonSuccess or click on the logo at the bottom of this page.

SORS Youth Development Committee Shares Lessons on Community-School Partnership

After an extended hiatus, the SORS Youth Development Committee reconvened with 16 agencies gathered to learn about community-school partnerships in Jackson and Josephine Counties. The meeting was a response to the Youth Development Survey from last month in which participants expressed a desire to work collectively to solve problems.

As one participant noted, “We see each other in meetings all the time, but it’s useful to have one meeting which is about improving the overall quality of service across our organizations for the sole purpose of improving outcomes for youth and their families.”



A highlight of the meeting was the ovation given to Central Medford High School Principal Amy Herbst for her sustained commitment to encouraging and welcoming community groups to her campus. Short presentations from other community-school partnerships from Illinois Valley, Josephine County (Grants Pass School District), and Rogue River High demonstrated shared values for building meaningful relationships among school personnel, service providers, parents, and students; a clear understanding that academic success is tied to physical, mental, and emotional health; the importance of parent education and family engagement; and the necessity for good communication between school administrators and outside organizations wanting to add value to the educational experience.

Attendees were particularly interested in the website designed by GPSD Director of Special Services Todd Bloomquist and the Josephine County Community Network called “A Need.” The website was created from the recognition that students do poorly when they don’t attend school, and that poor attendance is often related to family barriers. “A Need” is a simple idea where school personnel or community partners can post a need, such as a parent needing car repairs to get to work or a family needing food, and other partners can resolve it. Youth Development participants expressed interest in growing the Josephine County effort and possibly starting one in Jackson County.

Illinois Valley is working in partnership with the Ford Family Foundation Leadership Program to implement a community messaging campaign to “Be Part of the Solution.” The campaign uses posters to identify community concerns and propose community solutions.

Community-School Partnership was chosen as the topic of this meeting because it was identified as important by all respondents in the recent SORS Youth Development survey. Future



meeting times and topics are being determined by participants through a follow up survey. Topics may include Social Determinants of Health, implementing lessons learned from ACEs training, tools for addressing equity, building cultural competency, and ways to increase parent and community participation.

Community Voices from Family Solutions

While the names in this story are fictional, the events are true and all too familiar in our communities. Jake and John, middle-school-aged brothers, are the children of drug-addicted parents. The dad ended up in prison and the mom became homeless, leaving the boys with grandparents, Jack and Julie, who were willing to parent their grandchildren but needed help. Child Welfare referred the grandparents to the Family Solutions Protective Parenting Class in Grants Pass because the boys needed special care, having been traumatized by family disruption, parental neglect, and abuse. Jack and Julie were happy to attend the class. “When you haven’t raised kids for over 15 years, you forget what it’s like,” says Jack. “I figured I needed a refresher, and boy was I right. These classes are good for any parent or guardian, not just people who have had challenges or kids with behavioral issues.”

Children who have been exposed to adult abuse and neglect often manifest exceptional behavioral challenges that require a specific parenting approach. Standard parenting strategies can easily backfire and may even make the child worse. Severely traumatized, the boys were regressed in home, school, and community functioning. Neither was involved in extracurricular activities. After the boys relaxed into a more stable routine, Jack enrolled his younger grandson, John, in soccer.



“You should see his face light up when he kicks that ball into the net!” Jack says proudly. “But it hasn’t all been easy. When the boys first got here, they were scared and nervous. Trust was a big issue. Sometimes they had extreme reactions to our rules.”

The parenting classes taught Jack how to manage his own reactions to the boys’ outbursts and better handle conflict. It helped for him to talk with other parents, who suggested strategies that worked when they had faced similar difficulties.

Jack learned to separate the boys when they start fighting. They quickly realized they prefer being with each other without fighting to being alone in separate rooms. “In the past, I might’ve hollered at them to quit fighting,” says Jack. “Now I know a better way.”

The grandparents learned how to provide developmentally appropriate expectations that reduce the level of stress for everyone in the household. Their understanding of abuse dynamics has helped them be more present for Jake and John. Most importantly, they learned not to take the boys’ behaviors personally.

The house rule is to give the kids an hour after school to play outside or to play a video game, but then it’s time to do homework. One evening, after telling Jake to pause the video game until after homework, it was still on 15 minutes later. Jack was about to tell Jake to stop the game when Jake told him, “I think you need to take the Nintendo out of my room, Papa. I just

can't focus knowing that game is waiting for me.”

