

Connected Lane County

Breaking Barriers & Building Bridges



Annual Report

2022.2023

Breaking Barriers & Building Bridges

In our 2022 - 2023 year, we served 3,158 youth.

On behalf of the Connected Lane County Staff,
we thank you for caring and supporting our youth.

3,158

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Letter From The Executive Director

Anchoring To Who We Are

As we enter a new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on our organization’s vision and intentions. This year, our guiding words were growth, maturity, and clarity. We have experienced significant expansion over the past few years, and now, we have reached a point where we can ground ourselves and establish our work for the future.

Major Accomplishments and Milestones

I am thrilled to share that our achievements this year have been remarkable. We successfully raised over \$5 million for our capital project and organizational budget. Additionally, we launched Spark at Booth-Kelly, welcomed the first cohorts of our Manufacturing and Health Excelerators, expanded our network of partners to 546, and increased our donor base by 76 individuals. We have made strides in growing and diversifying our staff while addressing our youth’s housing needs. Our youth wages reached an all-time high of nearly \$750,000. I am also delighted to share that we connected with our first group of alumni and conducted insightful interviews. I can’t wait for you to read their inspiring stories in this report.

Realigning and Prioritizing Well-being

While our commitment to saying “yes” has driven our success, it has also brought about a sense of burnout among our dedicated team. As we move forward, we recognize the importance of regrouping ourselves. We are ensuring clarity in how our activities align with our vision. New support structures and positions are being implemented to promote a healthy work-life balance for our staff. We are actively engaging in challenging conversations on equity and striving to be a nonprofit leader in employee care.

Embracing Compassion and Connection

I implore you to delve into the pages of our report, not only to celebrate and appreciate the numbers (as I personally do, being a numbers lover), but to absorb the essence of each word. Our staff has prioritized meaningful interactions with every youth, sharing their stories with care and compassion. As we listen to their experiences, recounted in their own words, we are reminded of the profound compassion we hold for each of them. Our organization thrives due to the passion of our incredible team, and I am immensely proud to lead them. Together, we have provided support to 3,158 unique youth in Lane County over the past year.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. It is through your unwavering commitment that we can make a difference in the lives of these deserving young individuals.

I can’t wait for you to read their inspiring stories in this report.

Sincerely,

Heidi Larwick
Executive Director

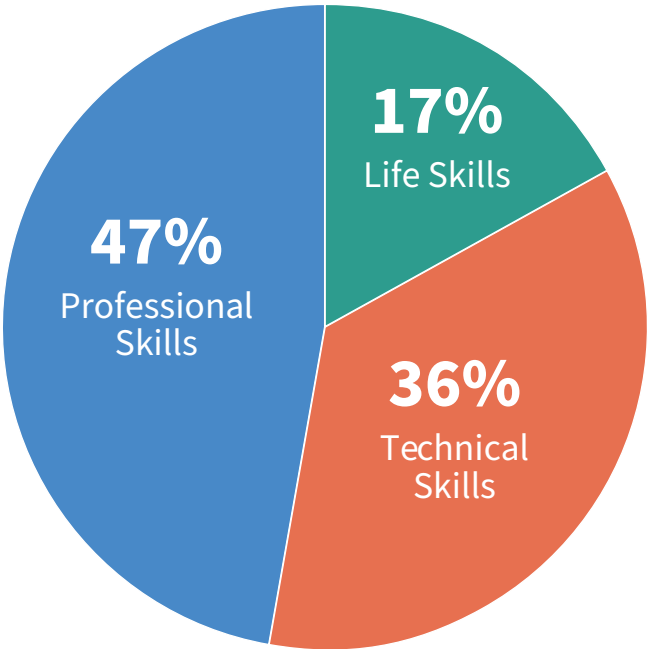


Assessing Youth Employability Skills

Youth Development and Workforce Readiness

For several years, our dedicated Board of Directors has played a crucial role in strengthening the capabilities necessary to fulfill our organizational objectives. In the past year, the board directed our attention towards identifying the essential employability skills that today’s youth need to thrive in a competitive job market. Moreover, they tasked us with assessing how our program contributes to the development of these skills.

To evaluate the impact of our program, we engaged with community businesses, youth, and families through surveys and analyzed program data. Our comprehensive assessment revealed that participating youth acquire a diverse set of skills that significantly contribute to their preparedness for the workforce.



These skills can be categorized into three main areas

Professional Skills

Fundamental elements for career growth and adaptability in various professional settings. These skills include vital competencies such as effective communication, problem-solving abilities, timeliness, collaboration, interview skills, and organizational proficiency.

Technical Skills

Equip youth with the specialized knowledge required for specific jobs or industries. This category includes industry-specific skills, computer literacy, mathematical proficiency, coding expertise, and machining capabilities.

Life Skills

Empower youth to navigate personal and professional challenges. They encompass essential skills such as finance management, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, and strategies to support well-being and healthcare needs.

These statistics highlight the significant impact our programs have on youth development, equipping them with the skills necessary for their future success.

Organizational Summary

Our Mission

We equip Lane County youth with the tools to help them gain confidence in their abilities and see value in their decisions. We break down barriers, build bridges, and create strategic partnerships to connect youth with education and employment pathways to transform their future potential.

Our Vision

We create opportunities to increase the relevance for each learner to connect to their lives beyond graduation, and intentionally connect partners to meet the needs of youth in Lane County.



Equity Stance

At Connected Lane County, we are committed to creating a safe and equitable learning environment for all youth. Youth in our programs represent a wide variety of backgrounds and identities including racial, ethnic, linguistic, diverse ability, neurodiversity, sexual identity, religious, socioeconomic, housing, and family status. We want every youth that participates in our programs to experience a sense of belonging.

- Believe communities’ histories, values, and practices contribute to diverse and equitable approaches to solving problems.
- Intentionally and explicitly identify and recruit historically underserved and/or underrepresented participants.
- Recognize the importance of utilizing curriculum and approaches that are culturally relevant and responsive to the communities being served.

