


COMMUNITY *Storytelling*:

Hearing and learning from residents of Benton, and Lincoln and Linn Counties

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG) is a member organization that serves as a vital link fostering collaboration among governments, businesses, and individuals across Benton, Lincoln, and Linn Counties. These counties are home to a combined population of over 280,000 residents and hundreds of local businesses. While the racial makeup of the counties is majority non-Hispanic white, there is a growing community of Hispanic, Asian, Black, and other minority groups emerging within the region.

OCWCOG is deeply committed to amplifying the diverse voices of those who live and work in the region. This commitment, coupled with financial support from the City of Corvallis and insights from the [Bias Response project](#), led to the creation of this document of community stories. This initiative was born out of an exploration into the feasibility of a regional bias response system across the LBL counties, reflecting the ongoing efforts to understand and address regional needs.

In this report, we showcase the unique characteristics of each county and provide an overview of the racial demographics of the people who call these counties home. From the largest demographic groups to the smallest, each contributes to the vibrant tapestry of the region. Most importantly, we share the stories of individuals within these counties, offering a glimpse into their lives and experiences. This report is not just a collection of data and narratives, but a testament to the vibrant tapestry of the region.

It was our privilege to partner with OCWCOG on this project and we look forward to future collaborations.

Sincerely,
Milena Zilo



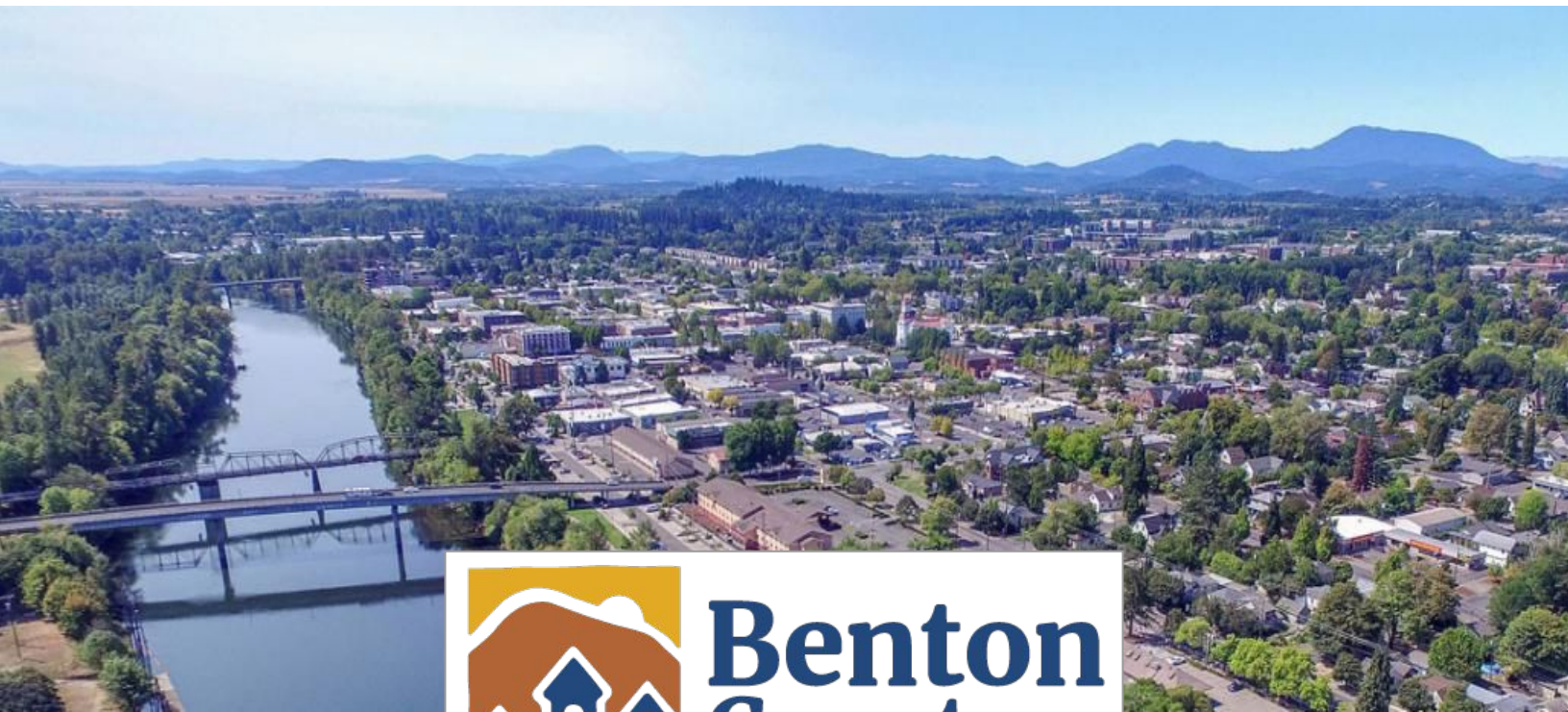
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COUNTY *Overview:*

