

C4C Community Builders Meeting

November 2024 meeting notes

Attendees:

21 attendees, 4 first-timers

- Kellen Klein, C4C Executive Director
- Jim Barnett, C4C Board Member
- Jaclyn Kordell, C4C Board Member and FAN Advocate
- Dawn Cooper, Roundhouse Foundation
- Nicole Woodson, Circle of Friends
- Jessica Sanchez-Millar, BetterTogether
- Eryn Ross, Sisters Depot owner
- Jane Ann Pighin, Council on Aging
- Diane Prescott, Three Sisters Historical Society
- Ronni Duff, Three Sisters Historical Society
- Kit Stafford, Community Volunteer
- Kris Bergstrom, 100 Women Who Care Sisters
- Susan Taylor, The Grant Lab
- Madi Cunningham, Heart of Oregon Corps / YouthBuild
- Bill Kelly, LWWDS and Rotary Club of Sisters
- Hannah Joseph, Seed to Table
- Sue Stafford, The Nugget
- Mark Gross, School of Ranch
- Christy Corzine, STARS
- Hannah Lewis, Rural Development Initiatives (RDI)
- Judy Smith, Age-Friendly Sisters Country (AFSC)

Remarks from Eryn Ross, Sisters Depot

- Eryn bought from an investor in 2020; opened December 16th
- First two years were “really hard”
- In 2023, met two cooks she really connected with; realized she wanted to cook too. Built a menu they were really passionate about. That other cook, Frank, has since passed, but love to still honor him with the recipes and the space
- Eryn has since learned to run all aspects of the business; has realized that events is an integral part of business succes
 - Put in full bar and small stage upstairs, aka “Frankie’s”; they do shows, private events, cooking classes, etc
 - Also renovated the outdoor stage
- Eryn is also the treasurer of the Sisters Business Association; “has been a great way to network with business owners in the community.” Goals of the SBA:
 - Collaboration between businesses, with other local leaders
 - Also mutual support. “All the businesses in SBA are really struggling.”

- Idea gathering and brainstorming; (e.g. “Sister businesses” where retail and restaurants can cross-promote”)
- Collaborative marketing to neighboring communities like Bend and Redmond
- Lots of work still ongoing to navigate the differences between SBA, Chamber, Explore Sisters, and EDCO, and how they can all support each other and the local business community
- Eryn is planning to help local businesses do better financial forecasting (her background is in accounting)
- Request from one attendee to offer a public forum for folks to learn more about SBA
- Plan for the next 6 months
 - Would like to extend the rear deck to the edge of the patio for more covered seating down below, and then ultimately have the deck offer more seating on it too for events like the folk festival
 - They had a tent/tarp last year, until the fire marshal shut them down due to it not being fire-rated
- Has also partnered with the Sisters Folk Festival to host music for a long time; “the most intimate of the venues offered” said one attendee
- Ideas and requests Eryn shared:
 - Eryn used to run the Sherwood Wine Festival; would love to do something similar in Sisters.
 - SBA would like to encourage locals to come downtown during major events like the rodeo, because most businesses and restaurants “are dead.” No patrons, because folks are staying at the venues and locals are staying home.
 - Eryn is considering using their ticket/order system to offer free prizes like SFF tickets, would folks like that?
 - Also wants to offer specialty dinners to introduce the most loyal customers to new menu every quarter
- STARS had their volunteer appreciation event here in October and Eryn was great to work with as a host. And now she’s a STARS driver!
- LWWDS hired Sisters Depot to cater an event and it “came off without a hitch”
- Big challenges:
 - Seasonality and unpredictability of business
 - Locals want discounts, and after all their expenses it’s just impossible to offer that consistently

Organizational Updates:

- C4C
 - Forum
 - Youth wellbeing packet
 - Central Oregon Gives
 - Land of 1,000 Picnics
 - Holiday Singalong
 - Leadership transition

- BetterTogether
 - Nonprofit under the umbrella of HDESD. Support youth and families in every school district in Central Oregon
 - Jessica leads youth and family partnerships, also supports location-based Latino and Youth Family Councils
 - They try to create space for marginalized and underserved families on a monthly basis to build community, share their needs and desires for the community.
 - BT helps support their initiatives.
 - E.g. Youth in Culver want to have their own soccer team and play for their local schools. So BT helped organize a community meeting to discuss the opportunity. Since then, started their first soccer club in Culver this fall with 54 participants. “This is the beginning,” now advocating for school clubs, after school programs, etc.
 - Here in Sisters, the Latino Family Council started in 2020 (right before COVID). They paused the last 5 months, but are restarting in January. One of the biggest challenges has been finding a monthly space to meet. They have an average of 6-12 parents come and meet for 2-2.5 hours. If you know of any spaces that are available, especially during the winter, please let Jessica know!
- Circle of Friends
 - Mentoring organization in town for at-risk youth
 - Currently have 48 kids they’re serving, another 20+ for group mentoring during the school day
 - This Friday, they’re hosting friendsgiving at the clubhouse. Anticipate 50-60 kids + mentors. Shoutout to the Smokehouse for providing the meat; mentors provide side dishes, and the kids prepare the desserts!
 - Their need is always mentors; they’re hoping to get another 8 mentors before the end of the school year. They only ask for an hour a week, minimum year commitment (average is 6+ years).
 - Had 75 people, 22 teams at their Halloween scavenger hunt, was a great time!
- Roundhouse Foundation
 - Currently wrapping up their grant season; they had 190 applications, were able to support about 77%
 - New grant cycle will open in January
 - Shoutout to Roundhouse for supporting the 2025 Sisters Civic Leadership Academy!
- Jaclyn Kordell
 - Holds three roles within SSD:
 - Family Access Network (FAN) advocate
 - Can support families financially (e.g. utility support), clothing donations, guidance with medical benefits and navigating various support services
 - They are housed in the school district office, can also email jaclyn.kordell@ssd6.org

