



ANDREW'S STORY



Andrew is our fourth and last child. Andrew was born three months prematurely, weighing just over two pounds. Our first son was also born prematurely so as parents, we had some experience. But we also had two full-term pregnancies with our girls after our first son was born, so we were not expecting a premature baby. Unfortunately, in the NICU, Andrew experienced a major set-back. A nurse punctured the lining of his heart while attempting to insert a pic line and then, he flatlined.

It took almost ten minutes before the staff noticed what happened and was able to resuscitate him. We remember that call like it was yesterday. Even though Andrew's life was saved, we still had so many concerns about his development. There was so many unknowns and it was too early to tell.

After relocating to Washington State, we worried about services for Andrew. Seeing how Early Intervention had benefited our oldest son, we knew this was the best option for Andrew. Within weeks, we connected with A Step Ahead. The staff came to our home, established services right away, and made sure we knew what all our options were. Jenn Black, A Step Ahead's Lead Early Intervention Teacher, is a woman that made such a profound impact on our family.

Jenn really epitomized everything we believe A Step Ahead is about. She was truly committed to the success of Andrew. Jenn offered her own expertise but also honored the wisdom we had as parents. She paid close attention to every detail of Andrew's development. In fact, it was because of her observations that we realized Andrew needed tubes in his ears. This improved his hearing and ultimately his communication.

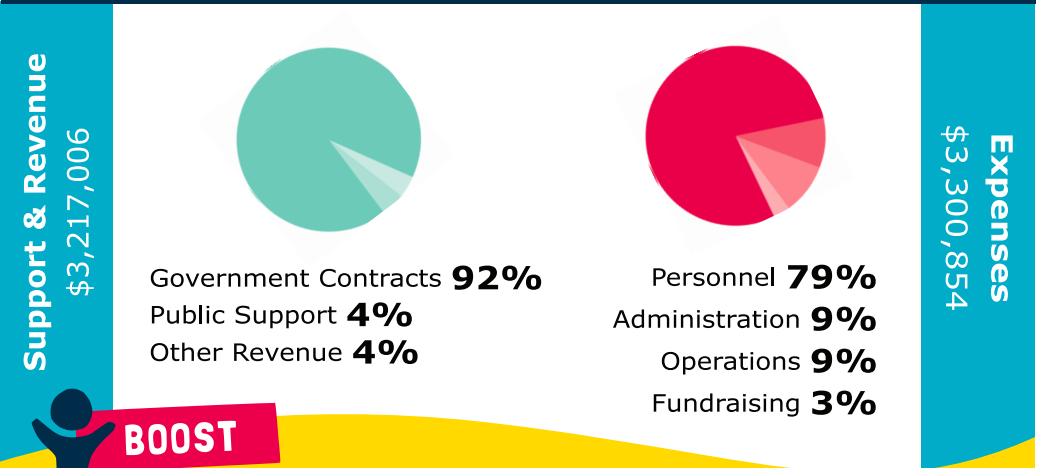
Andrew has recently graduated from the program at A Step Ahead and is heading to pre-school which is the beginning of many years of learning. He started this journey with the foundation that A Step Ahead helped him create. From our family to yours, thank you.

- The Baker Family

2020 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 12% 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, 2020. Detailed financial reports are available by request.*



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 family. BOOST specifically targets healthy emotional development through Infant Mental Health services. Infant Mental Health focuses on the relationship between infant and caregiver. 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 phone consults. 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 supports. With virtual visits and telehealth options established early during the pandemic, BOOST has remained a strong support system for families and can confidently maintain this level of support until the Pandemic crisis is resolved.

SNAPSHOT

"Despite his obstacles, he is nothing short of amazing and continues to thrive and overcome any challenge that is thrown his way."

Kaden was prematurely born at just 27 weeks, weighing only 2 lbs. 15.3 oz. and was in the NICU where he remained for the first 105 days of his life. He finally came home but remained on oxygen and faced many hospitalizations due to illness within his first year of life.

Kaden continues to face many obstacles due to his prematurity. During his short life, he's also been diagnosed with vision issues, seizures, developmental delay and is awaiting open heart surgery in our near future. Kaden was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. Despite this, we find hope in A Step Ahead services.

Once we began services, Barb became Kaden's biggest cheerleader and one of our biggest supporters as parents and advocates for our son. She has been by our side emotionally through each celebration, challenge, and concern. Kaden also receives speech services and vision services which eliminates travel time at other locations.

ASAPC has been amazing at listening to us as the parents, providing insight and experiences and working with us on a plan to best support Kaden. Without ASAPC we would have not felt as empowered and supported throughout this journey.

We are thankful to work with people who equally want the best for our child and the entirety of our family.

-Destiny Hagen & Matthew Whitaker



SUPPORT A CHILD, DONATE NOW

Approximately 1 in 10 families served access the CARES Fund.

50% of our clients are low income and we offer services to families even when full insurance reimbursement isn't available. To help with all these unrecovered costs, the CARES Fund was established. This fund helps to cover the costs of uncompensated care, so every child receives necessary therapeutic support they need. **NO FAMILY IS EVER TURNED AWAY.**

Donations from the CARES Fund include other wrap-around services, such as our Play Packet Giveaway's, Community-based Field Trips and Play Groups, as well as therapy, teaching supplies and equipment.

A Step Ahead depends on the generous donations of people like you who want all children to have access to the help they need. Thank You.

