



**Working Together to
Build Stronger Families in
Rural Communities**

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November 24, 2020

Dear Friend, Supporter, and Neighbor,

2020 has been, and remains, a pretty eventful year for us all. The disruption, uncertainty, and need to adjust continue to occur at pretty high levels. Originally we intended this year to be one of celebration, for Strengthening Rural Families' 15th Anniversary. That intention required revision on our part as we needed to adapt to the new realities that landed on our doorstep in March. Indeed one of the last "normal" events we had at that time was the first of a planned series of fundraising dine-outs and events. These were intended to help honor our 15th year and meet our goal of raising \$15,000 by the end of 2020 for our Celebration Fund.

Some of you may recall that we had a generous anonymous donor that matched all of our new or increased fundraising and donations up to \$5,000 to help us get to that goal. Unfortunately, the closures that began in March had a detrimental impact on that plan and on a great deal of our programming. However, in a bit of great news this same donor has offered to match all new and increased donations for this campaign up to \$3000.00. If we are able to meet the match we would raise a new \$6000.00 which would help us achieve that \$15,000.00 mark and anything beyond that point would be both exceptional and appreciated.

March and April had us scrambling to pivot or pause our services. Our 3 early childhood education programs, the Alsea Pups Preschool, Next Steps in Philomath and the Santiam Canyon Early Childhood Center, all switched to supplemental approaches until the end of the school year. Meanwhile, through the good work of our partners at Linn Benton Community College, our Live and Learn programs went virtual for the spring term. Many of our other in-person or K-12 collaborative programs, such as Boys Councils, Girls Circles and Mindful Movement, were paused. The same happened for our dental vans, parenting education workshops, and many of our other engagement activities.

In May, we were able to offer dental vans again with many new guidelines and procedures which included fewer spots available. Our partners at the Parenting Success Network were able to offer some parenting education and workshops virtually. We also began considering and planning (and re-planning and planning again) for our fall programs.

We actively worked on preparing to operate our programs within the parameters that were allowed by the Early Learning Division and the Safe Schools plan. This included getting approved as an Emergency Childcare site for our Alsea Pups Program and attending to our increased sanitizing and disinfecting standards. This preparation allowed us to open the Alsea Pups Preschool in person at the start of the school year, though we promptly shut down due to the smoke for a couple of weeks. We also consider ourselves grateful for some of the emergency funding we have received from Benton Community Foundation, United Way, the City of Philomath and the State of Oregon that supported our work through this period.

Our Next Steps program started operating in October with a distance learning model and we have registered children for the Santiam Canyon program and hope to start-up in December. That facility required commercial level cleaning and was needed to house other school staff for a period of time post wildfire, so we are just starting to get access to that classroom.

This letter is being written as we start to implement new closures; however, we hope to have kids back in-person in Philomath and Santiam Canyon soon after the first of the year. Much will, of course, depend upon the metrics. We also continue to run Live and Learn programs virtually for both the wobbler and toddler age groups and provide Parent Coaching.

It remains to be seen about how the rest of this school year and our programming will play out. Of particular interest to us will be our K-12 collaborative programs. We have taken some capacity hits as some of our staff has not been able to work due to their unique and challenging family situations. However, we also have some new opportunities, including being chosen as a Preschool Promise classroom in Alsea, and being asked to have some of our staff trained up and supported in providing financial coaching to individuals and families.

We would love your support to both meet and exceed our goal while achieving the match mentioned above. Please consider making a donation to help us celebrate Strengthening Rural Families' 15th anniversary and to contribute to our work. Thanks so much!

Warm Regards,

The Staff and Board of Strengthening Rural Families



YES! I want to help Strengthening Rural Families continue to support our rural families & communities.

Please make all checks payable to Strengthening Rural Families.

Enclosed is my gift to be used for: General Fund \$_____ Celebration Fund \$_____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/ST _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

I would like to pledge a monthly gift of \$_____ (Please contact SRF for more information.)

I would be happy to volunteer to: (check as many as apply):

- Provide childcare for programs Fundraise Help promote family activity events in my community
 Other _____

SRF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and as such is qualified to receive contributions. EIN # 20-2934930.

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