

Community Spotlight

Salem Leadership Foundation

Prevention Newsletter March 2022



If the past two years of COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that it takes a village to get through difficult times. A village to prop up our neighbors, community, family, and friends. The Salem Leadership Foundation is one of those organizations that brings together local communities throughout Salem.

Jennifer Palanuk with the Salem Leadership Foundation provided her insights into how they make communities better! We are excited to present SLF with our community spotlight for March 2022.



SLF

WHAT'S YOUR
NEIGHBORHOOD?

1. What does the Salem Leadership Foundation do to bring people and communities together?

Our mission at Salem Leadership Foundation is to engage people of faith and people of goodwill to transform the community for good – neighborhood by neighborhood.

I always tell people that Salem Leadership Foundation has two pillars.

The first pillar, our Churches as Neighborhood Centers, empowers churches to step out of their buildings and into the community to help fill the needs in the community. This looks different for every church from after school programs, community gardens, literacy programs, community events, volunteering, food distribution, the list goes on. We believe that neighborhoods can be transformed when churches are practicing what they preach through faithful servanthood.

The second pillar is our Community Partnership Teams (CPTs). The idea behind CPT's is simple. Every sector of town has individuals and organizations who want to plan and implement meaningful projects to address the needs of their neighborhoods. CPT's provide a regular forum for this to happen. People of all ages benefit from the work with the CPT's.

2. What are some successes you have seen from Community Partnership Teams or other community groups you host?

CPT's have been at the forefront of several small projects that have grown to great successes like the NW Hub, Englewood Forest Festival, Open Streets, West Salem Farmers Market, Neighborhood Block Parties and Neighborhood Clean-Ups.

Smaller but just as important successes include school and community events, city park projects, Little Free Libraries, community and learning gardens, monthly walking cruises, holiday baskets and school Care Closets.

It really just takes one person, passionate about an idea, to make something happen in a neighborhood or the community.

Most recently, a Community School Outreach Coordinator approached the Community and Partners of East Salem with an idea for boosting staff morale at Swegle Elementary School. It took one person to say to the group, "Why would we stop at one school. All the teachers and staff in the district are struggling." Three weeks later, 6,000 Willamette Pie Company pies were delivered to every staff member in the district along with a blessing basket to each school from



Marion County. It was an amazing collaboration between several organizations, businesses and volunteers! Read more about this amazing project at <https://www.salemreporter.com/posts/6009/volunteers-help-salem-educators-de-stress-with-personal-pies>

However, the greatest success of a Community Partnership Team is the collaboration that happens between those in attendance at each meeting and that can't be measured!

3. What are some current challenges?

Aside from a global pandemic and meeting by Zoom? 😊

Our community is hurting right now. We have seen a steep increase in mental health issues, addictions, food insufficiency, educational challenges, and homelessness just to name a few. The pandemic has also made it difficult to hold much needed community events in the community. Coming up with creative ways to help meet those needs is the greatest challenge but also comes with the greatest rewards!

4. How can people get involved with SLF's community groups?

Getting involved is easy. Salem Leadership Foundation organizes the Community Partnership Teams by the high school boundary map. All you need to do is live, work or worship in a specific area and have a desire to partner with others to make that area more livable. Contact me at jennp@salemflf.org and I can get you added to the email invites for your area.

Currently all meetings are held via Zoom. Below is a list of the Community Partnership Teams and their meeting schedule.

- **South Salem Connect** (South Salem & Sprague High School feeder area) – 3rd Tuesday of each month at 12:00
- **Community and Partners of East Salem** (McKay High School feeder area) – 3rd Thursday of each month at 11:00.
- **North Neighbors** (North Salem High School feeder area) – 2nd Wednesday of each month at 11:30
- **Edgewater Partners** (West Salem High School feeder area) – 4th Thursday of each month at 12:00.
- Salem Leadership Foundation also partners **with Keizer United** (McNary High School feeder area) – 3rd Monday of each month at 12:30.

5. Any parting words?

Learn more about Salem Leadership Foundation at www.salemlf.org.

I also want to thank Marion County Prevention Team for its amazing partnership with Salem Leadership Foundation. We appreciate and recognize all the hard work you have done in the community for years, but especially during the pandemic.

6. Last (and fun) question! If Jurassic Park or Jurassic World were real, would you visit and why?

Definitely! I would love to ride in the Gyrosphere!

Thank you Jennifer for your time and all at SLF for the work you do to bring our local communities and neighborhoods together!