



2016 WINTER NEWSLETTER

Pat's Post

I write this year's post feeling many, mixed emotions - proud of all SPARC accomplishments reached each year, grateful for a wonderful, talented staff, clearly passionate about their work, excited to see the progress each child achieves, fortunate to collaborate with many community partners to provide quality programs for all our young children, and visioning all the possibilities the future may

bring. At the same time, sad that this will be my final post as SPARC's Executive Director. After 36 enriched years of being part of the SPARC family it is time for me to retire. This was a difficult decision, however, I am comforted knowing I leave the program in very competent hands, committed to the unwavering mission of providing high quality services to children and families. I am thankful and appreciative of the solid support the SPARC Board and Skagit Valley community has provided

over the years; we could not continue to provide these much needed services without you. SPARC will always have a special place in my heart. I foresee my future efforts as an avid supporter and advocate for SPARC and its evolving programs. It is our plan to begin our search for a new director after the first of the year allowing for sufficient transition time prior the end of this school year. Once again, I thank you for your continued support and dedication to SPARC and our children and families.

Children Served

During our 2015-2016 school year

Birth To Three

- 65 children age birth to three were provided services
- 13 children reached age three and services continued
- 4 children no longer needed services at age three
- 2 children no longer needed services before age three
- 37 additional children evaluated during this year were found to not need services

Preschool

- 108 children age three to six were provided services
- 10 additional children evaluated during this year were found to not need services

Spotlight on SPARC Staff: Julie Henry



Julie started at SPARC in the old portables on Britt road in 1991 as a preschool bus aide and teacher assistant; next two years as a Special Education Teacher until 1994. She left and returned to teach the Bridge Program at Little Mountain Elementary then at Madison from 1998-2000. Took time to be full-time mom to her two beautiful children then found her way back to SPARC in 2010 where she began teaching this time for the Birth-to-3 Program, as well as learning the fine art of being a Family Resource Coordinator. Early Intervention has since continued to be her heart's call. She believes that SPARC's mission and unique role in our community is invaluable and so very needed - one that helps change lives for the better and make a lasting difference for our youngest learners.

Julie has been an integral part of delivering our Birth-3 Special Education Teacher services in the inclusion Early Head Start classrooms. Here Julie effectively collaborates with the Early Head Start teacher's to deliver classroom services and individual Special Education Services that adhere to the child's active Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Julie serves and supports our children and families in many other ways. Julie delivers services in childcare settings, homes, and serves children on Individualized Education Plan (IEP's) at INSPIRE Child Developmental Center. Julie is empathetic with the children and families and her passion and knowledge for the children and families shows in her interactions with the children and in her eloquently written updates on the progress and current development of each child she serves.

Julie is always thinking of new and different ways to engage children, bringing a variety of ideas into the classroom or home incorporating movement, song and thinking skills. She then joyfully shares anecdotes of their child's engagement and progress from the classroom with each child's family. She works hard to help families connect with the resources they need in the community whether related to childcare, medical or social needs.

Julie quoted "What a great privilege and blessing it is to know and work with these beautiful "becomers", their truly amazing families, and our outstanding dedicated staff."

SPARC is thankful for all she has done and will continue to do.

A United Way
Supported Agency



Supporters of SPARC

The Children of SPARC are supported by the community through special gifts and programs. *Thank you* to the following donors and grantors who were among SPARC's supporters last year:

- *United Way of Skagit County
- *Skagit Bank
- *Heritage Bank
- *SB&C, Ltd. & AMSI Vehicle Licensing
- *Pat Rimmer Tire
- *Skagit Community Funds
- *Moccasin Lake Fund
- *Swinomish Tribe
- *Fisher Construction Group, Inc.
- *Norman Archibald Charity
- *Swinomish Casino & Lodge
- *BNSF Railway Foundation
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- *Quil Ceda Village
- *Glaser Foundation
- *Charis Fund
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- *Knights of Columbus
- *First Christian Church
- *Columbia Charities
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- *Fred Meyer
- *The Greenwald Family
- *Kiwans Club of Mount Vernon
- *Judith Kreep Trust
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- *Amazon Smile
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- *Don & Michele Power
- *Jeannette McChensey
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- *Cheryl Bishop
- *Ken & Nina Mirante
- *Susan & Garry Christensen
- *Jerry Sells & Linda Larson
- *Rob Martin
- *Yamashita
- *Fran Hansen
- *Shawn Steffens
- *\$21,000 Fund-A-Need at SPARC Auction

SPARC Financial Report

Revenue:

School Districts.....	750,500
State Contract Services.....	224,108
Medicaid and Insurance.....	44,956
Grants and Donations.....	97,564
Fundraising.....	71,975
Other Income.....	2,618

Expenses:

Salaries/taxes/benefits.....	953,067
Contract/Professional.....	40,053
Fundraising Expenses.....	17,884
Program Expenses.....	53,998
Occupancy Expense.....	43,824
Depreciation.....	3,746

We



Books

Why do we love books? In addition to being amazing resources for fun and creativity, books are important in establishing skills for learning that will be important for years to come.

Did you know....Early reading for toddlers is linked to better language approaching school age. Students exposed to reading before preschool are more likely to do well in formal education, as reading comprehension is linked to improved self-discipline, attention span, and memory.

