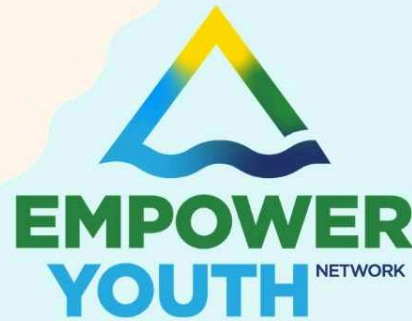


February 2026 Newsletter

Heart of the Valley Gala, Youth
Success Mentoring Opportunities,
Valley Innovation Project, and more!



Letter from the Executive Director

Greetings from Empower Youth Network!

This newsletter provides regular updates on ways to get involved and support our students and families in the Snoqualmie Valley. How can you help? Great question! Beginning with our **Valley Innovation Project** in March, and our **Heart of the Valley Gala** in May, there are so many roles you can support. And we always welcome new mentors - who truly can make a difference for local youth on a weekly basis.

Our partnership with all of you in the community is essential, and many of you have the opportunity to work side by side with our amazing staff. Our strength as an organization lies in the depth of experience of this team. In this month's edition, I am thrilled to announce the following new roles and responsibilities for several of our team members:

Heather Downing, most recently serving as Youth Success Mentoring Program Manager who has been with EYN since 2018, has been named **Director of Programs and Impact**. In her new role, Heather will work closely with me in representing EYN's program work and impact throughout the community. Since Heather has been such a key member for the success of our mentoring program, we will be hiring one additional Youth Success Mentoring Coordinator to support our work in the Riverview School District. Please look forward to more information about this role coming soon! Current staff member Kathy Hyland will remain the Youth Success

Mentoring Coordinator for the Snoqualmie Valley School District.

Michelle John, who joined EYN in 2021 and most recently served as Grant Coordinator on the Fund Development team, has been named **Fund Development Manager** and will oversee all fundraising and grant activities, working alongside longtime EYN staff member **Carol Van Noy**, whose title has been updated to **Business Engagement Manager**. Carol has been with EYN since 2018, consistently supporting all fundraising efforts and representing EYN with our local businesses and sponsors.

Jami Au, who has been with EYN since 2018 as Office Manager, is now EYN's **Finance and Operations Manager**. Jami will oversee EYN's budgeting and accounting. She will also oversee office administrative functions, utilizing her organizational talents.

Please join me in congratulating these dedicated individuals for their ongoing commitment to our mission. For a full list of our entire staff along with their backgrounds and experience, please visit our website here: empoweryouthnetwork.org/staff/. I am proud of our entire team and excited to continue our work with our amazing partners and community members.

In partnership – Helene Wentink, Executive Director



Gala Tickets on Sale Now!



The annual Heart of the Valley Gala, held each spring, supports ALL of our programming as our biggest fundraising event of the year and one very special, elegant, fun evening. In addition to supporting our Substance Use and Suicide Prevention efforts, the money raised at our gala in May supports the following key programs that support those efforts: Youth Engagement, Community Outreach and Education, TRACE Care and Resource Coordination, Youth Success Mentoring, Pathways to Employment Success, and Weekend Power Packs.

We hope you will join us to celebrate and support our life-saving work for youth and families across Snoqualmie Valley on **Saturday, May 16** from **5-10:30 p.m.** at **Snoqualmie Casino & Hotel**.

Reserve Your Seats

Become a Sponsor

Donate an item!

Can't attend? Check out the option to make a cash donation!

Be Part of Valley Innovation Project



We want you to be a part of the 2026 Valley Innovation Project! Students can sign up and businesses/professionals can as well at empoweryouthnetwork.org/event/vip-2026/.

? What is the Valley Innovation Project (VIP) ?

✍ A week-long opportunity in March for high school students from Snoqualmie Valley and Riverview School Districts to solve business challenges at local organizations

✍ The Business Case Study in 2024 was Remlinger Farms

✍ In 2026, we are excited to announce that we are expanding the industries included with FOUR business case studies (featuring **Mambe Blanket Co.**, **Snoqualmie Valley Candle Company** and **Remlinger Farms**)

? How does VIP work ?

💡 Students will be matched with a business to form a team of 5-8 members

💡 Examples of challenges: providing marketing solutions, streamlining operations, finding ways to engage new audiences, flood recovery, etc.

💡 Students will receive resource guides with strategies and tools

💡 Teams will be paired with local, experienced advisors

💡 Prizes and awards available, winning team has a chance to win scholarships to Saint Martin's University

💡 Food/transportation will be provided

? When is VIP ?

