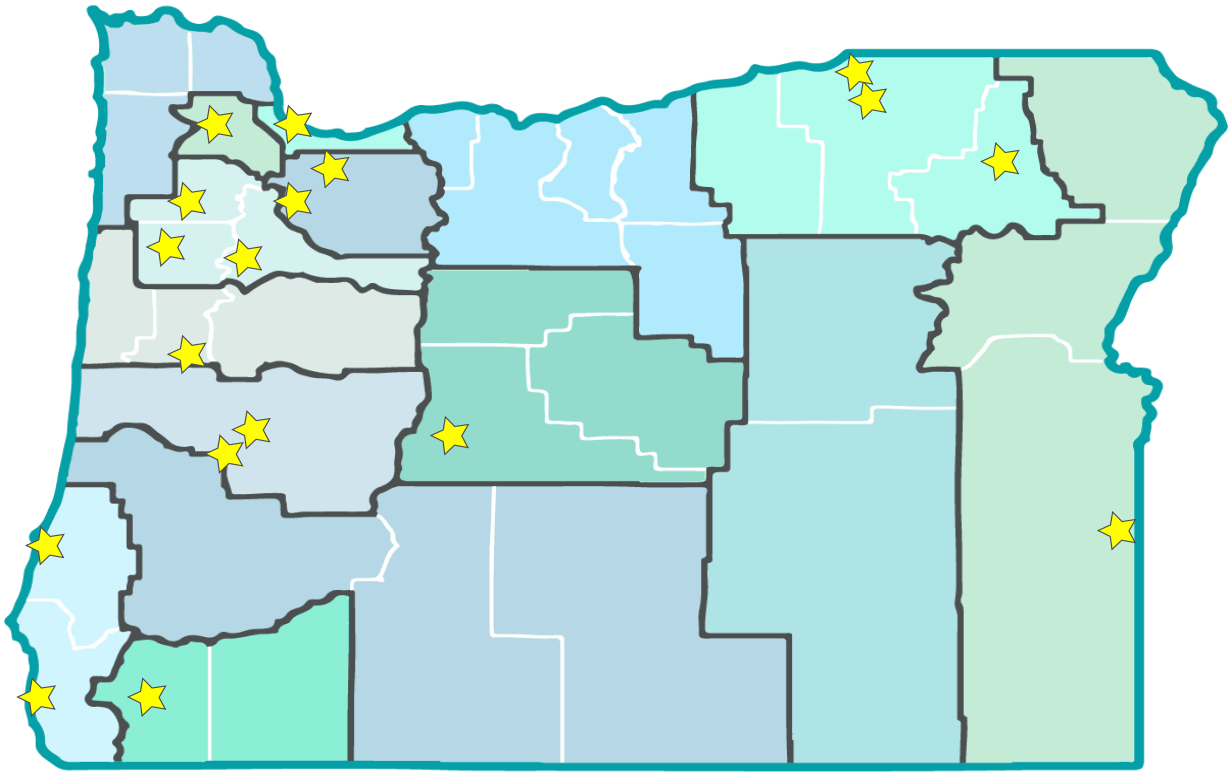
LISTENING AND DESIGN TEAM REPRESENTITIVIES





Chyanne Schlappie

Area Represented: Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Who I Am:
I am a Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde tribal member. I live and work on my reservation, primarily serving my tribal community through youth and family outreach. My passion is to help my people heal and thrive. My partner and I are enjoying the amazing adventure of raising our 3-year-old son, Bennett.

My Community:
My homeland is filled with strong, resilient, and beautiful indigenous people. My mother, partner, and friends are my main supporters. And everything I do, I do for my son.

My Story:
I was born and raised in Salem, OR. At the age of 10, we moved away from city life to reconnect with our native culture. My mother raised me and my two brothers. In reconnecting with my traditional roots, I learned of intergenerational and historical traumas and found a passion in helping others on their healing journeys. I earned my bachelor's degree in Psychology and started working as a Family Partner for my tribe 2.5 years ago. As a Family Partner, I help families in my community connect to resources and culture to promote stability and connection.



