The grand opening of the $50 million Sky Lakes Collaborative Health Center in Klamath Falls celebrated much more than the completion of a successful building project. The December event marked the launch of a new way to educate medical professionals that community leaders hope will transform the face of rural health care.

The health challenges faced by rural Oregon are well known: Although more than one-third of residents live in rural communities, only about 10% of physicians practice there, leaving many areas without any primary care providers. Transportation and geography create barriers to existing care. Significant health disparities are well documented in rural Oregon, where adults are 36% more likely to report their health status as fair or poor than are adults in urban areas.

The Sky Lakes Collaborative Health Center, a partnership of Sky Lakes Medical Center and Oregon Health & Science University, is tackling that complex problem head on, by training doctors and other health care professionals in the areas that need them most — rural Oregon.

The health center, besides bringing all Sky Lakes primary care under one roof, offers expanded training opportunities for medical providers interested in rural health, with the ultimate goal of boosting the number of health care workers who stay in rural Oregon to practice. “The intent when this is all done is to have essentially all students in all colleges do a rural rotation,” says Paul Stewart, president. Continued on page 12
Fair, accurate count critical for meeting safety-net needs

Welcome to the year 2020, a year ending in zero — that means it’s time for the census. Required by the U.S. Constitution, the census has been conducted every decade since 1790. But this year is different. The census is headed for some big changes and a lot of people are working hard to ensure Oregon communities benefit.

The census determines congressional representation, federal funding allocation, and provides organizations with critical data to inform strategic decision making. Without a fair and accurate count, Oregon stands to lose billions of dollars in infrastructure and social safety net support that Oregon communities need, leaving a funding gap that will be difficult to fill. With an accurate count, all Oregonians win.

“This year we are anticipating some challenges we’ve never faced before, and it’s critically important that we address barriers for Oregon’s hardest-to-count communities,” says Kasi Allen, director of Learning and Knowledge Management for The Ford Family Foundation. A dedicated group of agencies and organizations have been working for years to respond to the Census 2020 challenges. The Census Equity Funders Committee of Oregon is a collaborative of philanthropic organizations, including the Foundation, working in partnership with local and state agencies to reach “hard to count” communities for the 2020 census.

What is changing? For the first time in the census’ 233-year history, households will be able to participate in the federal questionnaire by using a phone, tablet, or computer, which raises citizen concerns over cyber security and reinforces a digital divide when almost 20% of Oregon households do not have broadband internet.

Many key safety-net programs are funded via census data, including school lunches, Section 8 housing, medical assistance and more.

Other challenges include:

• Reductions and delays in federal funding, creating a lack of critical infrastructure needed to support the count
• Fears among immigrants due to political and social dynamics
• Increasing public distrust of government
• Concerns regarding security of personal and online information

In addition, there was a very public debate over inclusion of a citizenship question, utilized by the 2020 count and instilling fear in communities of color. About one in nine Oregonians live with at least one non-citizen, and almost 80% of those who live with a non-citizen are people of color.

CEFCO is partnering with public agencies to implement the Hard to Count Campaign, which supports coordinated, locally relevant engagement, including door-to-door, community-based outreach and communications.

Hard-to-count communities are a demographic group that is at risk of not being counted in the census and may require costly follow-ups to ensure they are counted. The hard-to-count population includes young children, renters, immigrants and people of color. Southern Douglas County is considered one of the hardest-to-count areas in the United States. In 2010, only 66.2% of the area’s households responded to the initial questionnaire.

Many key safety-net programs are funded via census data, including SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program), school lunches, Section 8 housing, Head Start, Pell grants, short-term rental assistance, and medical assistance programs.

According to the Census Bureau, Oregon’s population has grown by 8.1% since 2010. If the current population estimates hold, Oregon stands to gain increased federal assistance and an additional congressional seat with an accurate count.

“Oregon stands to gain increased federal assistance and an additional congressional seat with an accurate count. The census determines congressional representation, federal funding allocation, and provides organizations with critical data to inform strategic decision making. Without a fair and accurate count, Oregon stands to lose billions of dollars in infrastructure and social safety net support that Oregon communities need, leaving a funding gap that will be difficult to fill. With an accurate count, all Oregonians win.”