A brief look into each county's history and demographic data



Benton County, Oregon

Benton County, Oregon, possesses a unique blend of history, culture, and economic diversity. Established in 1847, the county was named in honor of Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton, who was instrumental in the development of Oregon County.

Benton County’s economy is a diverse and dynamic ecosystem driven by the tech, health, and regional agriculture industries. Traditionally, county agriculture has focused on grass seed, Christmas trees, wine grapes, seed crops, and organic produce but has seen a large upswing in hazelnuts and marijuana in recent years. The community’s passion for supporting a thriving local economy allows the county to boast chefs, restaurateurs, winemakers, brew masters, and distilleries committed to locally grown ingredients with a strong focus on sustainability.

As of the 2020 census, the population of Benton County was 95,184, showing a steady growth from 85,579 in 2010. The racial makeup is as follows:

	Pop. %
White alone	86.6%
Black/African American alone	1.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	1.0%
Asian alone	6.6%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0.3%
Two or More Races	4.1%
	Pop. %
Hispanic or Latino	8.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	79.7%

[OCWCOG County Demographics Report](#)



Lincoln County OREGON

Lincoln County, Oregon

Lincoln County, Oregon, is a dynamic coastal region marked by its scenic natural landscape and rich historical ties to the fishing industry. From the rocky cliffs near Cape Perpetua to the seven miles of sandy beaches at Lincoln City, Lincoln County is one of the most popular destinations on the Oregon Coast.

Although timber and fishing have been replaced by tourism as the county’s largest industry, fisheries still contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to the region’s economy. In 2019, the fishing industry generated an estimated \$155 million in income and provided around 3,300 jobs, contributing a total of \$328 million to the local economy. The fishing fleet of Newport not only plays a crucial role economic role, but is also a living testament to the county’s history.

According to the 2020 census, the population of Lincoln County was 50,395. The racial makeup is as follows:

	Pop. %
White alone	89.1%
Black/African American alone	0.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	4.1%
Asian alone	1.5%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%
Two or More Races	4.1%
	Pop. %
Hispanic or Latino	10.0%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	81.3%

[OCWCOG County Demographics Report](#)



Linn County, Oregon

Linn County was established in 1847 in the heart of the Willamette Valley. It is framed by the Willamette River to the west and the crest of the Cascades to the east. Recreational opportunities in Linn County are vast, ranging from hiking, climbing, and skiing to picnicking and camping in numerous county and state parks.

The county's unique climate and soil conditions have helped it become one of Oregon's most diverse agriculture areas. It leads the nation in the production of common and perennial ryegrass, and is also suitable for a wide variety of specialty crops. Linn County is also home to major producers of rare and primary metals, processed food, and manufactured homes, as well as the traditional logging and wood products industries.

According to the 2020 census, the population of Linn County was 128,610. The racial makeup of the county is as follows:

	Pop. %
White alone	92.1%
Black/African American alone	0.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	1.8%
Asian alone	1.3%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%
Two or More Races	3.7%
	Pop. %
Hispanic or Latino	10.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	83.5%

[*OCWCOG County Demographics Report*](#)

COMMUNITY *Stories:*

Stories from community members of Benton, Lincoln, and Linn Counties

Embracing Joy: Emily's Call to Passion and Empowerment

Emily

Overcoming Barriers: An Interview with a Resilient Woman

Tere

Essential Values: Linda's Testament to the Golden Rule

Linda

Resilience & Hope: Santos' Pursuit of a Better Life

Santos

A Brighter Tomorrow: Abelina's Quest to Preserve Heritage and Build a Future

Abelina

Embracing Diversity: Heather's Journey to Building a Strong community

Heather

Rising Above: Fred's Journey with Faith, Resilience, and Community

Fred



Emily's Call to Passion and Empowerment

In the small town of Vista, California, Emily grew up surrounded by a tight-knit family and the vibrant beauty of nature. Both her parents were business owners who worked from home, allowing her to spend a lot of time with them, and her other siblings. Her mother, being one of ten children, created a large and lively family network, with lots of cousins. Emily fondly recalls a childhood filled with the joy of creating cherished memories with her close-knit family, and reminisces on the abundance of fruit trees, particularly oranges, which provided endless delights as she enjoyed the sweet taste of freshly picked fruit.