Bethy Annsa

Area Represented: Eugene, Oregon

My name is Bethy Annsa, and I live in Eugene. I have four children ranging from preschool to teenage. As a queer Latinx person and parent of neurodivergent children,I wanted to share my perspectives and experience with early education. It’s been an honor to advocate,collaborate, and ensure that the feedback from my communities is included in this process.



Bruna Pimentel

Area Represented: Cave Junction, Oregon

Togetherness: Our small town, Cave Junction, is diverse in all aspects: racial, cultural, economical, and political. When it comes to our children, we all come together to make our community a safe place for them. My community believes that teaching and raising at least one generation to be kind and respectful, we can change the future of our valley while showing our children how to love and care for it and one another.

My History: I am a dedicated learner and passionate about keeping children safe. I am a Brazilian immigrant who moved to Cave Junction over 8 years ago. I am a mother of two, a preschool teacher, and the bookkeeper at Art and Science Kids, an outdoor program providing care to children in the Illinois Valley. Joining this team meant my voice and my community's voice would be finally heard, and we could be hopeful to see a change in providing more quality care programs to ALL children.



Chelsey McAlister

Area Represented: Pendelton, Oregon

I am from Pendleton, Oregon, "The Real West". Pendleton is an agriculturally-based rural community that also finds pride in ranching. I am a mother of three beautiful children, a wife, a sister, a teacher, and leader. I am a Program Director at Pioneer Relief Nursery. Every day I see the shortages my community has for family support, childcare, and preschool. I joined this team in hopes to help identify concerns and offer solutions that can help advance these areas for future generations in this community.



Hadiatu L. Johnson

Area Represented: Beaverton, Oregon

My name is Hadiatu L Johnson and I was born in Sierra Leone and an American citizen, I'm a mother and a devoted Christian and I live in Beaverton, Oregon. I am an enthusiastic preschool teacher at Education Explorer LLC, a diverse childcare program that caters to all children. I am also a member of New Song Ministry, a close-knit church community which is situated in MLK in Portland, Oregon. I am passionate about child care and joined this team to contribute to the well-being and development of children. As part of this team, it has allowed me to connect with other childcare professionals and share experiences and knowledge. It has been a rewarding journey to be part of this listening community that values the importance of early childhood education and supports one another in this important work. As an infant/toddler teacher and early education educator, this program has helped in identifying the importance of childcare programs, accessibility, and inclusivity for all regardless of race, background, identity, and economic status. The exchange of childcare knowledge between and among service providers emphasizes common values and understanding.



Jessie Carpenter

Area Represented: Eugene and Springfield, Oregon

HISTORY: I am a white, cis-gender woman in my 40's. I am the parent of a 14-year-old son, and are respite provider for foster children. I am originally from Idaho, but I have lived in Oregon for almost 20 years. For 16 of those years, I have worked at Relief Nursery in Eugene and Springfield. Relief Nursery is a family support organization serving families raising children birth through age 5 who are experiencing multiple stressors. One of the many services provided by Relief Nurseries is the Therapeutic Early Childhood Program, a classroom model that focuses on social-emotional development and building resilience while also providing home visiting and parenting support to families. I have been a teacher and home visitor, a supervisor, a trainer, and most recently the Deputy Director of Quality Assurance. I have appreciated the opportunity to join the SPARK listening team because I care about quality early childhood programming, and I value the way that this process has elevated the voices of experts – parents of young children and the professionals who work in early childhood settings. No system can be successfully designed without input from those the system is intended for.

My community: In addition to my siblings, my partner, and a few close friends, I am grateful to have a community of colleagues at Relief Nursery who contribute, each in their own way, to making Lane County (and all of Oregon) more supportive of parents and young children. For many of us, this is more than a workplace. It offers a sense of purpose, inspiring examples of resilience, and unending opportunities to learn and grow.



