You Can Bring Laughter and Learning for Youth

You can give young people with disabilities the chance to build confidence, learn, and laugh with new friends when they head back to school this fall.

David’s developmental disabilities affect his balance and make it hard to for him to reach out and connect with friends. For years, the words “back-to-school” caused him anxiety and dread.

But that changed when David joined SAIL’s after-school Adventure Club.

SAIL’s after-school programs are designed for youth of all abilities to get outside and have fun with their friends. Adaptive equipment like specialized bikes help David and other youth try new activities. Plus, the accepting, considerate environment builds confidence and encourages peer support to take route.

In fact, it’s often in the most challenging moments, when people are wet, cold or grumpy, that you see participants step up and create positive energy for the whole group. Frustration turns to laughter, and the group finds the ability to carry on through the support of one another.

Your support will give Cherish and Keenan a place where they are accepted and have fun with new friends after school.

With your help, “Back-to-School” will mean laughter, learning and new friends for David and many other youth who experience disabilities. Consider a donation today!

You helped provide a “lifeline” for Susan following her stroke. Thank you!

“After my stroke I didn’t know what was going to happen to me. Having people who share their experiences gave me the strength to continue on.”

“After I had my stroke I didn’t know what was going to happen to me,” says Susan. “I learned that I’m still the person I was, and having people who share their experiences gave me the strength to continue on.”

When Denise reflects on her mother’s recovery, it is your support that stands out. “I cannot put into words how thankful I am that we have SAIL. My mom’s experiences with SAIL have made her the person she is today.”

Thank you for being a vital part of Susan’s story. For more inspiring stories of how you’ve helped build a community of peer support throughout Southeast, see page 3.
You Helped Build Skills, Confidence & Trust

Karl was nervous about returning to SAIL’s Summer Work Program this year. Although he thought he could do the work, he was worried about having to interact with new people. Karl pushed himself to do his best and today, he says, “I have stronger bonds with the people I worked with.”

Your support helped SAIL manage summer work programs for at-risk youth in Juneau and Haines. Besides working on meaningful projects like building trails and maintaining a youth vegetable garden, students learned lifelong job skills like punctuality, clear communication, and reliability, which will help them find success in high school and when they are ready to join the workforce.

Youth worked together throughout the summer and relied on each other for more than just shoveling and weeding. They learned to listen to one another, helped solve problems together and built trust.

In Haines, students were led by a peer mentor, who also learned the ins and outs of being a leader among her peers. “It was awkward in the beginning,” according to Gabrielle, the peer mentor. The group had to agree on expected behaviors and learn to trust one another when they faced challenging projects. “Now we are cohesive and work well together.”

“Building trails was hard, but we worked with what we had and we stuck with it.”

Thank you for making this meaningful work possible with your support. You helped to build connections, confidence and new skills for young adults in our communities. The benefits will be felt for many years to come.

You Helped Birdie Build Hope

Your support of SAIL brought people living with disabilities together to learn, share and build hope.

When you’re not feeling well, you go to the doctor, right? You might leave with a prescription, or instructions on how to take better care of yourself. But what about those lingering questions, and the feelings of isolation that can come with a new diagnosis? That’s where peer support comes in.

Your generosity helped people facing related challenges share their experiences, and solve problems together. In Juneau the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) support group is a regular gathering of adults who have experienced stroke, brain injury from an accident, or other traumatic event.

Martha is a regular at the TBI gatherings. “What I thought would be just a support group is really an educational gathering,” she says. “Each session I attend adds another tool to my toolbox, expanding how I can successfully navigate the world with a TBI. Fellow survivors have real and user-friendly tips every time and I have been able to help others as well; it’s a trusted community. I always leave happy and encouraged.”

Your generosity also helped support the weekly Behavioral Health support group in Ketchikan.

“Birdie, the group’s co-facilitator, knows from personal experience how important it is to feel heard and understood. Birdie is SAIL’s Peer Support Specialist and has lived with mental illness throughout her life. “To know other people who are walking the same journey makes me feel hopeful,” she says. Birdie’s goal is that each person leaves the meeting feeling better than when they came in.”