- If an OHP member needs rental support to prevent eviction, OHP is currently offering to pay up to 6 months in rent
 - Latino Family Liaison, helps support students learning English and their families
 - McKinney Vento liaison, helping support houseless kids in the school district
 - Requests:
 - Referring families who might not be aware of FAN benefits and support services
 - Interested in more student/family-led opportunities, especially from the Latino community, so might put out requests to the group in the future in that regard
- AFSC
 - Fiscal sponsor nonprofit; lend their 501c3 status to residents who have good ideas to improve livability in Sisters
 - They recently “graduated” the STARS program to become an independent 501c3
 - They recently concluded their “Romeo’s Joy” program because it’s leader is joining City Council
 - They are constantly “on the prowl” for new community ideas
 - They’re also anticipating some changes in their own Board of Directors, and would love to speak to anyone interested in the administrative and secretary roles
- STARS
 - Recently became their own independent nonprofit
 - Their demand grew 40% in the last year, so they’re really in need of more support and volunteers
 - They’ll be launching a “sponsor a ride” campaign to help connect financial support more closely to the impact its creating
- School of Ranch
 - They hire skilled community members to teach newcomers “how to live here” through skillbuilding
 - Started a program called SoR “Extend” – matches seniors with skills who want to teach volunteers in exchange for their help. E.g. a local goat farmer who needs help with animal husbandry, will teach that to someone in exchange for help
 - They now have 4 high school interns who do all their marketing, forms, website maintenance, etc. He’s looking for 6 more interns; no commitment, work whenever they want, paying \$15-20/hour
 - Have a new program called “Guest Star,” for people who want to run workshops but don’t know how; SoR can help coordinate the workshop and support the curriculum, the expert just gets to show up and “guest star”
 - FYI, any nonprofit can get \$10k/month in Google Ads; the challenge is making it work for a local org
 - Deschutes County Library, Oregon Humanities, and SoR are running a 4-part series on “civic issues”

- Offer: Mark offers free Facebook ads for other organizations! Reach out to him if folks want free ad space
 - Request: They need space! They have so many workshops that they're running out of spaces. They bring in between 8-30 people per meeting, and are looking for hosts for those.
 - Running a "Small Farm School" program on helping small businesses and nonprofits use AI. Event in March
- Seed to Table
 - Nonprofit education farm. Today is the last veggie pickup day!
 - Huge thank you to everyone who has supported them in different ways this year
 - They will be hiring an Associate Director position in the near future, focusing on operations, management, and communications
 - Shoutout to Cody Reault who made an awesome promo video for S2T!
- Council on Aging
 - Sisters Meals on Wheels program has no waitlist now!
 - They tabled at the LWWDS event, loved that
 - CoA will host the February Community Builders meeting at Sisters Community Church
- Heart of Oregon / YouthBuild
 - Just got a new program to restart their mentor/volunteer program
 - YouthBuild program supports youth who are disengaged with education; gives them their GED/diploma + construction skills. So they get a pre-apprenticeship for construction. Currently working with Sisters Habitat on that.
 - They also have a program helping kids get into SPRD for childcare support
 - Maddie is restarting their mentorship program, looking for volunteers to do 1-on-1 mentoring, but also support in the classrooms and on community service days
 - They're looking to do community service days 1/month in Sisters Country. So if you have a volunteer need, please reach out!
 - Maddie is also an instructor in youth mental health first aid. They want to bring that training to Sisters Country. Can provide certification for adults who want to get guidance on how to respond to youth mental health crises.
 - Heart of Oregon also has an employee advisory council – businesses and nonprofits who want to help hire youth after they've completed the Heart of Oregon GED program. Could be a great way to help cultivate future employees.
 - Learn more at heartoforegon.org.
- Three Sisters Historical Society
 - Working on a new exhibit focused on the history of local farms and ranches; if you have contacts in that space, please refer them to the Museum!
 - Will be open through the holidays
 - Looking for new board members who can bring special skills, and always open to more volunteers!
 - Had a great Fireside talk on Sunday with Wilson Wewa focused on indigenous oral history of the region. Was a packed house! Recording now available on their Youtube page.

- Living Well With Dementia Sisters
 - Had a Care and Connect Resource Fair last Thursday. Had 20 local organizations offering support to those suffering cognitive decline and their care partners. Over 50 people showed up for the event, felt it was very successful.
 - C4C will be incorporating all these participating organizations into our database and resource guide
 - Will have an event on Jan 9 – “Protecting Yourself from Scams and Fraud”
- Rotary Club of Sisters
 - Just completed a bed build with Sleep in Heavenly Peace program, making beds for kids who don’t have them. They did it in Bend, had 80-90 volunteers, made 100 beds in 2.5 hours
 - Their mega-raffle is coming up in January; last year they had about \$10k in prizes
- City of Sisters
 - Had a volunteer appreciation lunch yesterday for board/commission members
- The Grant Lab
 - A local consulting firm supporting fundraising/grant-writing needs for local and national nonprofits, educational institutions, etc
 - Recently helped coordinate two cohorts from the American Leadership Forum of Oregon coming to Sisters Country over the past weekend
 - Susan was just appointed to the Oregon Service Commission, which will help make policy for Americorps programs around the state. She’s really keen to bring more Americorps members to rural Oregon.
- Rural Development Initiatives
 - Work primarily with rural communities across the Pacific Northwest
 - They focus on empowering community leaders to build leadership skills, support collaboration, business trainings, etc. “Wealth building and skill building.”
 - A lot has been coming up for them around civil discourse.