Shawn C.Reynolds

Area Represented: Ontario, Oregon

My community and those surrounding Ontario, Oregon are diverse by virtue of its land and people. We are the Four Rivers region, which created a centralized location for us to gather and make a life sharing water in a desert area from the days of the Oregon Trail to the present day. The Owyhee Dam and Reservoir, which served as the blueprint for the Hoover Dam, has allowed us to flourish agriculturally. The heritage within our community is rich in Basque, Hispanic, Indian, Japanese, and European ancestry. We brought water to the desert and it brought us together as well as our cultures that have beautifully blended thereafter. We are a diversely acclimated community that loves our children dearly, and despite limited funding in an economically impoverished rural frontier, we work together to ensure the future of our children for generations to come.

Aside from the history of my community, I am a blessed and proud husband and father of two children, one girl, and one boy, in addition to being a community leader/voice for Early Childhood Education at the helm of Giggles & Grace. I am an advocate for children, disability services/supports, and a coach/mentor as the Assistant Track Coach for Treasure Valley Community College. I also manage/own my own personal business, SpeedGoat Cleanup & Removal, which assists in the beautification of our community and surrounding areas. In my community, I am connected with children all the way from infant to young adult. Once I tried on these pairs of shoes as an Executive Director of Giggles & Grace and advocate for children and local communities, I knew I had found my calling and business home. For that reason, I was ecstatic to join the Spark Redesign Listening Team as we seek to advance childcare in Oregon and beyond!

Dr. Massene Mboup

Area Represented: Lake Oswego



Dr.Massene Mboup is a School Administrator, entrepreneur, a Lake Oswego City Councilor. Mboup is an educational scholar and community volunteer. He is an immigrant from Senegal, West Africa. Massene and his wife Patricia moved to Lake Oswego in 2011 to create a French Immersion School. Massene holds a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics, a Master's Certificate in American Literature and Civilization from The University of Dakar, and a Doctoral Degree in Education from Portland State University. Before being elected to the Lake Oswego City Council, he was a member of the Lake Oswego School District Legal Budget Committee and the City of Lake Oswego Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force. Dr. Mboup is also a board member of the antiracist organization Respond to Racism.



Fernanda Lucas De La Torre

Area Represented: Coos Bay, Oregon

My community is all those people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, immigrant, parents, and educators. Fighting and dreaming people who want a more equitable world. I was born and raised in the beautiful city of Quito (Ecuador) surrounded by mountains and volcanoes. I am the mother of a child of almost three years and I have ten years of experience in initial and primary education. I have worked in children's creativity centers as a teacher and academic coordinator in international schools in Argentina, Ecuador, and Poland. I am a specialist in artistic languages in early childhood. I am principal and founder of Little Creek Bilingual School in rural Coos Bay. In my program I seek to approach education from a perspective that respects childhood, with a multicultural and nature-based approach. I wanted to be part of the listening team in Spanish because I wanted to bring a different perspective from my professional experience, be a generator of ideas that support and revalue the work of early education professionals and be able to find solutions to improve educational quality, suggest more resources and training for early childhood programs in Oregon. It's very important for me to represent my community and be able to bring their voices and ideas to be included in the



Janet Marlene Hernandez Ramirez

Area Represented: Cottage Grove, Oregon

My community is Cottage Grove Oregon is a rural city located in Lane County, Oregon, with a 2023 population of 10,607. The “mom” is a Mayan language spoken by a good part of the Guatemalan population of Cottage Grove. We are a population of cultural diversity. The community of Cottage Grove is very generous and adapts to the needs of the people. I am Janet Marlene Hernandez Ramirez. I emigrated from Mexico Guadalajara 6 years ago to Cottage Grove, Oregon. When I first arrived at Cottage Grove, Oregon with my family exploring my community, I found Early Learning Center (Peggy's Primary Connection) currently located at Cottage Grove, OR. The center was a port of entry for my family. We felt welcomed and there I realized the importance of the first five years of life that are so important for our children. There I found a lot of support for my children and us, the parents. Visiting the Early Education center has given me the tools to see my children's developmental skills and work as a team using them. I am a mother, student of (Early Learning Education), innovator with a lot of initiative, exploring my community, studying English, and learning the school system. Getting involved as a volunteer in my community, I realized the needs of the people, and that was how I was inspired, motivated, and became passionate about studying "Early Education in children". For me it is very important to be part of this listening team because I am here representing my community and the state of Oregon. I want all voices to be heard. We need high quality early care and education programs, financial support for lowincome families, we need more trained childcare providers so that children receive a quality education because together we can make big changes and get Oregon's

