

Collaboration - It's At Our Core

Empowerment. Accessibility. Integrity. Inclusion. Collaboration. SAIL's core values are at the heart of how - and why - we do the work that we do. At each all-staff meeting we focus our conversations around one of these core values in an effort to celebrate our accomplishments and deepen our understanding of SAIL's mission and goals. Last month, those conversations centered around collaboration.

We were struck by the stories of collaboration amongst our staff. Those successes were made possible because of the work and care of partner organizations, volunteers, donor generosity and family members. You'll get to read about some of them here in our spring newsletter. More are being made every day!

As always, one of our most important collaborations is with you, our donors. Your faith in us, and support for the work of inspiring personal independence has helped broaden SAIL's reach, and strengthened our impact throughout Southeast Alaska. Thank you for being part of the family!

Partners Come Together for Student Success

SAIL offers Pre-Employment Transition Service classes to high school students in Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan in collaboration with the State of Alaska's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and local high schools. Classes for students with disabilities cover a wide range of topics geared toward gaining skills to navigate the world after high school. Topics like how to open and manage a bank account, how to navigate public transportation, and budgeting for expenses like food and rent work together to build know-how and confidence.

The classes also cover career exploration, with field trips to local businesses, mock interviews, and guest presenters who talk about their jobs. In addition to tasks like how to make your resume, we explore soft employment skills like collaborative problem-solving. In Juneau ORCA organizes recreational activities, facilitates team building games, and leads students at the SAIL Challenge Course.

This program has contributed to a strong partnership between SAIL and the school districts we work with to craft the classes and identify the right mix of students. In many cases, teachers and para educators join the classes, where they are learning about inclusion principles for students with disabilities, and contributing to SAIL's understanding of what students need to be successful. A win-win!



"I like that SAIL comes right into school to share with us, and that we can follow up outside of class for more job support."

Working Together to Live Well in Haines A conversation with Bill and Janine

Bill A. loves gardening, painting and watching old westerns. Bill lost his wife Charlotte in 2020, and now lives alone with his dog and cat.

Bill and SAIL's Independent Living Advocate Janine have worked together on many of Bill's goals to help him remain independent and live safely in his home, including finding help and funding to keep up with shoveling when heavy snow threatened his roof, filing applications for COVID relief money, and working to ensure his social security payments were correct so he can support himself.

Janine and Bill chatted about their work together this month. A portion of their conversation is below.



Janine: "Bill, you embrace and embody independent living. You do what you can do on your own, and know when to ask for help or assistance about things you're unsure about. You're a phenomenal self advocate."

Bill: "I'm trying to do things I CAN do...SAIL is able to understand my disabilities – I have disabilities in writing, and disabilities that don't allow me to take care of certain things – and there was a plumbing leak in the house that I used to be able to fix when I was a younger guy, but I couldn't crawl underneath [the house], and I didn't have any money to hire a contractor. If it wasn't for SAIL, I wouldn't have running water in my home anymore."

Janine: "One thing I appreciate about working with you, Bill, is that you always know what you can do, and what you need help with, and you're very clear about asking for help for certain things..."

Bill: "So in other words, you admire my stubborn but persistent attitude!"

Janine: [laughs] "Well, it's perfect, though, because we make a good team and we collaborate together to get the job done!"

Bill: "SAIL's like the cane that helps the elder with the support that they need. Most people aren't able to say 'I need help'. And I'll tell you something, as a senior, that's a big turning point in your life. For you guys to be there, wow. It's incredibly helpful. Thank you."



A special thank you to SAIL's 2021 Pick.Click.Give. donors, who contributed nearly \$13,000 to SAIL. You are helping remove barriers so seniors and people with disabilities can live independently!

It's not too late to Pick.Click.Give for SAIL! Even if you've filed for your 2022 PFD, you can add or change your Pick.Click.Give contributions through August 31st at pfd.alaska.gov.

Building Trust and Skills on the Slopes



One of SAIL's oldest collaborations is with Eaglecrest Ski Area in Juneau, where SAIL's ORCA team works with Eaglecrest and crew of enthusiastic volunteers to ensure the mountain is accessible to athletes of all ages and abilities. Participants include youth and adults with developmental, mental health, and physical disabilities, and can arrange for lessons through the ski school on weekends during the season.

