FRIENDS of the CHILDREN

Klamath Basin









WHERE GOOD THINGS GROW

2026 Gratitude Report

Get Involved:

- **Request a tour of our clubhouses**



- **Follow our social media:**
  - facebook.com/friendsklamath
  - instagram.com/friendsklamathbasin

- **Register for our newsletter:**
  - friendsklamath.org/email-list-sign-up

- **Support an upcoming event:**
  - Cal-Ore Produce Potato Sale - November
  - Ugly Sweater Fun Run - December
  - Friend Raiser Dinner/Auction - May









LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

In its 26th year, Friends of the Children faced public funding cuts but persevered to grow stronger than ever!

In this report, you'll meet our resilient team members. You'll learn about this year's growth, including adding a 10th Friend and expanding academic and mental health support. You'll read stories of meaningful impact on youth and families. And you'll find our plans for the future.

Thank you for investing in Friends as a funder, agency partner, Board member, or Ambassador. You have helped plant and nourish the seeds of generational change for a flourishing community.



Amanda Squibb, Executive Director

Deep Roots

MISSION

Impacting generational change by empowering youth who are facing the greatest obstacles through relationships with professional mentors - 12+ years, no matter what.





MODEL

Many programs provide one-time interventions or short-term support, but research shows that the single most important factor in building resilience and overcoming childhood adversity is a consistent and long-term relationship with a caring adult. Friends provide those relationships, empowering youth to develop healthy coping skills, stay engaged in school, and break generational cycles of poverty.

Creating Stabilty

CORE ASSETS

Interactions between Friends and youth are designed to strengthen 9 Core Assets:



Growth Mindset



Belonging



Hope



Find Your Spark



Self Determination



Problem Solving



Perseverance & Grit



Self Management



Positive Relationship Building



DIGGING DEEPER

Every Friend supports 8 youth, providing 4 hours of weekly mentoring for 12+ years — age 4-6 through high school graduation. Friends commit this time as trained professionals who have made mentoring their full-time career.

CONSISTENT & LONG TERM

Friends help youth set annual personal goals for Learning & Education, Social-Emotional Development & Life Skills, Health & Well-Being, Community Involvement & Belonging. During weekly activities, youth advance those goals as they explore their talents and interests.

INDIVIDUALIZED & RELATIONSHIP-BASED

Friends take a holistic approach to well-being by considering each youth's strengths and challenges in academics, social-emotional development, connection to community and culture, health, and family relationships. They spend time with youth in their classrooms, our program clubhouses, and community spaces.

WHOLE-CHILD FOCUSED

INTO THE MODEL



DATA-INFORMED

We track school attendance, grade-level reading, and progress on yearly goals. We survey youth and caregivers. We seek 3rd-party evaluations. All this data helps us improve continuously to ensure that youth progress toward long-term goals.

GROUNDED IN COMMUNITY

We collaborate with community agencies and organizations, including the City and Klamath County school districts, the Oregon Department of Human Services, and the Klamath Tribes, to ensure coordinated support for children and families.

ENGAGED WITH FAMILY

Children flourish when their family has stability and opportunity. Through "2Gen" mentoring, program staff help caregivers access resources, navigate challenges, build skills and social networks, and pursue goals that benefit family well-being.

"It should be called Friends of the Family."

—Caregiver of a program youth

CORE ASSETS IN ACTON

BIRTHDAY BOWLING
A Story of Self Management

Ian* eagerly anticipated his 9th birthday bowling trip with Friend Corey. His excitement grew during their drive to the bowling alley, until...he saw an empty parking lot and closed lanes! Corey braced for an explosion, the kind he and Ian had worked through so many times before. But Ian simply smiled and asked to celebrate in another way. The pair moved on — to the animals at PetCo and then out for pizza! Having learned to manage disappointment, Ian is well set for positive relationships, learning, and success.



OPENING THE DOOR TO CONNECTION
A Story of Positive Relationship Building

At first, Reid* slammed the front door in Friend José's face, not interested in leaving his video games. But José kept coming back with the patience of a true friend, and Reid grew to love their activities together — hiking, frogging, playing soccer. In time, Reid trusted José enough to confide, "I don't really have any friends." José didn't miss a beat: "Our clubhouse is full of people who care about you," he said, "people who would be happy to be your friend." Reid's eyes welled up. "You're right," he said. "And that brings tears to my eyes." For 19 years, José has helped youth feel safe and seen – and given them the tools to build relationships vital for their well-being.