Judith Murillo Tuesta



Area Represented: Portland, Oregon

I work with underserved communities, families with low incomes and minorities - hardworking mothers and fathers who left their lands to offer something better for their children and their families. I like to empower my Latino community through education and information. Many of these communities have no say. Unfortunately, the immigration situation can be a very big challenge for these families who seek to have more access to employment opportunities, education, health, and state support for childcare. The Latino community is very joyful and welcoming. I feel blessed to be able to serve and support my community to navigate a system foreign to them and that can often be even more complex when there is a language barrier. 11 My name is Judith Murillo Tuesta, born in Lima-Peru, and daughter of provincial parents who migrated to the capital for better opportunities and it is where I and my two brothers were born and grew up. I have been an early childhood educator for over 19 years. I emigrated to the United States in 2007. I am a mother of two beautiful girls Celeste 3 years old and Esperanza 10 years and reside in Portland. Like my parents, I was also looking for better job opportunities and professional growth. Early education is the most powerful and fundamental tool to shape our children of the future. Thanks to the sacrifice of my parents and the education I received, I have been able to have better opportunities in a foreign country. I graduated in my native country with a bachelor's degree in early education from the National University Federico Villareal, but when I emigrated to the United States, I wanted to continue with this wonderful field so I went back to school and got a master's degree in early childhood elementary education at Concordia University. I've always been passionate about social work and working with underrepresented communities. I am currently working with IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization) as director of IRCO preschool where we serve children from 3 to 5 years old. We serve low-income families, many of them immigrants or refugees, and I also oversee a home visiting program. I have had the opportunity and honor to have joined the Equipo de Escucha where I have met parents and educators who are very passionate about the subject of early education. I am moved that many of my colleagues share the same ideals and desire to support our communities in need. For me it is very important to be part of this listening team and be more involved in this movement to improve the quality of education; both as a mother of two girls and as an early childhood educator. As a representative of this team, it is important to me that parents can participate and get involved in the education of their children and at the same time bring the voices of the least heard in our marginalized communities. It is important that all children regardless of race, color, social status have access to a good quality education, and that these children feel represented in their centers, day care centers, etc. It is also important for parents to feel supported when choosing childcare for their children. We need to be able to change/improve the Anglo-Saxon education system and design a system that invites all races that live in this territory.



Miriam Orozco

Area Represented: Milwaukie, Oregon

I own a certified home childcare center in Milwaukie, Oregon. I started my journey with my business almost 2 years ago. My career changed as a case manager working in a hospital setting and working with children ages 0-18 and their families to connect them with resources in their community. I connected a lot with all the organizations that support families from early intervention to financial and specialized assistance. I realized there was a gap in services for non-English speaking families and children with special needs. Number one are childcare organizations that were unable to support children due to a lack of language and skills to understand or work with the diagnoses the child had. That's when I realized I had to make a change in my community and be able to welcome children of all backgrounds and abilities. I am also bringing the lens of a family member. I have two sisters with Down syndrome and autism who don't speak and have some sensory needs. It's very hard when you get a diagnosis without expecting it. When my sisters were babies, they had several appointments and therapy at the clinic. About 3 or 4 days at the clinic with no staff who could assist my mom in Spanish about the day or therapy. I became the interpreter for my family and the rest of the families who came to the clinic when we were there. It became a support group where I prepared for them and explained them to them. I became familiar with medical systems, early intervention, government programs, SSI, and school. This was my way of making a change by helping families connect. Now, my goal is to let those families or providers in my community know what changes we can make by providing our feedback to these large organizations that can implement these changes. Early education is very important for all children but, especially for those children who are multilingual and have a diagnosis. I prepared them in a school setting and to advance in different milestones. I am the voice of those families and children. I want to empower childcare programs to have the capacity to support children with all abilities and provide them with the necessary training.



