



# IMPACT REPORT

2024



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Theory of Change.....	3
Turning Theory in Action.....	4
Why Change, Why Now.....	5
About OK You.....	6
Program Offerings.....	7-8
The Revolution Begins Inside.....	9
It Takes a Village (Supporting Those Who Support Youth)....	10-14
Program Impact.....	17-19
From Student to Leader.....	20-22
OK You Supporters.....	25
Team, Board & Advisory Council.....	26



**“With a focus on people of our age demographic, we aim to connect art and mental health, and use that to battle the stigma that’s present in a lot of our communities.”**

**Anya Li, Youth Leader  
OK You Inner Peace Corps**

**YOUNG PEOPLE  
CREATING THEIR OWN OK**

**TRANSFORMING  
MENTAL HEALTH  
CHALLENGES INTO  
CREATIVE WELLNESS  
STRATEGIES**

**ARTIST-DESIGNED  
PROJECTS THAT  
SUPPORT  
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING**

**REFLECTIVE AND  
INCLUSIVE OF  
ALL YOUTH**

**FREELY  
AVAILABLE  
TO ALL!**

**TO CREATE  
MORE OKNESS  
IN OUR LIVES  
AND COMMUNITIES**

**YOUTH  
SUPPORTERS  
ACROSS THE  
COUNTRY ENGAGE  
DOZENS TO  
HUNDREDS OF  
YOUTH IN  
THEIR CARE**

**YOUTH NAVIGATE  
DIFFICULT  
EMOTIONS WITH  
COMPASSION AND  
CONFIDENCE**

**FAMILIES AND  
COMMUNITIES  
JOIN THE  
OK REVOLUTION**

**WITH YOUNG  
PEOPLE LEADING  
THE WAY**

**YOUTH AT THE  
CENTER OF OUR  
CONVERSATIONS  
ABOUT THEIR  
MENTAL HEALTH**

**DRAWING ON THEIR  
MENTAL HEALTH  
EXPERIENCES AND  
CREATIVITY TO DESIGN  
WELLNESS STRATEGIES  
FOR THEMSELVES AND  
OTHER YOUTH**

**SHARING THEIR  
WELLNESS IDEAS  
AND STRATEGIES  
AS MENTORS,  
FACILITATORS,  
AND LEADERS**

**TURNING THE  
YOUTH MENTAL  
HEALTH CRISIS  
INTO A  
YOUTH-LED  
WELLNESS  
MOVEMENT!**

**CHANGING THE  
MENTAL HEALTH,  
ACADEMIC,  
AND SOCIAL  
OUTCOMES  
FOR HUNDREDS OF  
THOUSANDS OF  
YOUTH**

**LET'S  
DO THIS!**

**OKNESS  
FOR ALL!**

**A THEORY  
OF CHANGE**



# A YOUTH-LED WELLNESS MOVEMENT

Yes, young people are struggling right now to maintain their mental health. 42% say they feel persistently sad or hopeless. 20% have seriously considered suicide (cdc.gov). These numbers are even higher for LGBTQIA+, female, and BIPOC students.

But here's the thing: Through so many challenges—a pandemic, global warming, school shootings, anti-LGBTQIA+ threats—these young people have amassed a ton of wisdom and some pretty incredible coping strategies.

We believe they belong at the center of our conversations about their mental health, and we believe they have the best chance of modeling for future generations that caring for their inner well-being can be a cool and creative act.

The more youth who are able to summon their creativity and wisdom to transform adversity into healing action, the closer we can get to turning this country's youth mental health crisis into a youth-led wellness movement.

# TURNING THEORY INTO ACTION

## How we go about this business of change

### Evolve and expand

We grow and improve our program through learnings, data, and ideas from youth and youth supporters.

### Promote youth ideas

We share student ideas and creative strategies on OK You's website to inspire and activate youth and youth supporters everywhere.