Eaglecrest supports this popular program with rental vouchers for participants, lift tickets and office space in the lodge during ski season. Thanks to this generosity, all volunteers who spend a session with a SAIL consumer receive a complimentary ticket to ski another day on the mountain.

SAIL's volunteers and staff are trained in effective methods to help participants gain the confidence and skills to ski independently.

This winter, SAIL board member Ellen Pavitt, who has a spinal cord injury and uses a wheelchair, started learning to ski using a sit ski with hand held outriggers. When asked what motivated her to take to the slopes **Ellen told us about her grandchildren and said, "I don't want to sit in the lodge and watch my grandkids ski. I want to be out there with them!"** We were thrilled to have the opportunity to help Ellen achieve that goal.

Ellen put in the work at weekly lessons. She started with a seat assist, where a staff person holds on to the sit ski while skiing from behind. This assistance virtually eliminates the risk of falling, and allows the skier to gradually get the feel of the sit ski. After a couple of lessons Ellen progressed to skiing with tethers, and is close to skiing independently. "I think this will be a good start when my grandkids come up," she said.

Another exciting collaboration was between SAIL offices this spring. SAIL consumers in Ketchikan and Sitka traveled to Juneau for a four-day ski trip that included two days on the slopes, a pizza party and a movie night, complete with popcorn bar. This was the first ORCA trip since before 2020, and both new and experienced skiers had a blast learning skills and making new friends.



Abbey Learns to Ski. Abbey Greer is SAIL's Juneau ORCA Coordinator and JV/Americorps member. In addition to organizing recreation programming like painting sessions, climbing, and bowling outings, Abbey has spent her winter weekends up at Eaglecrest helping out with the ski program, and learning to ski herself.

"Coming from the warm winters in Alabama, I was nervous and excited to embark into my first ski season. Getting used to those boots is no joke! I fell a lot during training and wasn't sure I could be a big help to our consumers, but I quickly learned my role was valuable. During ski season, I act as a ski guide, meaning I ski with consumers as a buddy instead of attempting to teach them in structured lessons. Many of our consumers are great skiers that are eager to share their knowledge. My lack of experience did not keep me from being a good ski guide, in fact it helped me be a better one because I was able to listen and learn how to ski directly from our consumers. I can't thank the consumers enough for welcoming me and teaching me all they know about skiing."

Creativity and Camaraderie Return! SAIL Collaborates to Restart Ceramics Classes

SAIL Sitka recently teamed up with the Sitka Fine Arts Camp (SFAC) to coordinate ceramics workshops for seniors and people of any ability. The workshops took an open-studio approach in which participants chose what techniques and projects they wanted to pursue, like wheel throwing, hand building, and sculpting, while instructors provided guidance and support.

There was a great diversity of throwers, sculptors, and hand builders that were eager to continue learning, experiment with new techniques, and make art in community. Participants saw each of their projects to completion, from wedging and throwing (or sculpting) the clay, to trimming and glazing their final pieces.

Ceramics is a chance to build community and to engage in learning a fun and unique skill. Workshops were led by SAIL's Jesuit Volunteer Matt Millado and volunteers in the community. Matt was interested in restarting the ceramics program because he enjoys making art and had previous ceramics experience from college. Participants were grateful for a COVID-safe opportunity to make art with new and old friends, and appreciated the free-form nature of the class that allowed them to pursue independent projects. Sitka Fine Arts Camp partnered with SAIL by providing materials for the classes. **A previous collaboration helped get kilns and improve accessibility at SFAC, bringing the partnership full circle.**



"It's been so great to gather every week to meet new folks, renew old friendships, & create fun things out of clay. And the guys helping & guiding us are the best!"

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Training
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accessibility
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Individual donations to SAIL provide the flexible funding that helps us stay responsive to emerging needs in our communities, and makes intensive one-on-one work with consumers possible. There are many ways to support SAIL to fit your means and priorities:

- **Give online at www.sailinc.org.** A monthly donation is convenient and a great way to include giving in your budget.
- **Give through your retirement plan's** Required Minimum Distribution, or make a planned gift from your IRA. Ask your advisor about the benefits of giving directly to SAIL.
- **Direct your gift to a local office or program** you love, or make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one. We'll send an acknowledgement of your gift to the recipient(s) of your choosing!