



# Every Child

## OUR MISSION

Every Child Mobilizes Community to Uplift Children and Families Impacted by Foster Care in Oregon.

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We're thrilled to bring you Every Child Central Oregon's (ECCO) first ever Annual Report. It goes to show that while we're still a relatively new nonprofit, we are ever improving, such as now sharing news in a more structured, responsive manner.

Likewise, we've made great strides in creating more structure around ECCO's impact, becoming both more organized and more purposeful. With that, we've experienced greater responsiveness around our mission. By that, I mean ECCO's response to our mission, of course, but also the community's response in driving our purpose through volunteering, donations and other critical support.

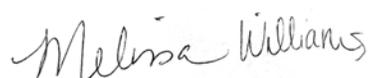
No doubt, the pandemic, plus significant regional crises have really challenged our organization and those we serve, testing many and demanding we practice agility, creativity and flexibility. Yet the resulting energy, compassion and solutions have been nothing short of phenomenal. Here's an accomplishments snapshot:

- Launching MyNeighbOR, a platform developed in response to COVID-19 for meeting community needs in real-time.
- Increasing foster family recruitment efforts, plus receiving far more applicants—155 inquiries in 2020, up from 76 in 2019 in Central Oregon alone!
- Providing encouragement, distraction and hope by delivering 30 Flash Boxes to foster families during COVID-19.
- Receiving a major donation for a playground at Child Protective Services (CPS) in Warm Springs.
- Outfitting Warm Springs' CPS with new desks, beds, laptops and iPads to help with long-distance learning and client hospitality.
- Overseeing a clothing bundle launch and first drive that secured hundreds of donated bundles for youth transitioning into foster care.
- Recruiting for and formalizing our growing volunteer program.
- Nurturing relationships with countless community partners.
- Enabling a major renovation of the Oregon Department of Human Services Visitation Center for Children and Families Experiencing Foster Care.
- Donating toys, gift cards and food with community partners through a holiday drive...

...and so much more! This year, we've got a full list of to-dos, plus we're asking big questions to develop viable solutions about foster care prevention and reunification. Read on to learn about our collective impact and how, through your contributions, ECCO is mobilizing community to uplift children and families experiencing foster care throughout Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook Counties.

We are so grateful for you!

Melissa Williams





## A FOCUS ON NEED EMPOWERS ODHS TEAM & THE PEOPLE IT SERVES

Core to its mission, Every Child Central Oregon (ECCO) provides love, care and support for vulnerable children and families in partnership with Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS). Specifically, ECCO helps in three areas of need:

1. Tangible goods, for example, Welcome Boxes, Launch Boxes and Flash Boxes, clothing bundles, emergency items and more.
2. Volunteering, whether ongoing or one time, such as for service projects, as an office buddy, staff appreciation, and foster parents' night out.
3. Foster care recruitment and management, for respite care like babysitting, shelter care, or long-term care.

In supporting ODHS, what's really been great is that when they ask for our help, ECCO can just do it, according to Melissa Williams, ECCO's director.

"For example, if they suddenly need a car seat or a family needs a hot meal so they can focus on their first night with a new child in care, there's no jumping through hoops, filling out paperwork, or dealing with red tape," Williams says. "We just get it done.

"This saves time, energy and stress for ODHS team members who can then better address other client needs. The result is a more smooth, peaceful experience for all parties and, for those moving into foster care, a less stressful, scary transition."

(Story continues on PAGE 4.)



In an email to ECCO from April Munks, district manager of the ODHS Self Sufficiency and Child Welfare Programs in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson Counties, Munks relayed how ECCO's positive impact has surfaced repeatedly in ODHS meetings.

"I can't tell you the number of times, including in today's discussion and follow-up emails from staff, I hear about how much Child Welfare loves and appreciates Every Child," Munks wrote. "You are doing such a wonderful job of supporting our families, problem solving alongside of us, and being so perpetually generous."

Committed to the core, ECCO is excited to build on its ODHS partnership, exploring new ways to improve current efforts, always striving to do more and do better.

"We want to shine a light on ODHS, which plays a vital role in our society," Williams says. "In our tri-county area, about 400 youth have spent a night in foster care within the past year alone. So the ODHS folks are extremely busy. And we only expect things to become more demanding for these heroes as youth return to school and mandatory reporters have what we call 'eyes on kids' again."

