

From the Desk of the Executive Director

The month of February, though short, is filled with love, recognition, and a deep sense of pride. It is a time when we celebrate the people and moments that shape us—whether through cultural heritage, acts of advocacy, or the simple yet profound ways we show love for one another.

This February holds particular significance for me. For as long as I can remember, February has been

a celebration of the contributions, achievements and firsts of Black people in the United States. As the first Black woman to serve as the Executive Director of REACH, I reflect on the importance of representation, inclusion, and the collective power of our community. Moments like these remind me how identity, belonging, and shared experiences connect us—whether through hobbies, service, or the meaningful work we do together.

At REACH, we recognize that advocacy is one of the most powerful ways we show our love for the community. This month, we are gearing up to engage with legislators alongside, and on behalf of, individuals with developmental disabilities through Key Campaign. Organized by the Key Coalition of Alaska and the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities, this annual advocacy effort brings together people with disabilities, their families, and dedicated allies to champion policies that promote choice, independence, and well-being. REACH has long been a committed partner, and this year, we are especially excited that the impact of programs, like our Infant Learning Program, is a KEY priority.

Advocacy is a shared responsibility, and every voice matters. Whether you are a self-advocate, a family member, a supporter, or someone who simply cares about creating an inclusive Alaska, I encourage you to learn more



Pictured: Naomi Studevan

about Key Campaign and join us in this important work. When we come together—whether in celebration, in advocacy, or in service—we strengthen our community in ways that last far beyond February.

With gratitude,

Naomi Studevan
Executive Director

It's Hard to Say Goodbye

This month we said goodbye to a REACH team member. Our Support Service Manager Monique Davis' last day was on Friday, February 7th. Monique played a significant role in facilitating staff tasks and catering to individuals' needs. Her dedication and friendly presence made her a joy to work with. Her time with us is greatly appreciated and we wish her well in all of her future endeavors.



Employee Spotlight: Mendenhall Woods

This month, we're highlighting our staff at the Mendenhall Woods Group Home. Check out what Group Home Manager Chelsea has to say about her team!

My name is Chelsea Kelly and I've been running Mendenhall Woods group home for about 14 years now. I cannot express enough how much I love being a part of this group home and a part of the resident's lives. However, the staff are the ones who keep Mendenhall Woods going!

My staff amaze me everyday with the wonderful on the job care they have for the residents. They provide meaningful emotional support, and advocate and encourage the individuals to work on their personal goals. The residents and I thank the Mendenhall Woods staff for their continued dedication and support they provide everyday!

Direct Service Professionals on Chelsea's Team

**Charles W.
Halatono T.
Andrew C.
Anthony L.
Derick N.
Corey H.**



REACHing Out

INCORPORATED



Advocating for Alaskans with developmental disabilities



A Coalition of:

- Parents, Family Members, Self-Advocates & Friends
- Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD)
- Alaska Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (AADSP)
- Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- Peer Power

38th Annual Key Campaign 2025

Key to the Future!

Dates → March 18th & 19th

Place → State Capital in Juneau



Wednesday, March 19th

- March to the Capital - 11:30 AM
- Meetings with Legislators - As scheduled

Tuesday, March 18th

- Key Campaign Opening Ceremonies and Orientation - 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM
- Legislative Reception - 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM - Program at 6:45 PM



Key Campaign 2025

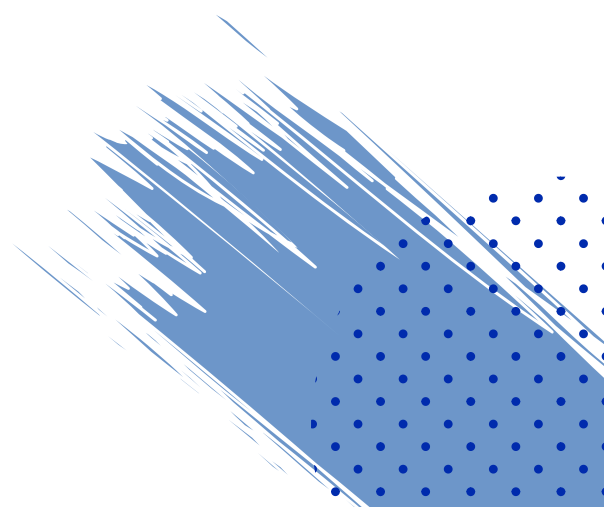
Save the Date! The 38th Annual Key Campaign will take place in-person in 2025 in Juneau! On March 18 & 19, individuals, families, guardians, and provider agencies are encouraged to participate in advocating to the legislature on why it's crucial to increase funding for Alaskans experiencing an intellectual and/or developmental disability. If you'd like to share your story or lived experience with our local legislators in-person, please register online at keycoalitionofalaska.org/get-involved/. If you can't attend in person, you can also participate with a written testimonial. Please contact Naomi Studevan at 907-796-7245 or nstudevan@reachak.org if you prefer to do a written testimonial.

The Key Coalition of Alaska is a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to improving community-based services for Alaskans with disabilities. Since 1988, they have worked to promote dignity, equality, and inclusion through unified statewide advocacy. Be on the lookout for the 2025 Key Campaign Priorities on the Key Coalition's website at keycoalitionofalaska.org/.

ILP Advocacy

It's advocacy month for the Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) sector! As our Executive Director Naomi Studevan mentioned in her letter, REACH's Infant Learning Program (ILP) is a KEY priority for funding increases. Funding for Infant Learning Programs (ILP) is critical. It allows for more equitable access to early childhood intervention, enhanced resources for staff and individuals and families, and increases the overall quality of life of Alaskans who experience a disability.

REACH ILP is collaborating with ILPs across the state to gather stories that highlight the work of early intervention. Whether it's a first word, a big milestone, or a newfound confidence, your story can inspire others and show state leaders how investing makes a difference in the lives of Alaska's kids. If your family/child benefitted from ILP services we'd love to hear your story! A short video, pictures or written testimony can be sent to ilp@reachak.org.





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Welcome to the Team

Please help us extend a warm welcome to our new employees who recently joined the REACH team! We are excited to have you join our awesome organization and bring your skills to the people and businesses we serve:

Sarah C. - Direct Service Professional
Anouk SB. - Direct Service Professional
Estelle S. - Direct Service Professional
Kaylonna H. - Direct Service Professional
Justin H. - Direct Service Professional

February Employee Anniversaries

We're incredibly proud of the hardworking people who work at REACH, and their dedication does not go unnoticed! Please join us in celebrating the following employee anniversaries for the month of February:

Mele F. - 1 year	Mary D. - 8 years
Sequoia K. - 1 year	Laurel S. - 10 years
Courtney P. - 1 year	Kathleen W. - 18 years
Alejandra RC. - 2 years	Charles W. - 18 years
David C. - 2 years	Michael G. - 18 years
Jennifer J. - 2 years	Danielle C. - 23 years
Jacob L. - 4 years	



Upcoming Events

March: Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
March 6: Exhibition - Ree Nancarrow: Sharing the World I Know @ the Alaska State Museum
March 7: First Friday Artwalk
March 13 - 16: The Thanksgiving Play @ Perseverance Theatre
March 17: St. Patrick's Day
March 23 - 29: Gold Medal Basketball Tournament