



A | STEP | AHEAD

2021 GRATITUDE REPORT



★ FROM THE DIRECTOR

October 1, 2021, marked 20 years of ASAPC serving children and their families in Pierce County. We celebrated with our staff, friends and community supporters at Casino for a Cause, our annual auction/ dinner/ gala! We beat all previous ASAPC fundraising records! 20 years ago, ASAPC began with a vision and two educators. In the last 20 years, ASAPC has grown to almost fifty staff members including educators, therapists, and administrative staff! We have improved our practices, embraced our community, and changed the trajectory for the better of thousands of children's lives!

2021 was a year of hope and discovery. Covid vaccines became available to those who wanted one. As spring approached, the number of new COVID cases were dropping and our providers and families were more optimistic than ever about moving forward. In June, we began providing limited in-person services to those children who required hands-on therapy (e.g., feeding, motor planning, etc.) and continued working toward seeing all our children in-person.

We are always striving to find innovative approaches to help improve our practices and 2021 was no exception. One of those approaches is the concept of Parent Coaching. Helping our parents and caregivers to better help their children is our main goal. Our providers schedule visits their families two to four times per month. Parent coaching had an incredibly positive side-effect; parents and caregivers began to gain self-confidence in everything they did with their children.

This was also a year of discovery. Eighteen staff members, almost half of our staff, participated in the creation of our 2021-23 Strategic plan! Some of the highlights from our Strategic Plan included implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into every aspect of ASAPC (e.g., hiring, training, community outreach, brochures etc.), expanding the kinds of services we provide (e.g., feeding, communication, and parent groups), and expanding our funding sources including additional fund raisers to support new or expanded programs to help more children.

In September, we returned to all virtual services due to the spike in new COVID cases and hospitalizations in our service area; however, we remained steadfast in thinking forward. ASAPC has always been resilient and has successfully persevered through challenging times. We will continue to improve and expand our services to meet the needs of children and families as our community family grows.

Thank you to our staff and families, for their patience and willingness to keep moving forward with ASAPC! Thank you to our community of donors, volunteers, employees, board members, and all those who continue to help us realize our vision of creating a truly inclusive community.

With sincere appreciation,



David Pozolinski, Executive Director



ETHNICITY OF KIDS SERVED

White 52.1%, Multi-racial 16.1%, Hispanic 13.2%, African American 8%, Asian & Pacific Islander 6%, Native American 1.8%, Other race 1.2%, Not Reported/Unknown 1.6%

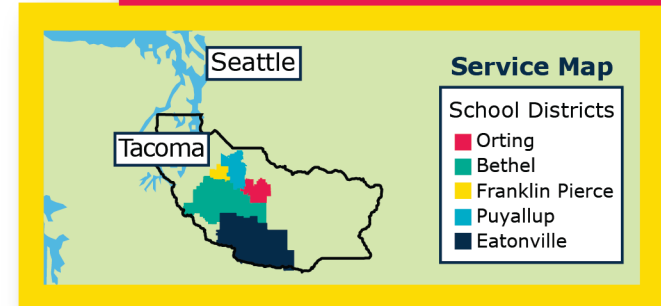
77% of ASAPC families are low income or on state assistance

95% approximately 95% of babies enrolled in BOOST who were born impacted by drugs

1 IN 10 The approximate number of families served access the CARES Fund

450 play packets were given to ASAPC families.

100% of the funds raised for the Holiday Giving Program goes directly to those families.





LAIKLEE'S STORY



"She's an amazing little girl and adds the icing on the cake."

Annaklous knew this pregnancy was different. She has had Type 1 diabetes since childhood, but as the pregnancy progressed, she was diagnosed with hyperemesis and was hospitalized for three months before her daughter's birth. Born premature at 35 weeks gestation, Annaklous knew her baby girl was at high risk for developing complications.

As Laiklee grew, her development milestones fell short. Annaklous concerns were continually dismissed by her pediatrician. As a person of color, Annaklous has endured healthcare racial disparities her entire life. Finally, the advice to call A Step Ahead in Pierce County (ASAPC) from a nurse gave her anticipated hope.

Once evaluated, ASAPC's flexible telehealth services began immediately. Laiklee was nonverbal, didn't make eye-contact, struggled with feedings, and had relationship difficulty outside her mother. With numerous ASAPC providers attending each session, the team focused on finding solutions to obstacles which fostered enhanced family engagement. The providers even found a local pediatrician with great Bipoc reviews.