“Jake didn't ask to have it back until school was out for the summer,” says Jack. “I'm pretty sure these boys will turn out just fine. And if I run into any more challenges, I know our family has the support we need.”

Youth Development Council Coming to Town

The Oregon Youth Development Council (YDC) is coming to Medford the evening of June 22nd to hear from Southern Oregon residents about how to best improve academic and career outcomes for youth and young adults. They are particularly interested in hearing from young people who use or need support services. The community meeting will be held at the Rogue Community College Auditorium, beginning at 5:30.

YDC Deputy Director Brenda Brooks explained, “We want to know what's working in your region—what do you want us to know about your innovative projects, programs, and services? We also want to know about the gaps you see and your solutions to address them.” YDC will be reporting its findings

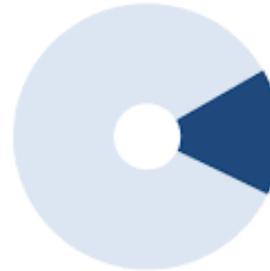
from regions across the State to the legislature as part of the 2017 budget process.

While YDC is tasked with overseeing policy and funding for youth ages 6 to 24, the unanimous passage of Senate Bill 586 last year increased the upper age range from 20 – so serving ages 20 to 24 is a new priority. YDC is particularly interested in hearing directly from these young people in Southern Oregon, along with programs which support them. “Opportunity Youth,” ages 16 to 24 who are not in school or working, are a funding priority. “Priority Youth” is the category of youth, ages 6 to 15, who struggle with transitions from elementary to middle school or middle to high school. This is another priority as these young people are considered to be at high risk of dropping out of school.

The Youth Development Council was created in 2012, charged with creating and implementing Oregon youth development policy. The 21-member council is appointed by the governor and supported by staff. Local programs funded by YDC in our area include Jackson County Juvenile Justice, which receives funding directly, as well as for community partners LifeArt and Spartan Boxing; the Maslow Project, OnTrack; College Dreams; Kids Unlimited; and Boys & Girls Club of the Rogue Valley.

Please email seth_kaplan@southernoregonsuccess.org if you plan on attending. Registration is not required for this event; however, YDC will provide pizza and we would appreciate hearing from you to estimate the size of the order.

Oregon Opportunity Youth, Age 16-24



1 in 7
Oregon Youth
Not in School and
not Working



Leading a Backbone Organization for Collective Impact

Drawn by an all-star lineup of collective impact thinkers and practitioners, a team from Southern Oregon trekked to Halifax, Nova Scotia for a three-day training called Champions for Change: Leading a Backbone Organization for Collective Impact. While the trip was long, others among the 116 attendees traveled even further, from as far as Alaska and even Australia to learn from leaders in the field. The conference was led by Tamarack Institute, facilitators of the Vibrant Communities Canada initiative, which has demonstrated the power of collective impact by lifting more than 200,000 people out of poverty; and FSG, which is led by Managing Director, John Kania, who was part of the team that first identified the collective impact movement already underway in 2011.

As Tamarack Institute President, Paul Born, noted in his opening remarks, “Collective Impact results when actors from different sectors commit to a common agenda for solving a complex social issue. Communities are increasingly facing complex problems too difficult for a single individual, organization, or level of government to resolve. Issues like poverty, economic revitalization, and inclusion of marginalized groups require a bigger vision and collaborative action which engages citizens and stakeholders.”

The Champions for Change conference was designed for people engaged in backbone organizations within a collective impact framework. Backbone organizations generally work behind the scenes to maintain alignment and focus across partners. They are often thought of as staff, but can include volunteer leaders who are engaged at the practitioner level. Within this audience, most were familiar with the basic tenets of collective impact: common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support.

Champions of Change went beyond this foundation, noting that these conditions are necessary components of a collective impact framework, but the framework is still new (2011), and evolving principles continue to clarify conditions for positive population-wide change. The new Collective Impact Principles of Practice were developed by a team of practitioners associated with Collective Impact Forum, Aspen Institute, FSG, Forum for Youth Investment, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, Living Cities, PolicyLink, Tamarack Institute, and United Way Worldwide. The principles are summarized here:

1. Design and implement the initiative with a priority placed on equity throughout governance, planning, implementation, disaggregated data, and strategies.
2. Ensure community members with lived experience are meaningfully engaged in governance, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
3. Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners, including residents, government,

- community-based organizations, private sector, and philanthropy.
4. Recognize that collective impact is not a solution, but rather a collaborative problem-solving process. Partners problem solve best when all have equal access to changes in context, data, and observations.
 5. Cultivate leaders with system leadership skills including facilitation, convening, and management to create space for people to come together to work out disparate viewpoints, foster shared meaning and aspirations and hold the complexity and non-linearity of system-level change. Transformational change grows from willingness to change individual organizations in service to the health of the whole.
 6. Focus mutually reinforcing activities on collective program and system change strategies to increase communication and coordination across organizations, change practices and behaviors, shift cultural norms, and improve services system wide.
 7. Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect.
 8. Customize for local context through deep understanding of the placed-based problem, both through data and stories. Align with existing work and pursue system and program strategies most relevant to local needs.

