

SAIL Spring 2026 Donor Newsletter

Plain Text Edition

WHERE COLLABORATION MEETS CARE: A SAFETY SOLUTION FOR YAKUTAT

When Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) team member Sarah traveled to Yakutat to connect with local veterans through the VOICE program, she uncovered a much bigger need. What began as a relationship building visit quickly turned into something more, as conversations with community partners revealed challenges that extended beyond her original purpose.

While meeting with Mark from the Yakutat Community Health Center, an elder and disability advocate, she realized that traditional life alert systems weren't working in the community due to limited connectivity, leaving many without a reliable way to call for help. This is serious in any situation, but in a remote community like Yakutat, where access to immediate resources is limited, timely intervention is even more critical.

Determined to find a solution, Sarah began researching options, quickly running into barriers. Many devices wouldn't ship to Alaska, and others relied heavily on strong internet or cellular service that Yakutat doesn't consistently have, making them impractical for real use in the community.

Through persistence, she identified a potential solution through LifeStation, a device called the Sidekick. Working collaboratively with the company and Mark on the ground, they arranged for the device to be tested throughout Yakutat to see if it could truly meet the community's needs.

The results were clear, it worked everywhere they tested it! Because of this success, the Yakutat Community Health Center secured 20 devices to distribute to community members who need them most, creating immediate impact.

What started as a visit to connect with veterans became a community wide solution. It's a powerful example of how collaboration, persistence, and listening can turn one conversation into meaningful, life changing support.

VOICE

VETERAN DIRECTED CARE

VETERAN-DIRECTED CARE or VOICE is a collaboration of the Alaska VA and DIRECTED CARE Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL). **YOU ARE IN CHARGE!** You or your designated representative will direct the support and services you need. Do you want to learn more about VOICE? Reach out to us!

SAIL CAMP SEASON KICKS OFF IN SITKA AND BEYOND

Camp season at Southeast Alaska Independent Living Inc. (SAIL) is underway across Southeast Alaska, offering youth hands-on experiences that build confidence, independence, and job readiness.

In Sitka, we kicked off with the Youth Outdoor Skills & Safety Camp. Students practiced teamwork, communication, and problem solving through real world activities. From emergency response training at the Sitka Fire Hall to outdoor safety learning with the Sitka Conservation Society. They also spent two days with the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA), learning CPR, first aid, and cold water survival skills in hands-on, team-based training.

This is just the start! SAIL Camps are designed to take place throughout the summer in Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka. Reach out to your local office for more details. These camps are vital programs for the youth in our communities. Your support ensures these opportunities remain accessible for a diverse population of youth, many of whom rely on SAIL's programs to build skills, confidence, and pathways to independence. Consider donating to SAIL today!

WILDLIFE CRUISE FUNDRAISERS

Join us for our Annual Wildlife Cruises, where breathtaking views meet an amazing goal, supporting personal independence for seniors and people with disabilities throughout Southeast Alaska.

- Ketchikan: May 2 | 6–8 PM
- Juneau: May 8 | 6–8 PM
- Sitka: May 15 | 5:30–8:30 PM

Space is limited so get your ticket today. Can't attend but you still want to support SAIL? Sponsor a SAIL participant to go at the reservation link: www.sailinc.org/cruises WILDLIFE CRUISE FUNDRAISERS This Event is Sponsored by Allen Marine Tours, Supporting Southeast Alaska Through Tourism.

ORCA'S UNFORGETTABLE ADVENTURE IN ORLANDO

In November, a spirited group of Outdoor Recreation and Community Access (ORCA) participants from Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan and SAIL staff set off for an exciting adventure in Orlando. After navigating connections through Seattle, everyone arrived late at night, collected rental vehicles, and settled into a spacious Airbnb that gave participants room to relax and recharge.

Over the next week, the crew experienced the perfect balance of adventure and downtime. From the sun-soaked shores of Cocoa and Daytona Beach to the thrilling rides of Magic Kingdom, the group enjoyed a variety of activities that encouraged exploration, independence, and fun.

The group explored Disney Springs, fed animals at a Florida farm, experienced Monster Truck excitement, visited Blue Springs State Park, and got up close with alligators at Gatorland.

Evenings were filled with cozy movie nights, shared meals, and time to connect with friends and staff. The SAIL team carefully considered participant needs and personalities, ensuring support with mobility and personal care, while also helping everyone navigate social dynamics and teamwork.

Trips like this are more than just vacations, they foster independence, build social and life skills, and give participants a chance to create lasting memories in a safe, supportive environment. By combining adventure, relaxation, and structured support, SAIL helps participants challenge themselves, grow confidence, and strengthen connections with peers and staff alike. The week in Orlando was a perfect example of how thoughtful planning and compassionate guidance can turn a trip into a transformative experience.

The journey concluded with a smooth return to Juneau, leaving everyone with tired feet, happy hearts, and stories to share. “ Thank you for the fantastic trip to Orlando... it was a blast!”-Andrea (A note in a thank you card written to the ORCA team).

FROM PORCUPINE TO HOOTER: DAEMON’S SKI SEASON SUCCESS

This season has been an exciting one on the slopes for ORCA skier Daemon Cook. A regular participant in the program, Daemon set his sights high and followed through in a big way. At the start of the season, Daemon was building his skills on Porcupine. With determination, consistency, and a willingness to challenge himself, he steadily progressed throughout the winter. Now, he’s confidently taking on Hooter, an impressive milestone that reflects just how far he’s come. One of Daemon’s greatest strengths is his goal-setting mindset. He sets clear intentions for himself each time he hits the mountain and puts in the work to achieve them. That dedication paid off in a big moment on Trickster, where Daemon successfully completed parallel turns all the way down the run. At the bottom, he celebrated a moment of pride, accomplishment, and pure joy that captures what ORCA skiing is all about. We’re so proud of Daemon’s progress this season and can’t wait to see where he sets his sights next.

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