



Growing Up With
SPROUT
Lasts A Lifetime



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[FROM LEFT TO RIGHT] Jillian Lush, Current Executive Director since 2010, Susan Amundson, Current Board President since 2015, Kathy Hill, Founding Board President, Diane Reinert, Founding Executive Director

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

My sister, Jackie, was born the same year as Sprout. Like some of the children we serve, she experienced global delays that made her slow to sit, walk, and talk. Some of my earliest childhood memories are of Lee, the home visitor who worked with Jackie and our family. Lee brought long strings of beads so Jackie could work on her fine motor skills, and she asked me to model these skills to help Jackie learn. Lee also taught me and my mom some sign language to use with Jackie—her very first language!

Working with little kids like my sister, Jackie, during their earliest years is the most powerful way to prevent unnecessary lifelong struggle. Intervening as early as possible is the best way to support greater success in life.



As you will read throughout this annual report, Sprout does so much more than early intervention. We support attachment between parents and their children, creating strong bonds that last a lifetime. Parents everywhere know that kids don’t come with an instruction manual. Sprout is here to help each family individually as they navigate uncharted waters

right from the start.

Thank you for your support of Sprout as we reach a milestone 30 years in the making! Enjoy this annual report as a celebration of where we have come from and where we are going. And here’s to 30 more years of empowering every child, every parent, and every family in our community to grow up supported and healthy for generations to come.

Jillian Lush

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

As many Homer old-timers know, the Infant Learning Program (ILP) started at the local community mental health center from the impetus of then-director Paul Craig in the early 1980s. Because I was an occupational therapist in the school district, all of us with a heartfelt commitment to the well being of children with special needs banded together to envision developmental and therapeutic services for wee ones, birth to three. A few years later, when ILP broke off into its own non-profit, it was just a fledgling organization with a couple part-time service providers for the entire southern Kenai Peninsula. Staff was resourceful, supportive, and diligent. Remember, there was no Internet or texting then—many conferences took place on airstrips and landlines.

Fast forward to 2017 and three decades later: Sprout has grown in increments, step by step over the years, into providing services for all children, birth to five years of age, and their families! Times have indeed changed and so have our services. Highly trained, supportive, and still resourceful staff members continue to transform the

lives of children and their families. By offering playgroups, coordinating resources, providing education about parenting and development, and collaborating in therapeutic services, Sprout helps little ones and their families connect with one another, and participate and enjoy life more!

As the current Board President, I am thrilled to see Sprout celebrate its 30th Birthday and serve as a conduit to help families and children thrive in our community. We now know through science what we intuited in the 80s: that the brain of a child grows based on his or her interactions with caretakers and the environment, especially in the early years of life. Early childhood experiences set the way we react to life events, our beliefs, our behaviors, and even later health outcomes!

Growing up with Sprout really does last a lifetime. And as we launch into the next 30 years, may we at Sprout continue to tap the resourcefulness, commitment, and heart of its 1980s originators as we serve and collaborate with families and young children to flourish today and beyond.

Susie Amundson



BOARD MEMBERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Susie Amundson
President | Carolyn Norton
Vice President |
| Tracie Brown
Member | Emily Sloth
Member |
| Linda Lekness
Secretary | Stephanie Stillwell
Member |
| Maureen Moore
Treasurer | Randall White
Member |

STAFF

- | | |
|--|---|
| Red Asselin
Outreach Specialist | Jenifer Dickson
Developmental Specialist |
| Pauline Benson
Cleaning Support Staff | Tara Hagge
Intake Specialist |
| Sidney Bechtol
Child Care Assistant | Jillian Lush
Executive Director |
| Jennifer Black
Interim Early Learning Manager | Audrey Morris
Administrative Manager |
| Patrick Clark
Rural Developmental Specialist | Mae Remme
Office Assistant |
| | Hanna Young
Child Care Specialist |

1986 HIGHLIGHTS

LOCATION

Small 'cubbyhole' office at 1060 East End Road.

AREA SERVED

South from Ninilchik on the Southern Kenai Peninsula, including communities across Kachemak Bay.

THE INFANT LEARNING PROGRAM

INFANT LEARNING PROGRAM
1060 East End Road
Homer, AK 99603

(907) 235-6044



THE JOURNEY BEGINS

I developed the local Infant Learning Program (ILP) when it was part of the Community Mental Health Center back in the early 1980s. We saw a real need for early intervention in children birth to three



to catch any lags in development as soon as possible. One of my first experiences was that I learned sign language so I could teach it to a deaf child and his family. It was so rewarding to be able to see a family gain the ability to communicate with each other.

