



# yachats youth

## and family activities program

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April 16, 2023

Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee:

I am President of the Board for the Yachats Youth and Family Activities Program (YYFAP), a non-profit that has been around for over twenty-five years, which runs a pre-school, after school program, summer camps, and infant playgroup for South Lincoln County, a largely rural area. Although our Executive Director, Patricia Hettinger, and I attended Friday's meeting, we were not called upon to testify due to the large number of people registered, so I am writing this testimony in support of continuing (and making permanent) funding for the Summer and After-School Learning and Enrichment Grant Program (SB531).

Like other youth serving programs, YYFAP officially closed its doors to in-person programs in March of 2020, although we were still able to offer some free virtual programs, connecting families via Zoom to provide educational activities and support learning at home. Fortunately, we were able to reopen in person for the summer of 2021, offering free summer camp programs for youth in our area due to the availability of the summer learning grants. This funding was hugely important to parents struggling to juggle childcare and get back to work, and the programs supported by these funds helped facilitate the social-emotional learning that students at home had been missing out on. Furthermore, these hands-on STEAM-focused summer camps helped reengage students in a variety of subjects to address some of the unfinished learning that resulted from the pandemic.

Last summer, YYFAP once again received summer learning funds and was able to subsidize camps and cover the cost of weekly educational field trips to a number of science centers and natural areas for experiential learning activities. This support was even more important as we were inundated by more summer campers that we have ever previously served. As a result of the high demand, we had to hire more staff and run three camps for various age groups simultaneously! This would not have been possible without the summer learning program grant.

For all the reasons stated above, I implore you to please fund this invaluable program to support affordable, high-quality summer education programs throughout the state. As I believe is obvious to most of us now, it will take years for our students to fully recover from the effects of the pandemic. As a former classroom teacher, I have often thought that students would benefit from year-round schooling. Since that does not appear to be an option for Oregon, and as Oregon has one of the shortest school years in the nation, I urge you to support funding for SB531 to ensure our students have access to programs that will help them develop the skills they need to thrive in school and as citizens and workers in the future.

Thank you for considering my words and my request.

Sincerely,  


Tracy Crews  
YYFAP Board President