

Dear Oregon Legislators,

I am writing to you to advocate for the continuation in funding of an incredibly VITAL resource in our community, Central Oregon Disability Support Network (CODSN).

Just 3 years ago, I was caring for my 2 year old daughter who has a feeding tube and was needing continuous feeds throughout the day. I was discouraged, watching her struggle to keep her feeds down and coming in and out of hospital stays. As anyone raising a child with a disability knows, the care of our children is constantly changing and we regularly have to reroute our routines, therapies, and plans to accommodate our children's most basic needs. I was feeling discouraged and that I was truly out of options. Our therapist encouraged us to reach out to CODSN and I was greeted by the most lovely human being, Callie Kackley, the lead program coordinator.

As a disability mom herself, Callie was incredibly knowledgeable and compassionate. She heard our story, took into account our current needs, and was intuitive on which steps to take next. Callie connected us with a local non-profit that specializes in providing funds for medical equipment for kids with disabilities. Thanks to CODSN and their in-depth knowledge of programs and resources in our area, we were able to get our daughter a piece of equipment that has eased her feeding journey.

As the years have gone by, CODSN has been a resource that I have regularly utilized, whether it's calling in to ask a question about my daughter's schooling needs, taking one of their amazing trainings, or attending an info night on "Transitioning into Kindergarten" and IEPs. I know that I am just one of many parents who feel that CODSN is the heart of our disability community here in Central Oregon and without their care and guidance, we would not be the mothers and fathers we are today, standing confident in our mission to give our kids the best life possible.

I lead a support group called Disability Moms of Central Oregon. We are a group of families that have ALL benefitted from the incredible knowledge, service, and heart that each staff member at CODSN brings to our area. Many staff are also disability parents, which has given so many of the moms in my group a connection point and intentionality that we can't find through other resources. We are so grateful for each staff member's unique gifting and true heart at the core of every call they take, every event they put on, and for being a true light to each family they meet.

As a mom of 4 young daughters, 2 of which who are disabled, I have always advocated for my children's needs, doing whatever it takes to get them the very best care. Now, it is time to advocate for not only my own children, but for fellow disability families in Central Oregon and I believe that continuing the great work of CODSN here in Central Oregon is necessary for the wellbeing and health of our community as a whole. We are a more beautiful, thriving community because of the work being done at CODSN.

Thank you for choosing to support the wellbeing and health of our precious children!

Meg Dawley
Disability Moms of Central Oregon