



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Jeneen Hartley, Coordinator of Education Services, Douglas Education Service District

PHONE:

EMAIL: [jeneen.hartley@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:jeneen.hartley@douglasesd.k12.or.us)

Melody Rogers, Career Connected Learning Facilitator, Douglas Education Service District

PHONE:

EMAIL: [melody.rogers@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:melody.rogers@douglasesd.k12.or.us)

**New opportunity for youth to express their voices**

Oct. 12, 2021 - The Education Services Department at Douglas Education Service District is kicking off a new project, Youth Design Institute. The leadership opportunity is intended for youth ages 14 -21 to express their voices and create positive changes within our community. Youth will decide what's important and mentors will provide skill-building and relational support. The project is made possible by a grant from the Oregon Youth Development Division and is operating with youth-serving agencies and organizations throughout the county.

The first step of the process involves creating a Youth Advisory Crew.

Adults interested in becoming allies/mentors are invited to a planning session on Thursday, October 21 at 5:30 p.m.

All interested youth are invited to a one-hour "hang-out" information session on Saturday, October 23 at 10:00 a.m.

The sessions will be held virtually during the scheduled meeting times. Access information will be provided upon registration. Additional team planning meetings will be scheduled in the future to help design the Youth Advisory Crew.

Participating youth will have the opportunity to earn up to \$50 for attending the one-hour information session. There will be opportunities to earn \$200 for participating in the Youth Design Institute via a series of in-person or virtual planning sessions through the fall and winter.

"Youth are leaders," says Jeneen Hartley, Coordinator of Education Services for the Douglas Education Service District. "So many decisions are made without the input or involvement of

youth. It's the responsibility of adults to listen to what young people say and the Youth Design Institute will be a launch to a promising partnership that bridges generations.”

“Youth are our future. Giving youth tools to be advocates allows our community to grow. This project is an amazing step for our community. Ideally, we're looking for 20 youth, supported by 10 mentors, to lead this program. The intent of the project is to add value to other existing services,” says Melody Rogers, Career Connected Learning Facilitator for the Douglas Education Service District.

For more information and to sign up, visit [www.douglasesd.k12.or.us/youth-design-institute](http://www.douglasesd.k12.or.us/youth-design-institute)