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BE OUR AMBASSADORS

Volunteer Your Time

Support Us

- Support us through Fred Meyer Rewards, Target, iGive, Facebook Fundraisers and make us your preferred charity on Amazon Smile.
- Hold a jeans day, team jersey, or ugly sweater day at your work; Staff donates to participate and learn more about our services, all proceeds benefit ASAPC! It's a win-win!
- Participate in our holiday giving program.
- Attend our Annual Auction Gala.

Give

- Give Financial Support, Planned Giving, and Gifts of Stock at www.asapc.org

Employer Matching

- Does your employer have a Matching Gifts Program? Most employers match donations dollar for dollar, but some companies triple or quadruple the amount, which equals more families we can serve.

Share

- Arrange for a presentation speaker for your business, staff meeting, or service club.

For more information on becoming an ASAPC Ambassador contact Michelle Smith, Fund Development and Communications Officer michelles@asapc.org.

Donations are tax deductible. Our Tax ID#: 91-2145470.

★ FROM THE DIRECTOR

I can guarantee, the past 17 annual meeting reports did not contain the word "Pandemic." This has been a year of challenges, successes, and most of all, resilience!

2020 began with much optimism for the coming year, then March arrived and our whole world was turned upside down. The pandemic hit and we were immediately faced with many challenges. Our most pressing of which was the elimination of in-home visits. This is what Early Intervention is based on, working with the child in their natural environment. Within days, after asking many questions, we learned virtual visits could be a viable solution. In a pivotal moment for A Step Ahead, five days before the state of Washington's stay at home order was implemented, our staff accepted the challenge and successfully began serving our families virtually. We are hopeful in 2021, that we will have the opportunity to resume in-person services once again; initially on a limited basis while following state safety guidelines.

We serve many low-income families and one of our concerns was immediate access to technology. We solved this dilemma via a temporary technology grant offered through Pierce County, which enabled us to offer our families with limited or no access to technology, hot spots and tablets. The funding for this program ended at the end of August. If we are to continue this very important program decreasing the inequities in our service area, we will need additional funding in the form of grants and donations.

Another barrier we faced was how we could increase parent/child engagement during these days of isolation. Our amazing providers began extensive training in providing telehealth services, parent coaching, and technology. Our awesome parents experienced a learning curve as well with the technology we introduced for virtual services. In-person services were no longer an option, so we adopted new techniques, and strategies including expanding an approach previously used by many providers, a parent coaching model. This approach provides parents with the skills they need to engage with their child more actively and further their child's development.

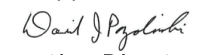
The weekly Activity Packet Giveaway was created as another opportunity for families to engage with their child. Once a week, we prepare a specific activity for our families with all the parts, pieces, and ingredients included. Parents can either drive-up at the Pierce County Library Administration Building to safely receive the activity packets or our providers can drop packets off at the family's home. The weekly Activity Packet Giveaway has been a great success measured by the number of families returning every week!

Our next challenge was the cancellation of our live auction in the spring. At first, we thought we would not see a fundraiser in 2020. Our determined auction committee refused to throw in the towel and quickly discovered other agencies were attempting virtual auctions too. We immediately re-scheduled the auction for the fall and began extensive research. After months of learning new technologies, long hours of preparation, and hiring a production crew; we were ready. Auction night arrived and we waited with bated breath. We launched our first live auction on the internet and succeeded in raising almost \$60,000!!

As we continued to work on our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals set forth in our 2019-2020 strategic plan, the Black Lives Matter movement became the steppingstone to initiating greater change and addressing systemic racism. Our goal is to continue working towards being an agency that reflects and supports the diversity and culture of the families and children we serve as well as the community we work in. In late spring, the Board of Directors, several staff members, and myself started assembling our first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC). We are currently developing a strategic action plan which includes DEI education, training, and awareness for staff, leadership, and our board of directors. We realize DEI learning does not simply end following a few trainings. This is a lifelong journey of personal and professional growth for our staff and our agency.

Pre-pandemic, December of 2019, we successfully completed our inaugural offering of our Holiday Giving Program. This program provides families in need with specific assistance during the holiday season. Our goal is to provide our families with items that they may not be able to afford such as: sensory toys, diaper supplies, toys for the visually impaired, and experiences. We asked our community partners to adopt those families we serve who need a little extra help for the holidays and were able to assist 27 families! The response from our community was so positive, we decided to offer this program to our families once again in 2020!

Thank you to our staff and families, for their patience and resilience through this challenging time. Thank you to our community of donors, volunteers, employees, board members, and everyone who continues to help us realize our vision of creating a truly inclusive community. Even though 2020 brought with it many challenges, because of you, it was still a great success!

With sincere appreciation,

 David Pozolinski, Executive Director



ETHNICITY OF KIDS SERVED
 White, African American, Asian & Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Multi-racial, and Native American

49.3% of ASAPC families are low income or on state assistance

14.3% are military families
12.4% are single parents

82% Children achieved or made significant progress in their developmental goals

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

100% of ASAPC Board of Directors give financially

BOOST served 81 children during the 2019-2020 fiscal year

653 Total served (including BOOST)
200 Play Packets are given out each month

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A STEP AHEAD

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED




A STEP AHEAD
 WHERE SPECIAL NEEDS FIND A HOME
2020 ANNUAL REPORT





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 2019-2020 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

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