

## Full SAIL AHEAD

Fall Donor Report, September 2024

Stories Celebrating triumph, independence, and collaboration.



### Summer Transitions Camps: Building Skills and Teamwork

This summer SAIL proudly hosted three engaging Transitions Camps for middle and high school students in Juneau, Haines, and Sitka. In partnership with the State of Alaska's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), these camps were designed to foster essential life skills, promote teamwork, and inspire future career goals through hands-on activities for youth who experience a range of disabilities. In Juneau and Haines, students received a stipend in recognition of their hard work and full participation. The stipend helped SAIL recruit students who otherwise may have been reluctant to participate, and created a financial incentive to stick with the program through challenges.

Juneau: Navigating Futures and Building Skills: Our Juneau camp focused on future career goals and soft skill development. The camp began with an exhilarating day at the SAIL Challenge Course, where participants engaged in goal-setting and self-discovery through structured debriefs. Over the next two days, students delved into kayak safety protocols and paddling exercises, followed by a discussion on healthy foods and a visit to Fred Meyer to independently purchase supplies for their capstone picnic on the last day of camp. Our

dedicated team, equipped with certifications ranging from NOLS Wilderness First Responder to American Canoe Association Level 2, ensured a high-quality experience. The camp culminated with a challenging trip to Suedla Island, requiring students to utilize teamwork, collaboration, and healthy communication to reach their destination.

**Sitka: Kayaking Adventures and Team Building:** In Sitka, our four-day kayak camp offered a unique blend of adventure and skill-building. Students embarked on a kayaking journey that included learning essential kayak skills, water safety, and ocean kayaking techniques. The highlight was a kayaking trip to Samsing Cabin, where participants engaged in team-building activities, cooked dinner, and spent the night in the cabin. This immersive experience taught practical skills and fostered collaboration and resilience in a stunning setting.

**Haines: Flexibility and Community Exploration** Haines presented a different kind of opportunity with camps focused on flexibility and patience. Due to unpredictable weather and the arrival of new students, the schedule was adapted to provide a comprehensive view of the Haines community. Students visited local businesses and organizations, including the Southeast Alaska Fairgrounds, Haines Rescue Kennel, and the local library. They also participated in a financial literacy workshop at Tongass Federal Credit Union. Each camp provided a unique opportunity for students to develop essential life skills, explore potential career paths, and enhance their ability to work effectively as a team. We are excited to see the positive impacts of these experiences on the participants as they return to school and prepare for their futures this fall. For more information about SAIL's Employment Services opportunities for youth with disabilities, check out our website at [www.sailinc.org/employment-services](http://www.sailinc.org/employment-services).

## Protecting Young Minds: Helmet Distribution and Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness



We're thrilled to share the success of our recent effort to protect local youth by distributing helmets and raising awareness about traumatic and acquired brain injuries (TABI) across communities. Traumatic brain injuries pose significant risks, particularly for youth who are active and engaging in sports or recreational activities. Statistics highlight the severity of this issue: according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 3.5 million children and adolescents in the United States experience TABIs each year. Among these, falls, sports-related injuries, and vehicle accidents are leading causes.

Notably, children aged 0-14 experience the highest rates of brain injury-related emergency room visits, underscoring the urgent need for preventive measures such as helmet use. These injuries can have profound and lasting effects, including cognitive impairments, behavioral changes, and in severe cases, long-term disability. Protecting young individuals with appropriate safety gear is crucial to reducing the incidence and impact of traumatic brain injuries.

Thanks to an additional grant and partnerships with local organizations and schools, SAIL's TABI Program was able to expand our reach and impact with key events aimed at promoting traumatic brain injury awareness. This included distributing more than 550 helmets in Juneau, Kake, Angoon, and Skagway. Each event provided children with a helmet to decorate, alongside educational materials and conversations about the importance of helmet use and the TABI Program.

The response from our communities has been overwhelmingly positive. Not only were hundreds of Southeast youth equipped with protective equipment, they also engaged in creative activities that highlighted the importance of safety. The decorated helmets were a hit, with kids proudly displaying their test

## **Transition to Success: From High School to Hired**



Cody, a recent high school graduate, has been involved in SAIL's Employment program since 2022.

He took part in SAIL's Sitka High School Pre-Employment Transitions classes for two semesters, where he acquired soft skills, visited various local businesses, and underwent work interest assessments to determine suitable job matches based on his preferences and strengths.

Additionally, Cody joined the SAIL Summer Work Program, working 10 hours weekly at Sitka Bulk Goods Store. This experience provided him with valuable work insights, knowledge of workplace operations, and marked his official start in earning for his efforts.

Subsequently, in partnership with the State of Alaska's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), SAIL helped Cody secure a paid work experience at AC Lakeside, a grocery store. He engaged in stocking, shelving, and inventory duties, and gained hands-on experience with machinery for product movement. Following high school graduation, Cody continued his work experience at AC Lakeside, proving to be a valuable addition to the team. Cody says he appreciates the organization and cleanliness aspects of his work. In recognition of his hard work and good fit on the team, he received a permanent job offer. Congratulations, Cody!

## **Summer Work Combines Accomplishment and Adventure**

This year SAIL's Summer Work Program included 42 students across Southeast, ages 14-21, our highest enrollment since SAIL started hosting the program in 2016! Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka, and Haines continue to provide students valuable work experiences through the Summer Work Program and other opportunities. This year we were able to extend the program to Gustavus, with six students participating in direct work experience placements!