Voicing that projected need and calling for people to help meet it, ECCO reached out in January 2021 to media, donors and community partners.

"We're expecting calls to the child abuse hotline to rise significantly this year," Williams says. "Over these critical months, generating even more support for ODHS, plus the youth and families they serve, will be vital. ECCO is gearing up to help however it can."

## PANDEMIC GIVES RISE TO MYNEIGHBOR PROGRAM

As the stark realities of COVID-19 took hold, threatening foster care services and systems, Every Child Oregon specifically designed a program to mobilize community to respond to timely needs expressed by foster families and youth in foster care. On Sunday, March 22, Every Child launched MyNeighbOR statewide, which provided an online platform for users to share and meet foster care needs. Five local faith communities stepped in, serving as safe drop sites for the program.

“In Central Oregon, we immediately saw this resource put to use, and it’s gained significant traction, allowing people to help others right in their back yard,” says Melissa Williams, ECCO’s director. “For example, if someone lives in Redmond, that individual can go on this platform and see the needs of foster families in Redmond. In addition, they can choose to meet needs in other Central Oregon communities as well, but the goal is to really get people helping people in their own neighborhoods.”

Over the course of the year, Every Child has updated the online platform, making it easier to track data and facilitate sign-ups. As of February 2021, requests continued to roll in at a significant rate, at least four a week. MyNeighbOR has proven effective, allowing need to be met during a time of practicing pandemic-related health and safety measures, according to those who’ve received program assistance.

“Erin”—one of many parents supported through MyNeighbOR—received a Mamaroo baby swing, premie baby clothing, and a Flash Box (a tub full of fun activities, as surprise encouragement). Erin currently fosters a number of children, including a medically fragile child, a scenario that makes parenting during COVID-19 more challenging than ever.

“Everything you all brought in the Flash Box was perfect for our family,” Erin wrote to ECCO. “After 16 years of fostering, I felt so supported and am so thankful.”

Currently, 89% of the support has come from Deschutes County residents. ECCO hopes to gain more participation from Jefferson and Crook Counties, which has 11% participation of fellow community members thus far.

“We’re addressing that gap because MyNeighbOR works best when people know they’re helping someone close to home, not miles and miles away,” Williams says. “The sense of reward felt is more immediate, personal and impactful.”



# 834

Tangible Goods Requested

# 66%

Increase in 2020 Requested Goods from 2019

# 97.2%

Requests Met

# \$54,697

Value of In-Kind Donations

Help Someone in YOUR Back Yard.  
Join MyNeighbOR Today!  
[www.everychildcentraloregon.org/myneighbor](http://www.everychildcentraloregon.org/myneighbor)

## A TRIFECTA OF WARM SPRINGS CRISES IGNITES ECCO RESPONSE

There's no question that this year has been a trying one for The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, a community hit hard not just by the pandemic but contaminated water and forest fire impacts. If there's any silver lining, it's Every Child Central Oregon (ECCO) found multiple ways to step in and meet various needs, growing its understanding of its community and building relationships to facilitate efforts to help.

"This year, the residents of Warm Springs faced a trifecta of crises, and we were grateful to plug in and support them with two drives, providing 1,540 donated essentials, everything from cleaning supplies to baby needs, paper plates, utensils, hygiene items, toilet paper and more," says Brianna Rogers, ECCO's community investment coordinator. "Efforts also included providing carloads and carloads of bottled water. This was really challenging from a transportation standpoint until a community partner, NeighborImpact, stepped in with its truck and helped us haul the water much more efficiently—we were so grateful!"

Looking back, Rogers noted a remarkable display of kindness. People stepped up and really wanted to give. And while many donors couldn't necessarily volunteer in person during COVID-19, they were at least able to do something to help others by providing essential items, including those that were culturally supportive.



As Alexis Amorelli, an Oregon Department of Human Services employee who works on tribal cases, wrote in a thank-you email to ECCO, "I picked up the baby board today that Every Child funded and I am just beside myself with the good feels. In the most heartbreaking of circumstances, we have helped connect this infant with her culture, and I am just overwhelmed with hope and gratitude. Thank you for making this possible."