By the Numbers

\$732,123

Paid Youth Wages

52,185

Youth Hours

3,158

Youth Served

546

Partners

76

New Donors

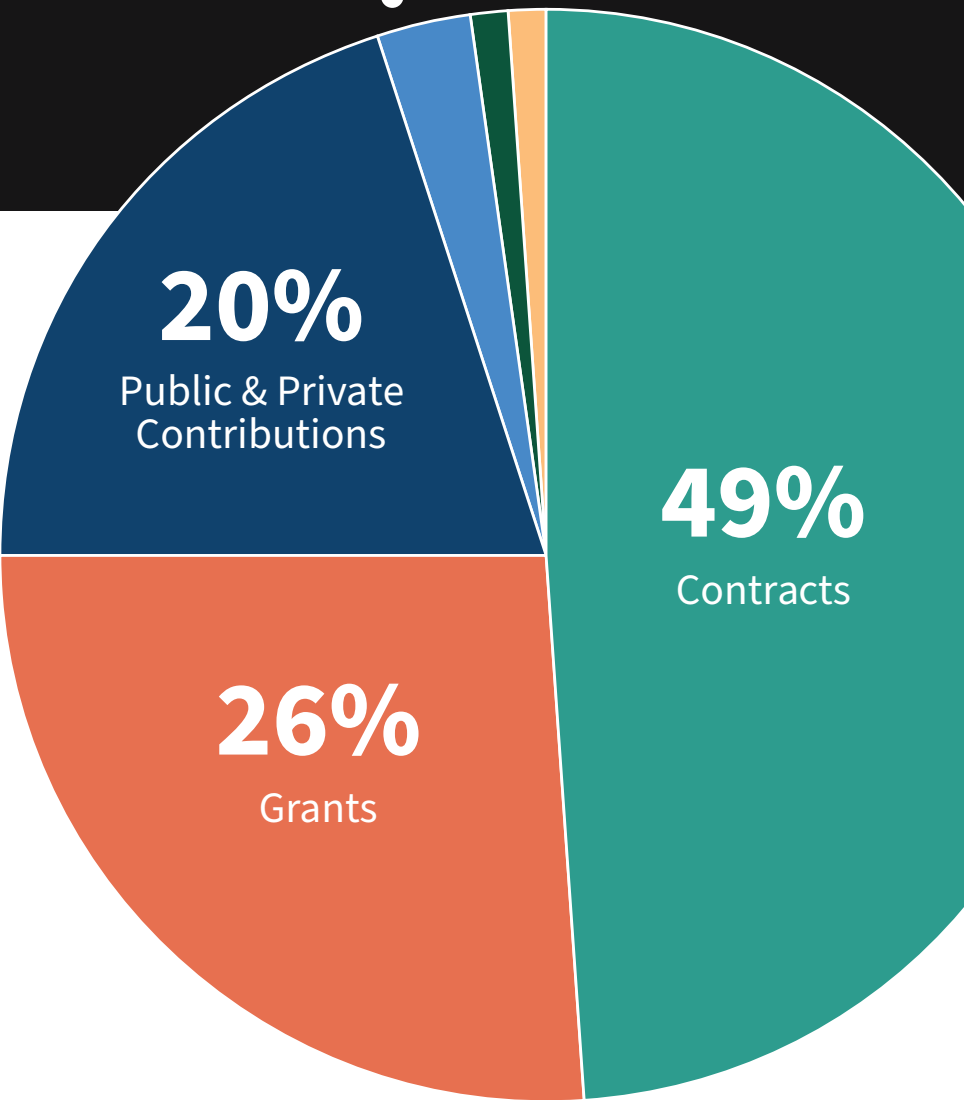
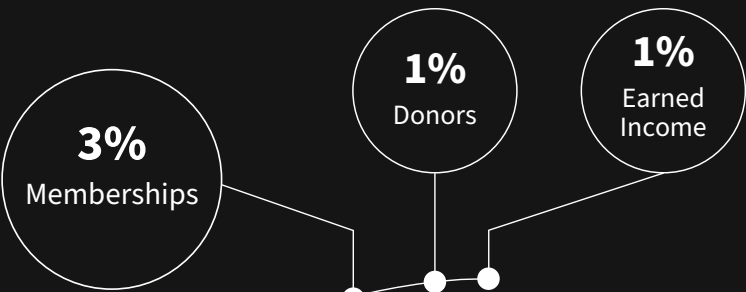
Income Summary

Total Income Brought In

\$4,967,046

Supporters

- Active 20-30 Club
- Association of Science Technology Centers
- Business Oregon
- Chambers Family Foundation
- City of Eugene
- City of Springfield
- Early Learning Alliance
- Eugene 4J School District
- Fair Housing Council
- FALLING SKY BREWING
- Glow Yoga
- Hennebery Eddy Architects
- John and Ginger Niemeyer Foundation
- John Hyland Construction
- John Serbu Fund - O.C.F.
- KGM International LTD
- Lane County School Districts
- Lane Community Health Council
- Lane County Government
- Lane County Economic Development
- Lane County Health & Human Services
- Lane CTE
- Lane Education Foundation
- Lane Education Service Department
- Lane Workforce Partnership
- Lane Community College
- Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation
- Oregon Community Credit Union Foundation
- Oregon Community Foundation
- Oregon Department of Justice
- Oregon Forest Resources Institute
- Oregon MESA
- Oregon Pacific Bank Employees
- Pacific Power Foundation
- PacificSource
- Palo Alto Software Charitable Fund
- Papé Group
- PIVOT Architecture
- Reynolds Electric & Plumbing

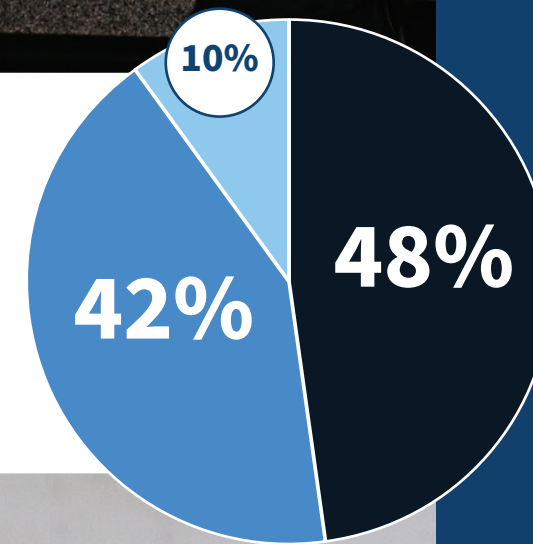


- R.W. Family Fund of Oregon Community Foundation
- Sierra Pacific Foundation
- South Lane School District
- Spirit Mountain Community Fund
- Springfield School District
- Swanson Group
- Systems West Engineers
- Tykeson Family Foundation
- Umpqua Bank Charitable Foundation
- United Way of Lane County
- University of Oregon
- Urban Lumber
- Wayfair
- WaFd Bank
- Weyerhaeuser Foundation



Youth Employability Skills Gained in the Elevate Program

- Professional Skills
- Technical Skills
- Life Skills



By the Numbers

2,367

Participants

18,177

Participation Hours

\$174,926

Paid Youth Wages

490

Industry Partners

4,741

Mentor / Volunteer Hours

Creating Opportunities

Elevate creates opportunities for youth to thrive in the working world. We curate career exploration events, work-based learning opportunities, workshops and training, industry tours, and more, including career expos, job shadows, internships, and externships.



