

thread  connecting
early care & education
to alaska

annual report

FY13-FY14

thread's mission is to advance the quality of early education and child development by empowering parents, educating child care professionals, and collaborating with our communities.

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From the CEO

Dear Friends,

We're Ready! Are you? **thread**'s commitment to improving access to affordable and quality early care and education has inspired "We're Ready", a campaign created to strengthen our support for families in their search for child care. This new focus over the past two years has provided over 10,000 families with the information they need to select licensed, safe, healthy, and playful care. "We're Ready" has now grown and is used throughout **thread**'s programs to communicate our collaborative work to improve the quality of early care and education across the state. In this annual report, enjoy highlights from FY2013 and FY2014 and discover the programs and services that are advancing the quality of early care and education across Alaska.

*"We're Ready" to connect the working families of over 38,000 young children in need of daily care to the quality early care and education they deserve. This included **thread**'s work advocating for more affordable and accessible early care and education to meet family's needs.*

*"We're Ready" to provide training for early childhood professionals and technical assistance to programs to improve the quality of their care and environments. **thread** delivered on improving the quality of care in Alaska's early care and education programs through the Safe Sleep for Alaska's Babies campaign. This program provided new safe cribs and training to early care and education programs throughout the state. It ensured more programs are "ready" to provide high quality sleep spaces for over 2,000 babies and toddlers.*

*"We're Ready" at **thread** to further partnerships and policies to increase access to quality care in our state. Together with you, our communities, employers, and policy makers, **thread** helped more Alaskans understand the importance of quality early care and education and that investing in early childhood is an investment in our current economy and in the future.*

"We're Ready" for the future. The "We're Ready" commitment also inspired the creation of an endowment, the Early Education Fund for Alaska's Children held at the Alaska Community Foundation. This fund will help reward quality and excellence in the field of early care and education to help inspire and ensure that more early childhood teachers and child care programs are "ready" to provide the very best for young children for many years to come.

We're Ready for more! Are you?



Stephanie Berglund, CEO

Support from the community has helped **thread** continue to meet the growing needs of early care & education in Alaska.

Thank you for being a friend of **thread** and for giving your time, money, and hearts over the past two years.

Financial Summary FY13

FY13 SUPPORT & REVENUE	
State & Other Grants Revenue	\$3,894,957
Earned Revenue	\$211,388
Foundation Support	\$25,000
Direct Public Support	\$123,373
Investment Income (realized & unrealized)	\$35,528
Total Support and Revenue	\$4,290,246

FY13 OPERATING EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$3,858,161
Supporting Services	\$294,841
Total Operating Expenses	\$4,153,002
Net Revenue Over Expenses	\$137,244
Administrative Rate:	6.9%

Financial Summary FY14

FY14 SUPPORT & REVENUE	
State & Other Grants Revenue	\$3,980,202
Earned Revenue	\$239,048
Foundation Support	\$25,000
Direct Public Support	\$36,566
Investment Income (realized & unrealized)	\$19,888
Total Support and Revenue	\$4,300,704

FY14 OPERATING EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$3,820,528
Supporting Services	\$406,631
Total Operating Expenses	\$4,227,159
Net Revenue Over Expenses	\$73,545
Administrative Rate:	8.4%

thread Initiates Endowment Fund

In FY13, thread formally launched the Early Education Fund for Alaska's Children – an endowment held at the Alaska Community Foundation to promote quality early learning and reward excellence in the field of early care and education.

We know the quality of early education for our youngest Alaskans plays a critical role in their positive development. Early childhood teachers help young children build strong relationships and provide a safe, healthy, and playful environment where children can thrive.

As the Early Education Fund grows, thread will highlight the importance of early learning experiences by offering awards to teachers and programs providing the highest quality of care.

Highlighting Quality

In FY13 and FY14, **thread** provided over 28,500 hours of training, with over 10,000 early childhood professionals across the state. In addition to training and technical support, one of the biggest ways **thread** helped support quality improvements for programs, families, and communities around the state was with the Safe Sleep for Alaska's Babies campaign.

thread's Safe Sleep for Alaska's Babies campaign not only raised support for new cribs but also raised awareness of safe sleep practices in early care and education programs throughout the state. More importantly, **thread** helped improve the quality of child care programs and ensure Alaska's babies have the safest places to sleep.

As part of the Safe Sleep for Alaska's Babies campaign and with the support of many partners, **thread**:

- Purchased and distributed 923 cribs to almost 200 licensed child care centers and family child care homes in twenty communities throughout Alaska, including places like Craig, Kodiak, and Nome.
- Provided 1,233 hours of safe sleep training statewide. This included support for early childhood teachers to develop safe sleep policies for their individual businesses and programs.
- Raised over \$200,000 from individuals, corporations, foundations, and government partners to help purchase and distribute cribs to communities in Alaska.
- Developed new partnerships with Lowe's, Span Alaska Transportation, Horizon Lines, and Alaska Airlines to support shipping and delivery of cribs and crib products in Anchorage and throughout the state.
- Supported safe sleep environments for over 2,000 infants and toddlers in child care programs in Alaska.

Special thanks to the Safe Sleep for Alaska's Babies campaign partners who helped make this campaign a success (in alphabetical order):

- Alaska Airlines
- Alaska Children's Trust
- The Alaska Community Foundation
- The Alaska Legislature
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council
- Cradles, Cribs and Things
- Horizon Lines
- Lowe's
- The Mat-Su Health Foundation
- The Pebble Fund through the Alaska Community Foundation
- Providence Alaska Medical Center
- Rasmuson Foundation
- Span Alaska Transportation
- The State of Alaska, Division of Public Assistance



thread provides training & technical assistance to early childhood teachers to increase their skills and improve the quality of early care and education in Alaska.