Emily's family had a connection to Oregon, as her father's side hails from Texas and spent

summers in the area. Eventually, her father's family made the move to Oregon, and in 2003, Emily followed suit with her two children. While she didn't have the opportunity to spend as much time with her extended family as she did growing up, she absorbed values and wisdom from a variety of sources along her journey. Emily's passion for reading, music, and history has shaped her perspective and enriched her understanding of the world.

Above all, Emily's proudest accomplishment is raising her two sons, now 25 and 21 years old. Her eldest son is a philosopher deeply committed to social justice, inspired by the great minds of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. He recommends reading about

Assata Shakur and admires the artistic talent of Tupac. On the other hand, her younger son is a talented artist and chef, displaying a passion for culinary arts from a young age. From breaking eggs on a piano bench to making ramen noodles from scratch, he exudes creativity and passion. Emily speaks fondly of her sons' unique talents and describes them as the most interesting people she has met.

As a devoted mother, Emily strives to instill thoughtfulness, empathy, and engagement in her children. She hopes to raise them to be authentic and compassionate human beings who feel empowered to make a positive impact on the world around them. Beyond motherhood and family life, she

aspires to write a book titled "Everything I Know About Being a Woman I Learned from My Cat," inspired by the lessons in setting boundaries that she has observed through her feline companion. With her empty-nest phase on the horizon, she focuses on what she refers to as the "decade of me," where she collects and cherishes things she loves. From skate dancing with friends, to pursuing her passions, Emily is embracing her personal journey.

In her pursuit of a fulfilling life, Emily emphasizes the importance of joy and meaning. She believes in engaging with activities that bring her happiness and fulfillment, constantly seeking hidden truths and unpacking deeper insights. Emily encourages listening to one's gut instincts, trusting that they will guide individuals in the right direction. Emily humorously points out that we can learn a valuable lesson from the unwavering confidence and authenticity of her cats, who never second-guess themselves.

Community and culture play essential roles in Emily's life. She values the act of sharing meals and laughter with loved ones, recognizing the table as a sacred space for connection. Growing up, Emily was influenced by a strong Christian community, which shaped her values, and aligned her personal values with her inner self.

While reflecting on her impact on the world, Emily humbly states that it cannot be narrowed down to one specific thing. Instead, she believes her presence is felt through her children and the love and values she has instilled in them.

In her pursuit of a fulfilling life, Emily emphasizes the importance of joy and meaning.

She also acknowledges the challenges they face, particularly regarding racism in their community. Her eldest son has experienced racism during his high school years, which deeply affected Emily. However, rather than sitting idly by, she decided to get involved in the school system and address this challenge head-on. Emily joined the District Equity Leadership Team Advisory of the Corvallis



Photo courtesy of Emily Barton

School District, where she strives to shape an inclusive and equitable environment for all students, especially those of color. While progress has been made, she acknowledges that more needs to be done.

Lastly, Emily is deeply concerned about climate change and its impact on communities, particularly those living south of the border. She vividly remembers recent flooding in California and the migrant communities affected by it. She emphasizes the importance of recognizing our shared humanity and the interconnectedness of our stories. With climate change exacerbating water scarcity issues and causing division, Emily urges everyone to play a role in dealing with its aftermath and not forget about the most vulnerable among us.

Whether it's raising her children, pursuing her passions, or advocating for justice and equity, Emily embodies the spirit of a compassionate and empowered individual. In a world that can sometimes feel overwhelming, she reminds us to embrace joy, listen to our instincts, and cherish the connections we have with one another. Her story is a call to action for each of us to play our part in creating a more inclusive, empathetic, and sustainable future.



Mural on W. Lincoln Street

OVERCOMING *Barriers*

An Interview with a Resilient Woman

In a heartwarming interview with a woman from Santa Teresa, Mexico, we dive into her remarkable journey of resilience, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to building community. Born and raised with seven siblings on a humble ranch in the mountains, this woman extraordinaire experienced an upbringing far removed from modern conveniences. It was in this backdrop where she learned the vitality of family unity, a prized characteristic of many Latino families.

