



FosterClub

Oregon Dream Conference Report 2023

Event Dates:

Tuesday, June 20 - Friday, June 23, 2023

Event Location:

Lewis and Clark College
Portland, OR

Theme: GPS (Growth, Perspective, Success)

Total Participants (See Appendix A):

48 Youth in attendance
19 Adult Supporters
11 FosterClub All-Stars and Coaches
7 Full-time FosterClub staff

Event Overview (See Appendix B):

Day 1: Arrival, Campus Tour, Group Activities including Compass Points, Rec Activities
Day 2: Pathways All-Star Panel, Workshops, Independence City, Rec Activities
Day 3: Keynote Speaker, Wellness Sessions, Workshops, Career, Education & Service Fair,
Open Mic Challenge
Day 4: Closing Session & Departure

Appendices:

Appendix A - Full Participant List
Appendix B - Full Agenda
Appendix C - Participant Evaluation Summary
Appendix D - Workshop Descriptions

Overview of Evaluation Learnings

(See Appendix C)

What went well:

- **Youth-Adult Partnership and the Pivot** - In the midst of the event, it was clear that youth and adult participants saw a need for a slower morning experience than was on the agenda. The FosterClub team took in that feedback and pivoted to replace one workshop session with “Mindful Morning” activities. This experience of debriefing, learning together and shifting gears in real time to meet needs built trust and ultimately improved the overall conference experience.
- **Conference Communication Tools** - One of the recommendations from last year was to improve direct communication with participants and adult supporters. This year, we added the use of the FosterClub App as a tool. We created two groups - one for all participants and one for Adult Supporters. The App allowed real-time updates to agenda and push notifications for reminders and announcements. Both groups gave participants access to create community with one another through a chat feature. This complemented printed materials, debriefs, announcements and use of white board for communication while on site. It also complemented the use of new Air albums for photo sharing which gave us real time access to photos from across the conference.
- **Pathways Fair (Career, Education and Service Fair)** - This was an area of focused improvement from last year’s event which was primarily promoting opportunities available through Central Oregon Community College. In attendance were:
 - 10 Colleges & Universities - including private, public, 2 and 4-year programs
 - 8 trades companies and training programs
 - 6 support organizations/programs specific to Oregon youth with lived experience in foster care
 - 3 military representatives

What could have gone better:

- **Facility** - Although in general reviews were positive and Lewis & Clark campus is beautiful, it was very difficult to manage supervision and took a tremendous amount of work to create adequate signage in order to host the event. Also - temperature regulation in the building was difficult. It was nice to have the fireplace and fans available, however some of the rooms were uncomfortably cold and others did not have screens on the windows. This said, the onsite support staff from Lewis & Clark were exceptional and supportive.
- **Agenda Structure** - One of the things we noticed throughout the event, in evaluations and in debrief is that COVID impacts continue to be real. We planned

longer breaks, more transition time, more free time and still young people were asking for slower, more space, more free time. Young people experienced A LOT of overwhelm and sensory overload.

- **Keynote Speaker** - Joshua was difficult to communicate with prior to the event which resulted in him being less prepared to engage the event as fully as possible.
- **Pathways Fair** - Although we improved the number and variety of resources available at the Pathways Fair and created some strong tools for engagement (the passport), youth feedback indicated that the Pathways Fair wasn't as helpful as we'd like it to be.

Recommendations for the future:

- **Prioritize Mindful Mornings/Wellness Activities** - In order to address COVID impact reality, we recommend starting each morning later (when possible) and slower with grounding and wellness activities.
- **Participant Communications** - It was clear that auditory announcements were really lost for many participants no matter when and how they were placed. We recommend typing up slides/visuals for priority announcements, reposting them via app or other messaging system, and leaving them up on a common area (white board) to have multiple ways of communicating and having reminders for important info.
- **Pathways Fair Improvements** - Suggest that the activity is held in a larger space in order to reduce noise and overwhelm. Offer participants the option to engage the fair with a supportive adult or peer leader accompanier in order to improve positive engagement. There was some disconnect between morning keynote/small group preparation and the fair that could be improved in order to increase positive engagement with the event. Suggest ensuring keynote is fully prepped about context and understands how they can help participants prepare for the day.