Empowering Youth

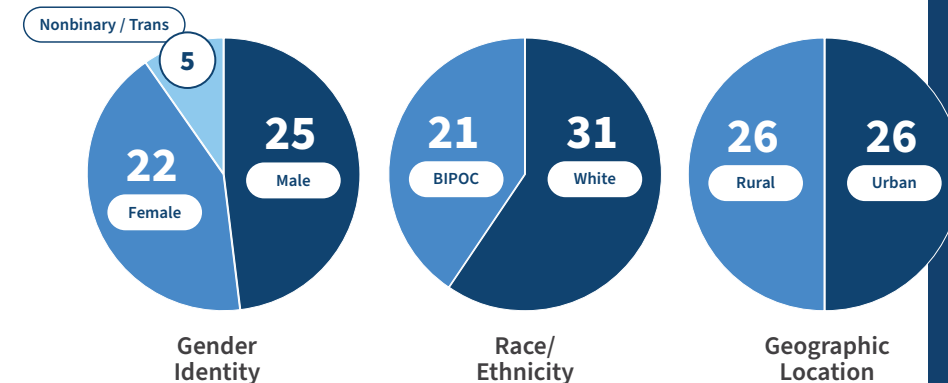
The Elevate program soared to new heights this year, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of young people in our community. With an astonishing 18,177 hours of active engagement, youth from all corners of the county demonstrated their dedication to learning and growing their future potential. And they didn't just give it their all—together they earned a jaw-dropping \$174,926.08 in post-tax wages through paid work experiences.

Collaboration was the secret sauce behind Elevate's triumph. With 490 industry partners stepping up

to the plate, participants were showered with 4,741 hours of mentorship and volunteerism, igniting their potential. The program also provided 52 talented youth with real-world Summer Internships, where they flourished and showcased their skills. This intern squad epitomized inclusivity, with a remarkable representation of nonbinary/trans, female, and BIPOC youth, hailing from both urban and rural communities. The Elevate program's achievements are a testament to our team's commitment to empowering young individuals and fostering collaboration.

Summer Internship Demographics

Total Number of Youth - 52



Through immersive engagement, financial support, and meaningful experiences, including career-connected learning opportunities, we're shaping a brighter future for all. Elevate is not just about creating opportunities—it's about propelling young talents to extraordinary heights.

Together, we are rewriting the rules of success.



Noel

He/Him/His
Siuslaw HS, Senior
Hispanic / Latinx

- Programs / Events Participated In**
- codeORcreate (2020, 2021, 2022)
 - marketingJAM (2023)
 - Tech Tours (2023)
 - Summer Intern at Habitat for Humanity in Florence (2022)

Noel, a senior at Siuslaw High School, discovered his passion for computer science during his sophomore year. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, he embraced the opportunity to participate in the virtual youth hackathon codeORcreate, where his team secured a first-place prize.

Learn Their Story

Impressed by the event's organization and the chance to network with industry professionals, Noel returned to codeORcreate in his junior and senior years. In his junior year, Noel was awarded an Elevate summer internship at Habitat for Humanity. Tasked with building the organization's new website, he dedicated over 200 hours to the project. Overcoming obstacles and teaching himself new programming languages, Noel successfully completed the website and gained valuable project management skills. In 2023, Noel participated on the Siuslaw High School marketingJAM team. He was able to bring his website design and functionality skills to a marketing competition and in the course of a weekend, his team mocked up a website for their client in addition to other marketing assets. Similarly to the codeORcreate results, his team walked away with a first-place prize.

Noel's dedication to computer science and his impressive achievements have earned him a full-ride scholarship to the University of Oregon. He plans to study Computer Science and looks forward to future opportunities with Connected Lane County, such as becoming a mentor at Invention Lab or the Tech Excelerator, or by joining our staff as our next IT Specialist.

Elevate Partner Kyle Bare (he/him), Swanson Group

"We have these young adults that are taking steps to invest in themselves and build skills... We saw hosting an intern as an opportunity to encourage that development and help them continue to grow."



Bella

She/Her/Hers
Willamette HS, Senior
Hispanic / Latinx,
Non-Binary

- Programs / Events Participated In**
- SLICE (2023, 2023)
 - Summer Intern at BRING Recycling

Bella, a senior at Willamette High School, found her creative outlet through art and fashion design. After moving to Eugene during her freshman year, she quickly embraced her new school and enrolled in various art and culinary classes.

Learn Their Story

Her journey with Connected Lane County began when she attended the youth culinary showcase, 'Slice.' Bella and her team enjoyed the event so much that they returned in 2023 and won first place. Though she is skilled in the kitchen, Bella's true creative passion is fashion design and art. In the summer after her junior year, Bella heard about our paid summer internship opportunity and decided to apply. She knew it was a competitive process, but was confident in her ability and hoped to be selected. Bella was chosen to participate in our summer internship



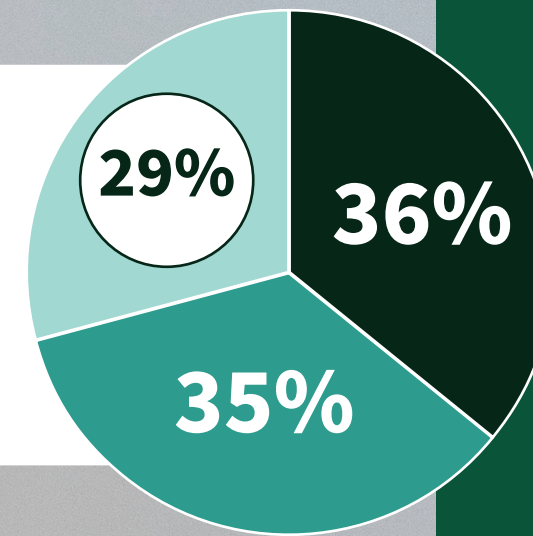
program and paired with BRING Recycling. We knew the projects involved in this internship would be the perfect creative outlet for Bella. She spent the summer designing and manufacturing up-cycled furniture, decor, jewelry, and much more that BRING sold in their retail shop. She learned how to design and program a CNC machine and how to safely use power tools (turns out most people are using them incorrectly!) She also learned how to up-cycle old skateboards into earrings!