At 20 years old, she embarked on a new chapter of her life and immigrated to the United States, determined to create a better future for herself. However, the road ahead was

far from easy, and she faced numerous obstacles upon her arrival.

In the 1990s, where considerably fewer Spanish-speaking individuals existed in the community, the language barrier presented another significant obstacle she had to overcome. Despite these difficulties, she remained undeterred and steadfastly pursued her goals.

During those early years, there were limited resources and support systems for the Hispanic community. The resilient spirit within her refused to be dampened. She sought employment and ventured out into the community, determined to make a difference.

Her perseverance paid off as she managed to secure a job despite the language barriers and the lack of assistance available at the time.

Reflecting on those early years, she acknowledges the substantial changes that have occurred in the community. The Hispanic population has grown, and the presence of support groups, bilingual educators, and healthcare professionals who speak Spanish has significantly increased. Today, even non-Hispanic individuals have embraced the Spanish language, which has fostered a positive impact on the community as a whole.

Inspired by her own experiences, she now aspires to

help others who are embarking on their journey to the United States. Although her own command of English may be limited, her determination to lend a hand and provide support to newcomers is unwavering. She dreams of establishing her own business, such as a coffee shop or a cleaning service, as a means to serve and uplift the community.

faith was a source of strength that helped her endure discrimination, overcome language barriers, and build a life of purpose for herself and her family.

Having received a plethora of support from her church community, she highlights the importance of lending a hand to others when needed.

unwavering commitment to helping others. Her story is a testament to the power of faith, love, and the potential we all possess to make a positive impact on the lives of those around us. Through her journey, we are reminded that we are never alone, and that with community, tenacity, and hope, we can triumph over any adversity.

“The Hispanic population has grown, and the presence of support groups, bilingual educators, and healthcare professionals who speak Spanish has significantly increased.”

Deeply rooted in her faith, she believes in the power of love, patience, and compassion.

When she arrived in the United States, with a one-year-old child and a myriad of challenges, her

She believes in fostering connections and understanding, regardless of differing viewpoints. From her humble beginnings in a ranch in Mexico, she has demonstrated unwavering resilience and an



Photo courtesy of OCWCOG



Casa Latinos Unidos (CLU) is a community-based and culturally-specific organization serving the Latinx communities of Benton and Linn Counties. They are committed to strengthening this community through programs that support people in meeting basic needs, build resilience and capacity through education and leadership development, and celebrate cultures.

In a recent project titled *Nuestras Historias*, Casa Latinos Unidos collected oral histories through short interviews with 13 members of the Latinx community.

Visit their website for more information: [Nuestras Historias | Casa Latinos Unidos](#)



Photo courtesy of OCWCOG

ESSENTIAL *Values*

Linda's Testament to the Golden Rule

Growing up between Oaxaca and Mexico City, Linda is a remarkable woman whose journey of independence serves as an inspiration to us all. While her parents instilled in her the importance of being independent and respecting others, Linda shares with us the profound influence her aunt had on her life. As her primary role model, Linda's aunt provided her guidance on living an upright life and taught her to steer clear of drugs and alcohol.

Initially settling in California, Linda faced numerous challenges when she first arrived in the United States. For instance, she did not speak English when she first arrived. Unable to communicate due to the language barrier, she found solace in watching television

shows in English to familiarize herself with the language.

She ultimately made the decision to move to Oregon to be closer with her siblings who had also chose to call this place home. The strong bonds she forged with Spanish-speaking friends in the community further solidified her connection to Oregon.

Witnessing the unity of her family and watching her children grow brought her immeasurable joy. She strived to instill in her children the importance of their roots by encouraging them to speak Spanish at home fostering a deep appreciation for their cultural heritage.

Linda's faith played a central role in her life, as she embraced Christianity and sought to help

others find their path to Christ. She expressed her desire to learn English more fluently, as it would enable her to connect with more people in the community and spread the message of God's love. Through her dedication to serving others, Linda aimed to create a safe and healthy community where people could thrive.

Reflecting on her journey, Linda emphasized the importance of perseverance in the face of adversity. She shared that even during difficult times and sickness, her unwavering trust in God helped her stay strong and keep pushing forward. Linda's words of wisdom resonated deeply: "Never give up. Keep fighting."