“The census is much more important than most people realize,” Allen says. “The 2020 changes are challenging, but we have the tools to respond. Each one of us needs to do our part because ensuring an accurate count in Oregon benefits all of us.”

In mid-March, homes across the country will begin receiving invitations to complete the 2020 Census. Once the invitation arrives, you should respond for your home in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail. Fill out the forms and return them if possible. Request a paper copy if needed. Encourage others to do both of the above. Consider serving as a census worker at www.census.gov.
Report documents supports, challenges for transfer students

Oregon’s higher-ed institutions can play a positive role

The Transfer Opportunity Program (TOP) at Umpqua Community College was a lifeline for first-generation college student Sierra Miller. TOP advisers directed her to scholarship opportunities, assisted her with class registration and helped her navigate an unfamiliar world.

“If I hadn’t been accepted into TOP, my college experience would have been more difficult, since I didn’t initially understand the overall process,” Miller says. In 2015, after receiving her Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer degree, she was accepted into a four-year university.

“My college transition was smooth due to TOP’s guidance and the resources they connected me with,” Miller says. “All of my credits transferred over without a problem.”

The goal of the research is to highlight policies and practices that could help contribute to strong transfer outcomes for Oregonians.

— Denise Callahan
The Ford Family Foundation

Sierra Miller transferred from Umpqua Community College to a private four-year university, but financial concerns interfered with the completion of her bachelor’s degree.

Community colleges can offer a cost-effective and convenient option for both traditional and non-traditional students. Yet even with comprehensive support systems, challenges remain. According to recent data from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, only 63% of community college transfer students complete a bachelor’s degree. The reasons range from the financial impacts of lost credits to a lack of support in managing the transition.

Miller cites financial reasons for not completing her bachelor’s degree. Despite her transfer to a four-year university with high hopes and a nearly 4.0 GPA, she left school with just one term to go.

In an effort to explore both the supports and challenges encountered by transfer students, The Ford Family Foundation commissioned a collaborative research project.

“We wanted to raise up examples of the positive role Oregon’s higher education institutions can play in the state’s transfer landscape,” says Denise Callahan, the Foundation’s director of Postsecondary Success.

The goal of the research is to highlight policies and practices that could help contribute to strong transfer outcomes for Oregonians.”

Supporting Transfer Student Success in Oregon: Lessons from Oregon Community Colleges and Universities, published in 2019, highlights policies and practices at six Oregon community colleges and universities in Oregon. These case studies document promising practices and effective strategies for supporting transfer students.

The report identifies advising systems as the foundation of a successful transfer program. When advising is provided along a coordinated continuum, from community college entry to university degree completion, transfer students are more successful.

Other features of a strong transfer culture include data use and clear transfer pathways. Transfer-specific student supports include personalized advising, programming and spaces which help students build a sense of belonging; online tools to support self-advising; and flexible financial aid and scholarship processes. Case studies in the report document many successful practices at the highlighted two- and four-year institutions.

Recommendations from the case studies:

• Invest in and continue to refine technology tools aimed at improving the credit transfer and degree audit process. Accurate online tools should be easily accessible to students at all stages of their journey.
• Invest in more supports for transfer students, including advisers, training, financial aid and programming. Ongoing training should be conducted to help faculty advisers understand transfer students’ needs.
• Develop and maintain partnerships across the state to support transfer agreements. Existing agreements should be maintained, new pacts developed and transfer pathways should be strengthened.

The report highlights that community college students have different needs; in response, The Ford Family Foundation is adding a new scholarship for transfer students to its suite of scholarship programs (see sidebar).
Parenting education shows results

More funding, more programs point to parenting group’s success

In Wallowa County, parenting educators offer a variety of public safety classes around bike helmets, winter sports, life jackets and fire prevention, as they step in to cover the hole in services left when the county’s health department shut its doors.

In Yoncalla, families rub elbows in the community kitchen as they turn taking preparing meals for fellow attendees of a 12-week parenting course, facilitated by trained community members.