*For privacy, name and photo are not connected to this story.

AMBASSADORS & Board of Directors

"I volunteer for this Board because this organization is the right thing for our community."
—Michael Donarski

EXECUTIVE

Chair - Tessa Koch, Owner, TMK Creamery
Vice Chair - Debi Catron, Retired Exec Admin Mgr, JELD-WEN, Inc.
Past Chair - Traci Freid, Former Educator
Secretary - Cassi Stevens, Educator
Treasurer - Jim McCabe, Retired Business/Sales Development Executive

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Susan Kandra, Retired Educator
Jessie Hecocta, Financial Advisor, Edward Jones
Dr. Tracy Graham, Pediatrician & Owner, Graham Pediatric Clinic
Hannah Watah, Trainer & Consultant, Portland State University
Mark Goodwin, Owner & Operator, Horseshoe Ranch
Michael Donarski, COO, Cascade Comprehensive Care
Robert Cowie, Executive Director of CVIP, City of Chiloquin Councilor
Kali Carter, Owner, AAA Property Management
Don Crane, Retired District Attorney

AMBASSADORS

Shelly Cauble
Isa Daibes
Allyssa Jannealle Defillipo
Tink Devoux
Carol Falconio
Sue Harbin
Danielle Harmon
Breanna Henrick
Chessa Hodge
Maggie Huntley
Sabree Johnson
Maryann Lundin
Dena Morosin
Lauren Petersen
Johanna Scholer
Cynthia and LeRoy Ulrey

"What I love about this organization is that it's really trying to fix problems to build a better future, not just putting on a band-aid."
—Dr. Tracy Graham

Strong Trunk

In 2026 we added a 10th Professional Mentor ("Friend") and reached the capacity to support 87 youth.








Jose Hernandez, Professional Mentor / QMHA
Naomi McCleve, Professional Mentor / QMHA
Sarah Smart, Certified Professional Mentor / QMHA
Michael House, Professional Mentor / QMHA
Corey Stamper, Professional Mentor / QMHA







Cortney Tucker, Professional Mentor / PSS
Dan Brinton, Professional Mentor / QMHA
Talea Kellar, Professional Mentor / QMHA
Hannah Burgoyne, Professional Mentor / PSS
Josh Paulson, Professional Mentor / PSS

Credentials:
QMHA = Qualified Mental Health Associate
PSS = Peer Support Specialist
LCSW= Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Supporting Growth

We also deepened support by adding an Education Specialist/Professional Mentor and a Director of Mental Health (details on page 11)







Amanda Squibb, Executive Director
Crystal Muno, Program Director / Professional Mentor / QMHA
Anne Keyser, Director of Philanthropy
Kenny Benson, Operations Director
Devon Priem, Director of Mental Health / LCSW







Jordan Falconio, 2Gen Program Manager / Professional Mentor / QMHA
Anne Taylor, 2Gen Program Manager / Professional Mentor / QHMA
Jen Nelson, Education Specialist / Professional Mentor / QMHA
Felicia McNair, Part-Time Tribal Engagement Coordinator
Dani Harmon, Contracted Event Coordinator

DID YOU KNOW? PROGRAM LEADERS ALSO MENTOR YOUTH!

Mental Health Support

Friends help youth identify and handle big feelings, build positive relationships, and find healthcare services. This year, Friends – Klamath Basin further deepened this capacity for mental health support! Using state grant funds, the chapter credentialed all Friends as Qualified Mental Health Associates or Peer Support Specialists and hired LCSW Devon Priem as Director of Mental Health. This infrastructure will allow Friends to connect youth to appropriate therapeutic supports and reinforce specific skills and strategies recommended in mental health treatment plans. Friends' targeted support will fill a care gap in Klamath County, which has just one mental health practitioner for every 160 residents. And, once Friends – Klamath Basin is recognized as a state-approved behavioral health care provider (anticipated spring 2027), this work will generate new chapter revenue in the form of Medicaid billing.



Academic Support

ENRICHED IN 2026!

Friends of the Children provides year-round education support in many forms, including mentoring visits in K-5 classrooms, tutoring help and reading practice at the Friends clubhouses, and 8 weeks of summer STEAM camp activities. New Education Specialist/ Professional Mentor Jen Nelson expands academic support by sharing curriculum resources with Friends, helping caregivers navigate IEPs & 504 plans, administering literacy assessments, and coordinating the reading challenges that inspired 16,770 minutes of reading this year!