Throughout her 33 years in the United States, Linda has witnessed significant changes.

markets, and the increasing representation of Hispanic culture.

work. From Oaxaca to Mexico City and her eventual settlement in the United States, Linda's story serves as a testament to the power of strong values, the importance of faith, and the unbreakable bond of family.

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At first, adjusting to a new culture and cuisine proved difficult, especially without the presence of Latino markets. However, she now celebrates the growth of the community, the emergence of diverse

Linda's journey is one of resilience, determination, and unwavering values. Working tirelessly and saving diligently culminated in her goal of purchasing a car, a symbol of her independence and hard

Linda's story reminds us all to treat others with kindness and respect, just as we would like to be treated ourselves. Her advice is simple yet profound, encapsulating the essence of humanity.

SPOTLIGHT

Latino cuisine in Benton County



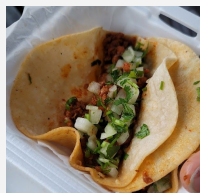
La Rockita | Philomath, OR

La Rockita is a family owned Mexican restaurant in Benton County.



Mexico Lindo | Corvallis, OR

Mexico Lindo has been serving fresh, tasty Mexican cuisine since 2002.



Taqueria Solis | Monroe, OR

Taqueria Solis is a 5-star rated taqueria in Benton County.



Pupuseria Del Valle | Common Fields Corvallis, OR

Pupuseria Del Valle has been serving Central American comfort food to the Willamette Valley since 2017.



Todos Santos, Guatemala

RESILIENCE & *Hope*

Santos' Pursuit of a Better Life

In the small village of Todos Santos, Santos grew up amidst challenging circumstances. The absence of electricity and water, coupled with extreme poverty, created a difficult environment for Santos and his family. Despite these hardships, their livelihood revolved around tending to their 700 sheep. The nearest school was a 1.5-hour walk away, and with only four houses in the area, education became a luxury Santos could only afford for three years. Fetching water was an arduous task that required a 2.5-hour journey on foot.

Seeking a better future, Santos made the life-changing decision to move to the United States. The journey from Todos Santos was long, and his decision to

leave was primarily driven by the lack of water and the poverty that plagued his community. Settling in Oregon, the United States was truly a dream come true—a land of opportunities for Santos and countless others seeking a better life.

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When Santos first arrived, he had very little money to his name. For the past nine years, he has built a new life for himself and his family and hopes to maintain a steady income and buy a house. He has two brothers living in the U.S., while his mother remains in Guatemala. It has been nine

long years since Santos last saw his parents, but his dreams and aspirations keep him motivated to create a better future for them all. Despite the distance, he holds onto memories of his beautiful homeland, while acknowledging the hardships faced by his loved ones.