Bella's internship experiences and dedication to her craft led to her acceptance into the School of Art Institute of Chicago on a full-ride scholarship. As she embarks on this new adventure, Connected Lane County is excited to see her flourish and succeed in her artistic pursuits.



Youth Employability Skills Gained in the Navigate Program

- Professional Skills
- Technical Skills
- Life Skills



By the Numbers

223

Participants

Charting a Course to Success

Navigate is a guiding light for youth facing significant barriers, providing essential support to help them find a path forward toward education, employment, housing stability, and success. Our team of dedicated Resource Navigators goes above and beyond to re-engage youth in education and workforce pathways.

Empowering Futures

This year, our Navigate program reached new heights, providing crucial support to 223 youth. A remarkable 73 young individuals successfully completed a transformative Work-Based Learning (WBL) experience, accumulating an impressive 17,723 hours of active participation. Their unwavering commitment to creating a better future was truly remarkable.

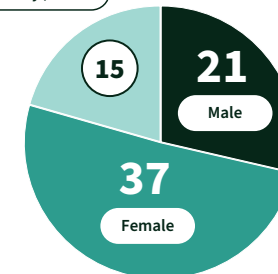
Incredible success followed in the wake of collaboration. Our Navigate youth earned an astounding \$344,447.35 in wages from their work experience adventures. This remarkable achievement was made possible through the partnerships formed with 33 businesses, which provided unforgettable real-world experiences. Additionally, we were privileged to welcome 13 inspiring guest presenters who ignited inspiration during our Wonder Wednesday life skills classes.



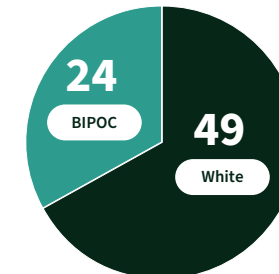
WEX / Internship Demographics

Total Number of Youth - 73

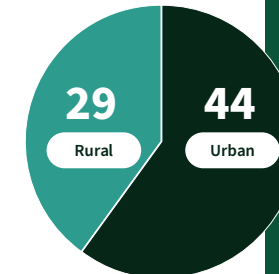
Nonbinary / Trans



Gender Identity



Race/Ethnicity



Geographic Location

“As a Resource Navigator, I take pride in the relationships I build with youth, and nothing is more rewarding than being a safe landing place, a trusted adult, and a conduit for success in a young person's life.” - Hailey Johnston

Together, we are navigating systems and empowering youth to reach for success.

17,723

Participation Hours

\$344,447

Paid Youth Wages

46

Industry Partners / Guest Speakers

26

Volunteer Hours

Maia

She/They
White

Programs / Events Participated In

- Job Shadows
- Wonder Wednesdays
- Wonder Week
- Work Based Learning
- Invention Lab



Maia entered the Navigate program at 17 years old. She was living out of a car, had disengaged from school, was working part-time at a fast food facility, and struggling to meet her basic needs. Upon registering with the Navigate program, Maia worked hard with the support of her Resource Navigator to prioritize completing her GED.

Learn Their Story

Maia actively participated in various Connected Lane County events, including Wonder Wednesdays, Elevate Job Shadows, Wonder Week, and DevNW Youth Financial Foundation classes. Through these experiences, she gained essential skills and knowledge while receiving support for her basic needs, such as food stamps and health insurance.

With her GED completed, reliable transportation, and basic needs met, Maia focused on her career goals. She secured a work experience at the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, which then turned into an internship. Maia’s dedication and skills led to a full-time employment opportunity as a Division Support Specialist with LCOG. Today, Maia is thriving in her high-wage job with opportunities for growth. She is preparing to transition out of the Navigate program and has plans to secure her first independent apartment.

Maia is an excellent example of how a little bit of support and guidance can give youth the opportunity to excel and complete their education and career goals.

Navigate Partner SELCO Community Credit Union

When asked about working with Navigate youth, SELCO Service Center Supervisor April Bodine emphasized the importance of asking questions and getting to know the intern personally, including interests, strengths, and goals. This approach helps find the best placement for their skill set and demonstrates that they are a valued part of the team.

“We hired our intern as soon as she graduated, gaining a team member who will no doubt do great things in the future.” - April Bodine, SELCO

Carmen

She/Her/Hers
Hispanic / Latinx

Programs / Events Participated In

- Wonder Wednesdays
- Wonder Week
- Work Experience



Carmen entered the Navigate program at 17 years old unemployed and having dropped out of school. The combination of a difficult home life and a severe car accident that totaled her only source of transportation left her struggling with mental health issues and re-engaging with education.

Learn Their Story

Supported by the program, Carmen enrolled in a GED program and successfully completed her GED. She also received assistance for her mental health, which allowed her to better engage with program events and opportunities. Carmen actively participated in Connected Lane County events, such as Wonder Wednesdays, Wonder Week, and DevNW classes. Her dedication and

proactive approach led to multiple work-based learning experiences related to her career goal of working in sustainable farm-to-table agriculture. Through her work experiences at the Youth Farm and Positive Community Kitchen, Carmen not only gained valuable skills but also became a youth leader. Her hard work and dedication resulted in promotions at both sites, showcasing her commitment and work ethic.