Laiklee was finally diagnosed with autism and has a variety of neurodevelopmental obstacles. Although she is still nonverbal, Laiklee's determination to communicate is remarkable, which Annaklous attributes her success to Katie, Leslie, Kari, Maria, and Evonne.

"I won't ever say it's a piece of cake, but it will be the best cake ever! Each slice is a greater and an everlasting joy that outweighs the tears, fears, ups and downs; there will always be more cheers and endless amounts of love. This little person has shown us a new way of looking at the world in a way we've never imagined."

Laiklee's mother is newly married to her wife Keandra, and has a 14 year old stepbrother. The family is grateful for everything ASAPC has done and love viewing life through Laiklee's eyes.



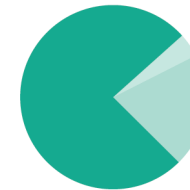
2021 FINANCIALS

The two graphs below show the sources and uses of A Step Ahead's funds as a percentage of total income and expenses. We are pleased that the combined total of administrative and fundraising expenses is only 10% of our total costs.

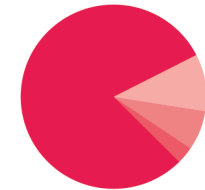
**The accounting firm of Mary Jane Dubbs, CPA, conducted an independent audit of the finances of A Step Ahead for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020. Detailed financial reports are available by request.*

Support & Revenue

\$3,433,949



Government Contracts **76%**
Public Support **20%**
Other Revenue **4%**



Personnel **80%**
Administration **10%**
Operations **7%**
Fundraising **3%**

Expenses
\$3,289,587



BOOST

The BOOST program supports infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years) living in foster care. The focus of the BOOST program is to support the child's social emotional growth along with supporting the entire foster family. BOOST specifically targets healthy emotional development through Infant Mental Health services. BOOST also connects the foster family to various resources offered within the community. Community resources may include Early Head Start programs, community activities and events, and clothing/food bank programs.

With the current Pandemic and limited ability for face-to-face services, BOOST has switched its service platform from in-person visits to either telehealth or virtual appointments. Through both platforms, the BOOST program has been able to actively engage with the families it serves and has continued to consistently enroll new families. The program enrollment has remained steady, and families have reported that they feel they are receiving necessary support. With virtual visits and telehealth options established, BOOST remains a strong support system for families and can confidently maintain this level of support until the Pandemic crisis is resolved.

MISSION AND VISION:

Mission

- Supporting families of infants and toddlers with special needs by enhancing their development and relationships both at home and in their community.

Vision

- A community that embraces and integrates children of all abilities and treasures the unique gifts each child possesses.

Principles & Values

- We will do our work in a way that treats the well-being of children as our highest priority.
- We will provide family-centered services in a manner that promotes trust, respect, and confidence with the families we serve.
- Our behaviors will be of the highest ethical standards. We will always conduct ourselves with compassion, sensitivity, and honesty.
- We will demonstrate integrity through the operation of a transparent organization in the form of board oversight and fiscal responsibility.
- We will be both creative and collaborative in our approach to building a vital community.

SAVE THE DATE

A Step Ahead Annual Auction

**May 21, 2022
Silver Cloud Hotel Tacoma
Point Ruston Waterfront**



HOLIDAY GIVING

The Holiday Giving Program pairs families with benefactors to provide necessary items. Many families struggle with low incomes, families whose children are facing heartbreaking illnesses, or have disabilities/developmental delays find it difficult providing therapeutic needs. Forty-six applications were accepted and through generous donors, every family received help to make their holidays a little brighter.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Scott Leingang, President
Twin Star Credit Union

Amy Schreiber, RN Vice President
MultiCare

Dr. Uchenna Baker Treasurer
Fairleigh Dickinson University

Andrea Pearson, SLP Secretary
CHI Franciscan

Jordyn Fleming - Bowman
Community Member

Aaron Bakewell
Sammy Squad Rentals

David Pozolinski, Executive Director
A Step Ahead in Pierce County

A Step Ahead in Pierce County is currently recruiting individuals to join the Board of Directors. Please contact David Pozolinski to learn more, davidp@asapc.org.

STAY IN THE KNOW

- A-STEP-AHEAD-IN-PIERCE-COUNTY
- ASTEPAHEADKIDS
- STEPAHEADKID
- A-STEP-AHEAD-IN-PIERCE-COUNTY
- A STEP AHEAD IN PIERCE COUNTY

Visit our new website:



FIELD TRIPS 2021

During the pandemic, families with special needs children struggled to find a safe space to play. ASAPC developed Play Packets led by Marti Cates to introduce families to activities that promote play learning skills in toddlers. These Play Packets offered opportunities to inform and support parents in their child's development while facilitating wonderful moments of connection playing alongside their children.