### Provide opportunities for youth to lead

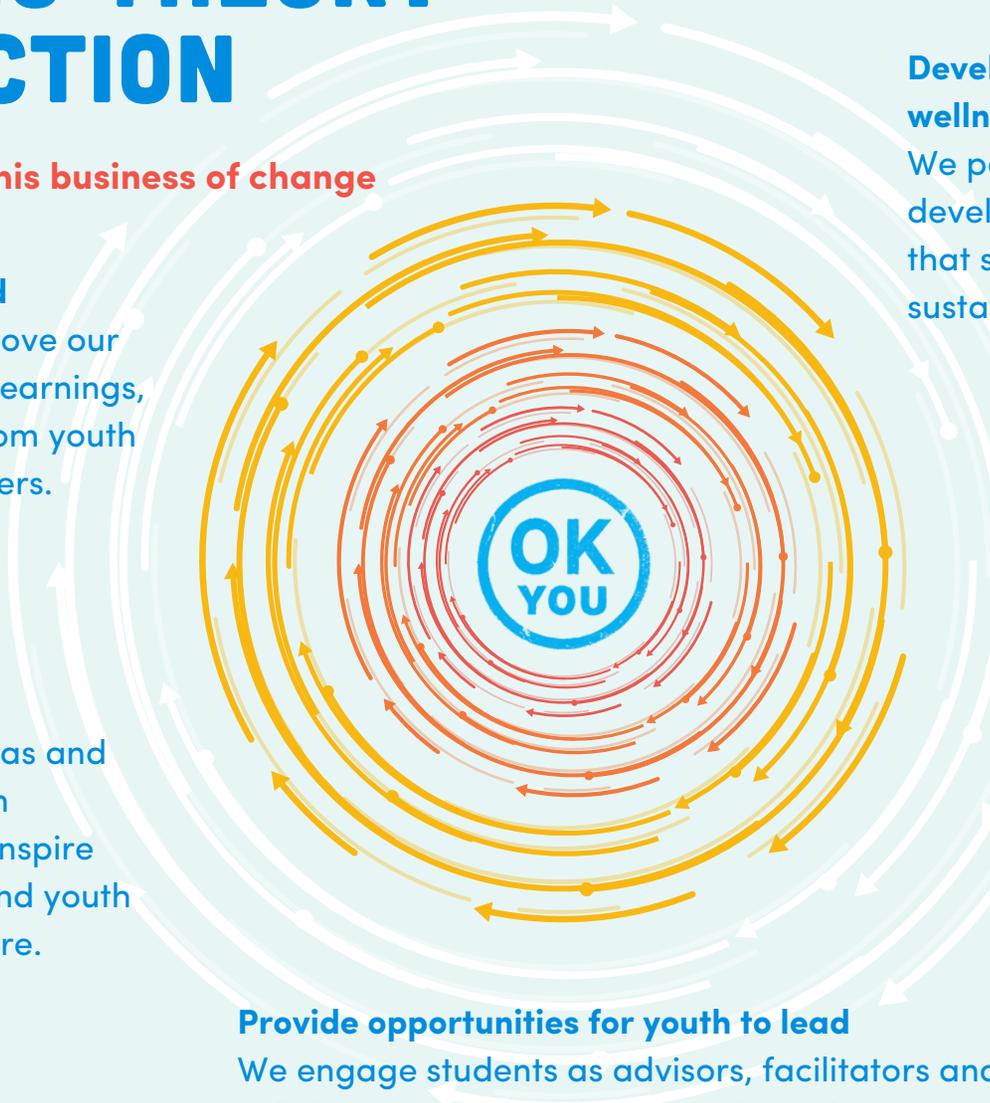
We engage students as advisors, facilitators and collaborators within their schools, and more widely through OK You's Inner Peace Corps youth leadership program & OK Challenge national project design competition.

### Develop and share free arts-based wellness practices

We partner with diverse artists to develop free projects and resources that support youth in creating and sustaining inner wellbeing.

### Support those in trusted, culturally-specific roles with youth

We offer resources and support to school counselors, teachers, families, culturally-specific programs, youth-supporting organizations.



# WHY CHANGE, WHY NOW

In December of 2021, the Surgeon General issued a report warning that young people are experiencing a “devastating” mental health crisis. While mental health challenges take many forms, they all share one thing in common: a negative impact on overall wellbeing and academic outcomes due to impaired concentration, school avoidance, and lack of participation in social activities.

These negative impacts disproportionately affect youth from historically marginalized and under-resourced communities, especially BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, immigrant, and rural youth.

As the number of young people struggling with anxiety and depression continues to rise, never has there been a more urgent time to activate youth in sustaining their inner wellbeing, and leading the way for future generations.

