



January 26, 2023

Senator Michael Dembrow
Chair
Senate Committee on Education

RE: Senate Bill 531 To Support Children Experiencing Disability

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am on the board of directors for Camp Yakety Yak (CY). CY offers a vibrant summer camp providing children experiencing disability with research-based, learning-enriched experiences that allow them to develop socially and emotionally through improved friendships and communication skills. CY is an appreciative grantee of the Oregon Community Summer Grant for the years 2021 and 2022, and takes this opportunity to share our very sincere support for Senate Bill 531.



CY's summer camp programs serve more than 165 individual campers each year, many attending for several weeks during a single summer. Over 85% of the campers are youth experiencing disability. CY provides rich mentorship and professional learning opportunities to more than 100 education and therapeutic professionals and graduate students. It also provides service-learning opportunities to more than 100 high school, college, and community volunteers. Campers, staff, and volunteers are mostly from the greater Portland area and Salem with other campers throughout Oregon.



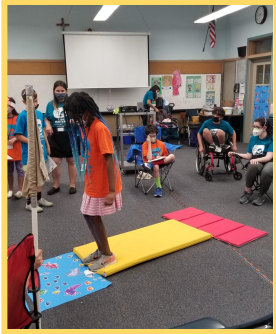
The Oregon Community Summer Grant directly offset the devastating organizational impact the pandemic had on CY, its staff, and our camper families. Having resources from the grants greatly improved our organization's health and vitality, and we are now focusing on sustainability and expanding our mission for the long-term.



In 2021 and 2022, CY provided families with about \$70,000 of needs-based scholarships and reduced camp registration fees to improve affordability and access to CY's uniquely focused and individualized

services. It also helped offset rising staffing costs and allowed us to expand and deepen services across programs, including the doubling of our 18-21 year-old apprenticeship program.

We know that is just one example of the many ways the Oregon Community Summer Grant supported youth and



families across Oregon to access meaningful, relevant summer opportunities. Every Oregon youth deserves access to safe, inclusive, welcoming summer learning environments that help to prepare them for success in school and as adults. The opportunity to apply for another grant this summer will enable us to maintain and grow our mission while also continuing to offer scholarships and comprehensive camp services to families.

As a constituent and nonprofit leader, I am asking that you please support Senate Bill 531 to help ensure we are able to address the needs of Oregon children experiencing disability and other youth who continue to struggle to find relevant and appropriate summer opportunities.

We welcome a meeting or program tour to allow you to learn more about the impacts that we are seeing among our camp youth and educators and how the Oregon Community Summer Grant has directly supported that impact.

Again, we urge the passage of SB 531 and thank you for your continued efforts in supporting children with disabilities and their families in 2023.

Sincerely,

Jill Vogt

Member, Board of Directors

Camp Yakety Yak

www.campyaketyyak.org