

January 2026 Newsletter

Free Laser Tag Night, Gala Kick Off,
Valley Innovation Project,
Mentor Month Recap, and more!



Letter from the Executive Director

Happy January! We have jumped into 2026 with energy and enthusiasm for our work supporting youth in the Snoqualmie Valley. Special thanks to all who helped promote Mentoring Month, including our cities and partners at the Riverview and Snoqualmie Valley School Districts. We also had great support for our Needing Help is Human/Necesitar Ayuda es Humano campaign - helping us all break the stigma in asking for help! Read more about these important initiatives and how you can support our work in this newsletter.

I would like to personally invite you to join us for the kickoff for Heart of the Valley Gala planning on Wed., Feb. 4 at Snoqualmie Inn! It is a fun evening with food and conversation about all the ways you can support our most important fundraiser on May 16. Come on out and bring a friend! RSVP link in article below.

I am so excited to continue officially in my role as Executive Director at EYN. This monthly newsletter is a great way to keep up to date about our work - please help us share the word. Your impact and support matters and I am so grateful for the ways that this community shows up for our youth and families. You can always contact me directly at helene@empoweryouthnetwork.org to learn more.



With thanks for being part of our community,

Helene Wentink

Helene Wentink

Executive Director of Empower Youth Network

Thank you to the Valley Voice with Jessica Self for a great conversation recently. You can listen to Helene's episode on the podcast below!

Episode 16 "Rooted in Community: Helene Wentink on Empowering Youth & Families in the Snoqualmie Valley"

Gala Kick Off Time is Here



Volunteers needed! Help us plan another gala the whole valley looks forward to every year to continue our life-saving work for valley youth.

Join us on **Wednesday, February 4** from **5:30 - 7:30 p.m** at Snoqualmie Inn (35228 Snoqualmie Parkway, Snoqualmie, WA 98065) as we kick off planning, procurement and MORE for our Heart of the Valley Gala coming up on Saturday, May 16 at Snoqualmie Casino. Learn how you can get involved and support this annual event benefitting EYN. Bring your ideas and willingness to learn more about our biggest event of the year and we'll provide snacks, beverages and a great atmosphere!

RSVP for Kick Off

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 businesses (to be announced in February)

? 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, 2026 and end on Friday, March 27, 2026. 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

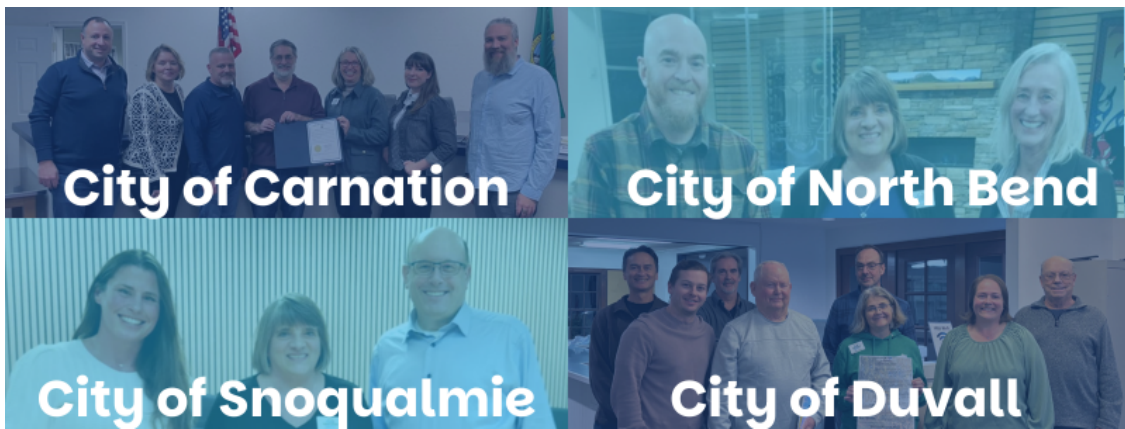
Brought to you by:

Your ideas. Real businesses. One epic week.

Solve real-world business challenges at local organizations!

Mentoring Month Recap



Thank you to all of our supporters who celebrated National Mentoring Month with us this January! Special shout outs go to our friends at the City of Carnation, City of North Bend, City of Snoqualmie, City of Duvall, Snoqualmie Valley School District and Riverview School District.

Being a part of our NQMS Gold Standard Youth Success Mentoring program is easier than you might think! Can you meet with a student once a week at school for 30 minutes - 1 hour to play games, get creative, and connect?

[Learn More About Youth Success Mentoring](#)



Learn More About District Bonds and Levies for February 10 Ballot

February 10 is Election Day!

Cast your vote to empower youth
all across Snoqualmie Valley.

Empower Youth Network asks that families and neighbors in both the Riverview School District area and the Snoqualmie Valley School District area review the resources provided below in order to be fully informed and ready to vote on **Election Day, February 10.**

Riverview School District Levy Renewals & Bond Info

Recording | RSD407 Community Information Night - Levy
Renewals & Bond

Complete Bond and Levy Info

Riverview School District Levy Renewals & Bond Info

FAQ on SVSD Levy Renewals

Short Video - 2026 Renewal Levies

Needing Help is Human
Necesitar Ayuda es Humano



Thank you to all of the business, organizations and individuals who shared the Needing Help is Human and Necesitar Ayuda es Humano messages this season! It was great to see the messages on shirts in the valley and to have discussions on how to break the stigma in asking for help.

For more information, please visit the links below.



Needing Help is Human

Necesitar Ayuda es Humano

TRACE Care Team - Family Resources



Thanks again to...

Riverview School District, Snoqualmie Valley School District, Cedarcrest High School, Mount Si High School, **PhysioCare Physical Therapy**, **Kelsey's Koffee** and **Duvall Eyecare**.

Weekend Power Packs Thanks Talking Rain



Empower Youth Network and EYN's Weekend Power Pack program extends our deepest gratitude to **Talking Rain Beverage Company** for their incredible generosity in donating 1,000 Weekend Power Packs!

Each week, EYN provides roughly 200 Power Packs to students in need, helping ensure consistent access to nutritious meals. Partnerships like this enable us to make sure that students in the Riverview School District are provided for.

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

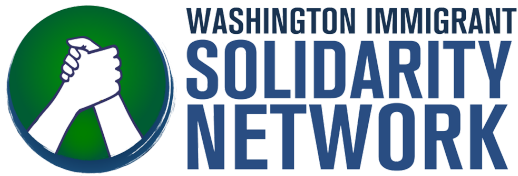
Free Upcoming Youth Events



[Register Here](#)

Laser Tag Night is a free event that is open to youth ages 11-18. While the venue for this event is provided by SVA Church, this is an event organized & brought to you exclusively by Empower Youth Network.

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.



The Farmer Flood Relief Fund is now accepting applications. The first round of applications opens, January 16, 2026, and will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Anticipated award decisions for the first round will be made by February 15, 2026. Applications will continue to be accepted through March 1, 2026, and may be extended if additional funding becomes available. This page will be updated regularly with information about upcoming award rounds, timelines, and available resources.

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.

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