**40%**

# OF TEENS WHO REPORT FEELING  
PERSISTENTLY SAD OR HOPELESS

**1 IN 5**

# OF THOSE TEENS WHO SAY THEY  
HAVE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE

**80%**

#OF YOUTH WHO DONT  
RECEIVE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

**1:370**

OREGON AVERAGE RATIO  
OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS  
TO STUDENTS

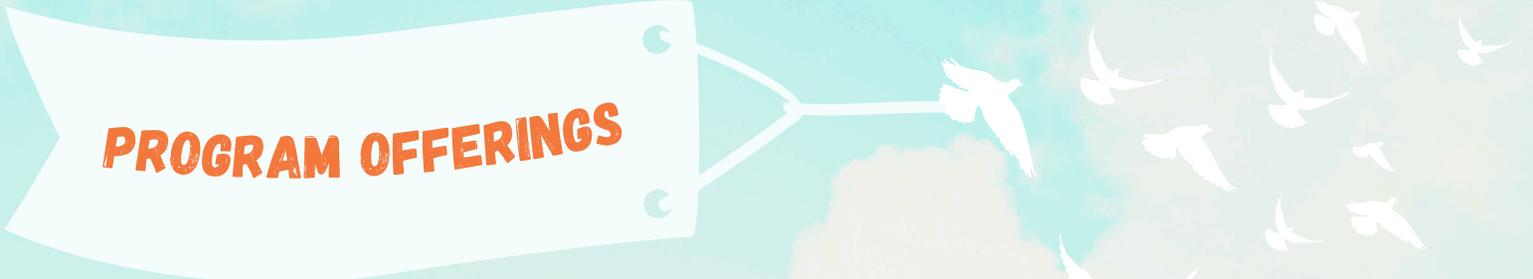
Source:  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

# OK YOU ENGAGES YOUNG PEOPLE IN CREATING MORE OKNESS IN THEIR LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

With a mission of bringing more OKness to the world, OK You supports youth in accessing their inner wisdom and creativity to transform mental health challenges into wellness practices.

Having the tools and inner resources to sustain their inner calm and strength is fundamental to their health, relationships, ability to focus and learn, and resilience in navigating the challenging moments and emotions of their lives.





**PROGRAM OFFERINGS**

**FREE ARTS-BASED  
WELLNESS PROJECTS &  
RESOURCES AT OKYOU.ORG  
AND ON YOUTUBE  
@CREATEYOUROWNOK**

**ACCESSIBLE IN  
MULTIPLE  
LANGUAGES!**

**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
WORKSHOPS FOR  
SCHOOL COUNSELORS,  
TEACHERS, AND  
YOUTH SUPPORTERS**

**FREE MONTHLY ZOOM  
SUPPORT SESSIONS—  
OPEN TO ALL!**

**YOUTH  
LEADERSHIP  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**PARTNERSHIP WITH  
CULTURALLY-  
SPECIFIC PROGRAMS**

# WE ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING PROJECTS THAT REFLECT & ENGAGE ALL YOUTH

OK You's projects are designed by diverse artists who all hold one thing in common: using creativity to understand, express and befriend the challenging moments and emotions of life. Through the varied cultures, identities, ages, and experiences of our collaborating artists, we're able to expand our offerings with the goal of creating a hub of resources that are reflective and inclusive of all youth.

Our website ([okyou.org](http://okyou.org)) and YouTube channel (@createyourownok) provide youth and youth-supporters with easy-to-follow project instructions and resources for navigating anxiety and other complex emotions. And through our online gallery, youth have the opportunity to share their creations and find community among others who experience similar feelings and challenges.