FINDING CALM,
Finding her Words

Matilda* melted down just moments into the car ride home. "I can't read this! I don't know the words! It's too hard!" she shouted, flinging aside her book. Friend Sarah didn't argue or correct. Instead, she began a breathing exercise, slow and steady. Then she started the "I see" part of a 5-senses grounding activity, saying,"I see a fish-shaped cloud...I see a V of geese." Before long, Matilda joined in, settled down, and picked up her book. She read it straight through, quickly and easily. With consistent modeling and support, Matilda is learning how to move past overwhelming emotions to a place of learning and success.



BREAKTHROUGHS
Built on Trust

14-year-old Taliya* struggled after her mom's death left her in unstable kinship care. Already shy, she began isolating herself. She rejected therapy; she skipped school. Eventually, she was expelled. But Taliya stayed with Friends of the Children, where cooking, art, and other low-pressure activities spoke to her creative spirit, where Friend Jen was consistently encouraging. This year, at last, Taliya agreed to try therapy — to get back on track in school, to help her little brother, and (in her words) "to be better." It's a significant step toward healing and possibility. And Friends will continue to walk with Taliya, no matter what.

*For privacy, name and photo are not connected to this story.

"2Gen" Support

Children thrive in stable households, so Friends of the Children provides support to parents and guardians of enrolled youth. This two-generational (2Gen) outreach includes calls and visits to help navigate community resources, family events to help build social connections, and Caregiver Cafés (food and childcare included) to help with challenges of life and parenting. By regularly connecting with 80+ families, 2Gen Program Managers have a positive impact on nearly 400 individuals.



Cultural Support

Strong cultural connection reduces stress and isolation by building pride and belonging. As part-time Tribal Engagement Coordinator, Klamath Tribal elder "Grandma Felicia" McNair builds connection by sharing traditional knowledge and skills. She teaches both Native and non-Native program youth, lovingly calling them "elders in training" and "allies." Her work preserves identity, strengthens belonging, and builds respect and understanding.



"It was fun to see the youth 'get tall' as adults cheered for them and complimented the tule visors they'd made in the traditional way."

—Friend Naomi, after walking in Chiloquin's 2026 Restoration Parade



EMPOWERED BY Literacy

Program youth averaged 2,600 minutes of reading monthly this year, motivated by contests organized by Education Specialist Jen Nelson. One eager reader was 4th-grader Rozalee,* who two years ago could not complete a school literacy assessment because she could not read the instructions. "I'm getting good at this reading thing!" Rozalee said proudly after working through ten *Pete the Cat* books in the Friends library. Friend Naomi credits clubhouse tutoring for Rozalee's progress. "She went from not attempting to participate in class to reaching out to help her tablemates," said Naomi. "It's been really cool to see her coming out of her shell."



CULTURE IS Prevention

Sincerity* lights up when Friend activities reunite her with the culture she lost through family separation. Said Friend Cortney, "She holds so much pride in helping 'Grandma' Felicia remember parts of the traditional Klamath language and teach indigenous skills activities to younger or removed Indigenous youth. At the Earthen Lodge, another youth put her hand on her heart and said, 'I feel the music inside me. It's so beautiful I feel like I want to cry.'"



A IS FOR AWAKE and Attending

12-year-old Arlo,* once known for chronic absenteeism, is now a regular school attender and routinely awakens his older brother and younger sister in time to catch their school bus. "I stressed to him how important attendance is," said Friend José. "Now he stresses it with his siblings!"

*For privacy, name and photo are not connected to this story.

Q IS FOR QUEENLY
and NOT Quitting

8-year-old Blair* was not reading or writing at grade level this year. She even struggled to form letters; the letter Q was particularly hard. So when Blair finally formed a perfect Q without help at the Friends' clubhouse, Friend Bekah excitedly shared the success with her mom. "Yes!" Mom replied. "She's been practicing just for you!" As Blair's story unfolds, Friends will be there to support her through every chapter along the way.



