Welcome to the Art and Neuroscience of Behavioral Change!

I’m Bill Griesar, and I teach neuroscience along with an artist and fellow educator, Jeff Leake. We started NW Noggin, a partnership for graduate and undergraduate students at Portland State University, Washington State University in Vancouver, and Oregon Health & Science University that Jeff will tell you more about in a moment...

Noggin volunteers develop their own arts-integrated outreach programs for public K-12 classrooms and venues like this, to inform and enthuse students, many of them struggling in school, and the broader community about what current, cutting edge research tells us about how our developing brains relate to our behavior.

So today we have - in this room - graduates and undergraduates from PSU, WSU, and OHSU, who explore the link between brain development and behavioral change. You are your brain, and these young people are discovering how your experiences literally change how your brain cells and brain networks wire together, allowing you to remember who you are, attend, perceive, speak, comprehend, respond intuitively and make those daily, complex social decisions...

We’re going to highlight some specific research about why some behaviors are so difficult to change, with a short presentation by John Harkness, a post doc in Barb Sorg’s Neuroscience lab at WSU Vancouver, and Kindra Crick, a celebrated Northwest artist who is fascinated by the intersection of science and art. Kindra’s work gives powerful visual expression to the process of scientific inquiry and discovery, as you can see in her piece hanging here today...

Around the room you’ll also have the opportunity to speak with Jaboa Lake and Maria Villareal from Kimberly Kahn’s Psychology lab at Portland State University, who both study the exceptionally topical phenomenon of implicit bias, which influences our social decision making; Binyam Nardos and Marc Rudolph from Damien Fair’s Behavioral Neuroscience lab at OHSU, and Justin Caouette from the TRAC lab at OHSU, who are exploring how the brain changes during infancy and adolescence, both in terms of structure (how networks of brain regions wire together), and function (how that wiring relates directly to how people behave)...

I’d like to introduce Jeff Leake...