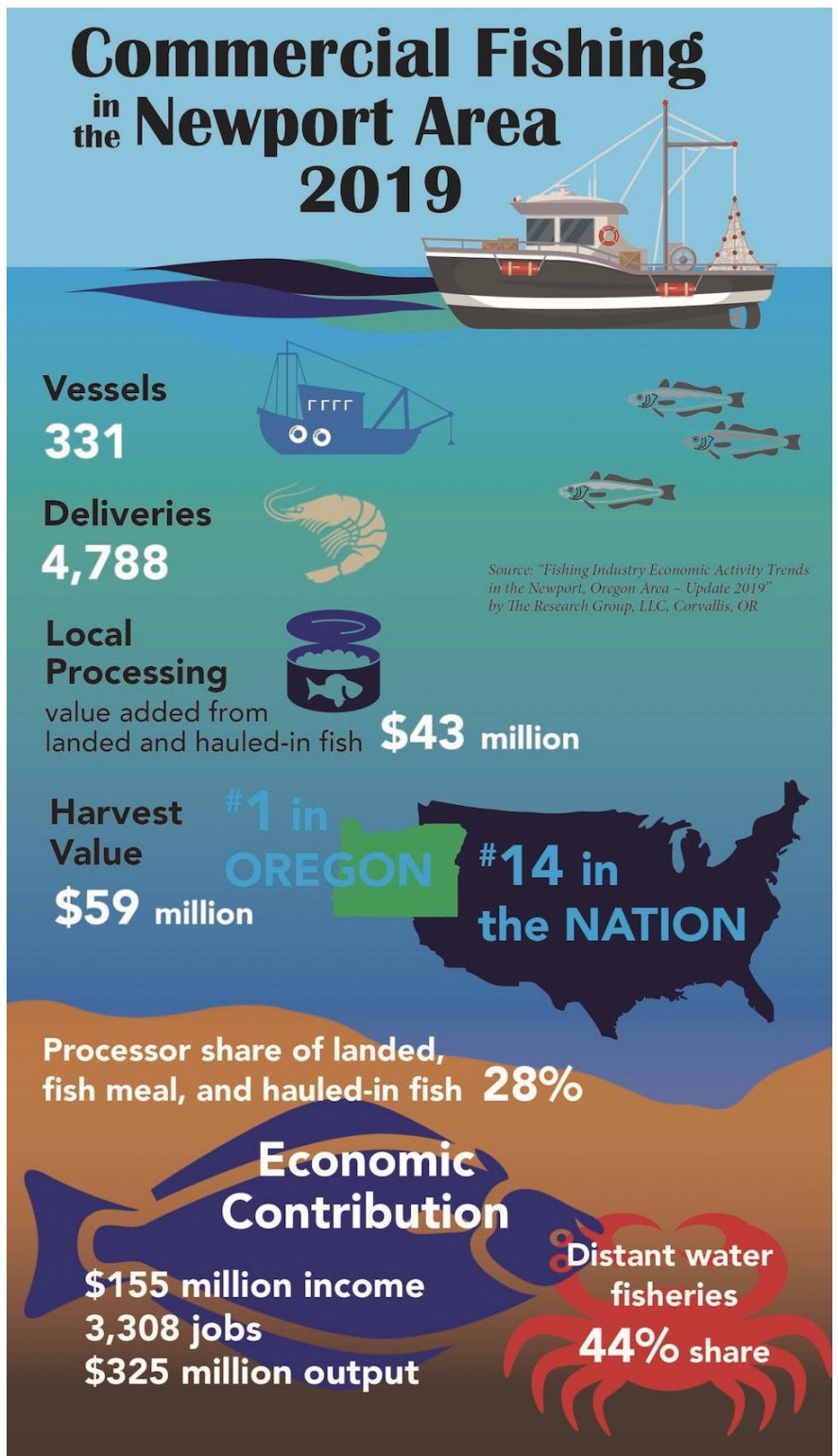
Reflecting on the legacy he wishes to leave for his children, Santos aspires for his son to become a doctor or a police officer. He recognizes that there is no life to be found in the impoverished conditions of his homeland, and he dreams of a brighter future for his family.

Life in the United States has been anything but easy. During times of uncertainty, when there is no work, Santos perseveres and maintains a positive attitude through it all. He feels a sense of true accomplishment when he is able to provide for his family and work hard. In addition, Santos remains deeply rooted in his culture and traditions, vowing to never forget where he came from.

Santos works in the Fishing Industry in Newport, which is at the heart of Newport's history.

Santos' journey serves as a reminder of the power of perseverance and hope. From his humble beginnings in Todo Santos to his pursuit of a better life, Santos' determination is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. As Santos continues to work towards his goals, he advises others to maintain communication with their families back home.

He emphasizes the importance of gratitude, even in the face of adversity, and cherishing the beauty of the new land he now calls home.



Infographic from 2023 Fishing Industry Economic Activity Trends in the Newport, Oregon Area



Guatemala City, Guatemala

A BRIGHTER *Tomorrow*

Abelina's Quest to Preserve Heritage and Build a Future

Originally from Guatemala, Abelina's family relocated from Todos Santos to Mexico in 1982 due to the turbulence caused by the guerrilla movement. Tragically, her grandparents fell victim to the violence that plagued their homeland, compelling Abelina's family, like many others, to seek safety and refuge in Mexico.

9 years ago, with hope in her heart and prayers to guide her, Abelina followed in her husband's footsteps, who had immigrated to the United States, the joy of arriving in a new land filled her with gratitude.

Although Abelina now has a supportive community and two sisters living in the United

States, her parents and other siblings remain back home in Guatemala. Abelina recognizes the importance of staying connected with loved ones, despite the distance that separates them.

One of her proudest achievements is making the transition to a new country, embracing a different culture while still preserving her Guatemalan identity.

Abelina recognizes the importance of staying connected with loved ones, never forgetting her roots despite the distance that separates them.

Reflecting on her own experiences, Abelina offers valuable advice to others who

have recently arrived from Guatemala. She emphasizes the importance of saving money and, more importantly, maintaining connections with family back home.

