



April 17, 2021

Dear Senators Johnson & Steiner-Hayward, Representative Rayfield and Committee Members:

Kid Time is a Nonprofit Children's Discovery Center and Preschool in downtown Medford. We have a 20 year history of providing early learning opportunities and host of collaborations with local agencies serving families in the Southern Oregon region. Pre-pandemic we served nearly 100,000 visitors a year plus 80 students in our preschool. A large portion of those we serve have no other access to early learning activities and consider Kid Time their primary source for community resources, parent mentoring, and social interaction.

It was just over a year ago I met with many of you about our project to renovate a Historic Carnegie Library in an area of Medford much in need of revitalization. Thanks to the support of a \$2M state grant along, with significant community resources, we will soon complete our project.

The world has changed since I last presented to you. At that time, our Southern Oregon Region had the childcare capacity to serve only 20% of children aged 0-5. Then, we were considered a "childcare desert." Medford School District reported that 25% or less children arriving at kindergarten had any exposure to preschool.

Today, we are in FURTHER distress as half of the previously operating facilities have now closed or are providing reduced services due to the Covid crisis and wildfires that devastated our region.

The lack of access to childcare inhibits families, particularly women, BIPOC, and other historically underserved families for fully participating in the workforce. This in turn makes housing less accessible, increases the rate of family stress and Adverse Childhood Experiences, and exponentially impacts the negative economic factors of our community.

Your support allowed us to expand and serve 140 students as an emergency childcare provider throughout the 2020/21 school year, even during construction. 80% of our students rely on financial support to attend - from Preschool Promise to Foundation supported scholarships.

Yet for every parent able to return to work because we provided subsidized childcare, there are many others we must turn away due to space limitations.

With one facebook post we announced our registration last Friday for 40 summer preschool spots, and within hours we had 135 registration requests.

I was hesitant to approach you again as I do not wish to undermine how grateful we are for your generous investment in our facility. We would not have been able to serve the children we are serving now without your support. I know you have statewide needs far exceeding your ability to fund them. However, we cannot ignore the growing crisis in our community.

I was on the phone Friday night until 10:00 with an Ashland City Councilor seeking our help. Emergency Room Physicians have reached out as they are cutting their schedules and compromising our regional ability to respond to the pandemic because they cannot find childcare. Childcare providers call us each week, asking if we can take their families into our program as they are facing closure.

The situation is dire.

Additional funds would allow us to quickly add a licensed outdoor classroom for 30 children. We have the skills and organizational capacity to put the funds to work immediately and serve families with an urgent need that will have a long-term impact.

We appreciate your consideration and are prepared to share details as needed. Thank you for your service during these trying times.

Sunny Spicer
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Contact

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