VIP will begin on Friday, March 20 and end on Friday, March 27 Throughout that week, teams will work independently to prepare for 03/27.

Launch Day | 03/20 from 12 - 3:30 p.m.

Business challenges will be presented, students will be matched and teams will be assembled, advisors will be assigned

Competition Day | 03/27 from 12 - 3:30 p.m.

Teams will present solutions, and a winner will be selected

Be a part of this special opportunity to empower the next generation of business leaders with local, real-world experience!

[Learn More About VIP](#)

[Student Sign-Up Form](#)

[Advisors, Judges and Volunteers Needed](#)



VALLEY INNOVATION PROJECT
Friday, March 20 - Friday, March 27 2026

Brought to you by:

Logos: Snoqualmie Innovation Center, Empower Youth, Snoqualmie Valley School District, Riverview School District, Carnation Chamber of Commerce, Pualliance, Snoqualmie Valley School District.

Your ideas. Real businesses. One epic week.
Solve real-world business challenges at local organizations!

Youth Success Mentors Needed



Youth across Snoqualmie Valley need you!
Meet once a week. 30 mins - 1 hr. Make a difference.

Logos: NQMS Gold Partner, 2024-2027.

Photo: A group of diverse adults sitting around a table, smiling, representing potential mentors.

Part of what makes YSM a **NQMS Gold Partner** with **MENTOR Washington** is our matching process. Right now, we have specific needs for mentor matches:

Riverview School District - 4 women, 2 men and 1 woman that is bilingual (languages: Spanish and English)

Snoqualmie Valley School District - 3 men, 1 woman

When students connect with mentors who look like them, speak their language, or share similar life experiences, it sends a powerful message about what's possible.

Across both districts, this mix of identities and backgrounds helps students feel like they belong, and that belonging opens the door to confidence, connection, and growth.

Want to learn more? Stop by an upcoming Mentor Meet Up!

- March 25 from 10 - 11:30 a.m. at Culturas International Cafe, Main St NE Suite 101, Duvall
- April 1 from 3:30 - 5 p.m. at Snoqualmie Ice Cream, 8102 Railroad Ave, Snoqualmie

Learn More About Youth Success Mentoring

Weekend Power Pack Updates



It's been an exciting and energizing month for Weekend Power Packs! We're incredibly grateful for the amazing supporters who stepped up to assemble packs and donate much-needed supplies.

We kicked things off in late January with eleven enthusiastic Girl Scouts and their troop leaders, who packed an impressive 250 Weekend Power Packs. Then, in early February, the wonderful team at EvergreenHealth spent an afternoon putting together 400 packs—complete with a fun competition. To round out the month, a BNI group assembled 200 additional packs, and a fantastic group of community members hosted a lively packing-and-dance party to help us finish strong.

Each week, EYN distributes about 230 Power Packs to students who need them most. Partnerships like these ensure students across the Riverview School District have reliable access to the support they deserve.

If you or your organization is interested in participating in a packing party, please contact us below.

Together, we can make a difference to keep kids fed.

Contact Us

We would also like to give a huge thank you to everyone who has donated via our Amazon Wish List. **If you would like to purchase items on our Wish List, please do so below.**

Thank you for your continued support!

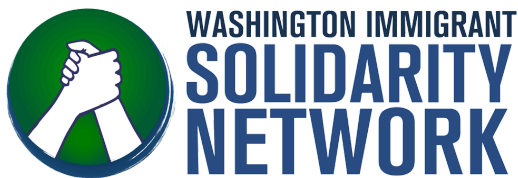
Purchase Wishlist Items

Free Upcoming Youth Events



Event Details

Some Useful Resources for Today



The WAISN Deportation **Defense Hotline** is the only statewide resource dedicated to supporting all Washingtonians, regardless of immigration status.

The Fair Fight Bond Fund helps release people from immigration detention, to reunite them with their families and allow them to pursue their immigration cases outside of detention, which increases their chances of a successful case.



Project Access Northwest's goal is to help uninsured and underinsured individuals in our service area gain access to the right mental health professional — or emerging health professional — to meet their needs.

Patients may now enroll themselves in the **Pro-Bono Counseling program.**

What resources or work should we share in the next newsletter?

Please contact Communication and Engagement Coordinator Maddy Horn at **maddy@empoweryouthnetwork.org**.

About Empower Youth Network

Empower Youth Network's mission is to promote and inspire youth to lead safe, healthy, and successful lives. The Network helps build, support, and coordinate community leadership to promote health and wellness through effective strategies to make the Snoqualmie Valley a place where all residents thrive.

Check out our **[website](#)** to learn more.

Copyright © 2026 Empower Youth Network, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.