TURNING THE PAGE
Together

Fourth grade felt overwhelming for Lotus.* Unstable home life and inconsistent attendance had eroded her focus and confidence. In her fall reading assessment, she scored below the 30th percentile. Thankfully, Lotus has a trusted adult in her corner. Friend Cortney scheduled tutoring at the Friends' clubhouse and coordinated new routines for attendance and homework. She introduced character voices for reading practice and other tricks to make learning fun. She celebrated Lotus's progress. By June, Lotus had improved 3 percentile points in fluency, 20 points in comprehension, and 24 points in vocabulary. This fall, she entered fifth grade without the need for reading intervention and with the confidence that she will succeed.



*For privacy, name and photo are not connected to this story.

FY 2026 Finances

Countless partners enabled Friends of the Children to provide the consistent, high-quality support that makes a difference with trauma-impacted youth. We are thankful for every grant award, agency contract, sponsorship, donation, auction item, and in-kind gift that helped us meet 2026 expenses and build infrastructure for long-term sustainability.

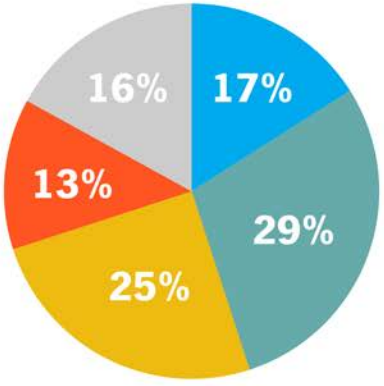
SUSTAINING INVESTMENTS:
A Legacy of Love for Children

Friends of the Children was blessed by a generous gift from the estate of former Klamath residents Harvey and Sharon Bush.

"Harvey and Sharon shared a soft spot, nurturing spirit, and generosity for children," said Harvey's brother Roger.

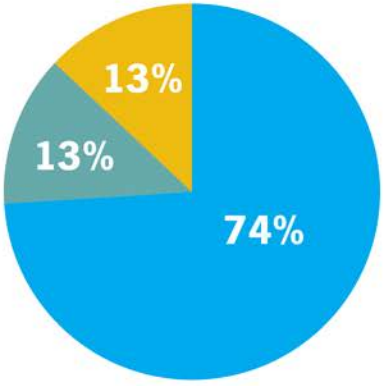
"They knew that long-term, continuous, trustworthy, and loving relationships are integral to a child's happiness and adult success. In life, they housed, offered guidance, and made homes for those that lost their path. They hoped that their bequests would enable others to do so as well."

Operations Revenue
$1,752,615



- Public Grants: $288,655
- Private Grants: $513,447
- Donations: $443,757
- Events: $232,980
- Other: $273,776

Operations Expenses
$1,683,425



- Program: $1,243,748
- Development: $227,851
- General: $211,826

Healthy Branches

STATE-LEVEL Leadership

This summer, 16-year-old Luna* was selected for the Oregon Health Authority's Statewide Youth Advisory Council, a team that helps shape Oregon's health programs and policies. In her interview for this paid role, Luna talked about the Friends' Core Asset of Perseverance, a skill that she has so clearly mastered!





2026 By the Numbers

83,200 miles driven	**2,538** caregiver contacts	**16,770** minutes read	**107** fish caught
4 colleges toured	**1,399** meals served	**254** tutoring sessions	**431** individuals impacted
15,508 hours invested in youth and families	**1,235** hours in schools	**9** family engagement events	**90** youth served directly

*Name is changed for privacy.

Bearing Fruit







Intermediate Outcomes

Every year, program youth set personal goals in four areas that are strong predictors of the long-term outcomes that lead to self-reliance in adulthood. Friends help youth tackle their goals and track their progress over time. In 2026, 98% of program youth **made progress in all four goal areas** and **completed** their goals at the following rates:

- Learning & Education 82%
- Social-Emotional & Life Skills 86%
- Goal for Health & Well-Being 92%
- Community Involvement & Belonging 94%

EVERYDAY SKILLS, Extraordinary Impact

The Friends' "Passport to Adulthood" program is helping 17-year-old Ophelia* learn practical "adulting" skills. This year, she created a professional email address, completed a work application, and practiced job skills as a "JuniorMent" leader at Friends' summer camp. Recently, Friend Jen watched with pride as Ophelia independently handled an interaction at her credit union — asking questions, speaking directly with the teller, and completing a cash withdrawal on her own. Every new skill is more than a box checked off on a passport; it's a step toward the confidence and independence Ophelia needs to thrive.

*For privacy, name and photo are not connected to this story.