Some Packets included sensory tubs, picture and sound cards, and art. Sounds are easier to imitate than words therefore, children are likely to repeat words or sounds if they are engaging in sensory activities. To introduce concepts and language, packet directions were offered in English and Spanish.

Additionally, outdoor Field Trips returned allowing families the opportunity to experience art, science, nature, sensory play experiences at local parks. Katie Stitt, a local illustrator, donated her books and engaged the children in a collaborative art project.

"These opportunities have been rare during Covid, yet it is exactly what contributes to a sense of acceptance and wellbeing in all of us." - Marti Cates

"Before attending, I felt as if I was failing at teaching my daughter, but this has helped me so much. Not only is she learning, she is also playing while we bond. Also, thank you for doing it in Spanish as well." - A bilingual family



THANK YOU DONORS

Thank you to the Parents, Friends, Board Members, Community Partners, Businesses, and Staff that financially gave to A Step Ahead in Pierce County during the 2020-2021 Fiscal year (July 1- June 30th).

Without the generosity of our donors, many of the life changing therapeutic services might not be available to every child.

If you would like to help children with disabilities, please consider donating today at asapc.org

Business Donors

1st Security Bank - David Alexander
Alaska Airlines
Amazon Smile
Bamford Foundation - Holly
Bamford Hunt
Black Bear Diner - Danny and Darshana Banwait
CHI Franciscan Foundation
Columbia Bank - Kim Travis
DaVita Inc
Forest Foundation
Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation
Gottfried and Mary Fuchs Foundation
Kiwanis Club of Puyallup
YCPO
Kroger
Medina Foundation
Microsoft
Multicare Foundation
Norcliffe Foundation
Sound Credit Union
The Melsness Foundation/Edison 47
Titus-Will
T-Mobile

Personal Donors

Dr. Uchenna and Justin Baker
Aaron and Patricia Bakewell
Danny and Darshana Banwait
Strawberry Barbara Steve
Lois Bernstein
Anthony Black
Dr. Darin and Coleen Blackburn
Jordyn and Austin Bowman
Megan Brooks
Katie Brotten
Susie and Jack Brown
Rachel Brown-Baker
Rachel Buckles
Allison Buist
Kelly and John Carrick
Roberta Conti
Joe and Malie Corsell
Crystal Cressey
Darren Dean
Jenni Dominique
Cathy Early
Mary and David Enos
Lisa Eurom
Diana and Andrae Evans
Kay Foreman
Melody Fort

Ann Fosterforeman
Leslie Frazier
Lisa Garcia Torres
Annabel Gonzalez
Drs. Mark and Nancy Grub
Sheree Haeder
Anna Hamlin
Anne Hand
Candie Handyside
Brenda Hartman
Jacob and Lindsey Hartman
Jessie Hattie
Erika Hinostrroza
Susan and Larry Hulbert
Becky Iohse
Sheryl Jakobsen
David Jakobsen
Michelle Jawish
Brandon and Jennie Kanning
Pamela Kassuhn
Jordan Kemp
Ingrid Lapins
Vicki Lawrence
Scott and Michelle Leingang
Lisa Lohse-Miranda
Erica Lustig
Joe and Jennifer Maciejewski
Renee Maciejewski
Adilene Marin
Roy Marks
Karen Martin
Brad Martin
Barbara and Jeff Martin
Debra and William McClendon
Jaime and Directors Melsness
Dr. Stacy and Noble Merrifield
Amy and Jay Mesec
Elmer Mutchler
Aurea Nicolet Dones
Colleen Oaks

Jack & Janet O'Connell
Timothy O'Connor
Janet Olejar
Philip and Jennifer Palermo
Andrea Pearson
Tim Pearson
Peggy Perron
Donna and Donald Perry and Savvy Vindivich
Dr. Taima Plummer
David Pozolinski and Jim Boland
Aimee Rachelle
April Reagan
Leilena and Ian Reyes
Alyssa Roleke
Melissa Russell
Jeff Sayles
Nathan & Amy Schreiber
Dr. Dale & Nancy Scott
Rose Shandrow
Zahra and Simran Singh
Lisa and Scott Skinner
Patty Smith
Michelle Smith
DeEtte Snyder
Gus Stieber
Harlan Street
Alexandra Tartaglia
Mark Theine
Kim Travis
Jeremy Trenhaile
Jim Waldo
Jeffery and Sunny Wangsao
Nellie Ward
Candy Watkins
Jeff Webb
Marcie Williams
Shelley Winder-Yost

