

March 5, 2019

Dear Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

On behalf of the participants, staff and Board of Directors at Family of Friends Mentoring, and our collective impact partners, the City of Gresham and Multnomah County SUN, I would like to share the significant impact that Oregon Youth Development Division investments have made in the lives of children living in East Multnomah County and Gresham, over the past biennium.

Our program uses the power of play and intergenerational friendships to build skills and relationships that help low-income kids succeed in and outside of school. Demographic shifts in Multnomah County have pushed many low-income families eastward, in search of affordable housing. Prior to receiving funds from the YDD, our program was in the midst of spinning off from our parent organization, to move to Gresham, in response to these demographic shifts. Funding from the **YDD has helped us double the number of mentoring relationships we support in Gresham and East County in the past two years - going from roughly 25 youth/mentor matches in FY2017 to 55 matches by this summer.** In addition to helping us grow our program numbers, YDD multi-year funding has allowed us grow our incredible partnership with the City of Gresham, who provides us with free office space and back end support, and Multnomah County SUN, our primary child referral partner. YDD funds has been a primary driver in our ability to invest in infrastructure like staff training, evaluation and partnership development that will keep our organization strong and stable as we grow.

Children in East Multnomah County and Gresham will also benefit by collaborative work our organization is leading and which was made possible by seed funding from the YDD. The Mentoring Collaborative is a group of 8 youth-mentoring organizations working together to operationalize equity within our programs, so that children receive the most culturally responsive mentoring possible.

YDD investments are making an incredible impact for amazing kids in our region, by strengthening the community-based organizations that serve them.

Thank you for this opportunity to share the impact of YDD funds, and we urge you to continue investing in our youth and their futures!

Kind Regards,



Michelle Kosta
Executive Director
Family of Friends Mentoring