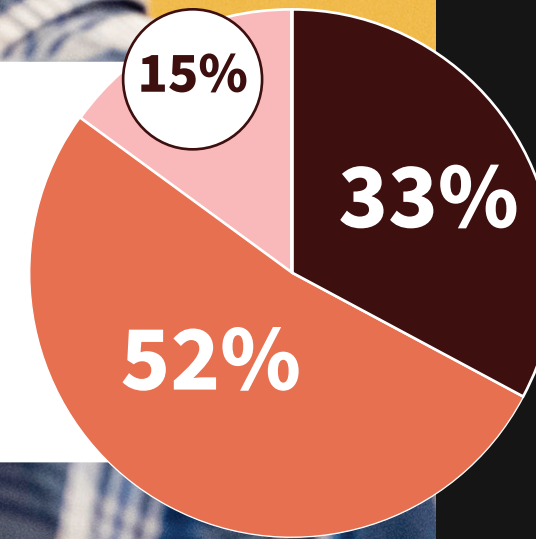
Currently working two jobs, Carmen is on track to exit the Navigate program with confidence and the necessary skills to continue succeeding in her chosen career path.





Youth Employability Skills Gained in the Spark Program

- Professional Skills
- Technical Skills
- Life Skills



By the Numbers

534

Participants

11,240

Participation Hours

\$139,625

Paid Youth Wages

26

Mentors

2,089

Mentor Hours

Igniting Innovation

Get ready to be amazed by the sparks of brilliance coming from our Spark program as we inspire the next generation of innovators. We create exciting and safe spaces where youth can explore technologies, dive into STEM education, and cultivate essential teamwork and leadership skills. With programs like Invention Lab, Invention Club, The Agency, and spaces including Spark on 7th and Spark at Booth-Kelly, we set the stage for curiosity and creativity to thrive.

The journey to innovation wouldn't be possible without our exceptional mentors. The 26 passionate individuals devoted over 2,089 hours of their time to shaping the minds and talents of our young innovators. Through their mentorship, they ignited sparks that will fuel a lifetime of creativity.

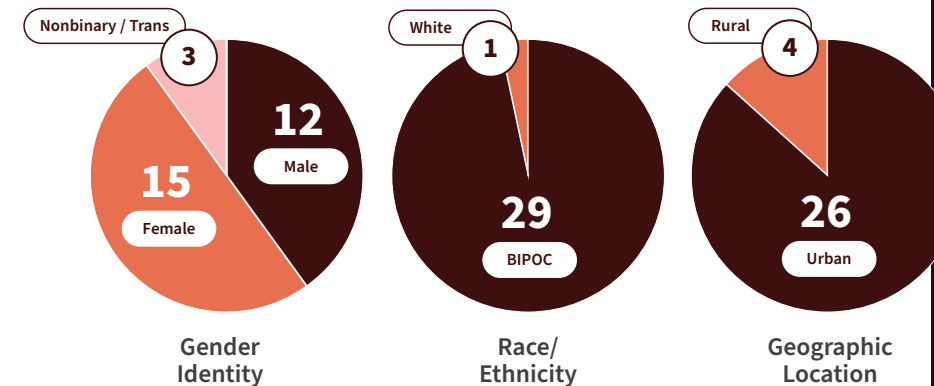
Empowering Inspiration

This year, Spark achieved remarkable milestones with 534 enthusiastic participants, collectively contributing a staggering 11,240 hours of active engagement. Their dedication and hard work did not go unnoticed—youth wages amounting to \$139,625 were paid out, recognizing their invaluable contributions to the program.

These achievements, alongside the incredible dedication of our participants, mentors, and the entire Spark team, showcase our unwavering commitment to igniting innovation and empowering youth. Through active engagement, financial support, and mentorship, we're shaping a future where creativity thrives and the next generation of leaders and inventors can emerge.

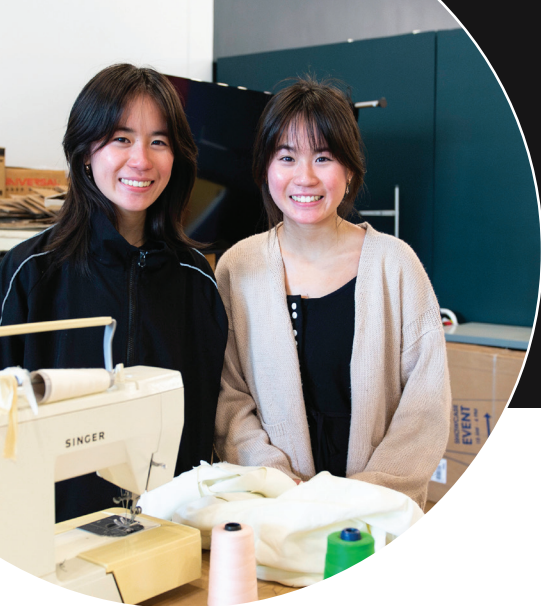
Invention Lab Demographics

Total Number of Youth - 30



“Spark will always leave a big impact on me... It has helped me build confidence and discover new opportunities.” - Thu

Together, we are sparking a revolution of innovation and lighting the path toward boundless possibilities.



Minh & Thu

She/Her/Hers
Willamette HS, Juniors
Asian

Programs / Events Participated In

- Invention Club (2021, 2022, 2023)
- Invention Lab (2022)
- Youth Business Incubator (2023)

Minh and Thu, juniors at Willamette High School, have been actively involved in Connected Lane County's Spark programming. They joined Invention Club in 2021 and quickly became passionate about STEM and creative projects.

Learn Their Story

At MESA Day, an end-of-year statewide STEM competition held at Portland State University, Minh and Thu's catapult design took 2nd place in the main design challenge. They later participated in Invention Lab's summer cohort in 2022, where they, along with their teammate Joci, focused on wearable technology. They created Safety Stuffies, keychain-sized stuffed figures with a panic button sensor, combining programming, sewing, and laser cutting skills. The Safety Stuffies received great attention at the closing showcase, leading to an invitation to join the Youth Business Incubator program. The team attended online classes on Essentials of Entrepreneurship with Professor Juan Barraza from PSU and learned to budget and

market their product, which pivoted to a portable social-emotional stuffy for young people. Minh, and Thu remain dedicated participants in Spark programming, attending Invention Club, recruiting other youth, and volunteering their time with our annual Winter Coat Project, repairing Columbia Sportswear as a resource for unhoused youth.

We have loved watching Minh and Thu build and create at Spark and are excited to see what their senior year will bring. Their dedication and creativity make them outstanding examples of youth embracing STEM and Innovation.