In 1986, we became our own organization and I was the first Executive Director. At the time, we were located in a tiny space in the back of a law office. There was room for two desks and some toys—that's it. I was involved in day-to-day work with the kids in their homes as well as grant writing and other responsibilities. We were in uncharted waters, because there were not

many places we could reach out to for help and advice in setting up a nonprofit.

It was an interesting job. ILP was a new model, and I constantly asked myself how I could get resistant

families to engage with what we were doing. One time when I arrived, a family was walking out the door. I walked with them to a school event so I could visit with them. There were so many other demands on families' lives, I needed to veer off what was standard visit protocol. We tailored our approach and made it work. Sometimes families did not want our materials in the home, so we got creative and used things they had around the house, things from their cultures. We saw that when families got on board and identified areas to strengthen their child, and followed through, it made a huge difference in their children's growth. It was very rewarding!

Diane Reinert, First Executive Director

THE SPROUT STORY

1986

September 1986

Homer Children's Services (HCS) incorporates and receives a grant from the State of Alaska to administer the Infant Learning Program (ILP). The ILP was previously administered by the Homer Community Mental Health Center from 1982-1986.

HOMER CHILDREN'S SERVICES PURPOSE: "Sponsor direct service programs for people with special needs, promote coordination of services to families with special needs, and to promote professional growth in persons working with families with special needs".

FAMILIES ENROLLED IN ILP PROGRAM:
12-14, ages 0-3*

* Homer News, Nov 20, 1986, pg. 19



1992

1992

HCS begins renting 3691 Ben Walters Lane the building where Sprout Family Services is still located today. The Infant Learning Program continues to grow and begins lending out toys, books and other supplies to enrolled families.

The 'Lending Library' now loans toys, books and other supplies to ALL members of our community.

2010

2010

HCS starts the year with no Executive Director and the board considers moving the program to Soldotna and closing HCS. A few community members decide it is important to keep the program in Homer and help to recruit a new board of directors.

See 2010-2011 Highlights on page 11

THE INFANT LEARNING PROGRAM

3691 BEN WALTERS LANE, #4
Homer, Alaska 99603
Phone 235-6044 • Fax 235-2644



1996

1996

OCTOBER

HCS signs 15-year lease-purchase agreement for 3691 Ben Walter's Lane.

2000

Birth 2 Three

235-6044 | 877-235-BABY | homerilp@xyz.net | (fax) 235 2644



2000s

FROM EARLY 2000s-2010 HCS changes Infant Learning Program name to "Birth 2 Three". Program services remain consistent for the next 10 years.

"As a funding agency, ACT appreciates the opportunities we have had to provide Sprout with the resources to continue their great work in Homer. Sprout provides outstanding supports to families to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to ensure their children grow up strong and healthy. Without Sprout, families would not have local resources to access as they navigate the complicated world of parenting."

1998

1998

HCS receives Alaska Children's Trust grant to provide "universal access" home visiting and playgroups to all families with children under the age of 3.

See 1998 Highlights on page 10

Trevor Storrs, Executive Director of Alaska Children's Trust (ACT)

1998 HIGHLIGHTS



Leanna Raymond



1999 newspaper article featuring Leanna & Haley Raymond

Through Sprout’s support, I gained confidence and learned how to advocate for my child. I became a better equipped parent than I’d been before. “The playgroups also offered the opportunity to get together with other parents and support each other. Through these playgroups, I built long-term relationships with other families and my daughter had exposure to her peers. As my daughter Haley says, these groups ‘made mommy happier!’”

Leanna Raymond, connected with Sprout since 1995

2010-2011 HIGHLIGHTS

Playgroups begin as “peer groups” for families enrolled in services.

HCS begins billing insurance for services, allowing them to not be entirely grant dependent.

Families enrolled in ILP program: 60 (ages 0-3).

* Homer Tribune, July 13, 1999, pg. 5

The new board commits to move from an operating board to a governance board.

Sprout Family Services purchases 3691 Ben Walters Lane building.

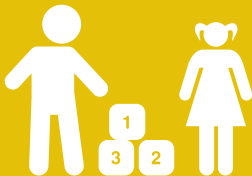
Sprout expands services to families of all children ages 0-5 (previously was 0-3) and provides comprehensive family support.