Though many of our SPARC families share our love for books, they can sometimes seem inaccessible, either because of the expense, or due to feelings of uncertainty of what to do with books....especially with kids who do not necessarily sit and listen to a long story. With this realization, the SPARC SLPs launched "Project Read" in 2015, with the goal of providing books as well as parent-friendly ideas of ways to incorporate reading and literacy into daily routines. **Through this project, SPARC provided more than 400 books to local children and families throughout the 2015-2016 school year.** This year we are expanding our project with the goal to distribute 1,000 books.

Want a book? Stop by our Rosewood or PacPlace sites and pick a book and some free information on building preschool literacy skills.

Want to help? We are accepting donations of new and gently used children's books to share with local children and families!

Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, March 11, 2017

SPARC will host our 15th Annual "SPARC Your Engines" fundraiser Auction

The evening will be full of wonderful food, great silent and live auction items.

For tickets or to find out more information, contact SPARC at (360) 416-7570

Or
Visit our website
www.sparckids.org

SPARC is participating in a University of Washington study that is focused on improving early diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and increasing access to specialized services when needed. As part of the study staff and providers in the county will be trained on tools and curriculum to help identify and treat young children with an autism diagnosis.

In addition, over the past three years, SPARC has worked closely with com-

munity partners (school districts, local pediatricians, health department, and private therapy clinics) to establish the Skagit County Autism Partnership (SCAP). Through this partnership we have established a process in our county that enables us to diagnosis young children who may have Autism Spectrum Disorder. The process is designed to coordinate information sharing between providers who serve the child. The coordination, when appropriate can lead to an evaluation for Autism Spectrum

Disorder through the Center of Excellence. SPARC's medical director, Dr. Seema Afridi is designated as a Center of Excellence with the ability to diagnosis children with autism. At the present time one child has completed the process and another is in route. The focus is on children between the ages of 18 months and 5years old.



Working together to make a difference

Spotlight on a SPARC Child

Meet David Isaac

David Isaac is a 5-year-old boy who was diagnosed with Autism in November 2014.

After his birth all seemed normal but my son stopped responding at age of 8 months. He was referred to the SPARC program. In April 2013, we received a visit from Gabby Lopez working for the Center and from that day on, our experience has been very pleasant. There is much to be thankful for each and every one of the people that make possible this type of help.

Isaac began to receive occupational therapy with Shaun and then language therapy with Amy and continued therapy in the preschool classes at SPARC Center. I am grateful to each and every one of the teachers because my son has learned a lot.

When Isaac began to receive help, he lacked in several areas of development but primarily in his speech. For many days I longed to hear his words. One of the first words that we hope to hear as parents is to listen to them say papa or mama; but the continuous struggle to keep on receiving this help was worth it. Listening to him say "Hug me mommy" "Help please", fills me with great joy and tenderness. I will never finish thanking all the effort, patience, dedication, delivery, attention and love with which I have witnessed each SPARC staff give and display with their job.

Now Isaac can jump, run and ride a bike. There are so many words he now says not only in English but also in Spanish now his dad says we have a bilingual child at home.

Isaac is a child who has always surprised us with something. He loves animals and likes to explore, and all this experience and education that he has received from SPARC has been worth it.

We will always be grateful for their support from the bottom of our heart. We will never forget this great experience that we lived with Gabby, Shaun, Amy, Marinna, Susie, Kelly, Rachel, Emy, Gloria, Carly, Pat, Liz, Galina and Alma, God bless you

David Isaac es un niño de 5 años que fue Diagnosticado con Autismo en noviembre de 2014. Después de su nacimiento todo parecía normal pero mi hijo dejó de responder a la edad de 8 meses. Por lo cual fue referido al programa de SPARC. En abril de 2013 recibimos la visita de Gabby Lopez trabajadora del Centro y a partir de ese día nuestra experiencia ha sido muy grata, hay mucho que agradecer a todos y cada una de las personas que hacen posible todo este tipo de ayuda.

Isaac empezó a recibir terapia física con la señora Shaun y luego terapia de lenguaje con Amy y continua en las clases preescolares del mismo centro SPARC. Por lo cual estoy muy agradecida también con todas y cada una de las maestras porque también allí mi hijo ha aprendido mucho.

Cuando Isaac empezó a recibir ayuda carecía de varias cosas la mayor de todas era el habla. Por mucho días extrañe oír sus palabras, una de las primeras palabras que más anhelamos como padres es escucharlos decir papa o mama; pero la lucha continua de seguir adelante recibiendo esta ayuda ha valido la pena. Pues el escucharlo decir "Abrazame mami" "Ayuda please". Me llena de una gran alegría y ternura. Que nunca terminaría de agradecer todo el esfuerzo, la paciencia, la dedicación, la entrega, la atención y aquel amor con que me tocaba mirar como cada una hace su trabajo.

Ahora Isaac puede saltar, correr y andar en bici. Son tantas las palabras que ahora dice no solo en Ingles sino también en español que hasta su papá dice que ya tenemos un bilingüe en casa.

Isaac es un niño que siempre nos sorprende con algo. El ama mucho los animales y le gusta mucho explorar, y toda esta experiencia y enseñanza que ha recibido de parte de SPARC vale la pena.

Siempre estaremos agradecidos por su apoyo de lo más profundo de nuestro corazón, nunca olvidaremos esta gran experiencia que vivimos con Gabby, Shaun, Amy, Marinna, Susie, Kelly, Rachel, Emy, Gloria, Carly, Pat, Liz, Galina y Alma, que Dios los bendiga.



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Just by shopping with your Fred Meyer Rewards Card you can help SPARC earn donations. Link your card to SPARC by name or number at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You will still earn your Rewards Points and Rebates, just as you do now.

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www.sparckids.org

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Skagit Preschool and
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