

We hope you will join us on January 15, 2020 for some preliminary, collaborative conversation about the establishment of a Disability Empowerment Center in Corvallis (working title). The Center is a burgeoning concept, and we would love your help in crystalizing the stakes, vision, need, and shape of such an organization. Loosely, the Center aims to be a *formal cultural and community space created both by and for people with disabilities and their allies*. More on the Center's basic premise and possibilities follow below.

**Please come to a strategic think tank session on Wednesday, January 15, 2020 from 5:30-7:00pm at the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center** (2638 NW Jackson Ave, near OSU's campus and on the bus line). The meeting will be scent free.

**Please RSVP by January 9, 2020, and also let us know of any access accommodations you might need.**

The purpose of these initial conversations is to gather key stakeholders to begin to parse how this idea can come to fruition. There are many resources around town already supporting people with disabilities and creating disability community. The goal of the Center is to enhance those initiatives, partner with organizational entities that might not have the ability to centralize disability in the work they do, and proudly establish a space in Corvallis explicitly dedicated to disability culture and community building. Please note: this is *not* a fundraising event. It is an informal chance to come together and gather collective wisdom about how an organization like this one might contribute to disability justice, equity, and world-building.

The CDEC might function in myriad ways. No doubt there are more:

- as a generative place of self-discovery where disabled people can explore all the facets of their complex identities from gender to race to sexuality to nationality
- as a robust cultural and community center that emblemizes, cultivates, and supports disability pride and invites people into disability identity and allyship
- as a safe space for coalition, community building, and social connection that brings together diverse populations for whom disability is a component of their life experience
- as a powerful site that centers disabled people and is a place off of society's margins that they can actively claim and shape as their own
- as an innovative educational site for peer-to-peer programing on topics as wide-ranging as gender, sex/uality, work, education, family, carework, housing, access, and healthcare navigation
- as an influential community presence that educates people about ableism and changes social misperceptions about people with disabilities
- as a publicly visible, go-to disability resource repository—both materially and online—that can help users identify and navigate discrete support systems
- as a key linchpin linking existing diverse mid-valley organizations that support people with disabilities
- as a visionary organization identifying, strategizing about, and filling support gaps in our community

- as a strategic partner in networking, connecting, and training community stakeholders invested in disability access and equity

We hope you will join us on January 15. If you cannot and/or have suggestions about folks who should attend, please send that info along. It is very important that the Center (and its incorporate as diverse a group of disabled people and their allies as possible. We want to ensure that everyone is represented and has a place at the table as we formulate this plan further.

Thanks, and looking forward to hearing from you!

In solidarity,

Allison Hobgood and Abby Mulcahy