Through workshops, learning communities, and networking, participants took ample opportunity to dive into deeper waters, time and again rewarded with pearls of wisdom—many of which were displayed on the Learning Wall. Some quotable highlights:
“Equality is everyone having shoes; Equity is everyone having shoes that fit.”
“Just talking across systems gets us somewhere.”
“A Common Agenda is about collective aspiration. Don’t let it be something that happens to a community.”



Conference participation was funded by SORS partners Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon (HCCSO), Jefferson Regional Health Alliance (JRHA), and the Gordon Elwood Foundation, and was attended by Seth Kaplan, SORS Project Manager; Steering Committee members Kathy Bryon from Gordon Elwood Foundation, Jen Johnstun from Primary Health, Maggie Sullivan from HCCSO, and Angela Warren from JRHA; and HCCSO Board Member Belle Shepherd from the Oregon Health Authority. This was the second Collective Impact conference for SORS members, who joined the Tamarack

Institute in Canyonville in 2013. Most of the SORS participants who attended that earlier conference have moved on to support State efforts in early learning, and this conference provided an excellent opportunity to train new collaborative leaders to help promote the movement towards regional collective impact.

For those who don't have the opportunity or resources to attend a Collective Impact Conference, you can join an online community and follow the latest thinking and conversations across the globe through the Collective Impact Forum at www.collectiveimpactforum.org.

Growing Hope at Central Medford High

Students at Central Medford High School are gaining the capacity to hope, along with the academic and other skills they need to graduate and succeed in life. Central Medford is an alternative high school with a focus on building relationships with students, treating each other with respect, and connecting academics to real life experiences and skills. Hope is a powerful asset.



Principal, Amy Herbst, recently presented the findings of the CMHS School Culture Survey to a gathering of the Central Medford High School Community School Partnership. Among the student survey results:

- 73% strongly agree and 91% agree that they will graduate from high school
- 78% strongly agree and 98% agree that they have an adult in their lives who cares about their future
- 87% agree that they have the skills to find ways around any problem
- 98% agree that they were treated with respect at school the day before they completed the survey

While this may be too much to hope for, almost 76% agreed that they laughed or smiled a lot yesterday, meaning almost 25% had a mirth-free day.

Speaking about the survey results, Principal Herbst noted, “These students didn’t come here with this much hope. This is an important step toward academic success.”

Trauma Informed Training Available in Southern Oregon

The Southern Oregon ACEs Training Team, led by Kairos CEO and SORS Steering Committee member Bob Lieberman, is offering no cost training presentations on the Adverse Childhood Experiences study (ACEs) and how an understanding of the science behind brain development can transform schools, workplaces and communities. The training is recommended for schools, agencies, businesses, and community groups.

The team recommends a minimum of an hour and a



half to present the material. The goal of the team's efforts is to develop a common understanding and a common vocabulary throughout our region and across all sectors in order to effectively impact children and families who are struggling.

The ACE Study and Trauma Informed Training has become a hot topic in Southern Oregon because the 20-year-old Study published by the CDC revealed this is the largest public health breakthrough of our time, according to co-author and master trainer Laura Porter. The goal of the regional program is to tell as many people as possible about what is now known, and to provide resources to change our own behavior and promote change in our spheres of influence. The training is well underway nationally and already has reached tens of thousands of people from all walks of life.

Regional Training team members available to Jackson, Josephine, and Curry Counties include:

- Dr. Michelle Homer Anderson, Health Services Director for Southern Oregon Head Start
- Dr. Todd Bloomquist, Director of Special Services for Grants Pass School District #7
- Peter Buckley, Co-Project Manager for Southern Oregon Success
- Tamara Falls, Regional Manager-Community Liaison for Advantage Dental
- Taylor Kohn, MA, LPC, DHS Intensive Case Consultant
- Rick Rawlins, LCSW, Clinical Operations Manager for Jackson County Mental Health

To schedule a training presentation, or for more information, please email:

peter_buckley@southernoregonsuccess.org.