In Oregon, Abelina has built strong connections with fellow Guatemalans and individuals from various backgrounds. She feels a sense of belonging and safety in this welcoming community, in addition to a

better climate compared to California or Washington.

Although she only studied until the 6th grade, Abelina works diligently from 5 am to 7 pm every day. Abelina also harbors the aspiration of owning her own home, believing it would be a special milestone for her family.

She understands the value of education and hopes her children, who are currently 5 and 2 years old, will grow up healthy and pursue their dreams.

In times of hardship, Abelina allows herself to release emotions and seek support from loved ones.

She believes that through tears, one can wash away the burdens and find strength to carry on.

Abelina's resilience and determination shine through as she navigates the challenges of her new life.

Above all, Abelina hopes to be remembered as someone who cherished and preserved her Guatemalan heritage. One way Abelina maintains her culture is through *tejidas a mano de forma artesanal*, or hand-woven artisanal fabrics. She wants her children to understand and embrace their cultural roots, ensuring that the traditions and

values of her homeland are passed down through generations.

As Abelina continues to nurture her dreams and work tirelessly for a better future, her story serves as an inspiration to the community. Her courage, perseverance, and commitment to family and culture embody the spirit of resilience and hope. Abelina's journey is a testament to the power of determination, reminding us that no matter where we come from, we can build a brighter tomorrow.



Photo courtesy of Abelina



EMBRACING *Diversity*

Heather's Journey to Building a Strong Community

In a world where differences often divide us, it takes extraordinary individuals like Heather to remind us of the beauty and strength that lie in embracing diversity. Heather, a Toronto native, grew up in a vibrant multicultural setting, surrounded by various languages, clothing styles, and cuisines. From an early age, she recognized that these differences had the power to enrich a community rather than create divisions.

Heather's upbringing in a multicultural environment not only broadened her horizons but also instilled in her the values of love, compassion, and kindness. Growing up in a family with strong Christian faith, she witnessed firsthand the importance of uplifting others rather than tearing them down. With her father as a pastor and her mother as a teacher, Heather's household became a sanctuary where everyone was welcomed and valued.

Living in a community where English wasn't the first language for many residents, Heather developed a deep appreciation for diversity beyond just race. She recognized that embracing various lifestyles and thought

processes could create a better society for all. For Heather, the presence of different cultures and perspectives was not a threat but an opportunity to learn, grow, and foster understanding.

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Heather's realization of the need for inclusivity and unity was put to the test when her children started experiencing racial slurs at school in 2015. Disappointed by the school administration's lack of knowledge on how to address the issue, she decided to take matters into her own hands. Instead of simply complaining, Heather became the voice for those who were silenced, advocating for diverse perspectives and empowering the underrepresented.

Heather soon became the education committee co-chair for the local NAACP, which further sparked the world of student advocacy. This led her to volunteer then serve as staff with Kids for the Culture as a Student Advocacy Coordinator, and currently, Student Advocacy Director.

Kids For The Culture (www.kidsfortheculture.org) is a non-profit organization fostering positive racial identity development in Youth of African Descent.

Based in Willamette Valley, Oregon, Kids For The Culture recognizes that life in predominantly white Oregon can be especially hard for Black children being raised in rural areas. The lack of culturally-specific resources contribute to isolation and may impact their emotional well-being. Kids For The Culture creates spaces in which Black Oregonian children can form meaningful relationships, celebrate their identities, and thrive.

For more information, visit www.kidsfortheculture.org

Through this initiative, she helps to foster a sense of pride and self-worth in youth of African descent, providing them with the support they needed to thrive in a world that sometimes failed to recognize their value.

In addition to her work with Kids For The Culture, Heather and her husband took another step toward building a strong community by establishing a church in 2009. Their goal was not to impose their beliefs on others but to create a space where compassion, kindness, and respect were valued above all else. Their message was simple yet powerful: people of all backgrounds share a common desire for safety, happiness, and peace.

Despite their efforts to promote unity, Heather and her community faced their fair share of challenges. Insensitive comments such as, "So glad black history month is over so we can stop talking about you people," often served as painful reminders that there was still work to be done. Rather than being discouraged, Heather recognized these instances as opportunities to educate and enlighten those who harbored misconceptions.



People of all backgrounds share a common desire for safety, happiness, and peace.

One common misconception she encountered was the fear that promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) would result in the loss of resources and privilege for certain individuals. Heather emphasized that the goal of DEI initiatives was not to take away from others but to create a more just and harmonious society for all. In fact, she highlighted that when budget cuts occur, DEI programs are often among the first to be affected, illustrating the need for continuous support and investment in these essential initiatives.