In Baker City, moms in a residential treatment center share lunch before they go to class to learn strategies to manage parenting challenges. They finish each of the sessions in the 10-week course with a crafts-making class, where they create gifts for their children.

Those are just three faces of parent education in Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif., all of them dedicated to providing high-quality evidence-based parenting education — and all part of the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative.

OPEC celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. It was launched as a partnership between Oregon State University and several private foundations (The Oregon Community Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust and The Collins Foundation) to create a statewide infrastructure to support parenting education and expand access to evidence-based, culturally responsive programs.

Research has shown that parenting education provides a host of benefits for parents, caregivers, children and families. Classes give parents the confidence they need to knowledgably raise children, while improving parental mental health and well-being. Parent education has also been shown to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect by encouraging positive practices, and children whose parents participate in these programs demonstrate improved behavior.

“OPEC brings partners together around parenting education to collaborate, learn from one another’s struggles and successes, and leverage resources so that families can benefit,” says Shauna Tominey, OPEC’s state coordinator and an assistant professor of practice and parenting education specialist at OSU.

As it marks the end of its first decade, OPEC celebrates the development of a network that nearly covers the state. It features 16 hubs that deliver and coordinate programming in 35 of the state’s 36 counties, as well as in Siskiyou County, California.

Over the last 10 years, OPEC has built an infrastructure that melds the efforts of strong and promising community initiatives — and addresses a need to educate families with older children. Last year, DHS granted OPEC $3 million to leverage its network and expand programming for older children, teens and their caregivers.

“OPEC’s infrastructure has continued to grow and mature with support from foundation partners, the opportunity for private-public partnership has become a reality,” Tominey says. “We want all families to have access to parenting resources and supports.”

Normalizing parenting education

One of the unique aspects of the OPEC model is its focus on group-based parenting education, designed to build community in a way that breaks down barriers and brings people together.

“Coming together to share parenting joys and learn strategies to tackle parenting challenges creates community that lasts beyond a class,” Tominey says.

“At a time in our society when there is so much that can divide us, the love we have for our children can bring us together. We want to normalize parenting education and take away the stigma. Going to a parenting class helps us be the parents we want to be — it’s something we can do for our children, for our other kids, and for one another.”

In Yoncalla, parenting education has become an accepted — even anticipated — part of the community structure. Coordinator Erin Helgren attributes that partly to the model it has adopted of training facilitators from the community rather than bringing in professionals from outside.

“Our goal is to create a cadre of parenting educators who are embedded in the community, that people already have relationships with and a trust with,” Helgren says. One of the first facilitators was a local sheep farmer. Since them, several parents and community partners have undergone facilitation training.

“For remote rural communities, I really do consider high-quality parenting education as being a mental health strategy,” says Helgren. “And in a state that really struggles with meeting the behavioral health needs of residents, I think that investment in parenting education is powerful. I know it’s the longest and most successful strategy we’ve ever had in engaging parents.”

Program focuses on teens

OPEC programming has traditionally been aimed at early childhood, but a new partnership with the Oregon Department of Human Services is expanding its parenting education offerings. This new direction addresses a need to educate families with older children. Last year, DHS granted OPEC $3 million to leverage its network and expand programming for older children, teens and their caregivers.

Parents work multiple jobs and teens are very busy,” Helgren says. “I see it as creating a space for parents and teens to have critical conversations and relate to each other.”

The Oregon Department of Human Services granted OPEC $3 million to expand programming for older children, teens and their caregivers, and to provide training for program leaders.

Shauna Tominey

OPEC is the statewide eye that gets to see local experts, learn from them ... and get that across the state so we can all benefit.

— Shauna Tominey

Moms pose with fabric blocks they made for their children at an OPEC-funded parent education series.
Collaboration works to address trucker shortage

Public, private, charitable entities step up to help fix the problem

Two years ago, Susan Buell set out to identify needs for businesses in the Umpqua Valley. Over several months, the Umpqua Training & Employment president met with nearly 30 businesses in all sectors of the economy. She found that nearly all of them had a need for qualified workers, but one industry in particular faced a dire shortage. “There was an acute need in the trucking industry for drivers,” she says. “Really acute.” National statistics bear that out. In 2018, the already alarming deficit of 50,000 drivers swelled by more than 10,000 from a year earlier, according to a study by the American Trucking Associations. But that’s just the beginning; the U.S. trucker shortage is expected to more than double over the next decade as the industry struggles to replace retiring drivers.

