



## Vida Family Rebounds from Holiday Fire, Ready to Start New Year in New Home, New Community



Jessica and her 10-year-old son, Rudy.

In a year of unprecedented hardships, Jessica McClurg radiates positivity.

“Remaining positive is how I move forward,” explains Jessica.

Jessica and her family were forced to evacuate their home in Vida in September when the Holiday Farm fire ravaged the McKenzie River area. While their house was spared, the fire destroyed many of the homes and vacation rentals where Jessica worked as a housekeeper, leaving her unemployed.

Jessica and her son, Rudy, who experiences a disability, lived in a local hotel for more than two months due to the smoke damage to their home. With no job and limited resources, Jessica turned to the Arc Lane County for support.

“Eating out three meals a day is expensive, especially when I didn’t have a job,” says Jessica. “We were thrilled to receive food boxes from the CARES Center.”

The Community Aligned Resources for Eugene/Springfield (CARES) Center is a collaboration between The Arc Lane County, Families Connected, FOOD for Lane County and the Community Alliance for Lane County. In addition to food boxes, the CARES Center provides wraparound supports to people affected by COVID-19 and the wildfires.

Thanks to many helping hands, Jessica and Rudy are ready to start life anew in Eugene. They are getting settled in a new rental house, and the CARES Center was able to help Jessica and Rudy replace some of the their furnishings that were damaged from the smoke. Jessica says that after so much loss, it was wonderful to see Rudy so excited to pick out a new bed.

In spite of all the challenges, Jessica remains upbeat and intent on paying it forward. She has been reaching out to other parents in the McKenzie River area who have children with disabilities to make sure they have access to peer support through Families Connected and other resources to help them bounce back.

“All I want to do now is find a job I love and continue to pay it forward,” says Jessica.