Erendira Pin

Area Represented: Hermiston, Oregon

My Community: I live in Hermiston, Oregon. I have been living there for over 30 years! It is a rural community of about 20,000 people. The community is engaged with many migrant farmers. It is a very small community, but it is very happy and calm. My story: I am a provider, and I am also a single mother of two pairs of twins. I decided to join the listening group because I have had to experience firsthand how difficult it is to find childcare. My youngest son is in special care and it is very difficult to find someone who is trained for children of different abilities. I think change

Sabi Velasco



Area Represented: Washington County

My name is Sabi Velasco, and my roots go deep into the indigenous Mexican heritage. My journey in the United States has been a journey marked by unwavering resolve and an unwavering commitment to the diverse community of Washington. My odyssey began in 1990, when, together with my husband, we emigrated to the United States with the hope of a better future. For years, I worked tirelessly as a farm worker, harvesting fruits to support my family. I faced the difficult realities of the countryside and sometimes took my three daughters to work in harsh and unhealthy weather conditions. It was precisely this experience that led me to a moment of revelation: the urgent need for safer and more appropriate childcare for children from migrant families in my community. My determination knew no bounds, and in 1994, I joined the OCDC Early Head Start parent-child program. It was in this program that I earned my GED and CDA, and where I took the first steps toward working with children from migrant families in the OCDC Early Head Start organization. 19 Over the years, my commitment only grew. In 2002, I achieved a significant milestone by establishing my own childcare at home, obtaining the appropriate license. In 2007, I faced the challenge of raising my five children as a single mother, and that's when the idea for Amazing Minds Child Development came about. By 2008, this small seed had blossomed into a childcare center capable of caring for up to 39 children and employing 15 childcare team members. Despite obstacles, including an economic downturn, I kept my unwavering commitment to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children of my community. In 2011, I adapted my license to accommodate 16 children while maintaining exceptional quality standards. In 2018, I opened a second location with capacity for 14 children. Currently, we serve more than 37 families in Washington County, maintaining the same standards of excellence. My involvement was not limited to the operation of my childcare. I participate in key initiatives, such as the Preschool Promise program, in which Amazing Minds was integrated as the pilot in 2006, and we have continued to support low-income children to this day. I also take active roles on Early Learning Washington County's early education committee, tirelessly advocating for children, parents, and childcare providers. My commitment extended to the CCR&R advisory committee, and since 2013, I have held various positions in the Oregon Child Care Providers Union, fighting for the rights and well-being of providers and the children we care for. Even in the most challenging times, such as the pandemic, my team and I continue providing service to the children of essential working parents, demonstrating that our dedication knows no limits. Joining the listening team was a choice of great meaning to me. I recognize the importance of elevating the voices of childcare providers and parents to the state. My story underscores the vital importance of quality childcare and education early in diverse and constantly evolving communities.



Mayra Ramierez

Area Represented: Portland, OR

My community is all the people around me, regardless of race or gender. My community is those people who, like me, seek to improve the place where we live for the benefit of everyone but especially children! My story: I am a single mom, a daughter, a friend, a community leader, a responsible worker, a fighting woman, and I want to improve my environment and help my community for the benefit of our children. I am from central Mexico and with 93 percent indigenous in my blood it is very important to me that my daughter grows up accepting and treasuring our culture. This project offers the opportunity to make improvements and listen to many marginalized families and I hope all these aspects are heard and improve the childcare system. I have a 3-year-old daughter and being a mother has taught me many things, but the most important thing has been the quality of care or rather the lack of quality and for many experiences of my own and families close to me. I am very interested in participating in this project to contribute those experiences and help improve the system. I have been studying positive parenting for 3 years and for me it has been a great challenge to be able to work, take care of my daughter without childcare for almost 3 years, and without family in this country. It has been a great job though the early education system does not offer accessible help and it is difficult to navigate the system. I hope this project helps the design taking into account the most vulnerable families. I am interested in the quality of education for all because it is the basis of a healthy society, which is what I want most for my daughter and for all the children of families in general, to grow up and live in a mentally healthy country. I am grateful to have been selected to participate in this listening project to redesign Spark!



