

Testimony on 3/11/15 for Joint Ways & Means subcommittee on Education - Tim Rusk

A fact you may not know:

The rate of Oregon babies (under 1 yr old) that enter foster care is 50% higher than the national average

This has been a **priority issue** for **me** since 2002 when I started working in the Relief Nursery in Bend. It has been a **priority issue for Oregon Relief Nurseries for over 30 years.**

As you know, the first **1,000 days** of a child's life is supremely important:

The **scientific** literature on the importance of this period of time is **simply staggering**

Nothing replaces an attentive, emotionally available caretaker

Strong **attachment** between children and their parents **fuels success** in life

The **psychological advantage** of knowing someone cares about you...is a **tremendous advantage** and as you know, it goes far more than being ready-for-school...

Attachment is critical ingredient for children to have the resilience to weather **toxic stress** and its **implications for health and behavior problems** and an increase in the likelihood of criminal behavior and reliance on public assistance...I

encourage you to google the **TED talk by Nadine Burke Harris**

Oregon's Relief Nurseries **successfully engage** families with an average of **16 risk factors**...and their young children

- 84% of parents experience high stress
- 49% have a history of intimate partner/domestic violence
- 56% have current mental health problems
- 43% of parents were raised by an alcoholic or substance abusing parent
- 33% have a history of incarceration or criminal justice involvement

In short, we are working with families where children live in toxic stress. Portland State University has documented a **70% reduction in the risk of abuse** after just 6 months of receiving Relief Nursery services!!

To state the obvious, there is not enough money to pay for all the services Oregon children need.

- Oregon Relief Nurseries collectively bring in at least \$1 of private funding for \$1 of state funding in addition to strong volunteer programs
- We are community-based nonprofits that generate **resources** and a **local commitment** to provide **early-childhood, child abuse prevention services**
- We are fund raisers looking for a partnership with the State in order to carry out important work
- Please protect funding for **current service level**
- Consider \$1.4 M in additional **dedicated funding** for Relief Nursery satellite programs in Prineville, Newburg, South Salem, Sutherlin...in a total 7 communities where children and their families need our help.

Before you leave Salem, please **help us reduce the number of Oregon infants entering the foster care system.** Let's end our legacy of adding our youngest citizens to the system at a rate 50% above than the national average. From what I have seen as an Executive Director of Relief Nurseries in Bend, Madras and Prineville....every day counts in the first 1,000 days of a child's life – help me make sure it counts in the right way.

Watch Nadine Burke Harris' TED Talk...16 minutes of information why and how you can make a difference!



Fact Sheet

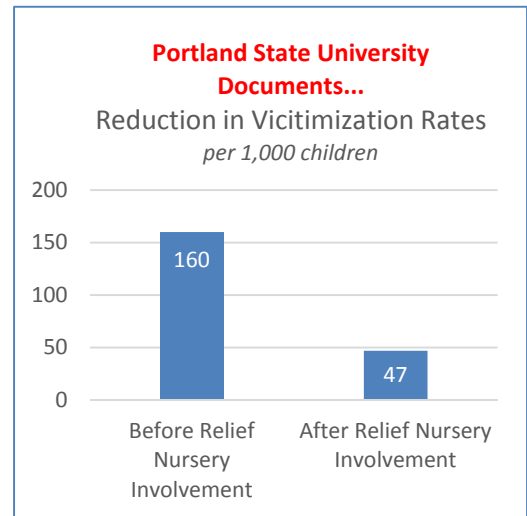
MountainStar Family Relief Nursery
 2125 NE Daggett Ln.
 Bend, OR 97701
 Phone: 541.322.6820
 Website: www.mountainstarfamily.org

Why We Are Here:

