

# More youths can be served through 'proven programs'

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Rose Fuller, executive director of Northwest Family Services, plans to vote for Measure 3-564, the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy

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Since the beginning of the pandemic and economic downturn, Clackamas County has seen a dramatic increase in children and youth experiencing trauma.

And as a service provider, Northwest Family Services (NWFS) supports a brighter future where a child can thrive, not just survive.

Clackamas County community-based nonprofits lack the resources to open their doors to all of the children and youth who need support. That's why I'm voting "yes" on Measure 3-564, the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy, to double the number of children and youth our community can serve through proven programs that are known to work.

One program NWFS provides is a mentoring program for children of incarcerated parents (CIP). The CIP program offers long-term support: a caring, stable community, connections to resources, and a mentor that guides youth on their path to thriving.

Often we start working with a child as early as kindergarten. It can make a huge difference for children. Benjamin, a youth who is in the CIP program, had this to say about his experience: "I love football and (the CIP program) connected me with a football coach to be my mentor. He taught me what it means to be a real man. I'm doing well in school now. I'm playing football and I have goals beyond high school. This program has made me into a different person."

Unfortunately, recent funding cuts led NWFS to completely drop the CIP program for younger children and reduce the number of children and youth served by the program overall. Because Benjamin is not alone. Clackamas County is facing a health crisis when it comes to childhood trauma.

If NWFS were able to access these funds, we could stabilize and expand services. Join me in voting yes for the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy (Measure 3-564) by Nov. 3.

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