

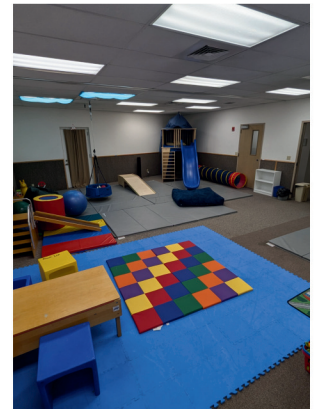


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REACH Newsletter | March Edition

Welcome to our latest newsletter! We're excited to bring you updates on what's been happening at Reach AK and what's coming up. *Let's dive in!*



Celebrating Progress



Not more than a year ago I remember sitting in my office having a conversation with the Supported Employment Director when we heard someone yelling. They went out to check and Andrea was not happy because she was asked to vacuum as part of her work duties that day. She was really upset and up until this incident, I barely ever heard her voice over a whisper.

About 6 months later I went into the front office and saw her vacuuming. I expressed my surprise to the job coach and she simply said "she accidentally knocked over some popcorn and she is vacuuming it up." There was no upset, no angry face and no yelling. She was simply vacuuming. Now here, 2 months later, we see her vacuuming like it's something she has always done, and she even has a hint of a smile on her face.

This was such a huge accomplishment and a testament to the work and patience of our job coaches and the very many abilities of those we work with.

Key Coalition of Alaska
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

REACH Advocacy in Action: The Key Coalition is Coming!

REACH is proud to participate in the 2026 Key Campaign, taking place in Juneau on March 18–19, where advocates from across Alaska will meet with legislators to support policies that strengthen services for children, adults, and families experiencing disabilities. This year's campaign focuses on five key legislative priorities aimed at building a more accessible, equitable, and sustainable system of supports.

REACH ILP is joining statewide efforts to support Senate Bill 178 (SB178), which aims to expand eligibility for Alaska's Infant Learning Program by lowering the developmental delay threshold from 50% to 25%. This change would help more infants and toddlers receive early intervention during the years when support has the greatest impact.

REACH staff and self-advocates will be meeting with legislators throughout the two-day event to elevate the voices of the individuals and families we serve. We are committed to supporting policy changes that improve quality of life, expand access to services, and strengthen the disability support system statewide.

For more information about the legislation that REACH is working on this year, turn to page five of this news letter.

We encourage our community to stay engaged, follow legislative updates, and join us in advocating for positive change. Together, we can help ensure that all Alaskans have the support they need to live, learn, work, and thrive.

Spring Time is the Time for Renewal, and Bit of Caution

Spring in Alaska is a cause for celebration with the return of daylight and the melting of ice and snow. It is also a time to be careful in our environment. Along the rivers there is breakup, the melting of river ice and snow in the surrounding areas. This can lead to flooding and make rivers impassable. Around the mountain ranges avalanche danger increases as warming snowpack can lead to wet loose avalanches, wet slab avalanches, and dangerous cornice falls. Other dangers such as dangerous road conditions are caused by the rapid thawing and freezing which can lead to potholes and pavement damage. Black ice can be present in the early morning. Frozen lakes and rivers thinning ice can lead to falling through the ice. Overflow from water flowing over ice can create deep slush traps.

As the first buds appear and skunk cabbage pokes through the snow bears start emerging from their winter dens. They are hungry after burning through their stores of fat and will be eager to feed and cranky. Be careful when traveling through bear territory in early spring. Landslides and mudslides can occur when heavy snowpacks rapidly melt. Steep slopes should be avoided and you should keep up with your local resources for avalanche and slide dangers.

Take all warnings seriously.

To stay safe stay informed. Monitor local weather forecasts, flood watches, and avalanche warnings. Drive with caution, watch for potholes, mud, and rapidly changing road conditions. Be bear safe. Carry bear spray and be aware of surroundings when hiking or near food sources. Assume all ice is unsafe during breakup, especially if it appears dark or honeycombed. Alaska is a land of unparalleled beauty but also of unforgiving nature to the unprepared. Use caution, stay alert, be prepared for danger, and you can enjoy the natural beauty of our state safely.





5 Ways to Support Women's History Month

1. Connect with Female Friends and Co-Workers

Work with your female friends and co-workers to lift each other up and celebrate today's accomplishments, no matter how small.

2. Find a new female leader from history

Take some time to learn more about a new historical female leader from your field or from another profession.

3. Talk to the Women in Your Life Who Inspire You

Whether it's a close friend, your mom, your grandma, or an old professor, take sometime to show them a bit of appreciation.

4. Practice Leading with Empathy and Care

Take a moment to look for opportunities to embrace one of the strengths of womanhood and apply it in your life.

5. Help Your Friends Find Their Voice

Your power is in your voice, make sure that your female friends are always using theirs, even if they are just whispering.

Quote of the Month

"How you are is just as important as what you do."

—Dr. Jeree Pawl

Your accomplishments are all worthy of celebration, no matter how small. But if they come at too great of a personal cost, it can make those achievements lose their meaning. While you are working hard, don't forget to take care of yourself.

Why It Matters

For far too long, women have been siloed into the role of the homemaker, the mother, or the caretaker. Even as recently as the 1980's women were still fighting for the right to have their own finances, separate from their spouse. Despite those limits, the way modern society is structured is still heavily influenced by incredible women. The feats accomplished, while overcoming these societal restraints, deserve to be celebrated to help inspire the next generation of female leaders.

Did You Know?



Most of the work done to define the double helix structure of DNA was done by Rosalind Franklin.



Hellen Keller was the first deaf-blind woman to graduate college in 1904.

Staff Features!

Are you following REACH on social media? If you aren't, make sure you are this month! We are featuring some of the amazing woman leaders here at reach.



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Disabilities Awareness Month

2026 Key Campaign Priorities

1. Build a system without waitlists

Advocates are urging lawmakers to fund the continued implementation of the InterRAI assessment tool and advance the Long-Term Services & Supports (LTSS) rate methodology to address workforce shortages and improve service quality.

2. Expand early intervention services for infants and toddlers

Support for SB178 would align ILP eligibility with IDEA Part B and help more children receive early support, benefiting brain development, reducing future special education needs, and strengthening families.

3. Require universal changing spaces in public buildings

– HB141 would ensure public facilities under construction or renovation include accessible changing spaces for individuals of all ages who need them.

4. Modernize Alaska's guardianship statute

SB190 updates outdated language, strengthens protections, and promotes autonomy and dignity for individuals under guardianship.

5. Improve access to transportation

HB26 would place public and community transit into statute, expanding access to essential services, employment, and community activities.

Monthly Motivational Quote

"Love yourself first and everything else falls into line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world." —Lucille Ball

Why It Matters

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, and its significance is amplified within small communities, like Juneau.

Raising awareness is not just about recognition; it's about ensuring equitable access and dismantling unique barriers. For families navigating the complex system of services and support for a loved one with a developmental disability can be exceptionally isolating and challenging. That's where REACH can step in and offer a helping hand to those members of our community that need that assistance.

From the early stages of life to becoming gainfully employed, REACH celebrates the individuals they support every day. March becomes an opportunity for us to share that passion with the great Juneau community.

Did You Know?



Activist groups have been organizing supporters in the United States since the 1930s, and even earlier in other countries.



The American Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990 by George H.W. Bush.



There have been more than 50 pieces of legislation passed by the United States for Civil Rights of People with Disabilities