

COLUMBIA LEARNING CENTER

PO Box 1094 • St. Helens, Oregon 97051 •
A non-Profit 501-C Organization Tax Id# 93-1165080

December 11, 2024

Mayor Scholl
Councilor President Chilton
Councilor Gundersen
Councilor Hubbard
Councilor Sundeen
City of St. Helens
265 Strand Street
St. Helens, OR 97051

Dear Mayor and City Council,

The Columbia Learning Center, owner of the Columbia Center, enthusiastically supports the expansion of the St. Helens Public Library Makerspace into the adjacent offices recently vacated by Columbia Economic Team. The Makerspace provides an important service to our community by training and making available a wide range of equipment and other support to the community.

The St. Helens Public Library has been a priority for the Columbia Center since its inception in 1994. The Columbia Learning Center, previously the Columbia Foundation, built the Columbia Center with the mission of enhancing lifelong learning and to build permanent bridges connecting all groups of the community. This was accomplished through building a vastly improved library, providing access to technology through a computer lab and classes as well as creating spaces where the community can come together to meet. As time and access to technology has progressed, we have adapted to the changing needs of the community. With the expansion of available internet services and home computers we changed our focus from providing tech services to a focus on lifelong learning through our Chance to Become Scholarships. To date we have funded 302 \$5,000 scholarships valued at over \$1.5 million to Columbia County students. With an eye on our continued efforts to achieve our mission, we believe that the expansion of The Makerspace into the currently vacant offices is a perfect match to the long-term mission of The Columbia Learning Center and will be a highly valued community asset.

Diane Kem, the original visionary of The Columbia Learning Center, would love the idea of Makerspace and additional benefits and opportunities it provides for our communities.

Sincerely,
Marion Christensen