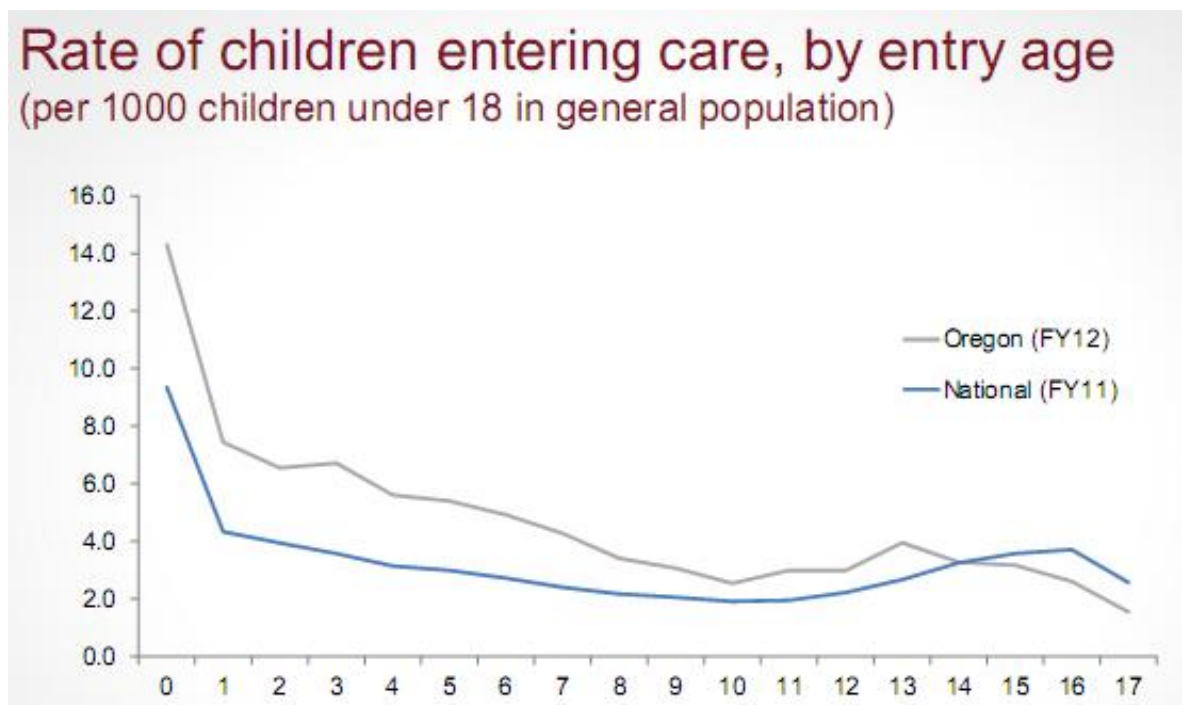
- We are the only program in Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties targeted at protecting 300 young children at risk for child abuse and neglect with early therapeutic childhood classes and parent support.
- 48% of child abuse and neglect victims are 0-5 yrs old
- Early childhood is a critically important period of time in a child's development. High stress, chaos and trauma can have long-term detrimental effects on neurological, social-emotional, and cognitive development.

Investing in Relief Nurseries Makes Sense for Children:

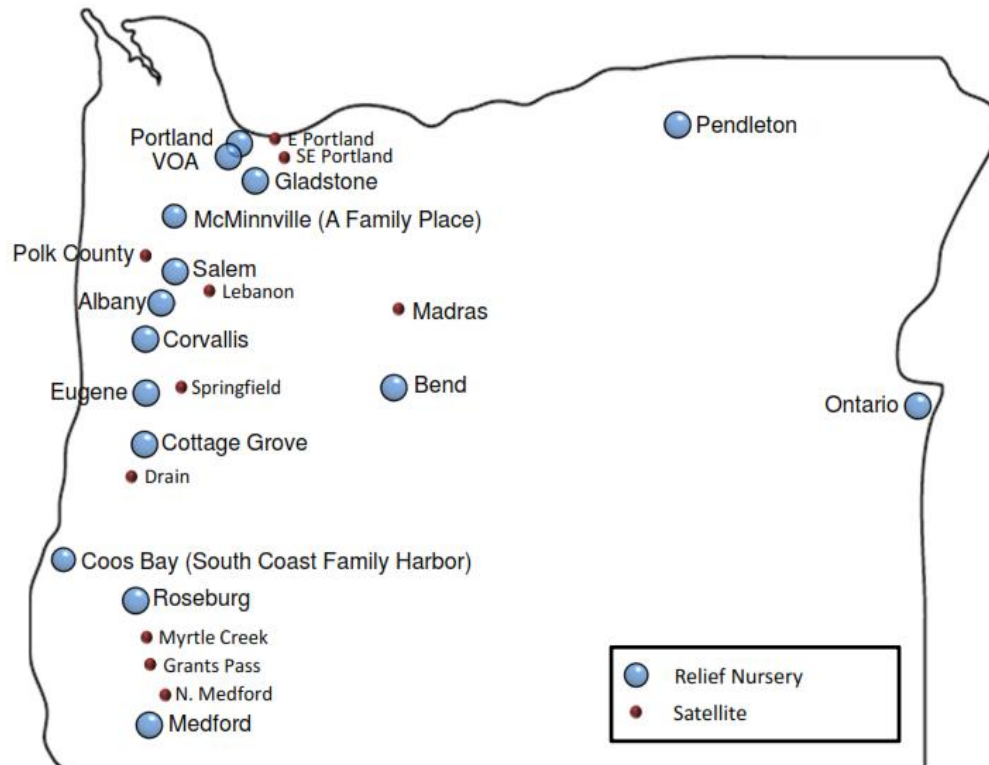
- 97% of Relief Nursery children had no subsequent involvement with Child Welfare including child abuse reports and foster care placements.
- 30% increase in parents reading to their children at least 3 times/wk after 6 months in Healing Children program.
- 4:1 Return on Investment – Portland State University documented a remarkable ROI for Relief Nurseries!



Relief Nurseries can reduce the number of children entering foster care:



Oregon Relief Nurseries in 2014



Relief Nursery Clients:

2,156 children from families with an average of 16 "risk factors" for abuse and neglect

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- 49% have a history of intimate partner/domestic violence
- 56% have current mental health problems
- 43% of parents were raised by an alcoholic or substance abusing parent
- 33% have a history of incarceration or criminal justice involvement

Our Ask:

- Continued dedicated funding \$9.2M
- Additional \$1.4M for 7 satellites in Prineville, Sutherlin, Dallas, Creswell, South Salem, Newburg, and Hillsboro