COLLEGE READY
Class of 2030!

Tempe* first experienced college life during a Friends fieldtrip to a "Green vs. White" Ducks game. She remembers catching a football.

This fall, she returned to the University of Oregon — this time as a full-scholarship student of the class of 2030!

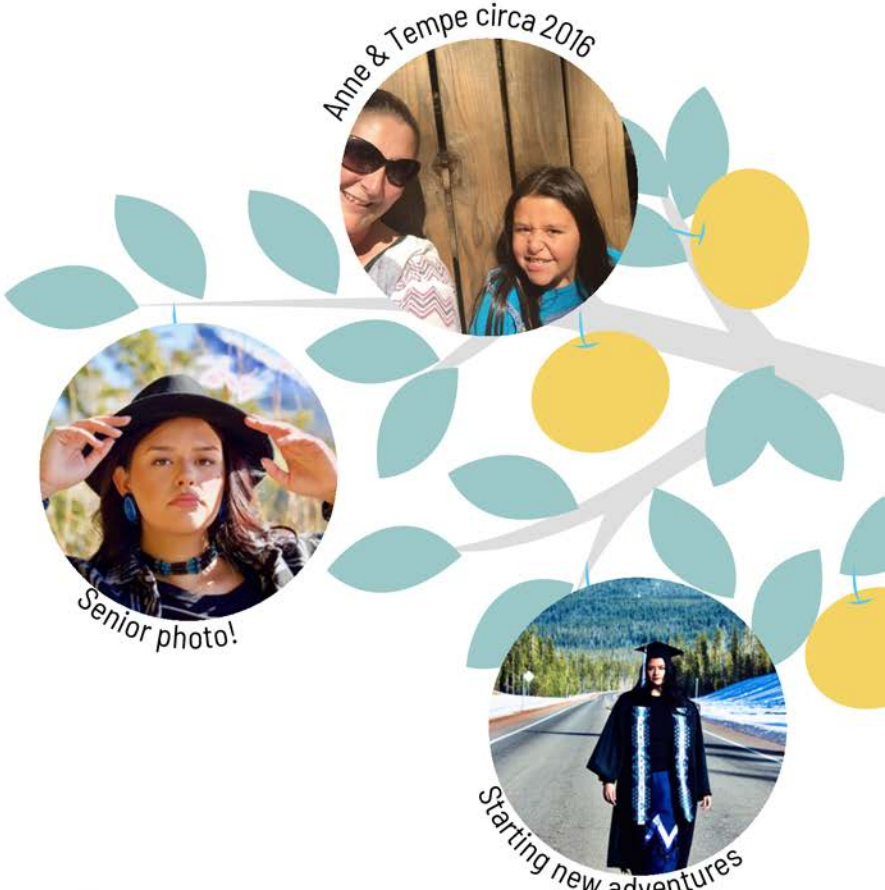
The years in between were not easy. In elementary school, Tempe experienced the sudden loss of her mom and time in foster care. She struggled socially and academically.

With Friend Anne's steady presence, Tempe overcame every challenge to become a high-achieving student and poised leader at Chiloquin High School.

"Anne helped me realize how strong I am and encouraged me to keep going, no matter how hard life hit me," Tempe said. "She helped me become the person I am today."

Tempe plans to earn her teaching certification, then return to serve and inspire her community. She has many fans cheering her on, all confident that this time on campus, she will catch hold of a future rooted in resilience and possibility.