In addition to the drives, ECCO jumped in to help Child Protective Services when COVID-19 hit, securing new desks, gently used/new iPads and laptops, and other items for two purposes: helping youth with distance learning needs and supporting home visitations, which suddenly switched from in person to virtual. What's more, noting that CPS had a need for a substantial playground but lacked the resources to achieve the vision, ECCO put out a request. At the close of 2020, one single generous donor had gifted \$25,000 for a new playground, currently slated to break ground in 2021!

"The playground funding, not to mention all the giving this year, has just blown us away," Rogers says. "It's been incredible to see people graciously receive this targeted relief during hard times. I can't even begin to tell you how many smiles we encountered. What's more, they now know a bit more about ECCO and what we do, which is important from the perspective of us furthering our mission. We're building relationships and trust there, and this connection enables us to learn how we can be more effective and continue to help."



## 'CLOTHING BUNDLE INITIATIVE' BETTERS THE FOSTER CARE EXPERIENCE

In spite of all best intentions, the transition into foster care can feel overwhelming—there are lots of logistics and stressors to manage and mitigate, particularly during that first night and day in a new home. Providing children some clean clothes to wear has always made the change feel more humane while helping to remove that immediate shopping task from a foster family's list of to-dos.

However, noting ways to improve this service, Every Child Central Oregon (ECCO) set about to restructure and improve this program, along with the launch of MyNeighbOR last June.

"In the past, we'd be urgently meeting that clothing need, digging through donation bins or racing to Walmart to piece together items for that first night and next day," says Melissa Williams, ECCO's director. "Then, once we'd found what was needed, we'd have to connect with the new families for a hasty handoff. Really, this just added to what was already a challenging time for all. So we decided to take a proactive approach to this outreach, building a more efficient system to manage it."

Thanks to a community drive hosted by Westside Church in Bend, ECCO received 200+ clothing bundle donations. In addition, National Charity League, Father's House, City of Bend and private individuals also contributed to the cause.

"We are now so excited to hand kids and their foster families this nicely packaged set of clothes, including pajamas, socks, underwear and an outfit," Williams says. "They are so grateful because they can change into something fresh, clean and cozy that first night. It may seem like a small gesture, but it goes a long way to making the transitions more peaceful for all involved. We're so thankful for all the support of what we know will be an ongoing need."



# 200+

New Bundles Donated to  
Youth in Need

89

Volunteers in 2019

240

Volunteers in 2020

167%

Increase in Volunteers

## THREE CHEERS FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Who would have thought a pandemic year would produce a record number of people opening their hearts and homes to care for local youth? So many individuals, businesses and organizations have been contributing their time, treasure and talent in countless ways...all have been appreciated!

In fact, volunteer efforts rose so sharply over the past 12 months that we're excited to announce Every Child Central Oregon has been board-approved to hire a part-time Volunteer Coordinator. Stay tuned for news about that job posting!



## MEET THE ECCO TEAM!

It's hard to believe that Every Child Central Oregon (ECCO) is moving into its third year of operation, expanding smartly and best as we can, thanks to our small but mighty team of staff members and board of directors steering the way. As this is our first Annual Report, we wanted to introduce you to our staff, plus give a shout out to amazing board members who have donated countless hours volunteering at events, contributing time and energy to developing projects and solutions, and helping us build goals and set strategies to achieve our mission.

### **Melissa Williams, Director**

It may surprise you to learn that Melissa Williams has a background in the banking industry, not social service. But it's true. This smiley, smart University of Oregon grad received her bachelor's of science in finance and economics, landing a career in the mortgage and banking industry, where she honed her financial and business skills. In this field, she excelled at troubleshooting challenges and practicing positive creativity in a demanding, fast-paced job. Yet at one point in her career, Williams felt called to make a change, one better reflecting her values and charging her with making the world a better place to live. Upon learning about the parent organization Every Child (Oregon) and its statewide expansion plans, she jumped at the opportunity to launch ECCO. It's a decision she's never regretted. While the responsibilities can be emotionally trying, they're incredibly rewarding. Melissa rises to all challenges with her service-centric spirit and aptitude for solid connection, furthering the mission and getting great results wherever she goes. Looking forward, Melissa remains focused on her core job: nurturing relationships, sharing ECCO's messaging, improving the nonprofit's business mechanics, and supporting Oregon Department of Human Services and The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs with child welfare issues, problem-solving best she can.