Spark Partner Eugene Symphony

The Eugene Symphony has been a repeat customer of the Spark on 7th Agency for two years. They hired the Agency to create laser-engraved character cutouts for their family concerts, Peter and the Wolf in 2022 and The Carnival of the Animals in 2023. These wooden cutouts, featuring engraved QR codes, were strategically placed around downtown Eugene during the First Friday Art Walks to raise awareness about the concerts and encourage ticket registration. The cutouts were also used as part of a scavenger hunt at the Hult Center on concert nights.

The collaboration between the Eugene Symphony and the Agency showcases the power of connecting youth talent with community organizations.

Parker

He/Him/His
LCC, Freshman
Multiracial

Programs / Events Participated In

- Invention Lab (2022)
- The Agency (2022, 2023)
- Spark Program Mentor (2022, 2023)



Parker didn't discover manufacturing technology classes until his senior year at Willamette High School. However, once he started learning digital design, 3D printing, and vinyl cutting, he was hooked. A constant presence in the MFG/Tech shop, Parker could often be found fulfilling orders for screen-printed T-shirts or trouble-shooting the embroidery machine.

Learn Their Story

After graduating, Parker joined Invention Lab and excelled in the program, bringing a quiet but commanding presence of leadership and exemplifying an openness to learning new skills. He later pursued business courses at LCC while working part-time at the Spark on 7th Agency. Parker took on diverse projects, such as soldering circuitry, designing vinyl signs, and creating interactive museum exhibits.

Parker's dedication to his craft led him to start his own clothing line, Honyx LLC. He applied the skills learned from the Agency to develop his business, exemplifying his growth, adaptability, and entrepreneurial spirit.

"My time at Spark on 7th has really allowed me to grow, meet new people, and learn all sorts of new skills... It's always a pleasure working with someone at the start of their career, especially when they're so excited to get their hands dirty." - Parker



spark at Booth-Kelly

Spark at Booth-Kelly, our second youth innovation hub, opened in June 2023! The space will be fully transformed with youth energy, excitement, and creativity over the summer.

We welcomed youth to access summer resources at our inaugural Bonanza at Booth-Kelly, hosted the first cohort of the Health Excelerator, prepared 70 youth to complete summer internships at local businesses and organizations, and expanded Invention Lab with a second cohort! Spark at Booth-Kelly results from deep collaboration amongst young people, local industry, community partners and funders, local government, educators, families, and youth advocates. We are grateful for the community's dedication to the next generation of leaders and innovators and look forward to ongoing collaboration.

12 Months

Fundraising & Construction

800

Youth Per Year
(From Springfield and Surrounding Communities)

By the Numbers

11,000 sq ft

Dedicated to workforce development and career-connected learning.

\$2,154,122

Total Investment

134

Dedicated Donors

We are committed to expanding and revitalizing youth opportunities in Springfield for years to come. Join us in creating an inclusive, beautiful, and safe space for youth!



Bringing Spark to Springfield

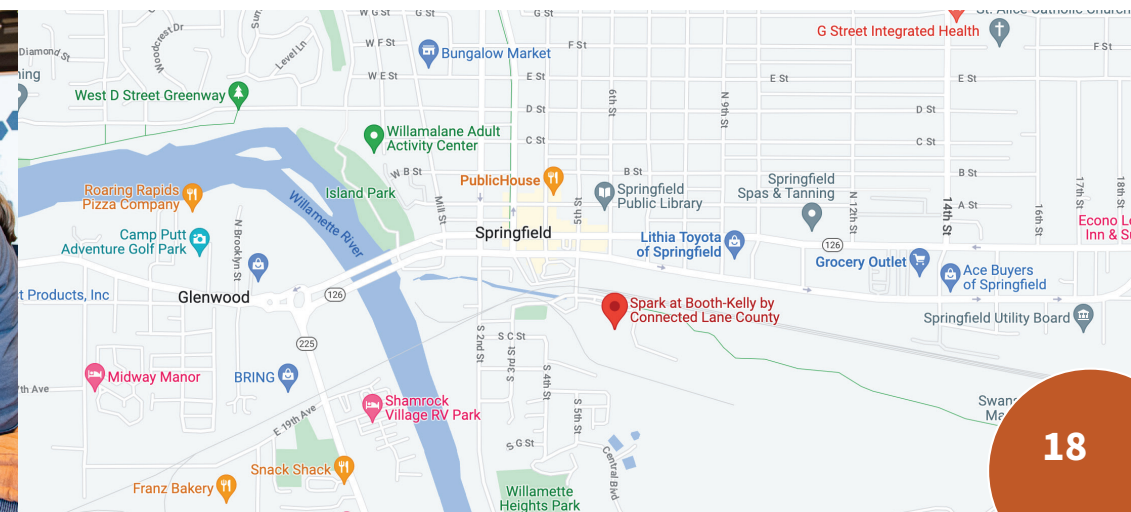
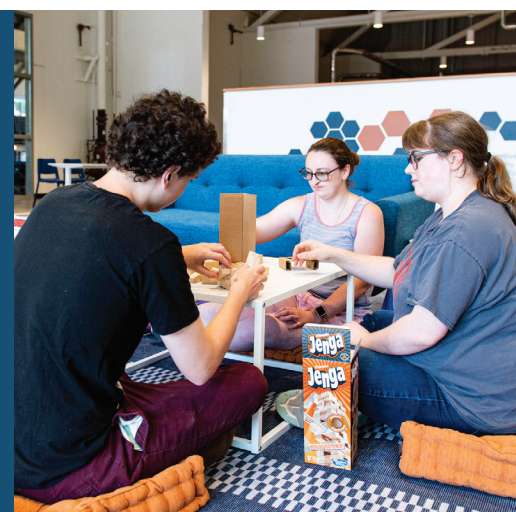
Spark at Booth-Kelly is located next to downtown Springfield, within walking distance from Springfield High School, and conveniently located along several bus routes. We are part of the Booth Kelly Makers District and have joined creative enterprises that align with careers our youth are excited to pursue. Schedule a tour today!

