



# EXCHANGE OVERVIEW

**Purpose:** The Urban/Rural Exchange is Part 2 of the Community Oregon Program when Community Oregon participants visit one another's communities for a day or a weekend (ideally as part of an overnight homestay, if possible). The power of place is a central theme in the Community Oregon program, so immersing yourself in a community substantially different from your own is intended to promote learning in several domains, including intellectual, emotional, and somatic/ physical. Participants are encouraged to notice what they are experiencing on all of these levels and "ways of knowing".

## **Primary Activities:**

- 1) Local hosts will share a bit of their daily life with their Community Oregon colleagues, and what is most important to them about their communities. Community Oregon visitors are not intended to be treated as "tourists", so hosts should not feel pressure to "show them the sights," unless they are places that have real importance to the local community in ways not always obvious to outsiders.
- 2) Visitors will continue to deepen dialogue around questions\* developed in the course of the Community Oregon Camp (Part 1 of the program). In addition, they will make notes about what assumptions or preconceptions they held going into their visit, and then compare and contrast those with what they discovered in the course of their community immersion experience. Visitors will develop a 5-7 minute presentation consisting of anything, including photos, video clips, sound recordings, quotations, physical objects, etc. that help illustrate what they learned during their visit. This presentation will be made at the September 21 Community Oregon Expo in Portland. [Note: If you are visiting a community with other members of your group and wish to make a joint presentation, you may do so provided everyone in your group has a speaking part at the Expo.]
- 3) Use this unique experience to practice your Dialogue skills with members of the host community as opportunities arise. Remember, the primary goal of Dialogue is not agreement, but deeper understanding. Key practices to keep in mind:
  - Listen to understand rather than to respond or refute
  - Respect others' truth (while helping them reveal their assumptions)
  - Speak your truth (while revealing your own underlying assumptions)
  - Suspend judgment (or turn *judgment* into *inquiry*)

*Tip: If you get stuck or hear something you strongly disagree with, try saying something like "tell me more..." or "say more about that" to create an opening for further information and context to be provided by your conversation partner while you stay in listening mode.*

\*See <https://healthydemocracy.org/communityoregon/2019participants/> to review your Community Oregon Urban/Rural Dialogue Questions from Camp