Leonor Adriana Iturbe

Area Represented: Bend, Oregon

My community is full of loving moms who are looking for the best for their children -- moms who are dealing with finding a job that at the same time allows them to be mothers, moms who are tired and still go out to enjoy life, moms with fears but brave. I live in a community of moms who fight for their dreams. I am Leonor Adriana. When I was at the University studying Psychology, I realized that many of the wounds we suffer as adults were generated in childhood creating wounded adults, and one day I thought that if I dedicated myself to caring and giving tools to children, we could have resilient adults. Now I am a preschool teacher, and I am convinced that if we focus on children - creating environments of discipline, love, management of emotions, and acceptance, in the future, we will have resilient adults



Norma A. Marín Favela

Area Represented: McMinnville, Oregon

Originally from Mexico in the state of Sonora, I was born in 1962 in a united family. My parents always showed me service to others, that pushed me to carry that principle in my professional life. Once I immigrated to this country 21 years ago, I found myself as a mother with the language barrier, which prevented me from getting involved as I wished in the education of my daughters. Seeing that this was an obstacle for many other parents, I took the initiative and began looking for resources that would serve both my family and other families in my community who were in the same situation as me. One of my first social tasks was working with men and women suffering from domestic violence and listening to their testimonies and referring them to help centers pushed me to persevere in service. Then the opportunity presented itself and I worked at Holiday Center as an Early Head Start teacher at Portland Community College. There I understood that inclusion is very valuable and that my Spanish brought peace of mind to Spanish-speaking parents because they could communicate and learn more about the program. As I got more involved with my community, I realized that migrants were not considered regarding health services. This was an incentive for me to agree to collaborate with Portland State University in a research project "Arthritis among Latinos". For two years I had the opportunity to make contact with farmworkers in several counties (Clackamas, Yamhill, Marion, Polk). During my outreach service in their communities, I was able to contact more than 500 field workers, conduct focus groups, interviews, visit churches, organize groups where nutrition and exercise classes were promoted. All this focused on the prevention of chronic diseases in Latino migrant families. I obtained the certification by Stanford University. It was a great learning opportunity these 2 years to know the comments of so many people working in the field who suffer from this health condition. Later, I was a coordinator of three community places of Adult Education CONEVYT-INEA in collaboration with Hacienda CDC and the Consulate of Mexico in Portland, where I was administrator of the INEA system. During my time I taught literacy, Primary and Secondary. It has been a great experience to see the commitment of my students, some 30 years of age, some 60 and 72, eager to know and I saw great fruits for 6 years. And I understood that we all deserve those opportunities of knowledge and that there is no age to learn. In my coordination, 460 students of legal age graduated. I have belonged for 19 years to the World Marriage Encounter movement along with my husband Hugo Manuel, where we are missionaries to support married couples and couples who deserve to live a dignified life for themselves and their families, offering retreats and conferences in 6 states surrounding Oregon. In general, the story can be for some indifferent and for others motivating, but what I am sure of is that no one can give what we do not have, and I committed myself to be a child care provider for 6 years, for the love I have for children and especially those who need help, because their parents do not speak the language, because they are abused mothers, or because they do not 17 have the economic resources to pay for quality child care, for me it is a great opportunity for growth to have participated in this listening project, because I believe that there is still much to modify, enrich in early education and child care in Oregon. Regarding what I consider for each Child Care and Early Education Provider, it would be excellent to get all the training to be up to date and give security and tranquility to parents who go to their jobs aware that their children are in the best hands, that parents feel the peace of mind that the center

/ home where they leave their children is provided with the best care, good nutrition, special attention according to their condition, and safety and above all that there is never a lack of love for children and that between providers and parents it is possible to have clear communication and accurate information about the mission handled by each center or registered home, and it would be great if more teachers or providers also speak the language of the parents in that way both parties will feel connected and this will have wonderful results with our Oregon children in the future. Many thanks.