303 S 5th St. STE 150, Springfield, OR 97477



Equipment / Features

- Industrial-size CNC machine
- Indoor/outdoor welding area
- Four-color printing press
- Computer lab with Chromebooks, laptops, iPads, and desktops
- State-of-the-art STEM programming
- Manufacturing Technology Excelerator for Youth ages 18-24
- Career Launchpad: Drop-in services and workshops
- Youth lounge
- Snack Space
- ShopBot CNC router
- Nomad 3 desktops
- Lincon MIG Welders
- Prusa i3 MK3S kit 3D Printers
- Universal Laser 60-watt CO2





Manufacturing & Health Excelerators

Learn and Apply

Excelerators were designed to prepare young people for work through accelerated education, training, and hands-on skill application in growing career fields. Each Excelerator focuses on a different high-demand field and includes training, certifications, and relevant skill-building in order to prepare young people for careers.

The first cohort of our groundbreaking Manufacturing Technology Excelerator launched in February 2023 and was followed by our first Health Excelerator in June! The Culinary Excelerator and Technology Excelerators will be launched in the 2023/2024 program year.

Manufacturing Excelerator

The Manufacturing Excelerator is a two-part program, where youth learn the skills needed to build a successful career in the manufacturing industry. The program includes workforce readiness training and internship experiences with manufacturing technology companies. Huge thank you to Urban Lumber, Astec/JCI, Swanson Group, Western Shelter, Gheen Irrigation, Sierra Pacific Industries, and Strapworks for hosting our first Manufacturing Technology Excelerator Interns!



By the Numbers

\$56,698

Paid Youth Wages

1,275

Training Hours

1,080

Internship Hours

11

Total Participants

7

Industry Partners

Manufacturing Youth Highlights

Amelia (She/Her/Hers)

Kalapuya Alternative HS, Graduated

- Excelerator Internship - Gheen Irrigation

Amelia entered the Manufacturing Tech Excelerator ready to explore every opportunity to learn new skills. Besides quickly learning measurement techniques, computer-aided design, and machine operation, Amelia was able to apply these skills to challenges like the accurate replication of pieces using different materials. Amelia designed and used the CNC router to make an electric guitar body as a final self-guided project.



Micah (He/Him/His)

Kalapuya Alternative HS, Graduated

- Excelerator Internship - Sierra Pacific Industries
- 2022 Elevate Summer Intern - Gheen Irrigation

Micah came to the Manufacturing Tech Excelerator with great focus. As a previous Elevate intern, he was ready to leverage that earlier work experience into a career in manufacturing. He was also the only youth who didn't miss a single training day. Micah excelled at computer-aided design and was quickly able to help others with machine setup and safety protocol. Micah's self-guided project was a CAD-designed side table to complement his desk at home.

Partner Highlight Avril Watt Site GM, Astec/JCI

"The Manufacturing Tech Excelerator offered by Connected Lane County really is a win-win-win. Connected Lane County has the opportunity to provide a meaningful program to start a student on their career journey in this industry."



Health Excelerator

The first round of our Health Excelerator started this spring with youth support specialist training which guided youth through a forty-hour Oregon Health Authority (OHA) approved training to gain certification as a Youth Support Specialists. The training is specifically tailored to fit the needs of youth and young adult peer support providers. In the 2023/2024 program year, the Health Excelerator will include an internship component in addition to the training.

"I want to do this training to give extra support to those who don't receive enough or need it. At my school we have a lack of peer support, It gets quite difficult for students. I want to be able to help not only students at my school, but many others. Everyone deserves to have someone there for them and I want to be that person for people." - Jaden

Alumni

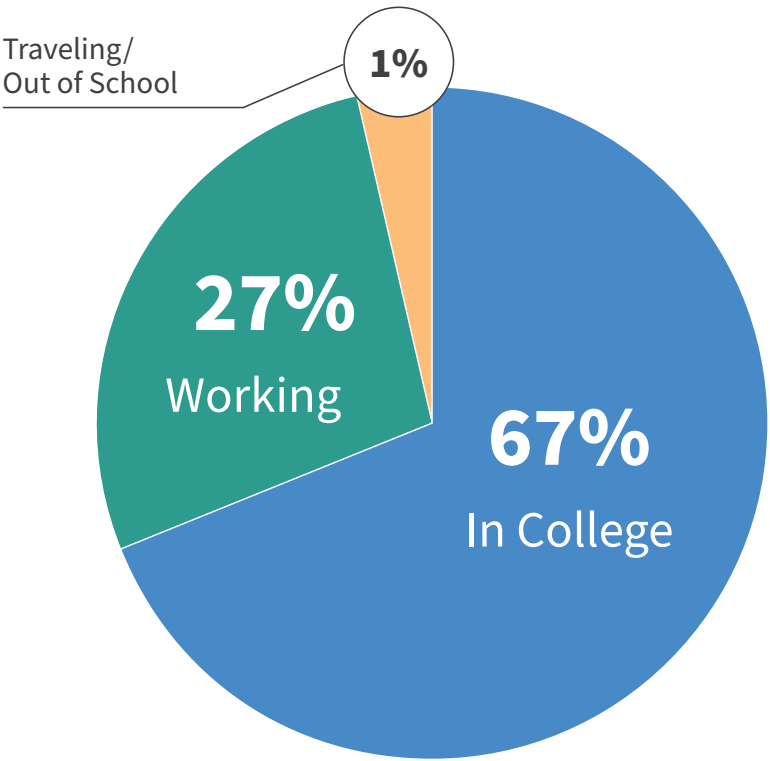
This spring we connected with 30 of our youth alumni to learn how their lives are progressing after participating in Connected Lane County experiences!

Amongst the alumni we surveyed, during their time involved with our programs they spent more than **8,780** hours in activities across Spark, Elevate, and Navigate activities!

Where are they now?

When asked about what they're up to now, the youth provided diverse responses, indicating a wide range of activities. 20 youth are enrolled in college full-time, while others have chosen to work full-time or part-time.

Over 50% of youth in college are also working part-time. One youth alumni decided to embark on full-time travel adventures this year.



Jerin (Spark)

Jerin participated in the first-ever cohort of Invention Lab in 2021 and has continued with our organization, serving as an Invention Lab mentor each summer since! Jerin graduated from Springfield High School in 2021 and is now studying computer science at the University of Oregon. We have been so lucky to continue working with Jerin as he mentors youth in Invention Lab and couldn't be more proud of his accomplishments!

"I became sure that I wanted to pursue a degree in CS. It gave me a richer experience than I had previously and affirmed that STEM was for me."

