Message from the Executive Director

Dear Families, Supporters, and Community Partners:

Reflecting on the 2021-22 year and my first six months as Executive Director, I am so honored to help drive the work of empowering families experiencing disability forward. This is heart work for me because I know first-hand the difference that family-led support has made in my own family’s journey.

FACT Oregon has been a significant part of my professional and personal life for over 15 years now. In my new role, I look forward to working with families and partners across Oregon who share our vision of a future in which children experiencing disability are nurtured and supported to grow into self-determined adults and lead whole, full lives.

2021-22 was a year of significant change and focus on process improvements. We reimagined our Support Line and invested in new technologies to better manage projects, support team collaboration, and improve data capture and reporting. And we launched a new parent leadership program that is grounding and supporting a new generation of parent leaders across the state. All of this work has been done with the overarching goal of providing seamless and responsive support and information to families experiencing disability.

This work is paying off. Families overwhelmingly report that the support we provide is helpful, empathetic, easy to understand, grows their knowledge, and provides them with ideas for clear next steps to take in their advocacy.

Yet there is much still to do. Support remains elusive to many families across the state, especially for those who experience systemic inequities because of race, language, geographic location, identity, and poverty.

FACT Oregon is committed to centering the values of diversity, equity and inclusion in our work so as to better serve families who struggle to access services and supports.

Thank you for joining us in this work.

[Signature]

Christy Reese
Empowering Families. Transforming Disability.

Our Mission

The mission of FACT Oregon is to empower Oregon families experiencing disability in their pursuit of whole lives.

We support families to hold high expectations and set a positive trajectory, to navigate special education and disability systems and services with a whole life in mind, and to advocate for the supports their children need to thrive at home, in school, and in community, growing in self-advocacy and self-determination.

The Need

From early childhood through young adulthood, youth with disabilities experience systemic inequities and access barriers that lead to poor outcomes. As a group, they face unmet behavior needs but twice the school disciplinary rate of their peers and high levels of segregation in school and extracurricular activities. Poor access to general education curriculum leads to a 40-point gap in reading and math proficiency levels and contributes to the worst graduation rate in the state. This sets youth with disabilities up for adult lives that are segregated in every way: under supported to develop meaningful relationships, explore further learning opportunities, find work aligned with their interests and skills, or maintain housing of their choosing.

Families are hungry for support, resources, and action to change these outcomes. They need early, accurate, and family-friendly information and support to develop a vision of a whole, full life, access and navigate disability and special education services and systems, and advocate for a future in which communities more accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities.
Our Goals and Work

**FACT Oregon strives to interrupt the cycle of segregation and poor outcomes for people with disabilities.**

We help families, youth, and professionals who support families and youth to hold high expectations, have a shared vision of a whole, full life. Together, we take steps to make that vision possible.

**Our overarching goals are to:**

**Disrupt ableism** and change how people think about disability.

Highlight the importance of **self-determination and whole lives**.

Help families **support children’s growth and well-being** in school, at home, and in community.

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**Key programs and services designed to achieve these goals in 2021-22 included:**

**Support Line.** Specialists (all parents themselves) answered questions and provided information to families and partners on special education, disability services, and community resources.

**Trainings.** We offered trainings on ableism, special education, inclusive practices, disability supports, and whole life planning.

**Outreach.** We connected with families and partners through community events, resource fairs, eblasts, social media, and committee and coalition work.

**Technical assistance.** We supported community partners to understand ableism, whole lives, self-determination, and disability related systems and services so they can better serve families and youth in their communities.

**Advocacy.** We brought family and youth voice to decision-making tables through parent leadership programs and public advocacy work.
## Accomplishments in 2021-22

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<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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<td><strong>NEW: Activate Your Advocacy Parent Leadership</strong>&lt;br&gt;This 12-session training program grounds emerging parent leaders in key concepts and prepares them to join and engage with decision-making circles for systems change.</td>
<td>45 parent leaders completed 36 hours of training.&lt;br&gt;Cohorts were highly racially, linguistically, and geographically diverse.&lt;br&gt;Graduates report significant gains in knowledge/confidence in key learning areas:&lt;br&gt;  - Pre-cohort: 17-56% confidence rate&lt;br&gt;  - Post-cohort: 83-100% confidence rate&lt;br&gt;Graduates now sit on local and statewide advisory groups.</td>
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<td><strong>Systems Improvements</strong>&lt;br&gt;Launching of a new, more responsive customer service platform to coordinate support to families via phone, email, and text.</td>
<td><strong>Our average wait time</strong> to connect to a support team member dropped to less than 1 business day despite increased demand from families across the state.</td>
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<td><strong>Support Line</strong>&lt;br&gt;1:1 family-led support to families and partners to help them navigate special education, disability services, and whole life planning. All support team members are parents of youth with disabilities; some also have lived experience as a person with a disability.</td>
<td><strong>1216 unique families served</strong> across the state&lt;br&gt;<strong>64% were first time users</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>92% of families reported information was relevant and easy to understand</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Top requests for support:</strong> school and special education, I/DD services, behavior supports, and family engagement and support.</td>
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<td><strong>Trainings</strong>&lt;br&gt;Trainings to families and professionals delivered virtually during COVID.</td>
<td><strong>30+ free stand-alone trainings</strong> for families&lt;br&gt;<strong>24 parent leadership trainings</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>14 technical assistance trainings</strong> for community partners, targeted to those from underserved communities</td>
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<td><strong>All Ability Tri4Youth</strong>&lt;br&gt;This program supports youth to develop a practice of healthy activity in their daily lives and to transform the perception of disability in sport and recreation.</td>
<td><strong>220 youth and their families</strong> participated statewide in the 2021 All Ability Tri4Youth Virtual Challenge.</td>
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How families we serve now feel

"I thought I had to do everything myself. Now I know I can always reach out. I feel better equipped to support my child and parents like me." - Asha

"I will show up in all spaces authentically as both a disabled person and the parent of a disabled child." - Tina

"Now I understand the difference between participating in our IEP and MEANINGFUL participation with my son’s input. INCLUDE them, INVOLVE them, it’s never too early." - Jessica

"I most appreciated the facts, the understanding from another parent, the tone in which information was shared, the confidence it gave me. For 5 years, I have needed help with this and did not know about FACT. I recommend to anyone." - Larque and Camille

"I will remember every day that my reasons are bigger than my fears, that my voice can be heard in any language. That bringing love and values to my community produces positive change." - Maria

"My voice is important, and I have the power to make changes through my activism." - Lucia

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