Juana Leticia Barcenas Sanchez

Area Represented: Beaverton, Oregon

Early Childhood Teacher - Spark (QRIS) 4 stars Owner of my own Family Program Registered Volunteer as a Hospital Health Promoter St. Vincent de Paul of Portland OR

I am the mother of Axel Cortes Barcenas of 14 years of age, Ashley Cortes Barcenas, 11, and Itzel Cortes Bárcenas, 7. Together with Miguel Cortes, we form this great Family. I am of Mexican descent. I like to get involved in groups to continuously improve my life and be part of advocacy to bring about continued improvement to different communities. I like to be learning every day and feel and improve on each change that is required and implementing new strategies. I am currently a provider / teacher in early education, and I have my program together with my family. Being part of this committee to "listen and carry the voice of each person" to new solutions is a great challenge since it involves many events in this story and reflecting to make a change is a process of time, effort, and sacrifice. By listening and knowing the needs of our Spanish-speaking community, it requires us to face, evaluate, propose, raise, and provide follow-up so that this inclusive change really takes place - so that there is continuous inclusive quality improvement. Thank you for the invitation to this Group of "listening and carrying the voice of each one" and take it further. I leave this short video of less than 2 minutes (Parent Voices for Change de OHA) (Juana's Story) so that they understand me better why I want to be and be part of "listen and carry the voice of each one", for the success of each of our children and be given the value they deserve.

Jennifer Rodrigues Bell



Area Represented: West Lind, Oregon

My Community (something about your community, its characteristics, etc.): My community can be found anywhere there are parents, teen moms, Brazilians, and anyone looking for friends.

My History (who are you, how do you identify, what would you like the readers of the final report to know about you. If you would like, you can share how you are connected to childcare and early learning programs and why joining this listening team was important to you): As a mother of two boys and a leader in a nonprofit working with teen moms, I want to help contribute to enhancing childcare programs.



Jorge Martinez Yañez

Area Represented: Beaverton, Oregon

Born and raised in Mexico City, having been part of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and as a member of the Faculty of Sciences and Humanities of Mexico City. Living in Oregon for over 23 years, I have served as an Employment Developer, Employment Specialist, Career Specialist, Coordinator and Program Director for different state and non-profit organizations. Always in touch with the Spanish-speaking community, I began my career as an employment developer for OCHA (The Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement), also worked at 12 Portland Community College, Oregon Department of Employment, Fuego Program, and currently employed by Easter Seals' Connecting Communities Program as Program Director for the past 19 years. My involvement in the Spark Redesign process is due to my passion in the education system and my community! Understanding that education is the foundation of our children's personal, intellectual, and emotional development, and being the parent of three children who experienced childcare in Childcare, Head Start, and private provider community centers, in addition to also experiencing lack of provider education, inconsistency in safety protocols, nutrition, and educational curricula with my own children were key to my interest in being part of this great project.



Tram Gonzales

Area Represented: Sandy, Oregon

I'm Tram Gonzales, and my community consists of families who are underserved and come from the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) community. I have worked in early childhood for over 10 years and have a Master's degree in the field of Education. I am a first-generation immigrant.

I wanted to be a part of the listening team to better understand the needs and concerns of the community we serve. It was a privilege to be a part of this effort for change, to help parents and provide voices to be heard in order to address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the underserved BIPOC families in our community.



Sage Halvorson

Area Represented: Gold Beach, Oregon

I live in rural Oregon and am the parent of one preschool-age child. I have learned a lot about the issues, limitations, and successes facing Oregon families and childcare providers today by having the opportunity to be on the Spark Connection Listening Team.



Robert M. Kleng

Area Represented: La Grande, Oregon

My Community (something about your community, its characteristics, etc.): Eastern Oregon has breathtaking landscapes, from majestic mountains to fertile valleys and picturesque high deserts. My vibrant community embraces a rich cultural heritage celebrated through festivals and museums. Its tight-knit and welcoming spirit fosters a warm atmosphere, has a thriving agricultural industry, and many opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts.

My History (who are you, how do you identify, what would you like the readers of the final report to know about you): I am a proud resident of Eastern Oregon, and I identify strongly with the unique blend of natural beauty and cultural richness that defines our community. As someone deeply connected to this region, I have a passion for preserving its heritage and ensuring its continued prosperity. I have been involved in various community initiatives and have worked closely with local organizations to promote our cultural heritage and outdoor opportunities.