It’s a scenario that keeps Andy Owens up at night. “Not only are 90% of goods traveled by truck, but here in Oregon, that number is closer to 80%,” says Owens, CEO of Glendale’s A&M Transport and a pivotal force behind several recent initiatives to train more drivers. “Eventually the economy is going to take off and go, but by 2023, we are going to be short north of 100,000 drivers nationwide. If a driver picks up a shipment every three days, that’s 35,000 shipments a day that could be potentially affected and not delivered to the customer on time.”

“Putting it all into context, all arrows point to that shortage slowing the economy down.”

In Oregon, the situation is bringing industry, education and economic groups together though an innovative collaboration model.

In the Umpqua Valley, identification of the driver shortage led to the establishment of the Umpqua Valley Transportation Sector Partnership. A similar effort, the Rogue Transportation and Logistics Partnership, has formed for Jackson and Josephine counties. Other efforts addressing the driver issue are also springing up around the state, such as Tillamook Bay Community College’s truck driver training program, and upcoming training offered in Glendale through Baker Technical Institute.

Industry partners in the Umpqua Valley Transportation Sector Partnership first identified top needs; putting a mechanism in place to help pay tuition for the non-traditional students it hoped to attract; upgrading the aged fleet used by UCC to train its students; and developing a promotional campaign.

That’s where the partnership comes in. Instead of expecting UCC to take on the tuition issue by itself, for example, the group reached out to all sectors. It collected financial support from private foundations, including The Ford Family Foundation, the county industrial development board, and finally, scholarships from industry itself.

Now, as UCC works to attract non-traditional students — veterans, women and people who need a second chance, for example — it can offer a powerful incentive.

“It’s always about how the community wraps around the problem,” Buell says. After industry leaders identified updated equipment as a priority, the partnership went to the college to find out what it could do to buy new trucks. In 2018, the UCC Foundation decided to raise the money through its annual gala, which brought $60,000 into the coffers.

Owens was then able to leverage his industry connections with Daimler/ Freightliner to obtain a “two for one” deal, where UCC purchased one truck with the Gala proceeds and Daimler donated one.

In all, about $464,000 was raised through grants, donations and the gala for the Douglas County project, not counting the donated truck.

“Every community partner stepped up to do something — public, private, two different foundations — all of them working toward fixing the problem,” Buell says.

The results are already apparent. The truck driving program has been funding students for more than a year and a half, with 53 graduating to date. “Our goal at UT&E was to serve 70 people, and we are over 100,” Buell says.

UCC has been offering truck driver training for more than 20 years. The extra funding is welcomed. “We trained 73 truck drivers last year and will probably exceed 80 this academic year,” says Robin VanWinkle, the college’s director of Community & Workforce Training. “Students have multiple funding options, including self pays, veteran benefits, SOWIB funding via South Coast Business, vocational re- habilitation and WorkSource Oregon funds. Many of these funding entities work with each other to cover as many students as possible.”

After seeing his work on the partnership pay off in the Umpqua Valley, Owens, whose business in Glendale straddles the county line, says it was time to make it work in the Rogue Valley region. The new Rogue Transportation & Logistics Sector Partnership has been successfully launched. “We’ve already pitched the tuition idea to the economic development board and things are moving along,” he says. “It’s really encouraging to see what is going on all over the region.”

Tuition assistance available for UCC Truck Driving School

The Umpqua Community College Professional Truck Driver four-week certification program covers logs, trip planning, and hours of service. Classwork is followed by behind-the-wheel driver training. Tuition assistance is available. For more information: www. umpquao.edu/commercial-truck-driving, or call (541) 440-4668.
I saw appropriations as a way to bring money back to Oregon, to bring federal dollars back to the communities in a meaningful way.

