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## RAISING FUTURE LEADERS THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



For 4 years, we have been partnering with Tacoma School of the Arts students to produce three Story Alive events annually.

This has been such a great way to introduce the students to children with special needs and to help them consider other career paths.

One sophomore said, "Last year, I was kind of skeptical of working with kids with special needs. But when we walked into the museum and I was surrounded by kids, I was ecstatic. When I was around all of the kids, something just clicked, and I felt at home." This student later said that she was considering pursuing her degree in Speech Pathology!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**In loving  
memory of  
Chris Lucero,**

**Board Member  
2013-18,  
Board President  
2017-18**



# A STEP AHEAD

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

## VISION

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

## MISSION

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





## SAMMY'S STORY



**"We just want her to be happy and able to have every opportunity to be the best she can be."**

Surrounded by the beautiful scenery of Lake Steilacoom, Aaron and Patricia were introduced and soon fell in love. Married once before, Patricia had two beautiful teenage daughters and although Aaron loved his new family, he longed for the experience of being a father to his own child. Shortly after their wedding, Aaron and Patricia made plans to expand their family.

The first pregnancy was the hardest because at 10 weeks they told everyone. Miscarriage after miscarriage their hopes turned to heartaches and they decided to give up their dream of another child.

United in their love they made big changes including a move and a new career for Patricia. They tried to pick up the feeling of brokenness and forge forward. As fate would have it, soon after settling in they were pregnant yet again. "It didn't matter, because it wasn't going to stay" Aaron said. Nonetheless, the baby did stay. At four months into the pregnancy and with hope restored, they visited a positive and natural midwife they met previously.

It wasn't until the first ultrasound that they detected a devastating situation. There was a 91% chance of Down syndrome. For the Bakewells, this little bundle was a blessing and the family excitedly prepared for the arrival of the new baby in the loving environment of their home. Sammy was born beautiful and healthy.

With Sammy's arrival her parents worried about the financial challenges of physical and speech-language therapy. At just four months old, Sammy and her family were introduced to A Step Ahead in Pierce County (ASAPC). **Although they had private insurance, they were unsure how all her therapy needs would be financed, and ASAPC was the only agency who approved them for financial aid.** This aid was provided through the CARES Fund which covers the costs of uncompensated care, so every child receives the necessary therapeutic support they need.

Today, Sammy is almost three years old, and she bubbles with excitement and joy. Her bright eyes are captivating and her smile is contagious. Everyone she meets instantly falls in love with her. She is a delightfully happy, loving, and determined little girl.

**A Step Ahead relies on the generous contributions of donors to help families like Sammy's. Please consider making a donation today at [asapc.org](http://asapc.org).**

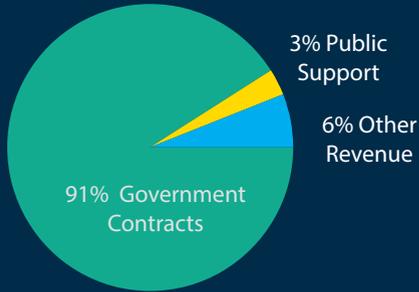
**SERVED  
772  
CHILDREN  
IN 2018**

**ABOUT 63%  
OF THE THERAPY  
SERVICES ARE  
UNCOMPENSATED  
BY INSURANCE  
PLANS**

**95%**  
**OF THE CHILDREN  
WE SERVED ACHIEVED  
OR MADE SIGNIFICANT  
PROGRESS IN THEIR  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
OUTCOMES**

# ★ FROM THE DIRECTOR

## 2018 INCOME



Over the past 4 years, with your help we have put forth a lot of effort to build capacity in order to meet the needs of more children with more complex conditions. For instance, 10% of the children in our program are either diagnosed, or likely to be diagnosed, with autism; 10-15% of the children are in foster care; and a significant number of children have intensive medical needs. Consequently, we realized that we needed to increase the number of staff members with specialized training. In response to the this need we have:

- Added four therapists and a children’s mental health provider to our staff
- Added additional play groups and field trips to serve more children in a variety of settings
- Invested in trainings for our providers that include:

*Infant and toddler feeding – to help children on feeding tubes eat by mouth*

*Sensory Processing techniques – to help children calm their bodies and focus better*

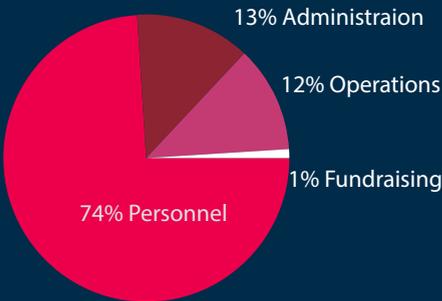
*A teaching curriculum tailored for children on the Autism Spectrum*

*Infant Mental Health – to help with early trauma, such as abuse and neglect*

These activities have renewed our enthusiasm and commitment to help all the children in our community grow and develop as best they can.

**Thank you to our community of donors, volunteers, employees, board members, and the fantastic parents who all help us realize our vision of creating a truly inclusive community.** We wouldn’t be here without all of you!

## 2018 EXPENSES



With gratitude,  
*Candy Watkins*  
Candy Watkins, Executive Director



## HELP US IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BY BECOMING AN ASAPC AMBASSADOR TODAY

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- Host a birthday fundraiser through Facebook
- Does your employer have a Matching Gifts Program? Sign up! Participate in workplace giving through United Way
- Honor your loved one with a memorial gift
- Stay up-to-date with our e-newsletter and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn

For more information on becoming an ASAPC Ambassador visit our website or contact Michelle Smith at michelles@asapc.org.