Looking ahead, Heather envisions leaving behind a lasting legacy of unity and understanding. Her ultimate goal is to bring people together, bridging gaps and celebrating our shared humanity. She firmly believes that by valuing and embracing diversity in all its forms, we can create a community where every individual feels seen, heard, and respected.

Heather's journey serves as an inspiration to us all. She reminds us that we have the power to shape our communities and make a positive impact, no matter the challenges we face.

RISING *Above*

Fred's Journey with Faith, Resilience, and Community

In a world often filled with struggles and obstacles, there are individuals like Fred who rise above adversity, transform their lives, and become beacons of hope for the community. Born and raised in Harlem, New York, Fred moved to Oregon at the age of 50, accompanied by his wife, and three young boys, aged 5, 9, and 10. Unfortunately, shortly after their arrival, Fred's wife tragically passed away from breast cancer, leaving him to navigate a new chapter in his life as a single father.

In Oregon, Fred was met with an outpouring of support from the community. The kindness of strangers opened doors for him, and he even became the focus of a YMCA story that highlighted the power of unity and compassion. Through Section 8 housing, he found remarkable assistance that not only provided him with a secure home but also connected him with vital resources and opportunities. Fred recognized the significance of this help and used it as motivation to give back to his community.

For two years, Fred served as the Vice President of the [Linn Benton NAACP](#), advocating for equality and justice.



Photo courtesy of FHC

Inspired by his own experiences and driven by a desire to make a lasting impact, he founded the non-profit organization "Faith, Hope, and Charity" in 2017. Through this organization, Fred has transformed the lives of countless individuals, providing them with resources, support, and opportunities for

In addition, he sheds light on the systemic challenges faced by marginalized communities through his work with Tina Cortez on racial disparity and courageously confronts the issue of racism, emphasizing the need for change and representation at every level of society.

Inspired by his own experiences and driven by a desire to make a lasting impact, he founded the non-profit organization "Faith, Hope, and Charity" in 2017.

personal growth. Fred also sits on the board of the Criminal Justice Commission, where he actively contributes to discussions and decisions concerning the criminal justice system.

Fred attributes his strong work ethic to his father, a World War II veteran who tragically succumbed to alcohol addiction. At the age of 9, Fred began shining shoes, an endeavor that his father



Faith, Hope, and Charity (faithhopeandcharityinc.org) aims to move individuals from feeling stagnant or overwhelmed into thriving and successful partners through supportive coaching, mentoring, and resources.

In order to develop healthy and sustainable solutions amidst challenging times, Faith, Hope, and Charity offers a variety of services including Peer Support Specialists (PSS), Project Health Opportunity Prosperity and Empowerment (HOPE), Inclement Weather Hotel-Sheltering, and Mentorship & Advocacy.

As a diverse workforce, Faith, Hope, and Charity specializes in marginalized communities such as Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) and underprivileged populations including the generationally destitute.

supported by helping him build his first shoe-shine box. Growing up in Harlem, Fred experienced gun violence at an early age, and still carries a bullet in his body from when he was once shot. However, basketball played a crucial role in keeping Fred out of trouble during his youth, preventing him from becoming incarcerated like many of his peers.

Despite the challenges he has faced, Fred's resilience and faith have propelled him forward. He constantly reminds himself of the impact he can make through positive actions and the significance of living a purposeful life. He also worries about the future, especially regarding his middle son, who has a mental disability. Fred seeks solace in the belief that his

Success is not always immediate, but through perseverance and unwavering faith, we can achieve our goals.

He reflects on his journey with gratitude, and acknowledges the slow but steady progress he made in rebuilding his life.

Fred achieved a personal milestone when he purchased his own home four years ago.

His story serves as a powerful reminder that success is not always immediate, but through perseverance and unwavering faith, we can achieve our goals.

efforts will help shape a better world for his children. He exemplifies the idea that no matter our circumstances, we have the power to overcome adversity, uplift others, and build a better future. Fred's story serves as a reminder that, despite life's challenges, one person's determination can create a ripple effect of hope and empower countless others to overcome their own obstacles.



THANK YOU!

Zilo International Group, LLC is honored to have partnered with OCWCOG on this important project. It is our hope to build a long-term relationship and assist you in other areas as well.

ZILO
INTERNATIONAL GROUP

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