—Liz Hill

I learned that you can do this role in the realm of government and politics all started in her Coos Bay high school. With the encouragement of her high school principal Arnie Roblan, Hill took her first trip to Salem as part of Marshfield High School’s Youth in Government Program. There, she spent a week in the Capitol participating as a mock member of the Oregon Legislature.

Her interest in politics sparked, she soon ran for student body president. “Arnie encouraged me and gave me a lot of support,” she remembers, some 15 years later. “I won and that really started my involvement in the political realm.”

Willamette University

After graduating from Marshfield in 2004, Hill returned to Salem — this time as a Ford Scholar at Willamette University, just across the street from the Legislature. That year, Roblan won his seat as Coos Bay’s state representative. Soon, Hill was serving as Roblan’s intern, and by the time she was a junior, working for him full time. “That really opened my eyes to how impactful politics and government can be on communities,” Hill says. “I became really interested in how I can help the community grow up with a lot of money and living in D.C. costs a lot. Because I wasn’t strapped with student loans, I could. You don’t see a lot of rural kids from Oregon come to D.C. It’s just too expensive.”

Hill took a break from her work in Merkley’s office in 2012 to come home to Oregon, where she ran Peter DeFazio’s reelection campaign, returning to Merkley’s office to oversee appropriations work.

“I saw appropriations as a way to bring money back to Oregon, to bring federal dollars back to the communities in a meaningful way,” she says. She expanded that interest when, in 2015, she moved over to the House of Representatives to fill the brand-new position of director of Northwest Policy for ranking member DeFazio, focused on making sure communities in the region got the money they needed for transportation and infrastructure.

In August of 2018, Hill was appointed as the Democratic staff director of the Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee. Although her address is in Washington, D.C., Hill still considers Oregon her home. She was married in 2016 in Coos Bay to Roseburg native Matt Hill, currently the executive director of Douglas Timber Operators.

The pair met several years ago in the Capitol, where Matt Hill was working as a lobbyist. “We worked together for a few years, and discovered how much we had in common — working for rural communities dependent on natural resources,” Hill says. They have a 1-year-old son, Noah.

“I’ve been very fortunate to be in the position I’ve been in for the last 15 years or so, with people, like Arnie Roblan, encouraging and pushing me all the way,” she says.

Resources offer insights

A book about how children succeed. An inspirational guide to making a positive difference. A step-by-step guide to winning grants. These and other resources are available through Select Books from The Ford Family Foundation. We provide these books at no charge to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, California.

Keep them, share them. The only requirement is providing us with your feedback on the publication ordered. Here are three books on the Select List:


Make the Impossible Possible: One Man’s Crusade to Inspire Others to Dream Bigger and Achieve the Extraordinary by Bill Strickland, 204 pages. ©2009. This inspirational book showcases the lessons learned by Bill Strickland as he worked with disadvantaged children and adults in Pittsburgh, Penn., through the jobs training center and community arts program he founded. Strickland writes: ‘...my mission is to turn people’s lives around.’ How does he do that? He tells us in 200 highly readable pages.

Winning Grants Step by Step: The Complete Workbook for Planning, Developing, and Writing Successful Proposals by Tori O’Neal-McElrath, 128 pages. ©2013. This user-friendly workbook guides the reader through the basic grantwriting process. It is modeled on creating proposals for program funding and can be adapted easily for general support. The book argues that a grant proposal must clearly present a well-thought-out program that both inspires confidence in the nonprofit’s ability to implement it and fits within the interests of the funder who receives it. See the complete list of Select Books: www.tfff.org/select-books/.
This entire project is a demonstration of community-building, with parties coming together with a shared purpose, shared vision, an open mind and a boundless energy.

— Joe Robertson

OHSU President, Retired

Meagan Atiyeh
appointed as senior adviser to program

The leadership of The Ford Family Foundation’s Visual Arts Program has changed. Longtime senior adviser Kandis Brewer Nunn handed the reins to experienced arts manager Meagan Atiyeh in January. “Kandis Brewer Nunn spearheaded the development of our Visual Arts Program, and she has overseen and grown it since its inception,” says Allyn Ford, a member of the Foundation’s Board of Directors and granddaughter of Kenneth and Hallie Ford. “We are grateful for her strategic vision and the years she has devoted to managing the program. Her passion and intelligence have served to nurture Oregon’s visual arts ecology in unique and powerful ways.”