 <p><b>MAKE YOUR OWN OK KIT</b> And fill it with reminders of your calm, strong, creative &amp; courageous OK self!</p> <p><b>START PROJECT #7</b></p> <p>Connection / Grades 3-5 / Grades 6-8 / Grades 9-12 / Grades K-2 / Kindness / Longer / Self-care / Self-confidence</p>	 <p><b>MAKE A TINY BOOK (OR 12)</b> Comics, inventions, tiny drawings, big ideas... the possibilities are endless!</p> <p><b>START PROJECT #8</b></p> <p>Connection / Grades 3-5 / Grades 6-8 / Grades 9-12 / Longer / Self-care / Self-confidence</p>	 <p><b>TRY THE SELF-LOVE WORKOUT!</b> (8 short videos) Celebrate yourself through movement with dancer Bethany Harvey</p> <p><b>START PROJECT #9</b></p> <p>Connection / Grades 3-5 / Grades 6-8 / Self-care / Self-compassion / Shorter</p>	 <p><b>MEET YOUR WORRY BEAST</b> Who knows, maybe you'll even become pals</p> <p><b>START PROJECT #10</b></p> <p>Grades 3-5 / Grades 6-8 / Grades K-2 / Longer / Self-care / Self-compassion</p>
 <p><b>TAME YOUR WORRY BEAST</b> (If you haven't met your worry beast yet, start with Project 10)</p> <p><b>START PROJECT #11</b></p> <p>Grades 3-5 / Grades 6-8 / Grades K-2 / Longer / Self-care / Self-compassion / Self-confidence</p>	 <p><b>LET YOUR INSIDE OUT</b> Create a box that expresses all the hidden parts of you</p> <p><b>START PROJECT #12</b></p> <p>Connection / Grades 3-5 / Grades 6-8 / Grades 9-12 / Longer / Self-care / Self-compassion / Self-confidence</p>	 <p><b>CREATE A POWER ALTAR</b> Who represents strength and inspiration to you?</p> <p><b>START PROJECT #14</b></p> <p>Connection / Grades 3-5 / Grades 6-8 / Grades 9-12 / Grades K-2 / Kindness / Longer / Self-confidence</p>	 <p><b>KEEP AN ART JOURNAL</b> ...and fill it up with YOU!</p> <p><b>START PROJECT #15</b></p> <p>Grades 3-5 / Grades 6-8 / Grades 9-12 / Grades K-2 / Longer / Self-care / Self-compassion / Shorter</p>

 <p>WITH ALI DARWICHE</p>	 <p>CHRISTIAN ORELLANA BAUER</p>	 <p>29:50</p>
 <p>1:10</p>	 <p>1:13</p>	 <p>WITH BETH HAIDLE 8:08</p>
 <p>2:46</p>	 <p>WITH SEBASTIAN 0:57</p>	 <p>WITH RUBO GERRA</p>

# THE REVOLUTION BEGINS INSIDE

Over time the stories we tell ourselves create neuropathways traveled so often they become our truth. The good news: We can change our stories.

With practice, we can transform the way we see ourselves and move through the difficult emotions and moments of our lives with greater compassion, creativity and courage.

This idea is at the center of our program and every project and experience we create. This is how we turn challenge into opportunity, and opportunity into a youth-led wellness movement.

**OKness is different for each of us, and each of us has the self-knowing and inner resources to create our own OK.**



# IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO START A MOVEMENT

By collaborating with youth-supporting organizations and offering free creative resources and support to school counselors, educators and families, OK You is able to multiply our impact with creative wellness strategies that continue to expand within communities. This expansion includes opportunities for young people to develop into leaders and advocates within their schools and communities.

OK You embraces an equity-based mindset to address disparities and lack of inclusion in arts and wellness programming by partnering with organizations serving historically under-resourced communities, and by providing free resources that anyone can pick up and use without barriers to access or implementation.



Ronald McDonald House receives OK Kits and staff training to share our practices with seriously ill and injured children and their families

Through our partnership with Guerreras Latinas, we've been able to transcreate OK You's resources into Spanish and offer Spanish-language workshops and leadership opportunities for youth and community members.





**We were raised in communities that carry past trauma and stigma around mental health. Talking about OKness instead of mental health breaks through these stigmas, offering simple and compassionate language for addressing this important issue so we can begin to destigmatize and gradually normalize emotional care in Latino communities.**

**Yoana Molina Marcial**  
**Founder / Director**  
**Guerreras Latinas**

# SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SUPPORT YOUTH

**In 2024, OK You provided professional development trainings to:**

North Clackamas School District

Guerreras Latinas

Multnomah County Health Department

Portland Parks & Recreation

Portland Public Schools

Ronald McDonald House

School counselors across Oregon through the Oregon School Counselors Association's annual state conference