Half of Pregnant Women in Region Benefit from Federal WIC Program

The federally funded Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is one of the most important supports for low-income mothers, infants, and children in Jackson and Josephine Counties. WIC is the common term for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. WIC provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, and postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. Last year, WIC served 9,564 women, infants, and children in Jackson County and 4,162 in Josephine County. More than half of the pregnant women in both counties were served by WIC, and most of the families served have at least one working family member. More than \$5.2 million was invested in the local community as participating families used funding to purchase healthy foods from local sources.

One of WIC's key educational campaigns is to promote breastfeeding. A growing body of research supports breastmilk as the best sole source of nutrition for infants during the first six months, requiring mothers to eat healthy foods themselves. More than 95% of moms participating in WIC regionally breastfeed their babies, and almost half do so exclusively for the

first six months. To find out more about WIC in Jackson County, call 541-774-8203. In Josephine County, call 541-474-5333.

Newsletter Briefs

Explore Your World!

The August Institute is offering an environmental education program for K-12 teachers and administrators called Exploring Your World Through Geographic Literacy. Collaboration curricula graduate credit will be offered for the free institute, scheduled for August 8-12.

Through action-packed learning and optional field trips, participants will learn to promote connections between students, community and the environment. Participants will also receive reimbursements for student field trips.

The August Institute is offered by a subcommittee of Southern Oregon Regional Environmental Education Leaders (SOREEL), which includes OSU-SOREC and Southern Oregon University in collaboration with the Southern Oregon Education Service District and the Environmental Education Association of Oregon.

For more details, go to <https://sites.google.com/site/augustinst/>. To register, email augustinst@gmail.com

Buckley Named to SORS Partner Boards

SORS Co-Project Manager Peter Buckley has joined the Boards of the AllCare Coordinated Care Organization and the Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon (HCCSO). Both AllCare and HCCSO are represented on the SORS Steering Committee and are significant funders of the initiative.

“These are two excellent organizations doing great work in our region,” Buckley said. “I’m excited to have the opportunity to be part of their efforts to provide access and equity in health care, and of their significant collaborations to serve kids and families in both Jackson and Josephine counties.”



The Financial Cost of High School Dropouts

In another intersection between local economics, education and health, Oregon students who fail to graduate are more likely to require Medicaid assistance than high school graduates. Over 40% of high school dropouts require Medicaid assistance at some point, costing the State of Oregon more than \$200 million annually.

High school graduates are half as likely as dropouts to be incarcerated during their lifetimes. A 100% high school graduation rate would save the State \$37 million in incarceration costs annually. Overall, the State loses \$173 million annually in tax revenues due to the decreased earning power of high school dropouts.



Thanks to Our Volunteer Leadership!

SORS is led by volunteer leadership who demonstrate their commitment to the children, youth, and families of Jackson and Josephine Counties on a daily basis, making time to step beyond their individual organizational agendas to work towards collective impact. Our volunteer leadership drives the SORS' agenda and rolls up their sleeves to do whatever's needed to move things forward. Many of our leaders have been engaged in moving this effort forward since 2011, and we are grateful for their continuing support!

Stewardship Committee: Provides guidance to staff, provides backbone support to the collective effort, and collaboratively develops the strategic and tactical agenda.

Jim Fong, Executive Director, Rogue Workforce Partnership
Kathy Bryon, Executive Director, Gordon Elwood Foundation
Scott Beveridge, Superintendent, Southern Oregon Education Service District

Steering Committee: Collaboratively develops and guides the strategic and tactical direction of SORS.

Amy Buehler, Children's Area Manager, Jackson County Mental Health
Angela Warren, Collaboration Manager, Jefferson Regional Health Alliance
Bob Lieberman, Chief Executive Officer, Kairos
Debbie Ameen, Director of Strategy, AllCare
Heidi Hill, Community Engagement Program Manager, Jackson Care Connect
Jennifer Johnstun, Director of Health Strategy, Primary Health
Jim Fong, Executive Director, Rogue Workforce Partnership
John Higgins, Superintendent, Grants Pass School District
Kathy Bryon, Executive Director, Gordon Elwood Foundation
Maggie Sullivan, Executive Director, Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon
Mary Ferrell, Executive Director, Maslow Project

Mary-Curtis Gramley, Director, Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub
Rita Sullivan, Executive Director, OnTrack
Scott Beveridge, Superintendent, Southern Oregon Education Service District
Steve Thorpe, Faculty, Southern Oregon University



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