The Foundation’s Visual Arts Program honors the late Hallie Ford’s interests in the visual arts, providing a range of resources to assist artists and visual arts institutions.

Unique “Hallie Ford would be genuinely pleased with the direction The Ford Family Foundation’s Visual Arts Program has taken over the past dozen years,” says John Olbrantz, who knew Hallie Ford personally for nearly 10 years in his role as the director of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University. “Indeed, the program is unique around the country, and it has helped elevate Oregon artists and Oregon arts institutions to the national stage in a relatively short period of time.”

Renewed investment

In related news, the Foundation’s Board of Directors recently renewed its investment in the Visual Arts Program, which it launched in 2010 to honor the late Hallie Ford’s interest in the visual arts. The $6.5 million commitment, funded through 2024, reflects an increase in the scope of the program.

Changes include an increase in the amount of the Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts award to $35,000. Other changes include offering support for exhibits in artist-run spaces, support for professional documentation of artists’ works, and assistance to strengthen artists’ applications for major arts awards and fellowships.

Continuing elements of the program include artist residencies, career opportunity grants, creative camps, and grants for exhibitions, documentation and small capital improvements. See the Foundation website for full details of the program.

Meagan Atiyeh

Brewer Nunn was tapped by the Foundation in 2008 to guide research and development of the Visual Arts Program. Her professional practice in strategic program development services has spanned 47 years in consultative and in-house roles. Meagan Atiyeh came from the Oregon Arts Commission, where she managed the visual arts programs. Through her management of the state’s Percent for Art program, Atiyeh has brought hundreds of objects into Oregon’s permanent art collection, from important collections of works by national and regional artists to complex site-specific commissions.

“Meagan is ideally suited to step into this role because of her decades of experience in the contemporary arts field and deep ties to artists and arts professionals locally and nationally,” says Anne Kubisch, president of the Foundation. “Meagan will continue the past practice of coordinating with Carol Dalu, grants manager of the Foundation.”
Neighbors working together

The Buen Vecino program elevates the voice of Latino and immigrant communities

Bilingual public education, traffic safety, and a vision for more inclusive, united communities motivated residents in Molalla to get involved. The path to creating the change they wanted? Community building and connection.

Through the Buen Vecino (Good Neighbor) training program, families living in a farmworker housing complex worked together, discovered their shared interests and built skills to approach city and state officials. From communities like Molalla to Boardman, Sisters and Irrigon, neighbors are building power and cultivating their leadership. Mothers, young people, renters and agricultural farmworkers are mobilizing around common agendas, gaining courage and finding their voice.

The program, first developed by Roque Barros, Ford Institute for Community Building director, has been embraced and further developed by the rural communities The Ford Family Foundation serves.

“We do this work in communities to elevate the voice of those who most likely would not be heard,” says Laura Isiordia, a field coordinator for the Foundation, who is bilingual in Spanish and English. Isiordia meets with community members to decide what local issues they want to address and the skills they will need. She works with the group to facilitate training sessions on a flexible schedule.

Building skills

Practicing skills like public speaking and outreach to neighbors prepares participants to collaborate with other organizations and government agencies. Buen Vecino, implemented in Latino and immigrant communities across the state, reboots typical models of community engagement. Rather than leadership development in the abstract, community members’ passions and priorities determine the program content. Resident-driven agendas ensure the most relevant community needs are met; participants build confidence as they grow skills, gain courage and celebrate wins.

In Woodburn, residents Martha Pérez and Josefina Cruz exemplify this new wave of leadership. As longtime residents of the Farmworker Housing Development Corporation’s (FHDC) Nuevo Amanecer apartment complex, they and their neighbors were searching for new learning opportunities that could help their families. When the Buen Vecino program was presented by Anabel Hernandez-Mejia, FHDC resident leadership coordinator, they saw it as an opportunity for personal growth.