West Hills Montessori

**We also offer monthly zoom support sessions that are free and open to all.**



**SINCE 2019, OK YOU  
HAS SUPPORTED  
MORE THAN 100  
SCHOOLS AND  
ORGANIZATIONS  
IN OREGON**

**AND MORE THAN 30,000  
YOUTH SUPPORTERS  
NATIONWIDE THROUGH  
OUR ONLINE RESOURCES.**



**30,000 YOUTH SUPPORTERS**

**NATIONWIDE, EACH USING**

**OK YOU'S RESOURCES**

**TO SUPPORT...**

**DOZENS TO HUNDREDS OF YOUTH**

**EACH USING ONGOING WELLNESS PRACTICES**

**TO STAY CONNECTED TO THEIR OWN SELVES**

**AND SERVING AS ROLE MODELS TO OTHER YOUTH**

**GROWING A MOVEMENT OF CONNECTED,**

**CONFIDENT, RESILIENCE YOUNG PEOPLE**

**CAPABLE OF NAVIGATING THIS COMPLEX WORLD**

**OK YOU HELPS KIDS  
PREDICT THEIR  
WORRY AND INTERACT  
WITH IT HEAD-ON  
IN A COOL AND  
DYNAMIC WAY.**

**Kevin Ashworth  
Clinical Director, NW  
Anxiety Institute**

**OK YOU CENTERS THE  
NEEDS OF YOUTH AND  
RECOGNIZES THE  
ESSENTIAL ROLE THAT  
CREATIVE PRACTICES  
PLAY IN DEVELOPING  
YOUTH WELL-BEING.**

**MOBILIZING A STRONG  
AND DIVERSE NETWORK  
OF ARTISTS AND  
WRITERS WHO KNOW HOW  
TO CONNECT WITH AND  
INSPIRE YOUNG PEOPLE.**

**Hana Layson  
Head of Youth and  
Educator Programs  
Portland Art Museum**

**When I told a student who struggles with anxiety that making art can help, she was so surprised and doubtful. Now she uses art to process anxiety and self soothe on a daily basis!**

**Chandler Deming  
Middle School Counselor**



# IF NUMBERS COULD SPEAK

They would say that this program is transforming lives. We hear it from counselors and educators. We hear it from program partners and families. And we hear it directly from youth.

Through surveys and stories gathered from students, school counselors, teachers, social workers, and other youth supporters, we know that students are gaining greater confidence in navigating anxiety and other complex emotions. They're opening up, sharing their feelings, and turning their mental health challenges into personal wellness strategies.

Through the support of The Camassia Group (an equity-driven research and evaluation company), we continue to evolve our evaluation efforts, and we have been selected to be a 2025 case organization for the American Evaluation Association's annual Student Evaluation Case Competition. We are also actively exploring new ways of collecting data from our 30,000+ online users, including a registration feature that will gather more detailed metrics on our users and how we can better meet their needs.

**98%**

**OF STUDENTS REPORTED THEY FELT LESS ALONE IN THEIR WORRIES AFTER PARTICIPATING IN OK YOU GROUPS**

**100%**

**OF YOUTH REPORTED THEY LEARNED AT LEAST ONE NEW STRATEGY FOR HANDLING THEIR WORRIES**

**100%**

**OF YOUTH INCREASED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN NAVIGATING ANXIETY, ACCORDING TO THEIR COUNSELORS**