**The ECCO staff: Brieanna Rogers (left) and Melissa Williams (right).**

### **Board of Directors**

Katie Clemens - President

Jasmine Wilder - Vice President

Alissa Watson - Secretary

Josh Cordell - Treasurer

Steve Hughes

Jamie Giannettino

Alycia White

### **Brieanna Rogers, Community Investment Coordinator**

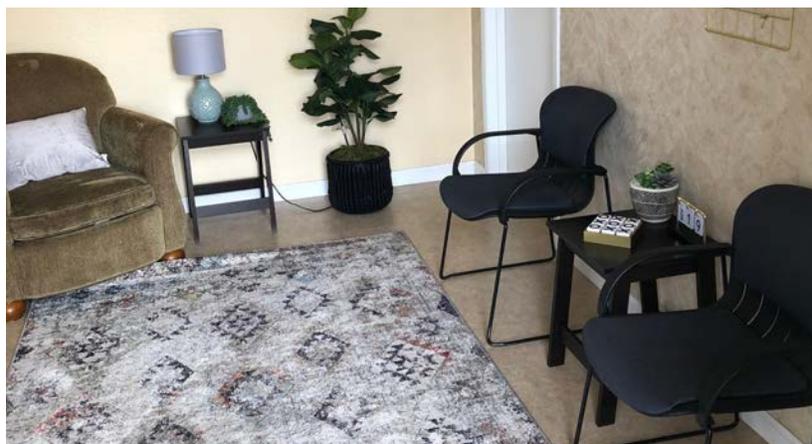
Brieanna Rogers comes to ECCO with mission-critical skills, given she's worked both as a 911 operator and a licensed daycare owner. In these positions, she says she learned much about children and families, particularly those facing some of the toughest situations of their lives. Yet, she's also witnessed how when people are given the right supports, they can overcome just about anything. That insight, along with her genuine love for kids, provides her excellent motivation in her ECCO role. While she's currently managing our growing volunteer base (soon to be supported by a part-time Volunteer Coordinator), Brieanna's primary duties are grant writing, managing the tangible goods network, helping with events, and helping oversee our various donation drives. Although she's originally from Eugene, Brieanna attended Oregon State University as well as Northwest Christian University and has degrees in both technical writing and interdisciplinary studies.

## CENTRAL OREGON NOW HAS A NEW, IMPROVED VISITATION CENTER FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES EXPERIENCING FOSTER CARE

Thanks to the big hearts of a handful of Central Oregon organizations and local individuals, children and families experiencing foster care now have a new safe, cozy place to meet with Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) in Redmond, Ore. This new facility is made possible by several individual area donors and key sponsors, in partnership with ODHS and Every Child Central Oregon (ECCO). While ECCO planned to hold an official ribbon cutting to celebrate the renovation and its contributors, it cancelled the plans to uphold health and safety considerations in light of rising pandemic numbers. Nevertheless, regional partners and both local and statewide media shared the wonderful news!

### Key Sponsors

- Guild Mortgage of Redmond
- Joshua and Jennifer Werner
- Furnish Hope
- Tim Davis Group, Central Oregon Realty
- Heartsong Interiors



OUR FOSTER FAMILY  
SUPPORT & RECRUITMENT

- Distributed 30 Flash Boxes, tubs full of activities for a family, as surprise encouragement.
- Collected nearly \$1,000 in gift cards, 300 toys and 175 winter coats through our first-ever holiday gift drive.
- Participated in multiple holiday drives with charitable community groups, including the "Polar Express," a socially distanced Santa event with ODHS, Hayden Homes and Costco.
- Held first-ever fundraiser, our "Spooktacular Drive-in Movie Night," raising ECCO awareness and money for our foster family needs. Approximately 100 people attended!
- 104%: increase of foster-home inquiries, Y2019 (76) vs. Y2020 (155).
- 11: ECCO recruited and ODHS certified homes in 2020.
- 12: "Explore Fostering" events in 2020, in person or virtually.

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<https://everychildcentraloregon.org/press/annual-report-2020/>