

April 3, 2025

Dear Chairs Valderrama and Campos and Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

I am writing to express my support for Oregon's Regional Family Networks and to share the impact that the FEATT Family Network- the Regional Family Network serving Douglas County has had on my family's life.

FEATT Family Network is a family-led organization supporting parents in their journey of raising children with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Douglas County. FEATT provides information, resources and culturally responsive support to families across a geographically expansive county.

In 2023-2024, FEATT:

- Provided support to more than 1,055 families
- Hosted 134 parent trainings and family events with 8,796 people in attendance
- Partnered with 365 community agencies

Many families raising children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially in rural communities, face deep systemic barriers. FEATT provides:

- Culturally grounded family support
- Accessible, neurodiversity-affirming family events
- Host Sensory Zones at community events to reduce isolation and encourage active family participation in their communities
- Provide disability awareness trainings to community partners, faith-based institutions and schools
- Help families navigate education, medical and disability service systems
- Host skill-building trainings to empower parents to advocate and plan for a positive and possible future for their children

Regional Family Networks are a lifeline for parents raising children with disabilities. The Family Networks help reduce isolation and the number of families going into crisis. The Family Networks strengthen families by giving them hope and direction.

For me personally, I see the Family Networks as a lifeline for families! My daughter is older now and the information that we share with families would have been invaluable to me when she was younger. As the Director of the Family Network, I see lives changed on a regular basis whether it be from knowledge gained in trainings, help with IEPs and school meetings, or just finding a group of people who understand what your journey is like, it empowers families to be the advocate their child needs to grow and succeed in life.

Sincerely,

Jill Fummerton

Director, FEATT Family Network