**Method:**  
Surveys collected from  
40 school counselors and 90  
students across grades 3-6.

# WHAT DOES ART HAVE TO DO WITH MENTAL HEALTH?

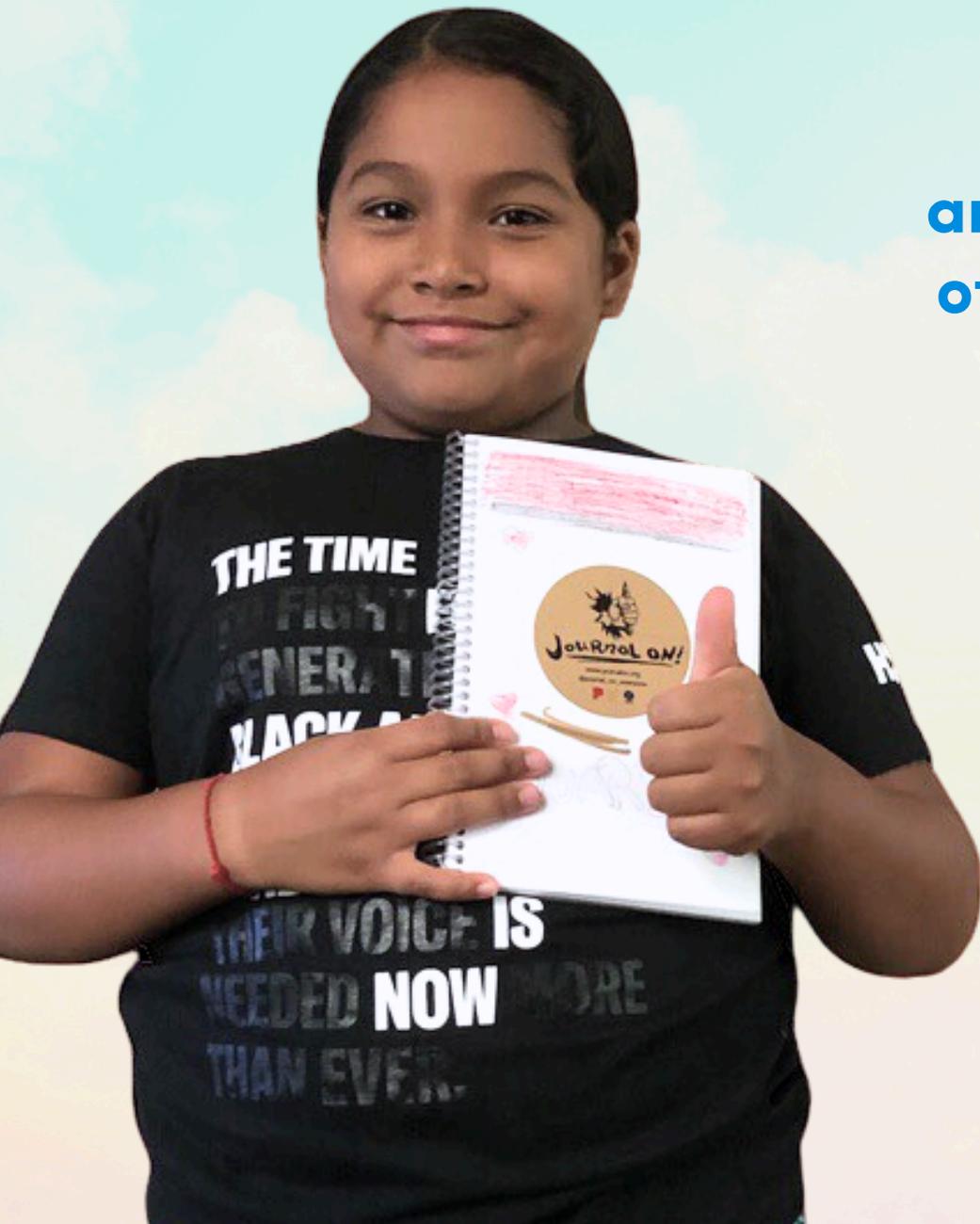
According to numerous studies cited by the National Library of Health, creative practices are an indispensable resource for managing change and the challenges of our increasingly complex world.

Creativity contributes to well-being by promoting self-actualization, self-confidence, greater perceived control over problems in life, and resilience in the face of stressful and traumatic circumstances. Through increased resilience, youth are able to attribute positive meaning to complex events, cope with negative emotions, and adapt to external stressors that change throughout life. Creativity has also been shown to support post-traumatic growth.

OK You's resources take these benefits a step further by aligning with social-emotional frameworks and mental health interventions, and by sharing our creative practices with those in professional, supportive roles with youth.

**CREATIVE PRACTICES ARE AN INDISPENSABLE RESOURCE FOR MANAGING CHANGE AND THE CHALLENGES OF OUR INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WORLD**

Source:  
National Library of Medicine



**“With this program,  
anxiety has become less  
of a big deal in my life.”**

**Student Leader**

# FROM STUDENT TO LEADER

After participating in an OK You group as 6th-graders, and with the support of their school counselor, these three students moved on to mentor incoming 6th-graders, and as 8th-graders, they planned and facilitated their own OK You workshop for 3rd-grade students.

Through our online workshop guides, OK You offers youth supporters ideas for growing youth leadership within and beyond their groups. This can take the form of students helping their school counselor select and facilitate projects, to students mentoring younger youth, to students designing wellness projects of their own.



# CENTERING YOUTH AS ADVISORS, COLLABORATORS, AND ADVOCATES



While youth need our support, they also have support waiting to be discovered within them. We believe that through their creative ideas and lived experience, students can lead the way to wellness for themselves, their peers, and younger youth.

In 2023, we partnered with the Portland Art Museum to launch our first OK Challenge, a project design competition that invited Oregon and Washington high school students to share creative strategies for supporting inner wellness. Inspired by the ideas we received, we then launched our Inner Peace Corps Youth Leadership Program, inviting high schoolers to join us as advisors, creative collaborators, and wellness advocates.

By making youth-designed projects and ideas available on our website where they can be accessed by youth and youth supporters across the country, these young leaders are inspiring more and more youth to create their own OK.



Members of our 2024-25 Inner Peace Corps leadership program.