*Name, photo, and story shared with permission

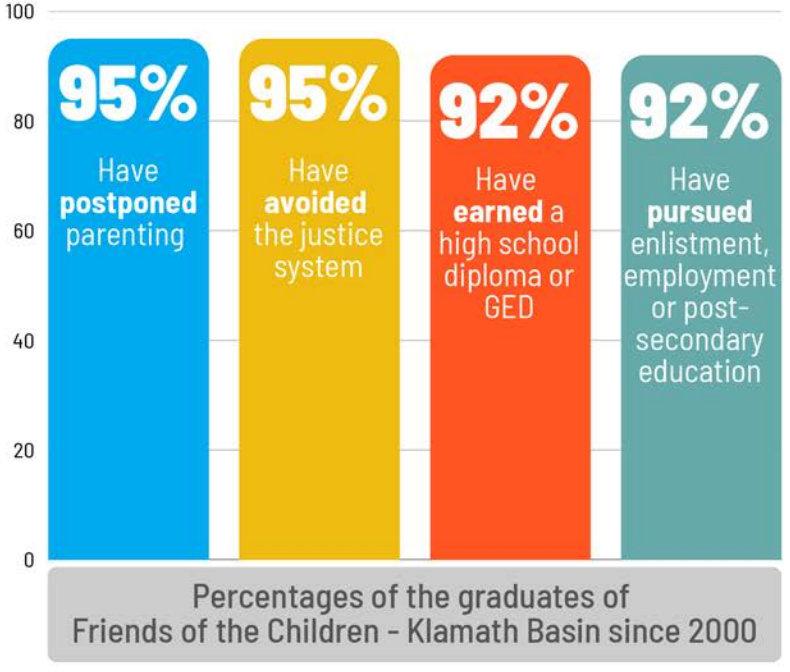


UNIVERSITY OF OREGON



Long-Term Outcomes

Program youth are positioned for healthy, productive adulthoods. Our results speak for themselves!



ALUMNI UPDATE & Celebration

Congratulations to 2016 program graduate **Chase Walters*** who this spring earned an Associate Degree in Business Management and Macro Economic Analysis from Klamath Community College!

*Name, photo, and story shared with permission

Buds Sprouting

A FRIEND FOR EVERY MILESTONE and Every Child Who Needs One

Friend José met Micah* in first grade when he had just entered foster care. Now, Micah is a thriving middle school student who this year earned straight As and even competed in a skeet shooting state championship!

Recognizing José's role in these accomplishments, Micah's adoptive parents asked him to share words of wisdom at their son's 13th birthday. The letter José read aloud spoke to character, resilience, and determination. It encouraged bold dreams and high goals, and it reminded Micah that he would never have to walk life's journey alone.

When José finished reading, Micah wrapped him in a hug. "I love you," he said. "That meant a lot to me."

Not every program youth receives a birthday tribute like Micah's. But every one receives the relationship and commitment it represents.

We wish Micah a very happy 13th year. And we wish every child a Friend like José.

*For privacy, name and photo are not connected to this story.

Our immediate goal is to sustain our 12-year commitment to 87 enrolled youth.

Our longer-term goal is to add TWO MORE FRIENDS by 2030 so that we can support 100 youth and families or ~450 individuals in the Basin!



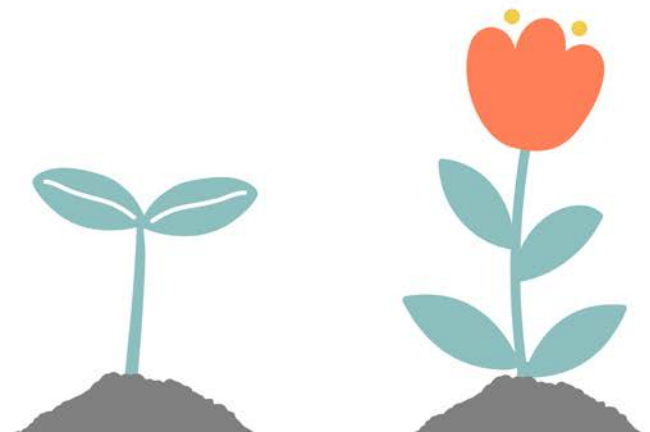


Next Season!

Donate:

- By *credit card* at friendsklamath.org/donate
- By *check* to PO Box 5235 Klamath Falls, OR 97601
- Via *Donor Advised Fund*: EIN #93-1290284
- Through *IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions*
- Via *Charles Schwab transfer*:
  - Account #7741-1580 | DTC #0164 | Transfer Code 40
- Through an *event sponsorship**
- With a *legacy gift**

*Contact: Director of Philanthropy Anne Keyser, akeyser@friendsklamath.org



With your continued investment, Friends of the Children can continue breaking generational cycles of poverty and trauma in the Klamath Basin.

ROI $1=$7: The Harvard Business School Association of Oregon estimated $900K in saved social costs per program graduate. Every $1 invested returns $7 to the community.

"We were seeking a charity which helps at-risk children. . . We were impressed with the long-term approach which doesn't just put a bandaid on current needs, but seeks to produce true long-term change, which would then create a ripple effect of change far into the future. May it be so!"

—Community member, on choosing to support Friends of the Children in 2026








FR1ENDS of the CH1LDREN

Klamath Basin

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