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Readers respond: Nonprofit childcare providers need state's help

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Letters to the editor



By Letters to the editor

Most Oregon students will participate in online learning this fall, forcing parents – many of whom depend upon schools as a safe place to send their kids during the day – to make impossible decisions.

Since March, nonprofits that provide out-of-school programming like Boys & Girls Clubs and YMCAs have provided safe spaces for some of Oregon's most vulnerable children. These programs have filled the gap created by school closures and offered emergency childcare for essential workers, allowing parents to return to work. Without reliable, quality, affordable out-of-school care, there is no economic recovery.

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Boys & Girls Clubs and YMCAs have increased operating hours and followed guidance to safely provide vital services during this crisis, while struggling from decreased revenue. These services are more important now than ever as continued school closures will disproportionately affect low-income families who cannot afford increased costs of care.

While the state is providing relief funding for industries impacted by COVID-19, it must also provide relief for those who need our support the most to fulfill their basic needs.

On behalf of the 176,601 students we serve in 18 counties, more than half of whom are low-income, we are asking the governor and legislators to allocate CARES Act funding to nonprofit programs to allow us to support distance learning and provide emergency childcare during the 2020-2021 school year.

We must ensure that the children most impacted by this crisis are safe and provided for by supporting nonprofits in continuing to fill the gap created by school closures.

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Sue Bloom, president of Boys & Girls Clubs Oregon Alliance

Marisa Fink, executive director of Oregon Alliance of YMCAs

Beth Unverzagt, director of OregonASK

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