Winners of our first OK Challenge, an invitation to Oregon/Washington high school students to share their creative ideas for supporting inner wellness. In 2025, the OK Challenge will go national.



**A lot of kids struggle with their mental health, and that's why OK You and the Inner Peace Corps is more necessary than ever. Everyone can always be more connected with their OK selves. That's what we're here for.**

**Luke Hestand, Youth Leader  
OK You Inner Peace Corps**

**I cannot express enough how valuable OK You is to my profession, my students, and my community.**

One of the students who attended in 6th grade was scared to speak in front of others, and now as an 8th grader, is not only leading a group of 5th/6th graders but she often goes to events to speak on behalf of OK You and how it's changed her as a student and person.

**Lisbeth Kobs**  
**Middle School Counselor**



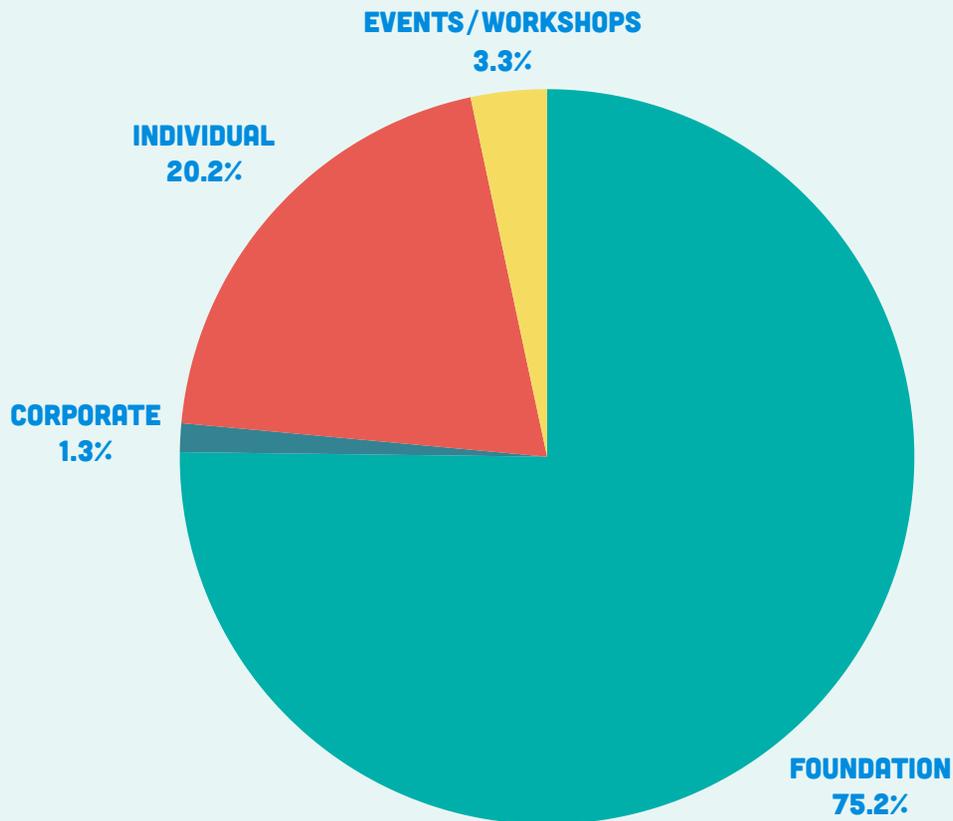
**NO ORGANIZATION I'VE  
WORKED WITH HAS COME  
CLOSE TO THE DEPTH AND  
BREADTH OF COLLABORATION  
WITH THE INTENDED  
USERS THAT I'VE SEEN IN  
THE THREE YEARS OF  
COLLABORATION WITH OK YOU**

**Britt Bieberich,  
LGBTQ2SIA+ Program  
Manager, Portland  
Public Schools**

**OK YOU NOT ONLY  
UNDERSTANDS THE  
IMPORTANCE OF EQUITY  
AND INCLUSION, BUT  
KNOWS AND RECOGNIZES  
THAT ANY MENTAL  
HEALTH PROGRAM  
NEEDS TO BE  
ACCESSIBLE AND  
RESPONSIVE TO  
CULTURALLY SPECIFIC  
COMMUNITIES LIKE OURS**

**Yoana Molina Marcial,  
Founder/Director,  
Guerreras Latinas**

# OUR SUPPORTERS MAKE IT HAPPEN



OK You programs are made possible through the generous support of:

- Anxiety Society individual donor circle
- Autzen Foundation
- Awesome Foundation
- Betsy Priddy Fund
- BPN, Inc.
- City of Portland/ Portland Arts & Culture
- Clark Lewis Family Foundation
- Collins Foundation
- Dr. Bronner's
- Full Potential Fund
- Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation
- Jackson Foundation
- Madfish Digital
- Marie Lamfrom Foundation
- Maybelle Clark MacDonald Fund
- OnPoint Community Credit Union
- Oregon Community Foundation
- PGE Foundation
- RACC (Regional Arts & Culture Council)
- Raymond Family Foundation
- Ronald W. Naito MD Foundation
- Trustey Family Foundation
- Wieden+Kennedy
- Women's Foundation of Oregon

# TEAM, BOARD & ADVISORS



**Kevin Ashworth**  
he/him  
Clinical Director,  
NW Anxiety Institute



**Britt Bieberich**  
they/them  
LGBTQ2SIA+ Program  
Manager, PPS



**Noah Bolls**  
he/him  
School librarian, writer,  
fiber artist



**Allison Bonifay**  
she/her  
Director of Clinic Operations  
& Senior Clinician,  
NW Anxiety Institute



**Mayra Camacho**  
she/her  
Development Manager/  
Grantwriter



**Phoebe Ebright**  
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Principal,  
Ebright Consulting



**Ben Franson**  
he/him  
U of O Design student



**Marquita Guzman**  
she/her/ella  
Student Success & Health  
Program Administrator, PPS



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Communications Advisor to  
Multnomah County Chair



**Heather Hadraba**  
she/her  
Board Chair, Professor & School  
Counseling Program Director,  
Lewis & Clark College



**Beth Haidle**  
she/her  
Artist, Creative  
Director of Illustoria



**Courtenay Hameister**  
she/her  
Writer, Editor, Author



**Bethany Harvey**  
she/her  
School Counselor,  
Therapist, Dancer



**Jonathan Hill**  
he/him  
Cartoonist, Illustrator,  
and Educator



**Gary Hirsch**  
he/him  
Artist, Creator of Botjoy,  
and On Your Feet



**Mariam Higgins**  
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Administrator, PPS, Founder,  
ArtsWell Consulting



**Ahmond Jackson**  
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Creative Media Manager/  
Producer and Music  
Composer



**Adrienne Karecki**  
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Relief International



**Liz Kobs**  
she/her  
School Counselor, Beverly  
Cleary Middle School



**Cristianne Lane**  
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Writer, Director of  
Professional Development,  
Lee Pesky Learning Center



**Kathleen Lane**  
she/her  
OK You Founder/Director;  
author



**Hana Layson**  
she/her  
Head of Youth and Educator  
Programs, Portland  
Art Museum



**Kim Leonard**  
she/her  
Founder/Principal,  
Camassia Group



**Katy Mayo-Hudson**  
she/her  
Educational Consultant,  
Co-founder of Turnaround Arts



**Yoana Molina Marcial**  
she/her  
Director and Founder,  
Guerreras Latinas



**Ivo Mussa**  
he/him  
Board Treasurer  
Senior Financial Analyst,  
Nike



**Liz Gill Neilson**  
she/her  
Co-owner/Creative Director,  
The Beauty Shop brand &  
interactive design agency



**Mia O'connor-Smith**  
she/her  
Artist, Dancer, Educator,  
Founder of Deep  
Underground



**Takaaki Okada**  
he/him  
Multidisciplinary artist



**Christian Orellana Bauer**  
they/he  
Multidisciplinary artist



**Lynne Shlom**  
she/her  
Former Asst Director of  
New Teacher PD, PPS



**Kelsey Snook**  
she/her  
Artist, designer and creator  
of shared experiences



**Marna Stalcup**  
she/her  
Board Chair Emeritus;  
Founder of  
The Right Brain Initiative



**Niko Swanson-Brownell**  
they/them  
Poet, artist, youth  
program facilitator



**Robyn Tenenbaum**  
she/her  
Principal of Rhapsody  
Productions, Co-creator,  
Live Wire Radio



**Nik Whitcomb**  
he/him  
Inner Peace Corps  
facilitator; Bag&Baggage  
Productions Artistic Director



**Chris Williams**  
he/him  
Student Advocate,  
Manager, Storyteller,  
Improvser, Producer



**Sahar Wilson**  
she/her  
Marketing/Communications  
Coordinator,  
Pacific Refugee Support Group