Joining this listening team is important to me because I believe that understanding the voices and needs of our community members is essential for sustainable development and growth. By contributing to this effort, I hope to shed light on the aspirations, challenges, and values of our community, which can ultimately lead to better-informed decisions and policies that benefit everyone who calls Eastern Oregon home.



Karen Alejandra Macias

Area Represented: Monroe, OR

Proudly Mexican, I was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco. I studied Business Administration and I must mention that I graduated with Academic Excellence. I like reading, traveling, walking, learning new things. I am currently a Social Activist, Volunteer, Child Care Provider and Mom of 3 amazing children. I live in a very small community in southern Oregon, where there are many needs since most people are farmworkers. This listening project has been an extraordinary experience. I really put myself in the role of listening and I tried to convey to people that their ideas, thoughts, and life experiences were important for this project. Thank you for the opportunity. You just have to



Teri McClain

Area Represented: Salem, Oregon

My name is Teri McClain, and my family and community are a diverse mix of African American, Russian, Latin, and multi-racial backgrounds. We are inclusive of anyone who chooses love over hate, and we support each other's personal and emotional growth. While we face many struggles like most families, we are there for each other through it all, believing that it takes a village to raise a child. And my diverse little village is pretty awesome.

I offer childcare services as one form of support to my village. I provide care for young parents who are struggling mentally and financially. I offer a lot of pro bono hours for mothers in crisis or for those trying to get on their feet. I also provide care for children with mental health issues that other providers may not be able to care for. I offer care after hours and on weekends because I know how difficult it can be to find childcare when you have no money or family to help.



Maria del Rosario Gaytan

Area Represented: Medford, Oregon

My community is a rural area, with needs, where many of the people are humble and noble. It's a close-knit community. The most beautiful thing about my community is when there is a family in need, the community does not hesitate to support. But it is also a community where leaders are required to be the voices of the community because there are families who for some reason do not dare to raise their voices or feel that they are not valued, listened to and in some cases are discriminated against and do not dare to report abuses out of fear. At 7 years old my second-grade teacher was my motivation to become a great teacher like her and help my students as she helped me. Due to economic situations and situations of destiny this was not possible. My dream went dormant, but I never erased it from my mind. And one day came the long-awaited opportunity and for 23 years I have been a Teacher of Early Education. My life is full of traditions, customs, principles, and teachings that my grandparents and my mother taught me since I was little. I had the privilege of growing up with difficulties, cadences and in a low-income house but full of love and wisdom. I never lacked good advice and had excellent role models (MY GRANDPARENTS AND MY MOTHER). I know that what you learn as a child does not define what we can be as adults. However, in my experience I can say that thanks to all the difficulties and the love I always received I am today the person I am. Beyond that, I will never change it for anything. If I were given the opportunity to be born again and choose how or where to be born, I would ask without hesitation to be born in the same environment that taught me to be strong and value every moment of my life - but above all, to have respect for each human being and our beautiful Nature. This is me and I LOVE who I am. Being part of this listening group was very important for me because I know that I contribute with a grain of sand for a great change. I had the opportunity to be the voice of people who dare not speak. I am proud of everything we achieved in this team. I thank Idalia Fernández and María Fernández for giving me this great opportunity to be part of this great group where I felt included in every moment.



Name: Ramiro Diaz

Area Represented: Wilsonville, Oregon

Ramiro Diaz, resident of Wilsonville, Oregon. Family man and an active member of my community. Grateful and blessed for the opportunity to serve on this project, benefiting parents, children, and childcare providers throughout the state.



Sheila Ward

Area Represented: Portland, Oregon

My community: My community is comprised of daycare providers, teachers, caregivers, all of whom are advocates for families and their children.

My history: I am a mother, wife, and an advocate for families, childcare providers, and children. I have worked in the childcare field for over 30 years. I wanted to be part of the listening team to continue my work advocating and giving families a voice in their community.



Amran Noor

Area Represented: Portland, Oregon