“I was a special education teacher here in Homer for many years in the preschool at Paul Banks Elementary. I recall having input on the process that was developed between Sprout and the Kenai Peninsula School District for the purpose of easing the transition for students and their families from a home-based program with Sprout to a classroom-based setting at the Paul Banks Preschool. Many years later, I volunteered as a board member for Sprout to support the continuation of the quality of services that I had witnessed being provided for children and their families in the community of Homer.”

Shere Baechler, board member from 2008-2010



305,132 miles traveled by car and plane since 1996



Sprout has had over 5,000 playgroup attendees since 2014

THE FALCO FAMILY'S STORY

Niki and her family have been an absolute inspiration for all of us at Sprout over this past year. We met Niki and her son just before their family grew to three, welcoming a sweet little girl. Needless to say, all Sprout providers look forward to playgroups, office visits, and home visits with this resilient family as we have grown through our many experiences together. Niki and her children continue to teach us what family strength looks like as they access resources, make healthy lifestyle choices, and work together to creatively solve any problems that might come their way.

Sprout has had the very fortunate opportunity to visit regularly with Niki's family and support them through many transitions this past year. We have provided developmental information for both kids, addressing current needs and offering anticipatory guidance as they grow. We have enjoyed providing respite during appointments and offering fun activities for the family to participate in together, such as games, playing with baby girl during tummy time, and going for walks. Sprout has also been able to support Niki and her family as they transition into a new apartment, access childcare and preschool, and connect with medical and social resources in Homer.

As Niki reflects on her introduction to Sprout through community playgroups, she appreciates how her son was allowed to engage at his own pace. During some challenging days, Niki says, "it was nice to have another adult who was like, 'it's okay you feel that way' and that he was allowed to hide or keep to himself until he felt comfortable to join in group activities." Discussing her experiences with parenting classes Niki says, "I really, really like the Circle of Security workshop. I feel like maybe that's something every parent should do, even before you have kids. It's not just with your children either...it's how you handle situations in general. It's been good for self reflection." Playgroups, parenting classes, and home visits offer families like Niki's opportunities for parent-child interaction, access to concrete resources, and create space for personal reflection.

Sprout Family Services is incredibly grateful to Niki for sharing her story and allowing us to be part of her good days, difficult days, and all the days in between, as we move forward in building a healthier community together. Thank you Niki!

Niki Falco, connected to Sprout since 2016



THE SPROUT STORY *continues*

2011

2011

Homer Children's Services (HCS) changes the name to Sprout Family Services.

2012

2012

Sprout receives grant to expand services to provide comprehensive support for families, using individualized support to help families meet their goals.

Chapman playgroups begin. Sprout begins administering Imagination Library.



16,230 books distributed through Imagination Library since fall 2012

2013

2013

Sprout receives grant to expand services to the Aleutian Islands and purchases their own 'Sprout' vehicle through local fundraising and a grant from the Rasmuson Foundation.

2014

2014

Sprout receives grant to expand comprehensive family support services to include families involved in the OCS system.

2017

2015

2015

Sprout receives Mental Health Trust grant to offer the first ever Alaska-based Circle of Security parenting curriculum training. Forty providers from around the state attend.

2016

2016

Sprout reaches 30 years of supporting families and children in our community!

2017

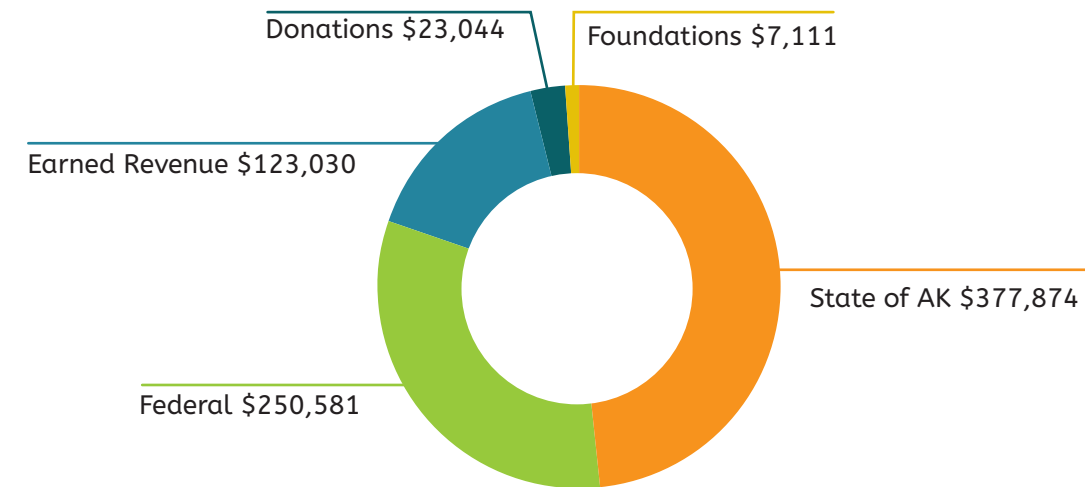
**CELEBRATING
30 YEARS**
of growing up with Sprout