Highlighting Accessibility

Families across the state rely on **thread**'s child care resource and referral services to make the right choice about the early care and education needs of their children. In FY13 and FY14, our Early Childhood Specialists provided individualized child care referrals to over 10,000 families statewide!

Alaskan families need access to affordable quality early care and education. To support greater accessibility, **thread** launched "We're Ready", a public awareness campaign focusing on empowering families with young children in Alaska. "We're Ready" helps families understand and be able to identify the characteristics of quality care in order to be more informed when selecting care for their children. It also encourages them to take the time needed to find early care and education that best fits their needs.



Below are the four characteristics of quality promoted within the campaign. We encourage families to consider these when searching for early care and education programs for their children:

licensed

- **Does this program have a Child Care License in Alaska?**
- What education or special training has the child care teacher received?
- What is his/her experience working with children?
- Are there clearly written policies and expectations?
- How does this program engage the family?

safe

- **Are children cared for at all times, even while sleeping?**
- Are cleaning supplies, medicines, and harmful items kept out of children's reach?
- How are children kept safe in the outdoor area?
- What is the plan for responding to emergencies and disasters?
- Is there someone present who has CPR and First Aid training?

healthy

- **What healthy meals and snacks are offered?**
- Is the children's restroom clean and sanitary?
- Is the hand-washing area easily accessible to children and adults?
- How are children supported when they are having difficulties?
- How physically active are the children during the day?

playful

- **What toys and games are available for children to play with (blocks, puzzles, etc)? Is there a variety?**
- Do classroom activities and schedules accommodate all children?
- What daily activities promote creative expression (singing, dancing, reading, making art, etc)?
- Are there regular community outings, such as field trips to the library or museum?

Highlighting Affordability

A common challenge facing many Alaskan families regardless of which community they live in, is the financial burden and cost of quality early care and education. Alaska is one of nine states where the annual cost for both licensed child care centers and family child care homes for children under age five exceed the annual cost of college tuition. And in 2012, the cost of child care in the U.S. grew up to eight times faster than family income. This is an issue that impacts not only low income families, but all families who rely on child care to go to work every day.

Another challenge is attracting and maintaining a strong workforce of early childhood teachers. Close relationships between young children and their teachers are an important part of creating quality care environments and positive child outcomes. However, in Alaska, the average annual income for these professionals is around \$20,000, and as a result, the industry's turnover rate is over 46%.

These are issues that **thread** is helping to tackle through HEARTS, Alaska's SEED ROOTS, the Child Care Assistance Program, and statewide advocacy efforts.

HEARTS

In Juneau, the turnover rate at child care centers was nearly 100 percent when the Juneau Borough funded the Hiring, Educating, and Retaining Teaching Staff (HEARTS) initiative. The HEARTS initiative is administered by the Association for the Education of Young Children Southeast (AEYC) in partnership with **thread**, and provides financial incentives for child care teachers to stay in the field and pursue professional development. The program requires teachers to achieve at least twelve college credits in early childhood development or receive a national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential in exchange for wage incentives. Since this was implemented in 2012, Juneau's turnover rates have dropped to 67 percent as a result of the program.

Alaska's SEED ROOTS

In Anchorage, **thread** is piloting a similar program—Alaska's System for Early Education Development (SEED) Retaining Our Outstanding Teachers (ROOTS) Awards. By the second year, eighty early childhood teachers were enrolled and more than \$113,648 in wage bonuses were awarded to qualifying participants.

To be eligible for a SEED ROOTS award, early childhood teachers must retain employment with the same employer for at least one year as well as attain a qualifying level on the Alaska SEED Career Ladder, a progressive professional development tool. As participants move up the career ladder, the potential wage bonus increases from \$2,080 to \$5,324.

Child Care Assistance Program

thread partners with Thrivalaska in Fairbanks to provide the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) which offers child care assistance services for the Northern/Interior region. Through **thread**'s positive financial support services, more than 500 families have access to the quality child care they need in order to participate in the workforce.



thread is a proud member of the Alaska Early Childhood Advocacy Group working to advocate for improved policies and resources to increase the availability, quality, and affordability of early care and education in Alaska.

Thank you Donors!

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Hotel Captain Cook
Kenai Peninsula Foundation
Kennedy and Associates
The Kroger Co Foundation
Kodiak Treks
Latouche Pediatrics LLC
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District
Mat-Su Health Foundation

Michael's
Municipal Light & Power (ML&P)
The Pebble Fund Grant
Petersburg Community Foundation
Programs for Infants & Children, Inc.
Providence Health & Services Alaska
Rasmuson Foundation
Rick Miller Productions, LLC
Sam's Club
Stamps.com
State of Alaska
Think Office LLC
Toyota
United Way of Anchorage
Wells Fargo Bank

Thanks for making thread strong and for your continued support of early care & education in Alaska!



Join **thread** in advancing the quality of early education and child development in Alaska. Are you ready?

- Give online at www.threadalaska.org.
- Sign up for Fred Meyer Community Rewards #82074 at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards and earn money for **thread** while you shop.
- Log in at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to **thread**.
- Designate **thread** as the recipient for Bagoy's Helping Hands every time you buy flowers or gifts.
- Give through your United Way workplace campaign, Alaska Combined Federal Campaign #36880, State Employee SHARE Campaign, or your workplace charitable giving program.
- Ask your employer to match your gift and make it go twice as far!
- Leave a legacy by supporting the Early Education Fund for Alaska's Children at Alaska Community Foundation.
- Volunteer! Contact **thread** to find out more.