Industries Where Youth are Currently Employed

- Construction
- Graphic Design
- Hospitality
- Interior Design
- Library Preservation
- Manufacturing
- Military
- Retail
- Student Housing
- Technology
- Truck Driving



Primary Field of Study

- The Arts
- Bio Sciences
- Business
- Computer Science
- & Mathematics
- Engineering & Technology
- Medical & Health

Ensuring Successful Futures for Youth

Through our programs, we have aimed to guide and support youth in making informed decisions about their education, career paths, and personal growth. By providing resources, mentorship, and opportunities for exploration, we have empowered them to discover their passions and develop valuable skills. We hope that their participation

in our programs has played a role in setting them on the right path, instilling confidence and purpose in their journey. Our goal is to contribute positively to their decision-making process, helping them make choices aligned with their interests, values, and goals, ultimately leading them towards fulfilling and successful futures.

Tanner (Navigate & Elevate)

Tanner, a Navigate alumni, is excelling in his career at Aichele Trucking. He completed financial foundations courses, Wonder Wednesday workshops, and an internship at Delta Sand and Gravel during his time with us. After obtaining his CDL certification at IITR Truck Driving School, he's considering becoming a Diesel Mechanic. Tanner loves his job and is looking forward to new adventures, including long hauls to Nebraska and driving asphalt as a lead driver. His future looks bright!

"I really appreciated the financial literacy classes. I also really appreciated the internship I did at Delta Sand and Gravel. I learned the crusher side of things instead of the transportation and mining part which was really helpful. I also learned how to change screens on the crushers and other technical skills in that industry."

Brittany (Spark & Elevate)

Brittany, a 2022 Willamette High School graduate, participated in our Spark and Elevate programs. She started with Invention Club in 2021 and advanced to Invention Lab in 2022, then finished with a micro-internship with Revolution Design Group in the fall of 2023. Brittany is studying graphic design at Lane Community College, and she is excited about her future now fueled by her passion for invention and collaboration.

"These experiences definitely helped strengthen my interest in invention, working with machines, and collaborating with others. It broadened my interests beyond art, which I already loved."

Connected Champions for Youth

Donor Highlights



We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support from the Lane County community. As we embarked on new adventures in service of youth and expanded youth experiences, we were supported by volunteers, youth mentors, educators, industry partners, and donors.

The outpouring of support inspired us to launch a major donor program, Connected Champions for Youth! We are excited to highlight several champions and look forward to sharing many more in the future.

Elaine Twigg Cornett and Zane J Cornett

Elaine and Zane are actively engaged in creating innovative opportunities for youth and have invested in bringing Spark at Booth-Kelly to life! They first collaborated with Connected Lane County youth via The Agency; a paid work experience where youth complete custom projects for local organizations and community members.

After learning there was a 3-D printer at Spark on 7th, Zane asked, “Could I make orchid pots using the printer?” Heidi and Justin picked it up from there, asking if Zane would be willing to act as a customer – working with the youth through conception, design, and testing the results.

“We each support Connected Lane County because it offers an enticing smorgasbord of options to help youth experience possibilities they may not have imagined, eliciting creativity and hard work while offering practical options and skills for them to take forward into their lives.”

Runyon Family

This year, Craig and his family had a special opportunity to contribute to Connected Lane County. They donated to the Spark at Booth-Kelly campaign, helping to create a safe space for youth in Springfield to explore careers, train for creative jobs, and access services in our community.

“Supporting Spark at Booth-Kelly to come to fruition was a feel-good moment for us. We’ve seen firsthand the positive results Connected Lane County creates and we hope contributing to the program helps make a positive impact on the community.”

We were excited to contribute as a family to create opportunities for youth who might not otherwise have access to hands-on training and opportunity.”



In Honor of

- In Honor of Annie*
- In Honor of Claire Barnum*
- In Honor of Gil and Liz Gray*
- In Honor of Elia Quinn*
- In Honor of Meaghan Watson*
- In Honor of Jess Wright*

In Memory of

- In Memory of Raven English*
- In Memory of David McKenzie*
- In Memory of Don Runyon*

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Connected Lane County Staff



Adriana Santiago
She/Her/Ella

*Resource
Navigator*



Alex Davis
He/Him/His

*Projects
Assistant*



Annie Dropek
She/Her/Hers

*Project
Coordinator*



Becky-Jo Samples
She/Her/Hers

*Marketing
Director*



Cheyenne Vance
She/Her/Hers

*Peer Support
Specialist*



Dan Lombardi
He/They

*Project
Coordinator*



Gerardo Garcia Cruz
He/Him/His

*Projects
Assistant*



Hailey Johnston
She/Her/Hers

*Resource
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Heidi Larwick
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*Executive
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Development Coordinator*



Jade Luther
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*Graphic Designer /
Marketing Assistant*



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*IT
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Lizzie Brown
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*Resource
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Sean Wilkinson
He/Him/His

*Resource
Navigator*



Shimea Jordan
She/Her/Hers

*Project
Coordinator*



Tracey Ward
She/Her/Hers

*Projects
Assistant*

“Our team has some of the most dedicated and passionate individuals I have ever worked with, and you can see that in the outcomes for our youth.” - Hailey

“When I was looking for the next step in my career, Connected Lane County knew what I was looking for before I could make sense of it myself! The team has an amazing ability to find individuals with diverse skills and experiences and nurture their growth.” - Iliana

Our Commitment to the Future

With the unwavering support of our esteemed board, we are confident in our ability to effectively prepare youth for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. By continuing to work together towards our shared goals, we can create a brighter future for the youth of Lane County, empowering them to achieve their full potential.

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Todd Hamilton
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Springfield Public Schools
- Secretary**
Tony Scurto
Superintendent
Lane Education Service District



Regrounding Year

As we head into this next year, I am looking forward to truly grounding our work and anchoring ourselves solidly into the community. This year we will deepen our relationships, augment our programs with key shifts in practice and impact, elevate our staff into leadership roles, and set our intentions to move the life cycle of our organization into maturation.

Thank you for reading about our magical year, thank you for supporting our staff, and most importantly, thank you for supporting and investing in our youth.

Heidi Larwick
Executive Director

“Connected Lane County taught me valuable skills like collaborating with a team, technical skills like building a website, design skills, and working with a real client to make a product that they were happy with.” - **Maya**



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