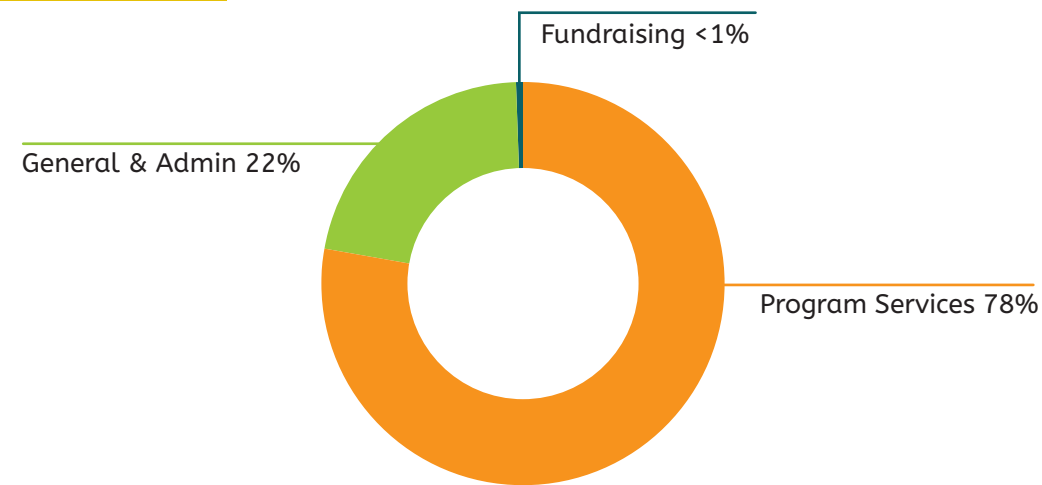
186 children and families served in 2017

2017 FINANCIALS (UNAUDITED)

Revenue Sources



Uses of Revenue



DONORS, FUNDERS AND FRIENDS

From July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

Alaska Children’s Trust	Harper Lawrence	Maggie Lush
Alaska Dept of Education and Early Development	Hollie Chalup	Margo Curtis
Alaska Dept of Health and Social Services	Homer Emblem Club #350	Megan Murphy
Allison & Malcolm Gaylord	Homer Kachemak Bay Rotary Club	Mel Strydom & Nadya Klingel
Allison Engebretsen	Jackie Norvell	Michael Hiller
Amanda Smith	James McCarron	Odin Onion
Amber Huestis	Jamison Knoll	OT Kids/Susie Amundson
Ben & Mercedes Harness	Jeanne Parker	Paul & Tina Seaton
Benay Eagan	Jeremy Bolts	Porter Lawrence
Benjamin Dickson	Jessica Lawmaster	Rachel Romberg
Best Beginnings	Jill Lush	Randall & Chelsea White
Carla Cope	Jonas Noomah	Ross & Jennifer Fonkert
Carolyn Norton	Julie Engebretsen	Sadie Gibson
Catriona Reynolds	Karen Northrop	Sarah Lambe
Charles Frances & Stephen Bottum	Kate & Scott Meyer	Sharon Whytal
Child Welfare Academy	Kenai Peninsula United Way	Shenandoah Lush
Conor McManamin	Kevin Kennedy	Shirley Fedora
Craig Thomas	Kristen Cook	Sullivan Hill
Dan Lush	Lela Benson	The Grog Shop
David & Jeanette Johnson	Linda Lekness	The Homer Bookstore
David Derry	Lindsay Wolter	The Remme Family
First National Bank Alaska	Lisa “Red” Asselin Martin	Thea Bemben
Hanna Johnson Young	M.E. Moore	Trevor Storrs
Harlon Engebretsen		



Since 2010, Sprout’s revenue has grown by over 140%



115 referrals from partner agencies in 2017



*Promoting the Healthy Development of
Children (ages 0-5) and their Families!*



3691 Ben Walters Lane, #4
Homer, AK 99603



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