“It’s a change in how we think and see things,” Pérez explains. “It’s being conscious of what we do and how we can improve ourselves and our community.”

For example, the group of Buen Vecino community leaders transformed Nuevo Amanecer’s National Night Out event, an annual community building opportunity with local police. In previous years, most community members were not aware of the event. In 2019, thanks to the Buen Vecino team connecting with their neighbors, “se hizo pachanga” (“there was a huge party”). Two hundred neighbors attended, bringing with them their families, the sound system, fun and food to share.

The success of National Night Out serves as an early indicator that the community building team was on the right track. Asking their neighbors to join in the planning for community projects ensures that voices are valued and hands are in the action as contributing community members.

“Just because you have a dream doesn’t mean it will come true,” says Isiordia. “This program is our dream.”

Want to learn more?

Contact Laura Isiordia, a field coordinator at The Ford Family Foundation, isiordia@ffff.org. Isiordia, who speaks Spanish and English, works statewide to support residents and action that builds community. The program can be implemented on a flexible schedule and includes follow-up support.

It’s not just a certain group of people who can make decisions,” Pérez says. “The power is in all of us.”

Residents like Perez are now using their power to participate in broader movements — from being a voice for farmworker rights to participating in campaigns for drivers’ licenses and advocating for fair housing practices. Josefina Cruz emphasizes that these conversations are essential for the success of all Oregon’s residents: “I’d like to invite people who perhaps don’t have the bravery yet or are embarrassed: Let’s educate ourselves and take advantage of opportunities to learn more. That will help us grow and give more to ourselves and other people.”


developing education supported by The Ford Family Foundation (see page 6).

Each chapter of the book is devoted to a characteristic — such as compassion, self-awareness, and resilience — and provides parents with age-appropriate conversations that can help shape their children’s understanding of the world.

For example, in the fostering resilience chapter, Tominey talks about how scary it is to talk with your child about suicide or death. But she also covers how important it is to help them build the protective factors to deal with them. She then models conversations between parents and children on key topics including divorce, relationships and sex, peer pressure, bullying and abuse. Each conversation is followed by a “what’s happening” section that identifies critical components.

“So often we shy away from conversations about difficult things because we don’t want our children to grow up too quickly,” Tominey says. “It might feel challenging, but ultimately might be the gateway to compassionate children.”

Lessons

The carefully constructed chapters include a host of resources to fortify the lessons. In each chapter, a question-and-answer section follows the conversations template that address common parenting questions and challenges. Each chapter concludes with suggestions for family activities, children’s book recommendations, and discussion questions that extend the learning into everyday life.

“Readers have told me they appreciate the concrete strategies for how to go about having conversations about our own emotions and mistakes as a parent,” Tominey says. “Seeing these conversations helps people feel like they have permission to have these conversations themselves.”

Creating Compassionate Kids: Essential Conversations to Have with Young Children is available for free to residents of Oregon and Yakima County, Calif., through the Select Books program: www.fff.org/select-books.
Talking with children

Parents can use conversations with their kids to help them become caring people

Oregon author Shau-na Tominey has lived in a lot of states and worked as a researcher and teacher with many kinds of families. “I have found that as I’ve worked with families in different settings, there are commonalities in the ways they talk with their children,” she says. “And I have noticed a lot of differences.”

As a member of a military family, she participated in frank, everyday discussions about war and family separation. At early childhood centers in urban areas, she listened to conversations about extreme racism.

“I started thinking about how hearing those conversations shaped how we parent our kids. What if other families had a lens into these conversations, too?”

The result of that question is Creating Compassionate Kids: Essential Conversations to Have with Young Children. Selected as a “Favorite Book for Parents in 2019” by Greater Good magazine, the book provides parents with a framework for using conversations that help their children become caring people.

Tominey, assistant professor of practice and parenting education specialist at Oregon State University, draws on her extensive experience to provide the example-rich content of the book. Tominey is also the state coordinator for the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative, an initiative to provide high-quality parent-

Continued on page 15