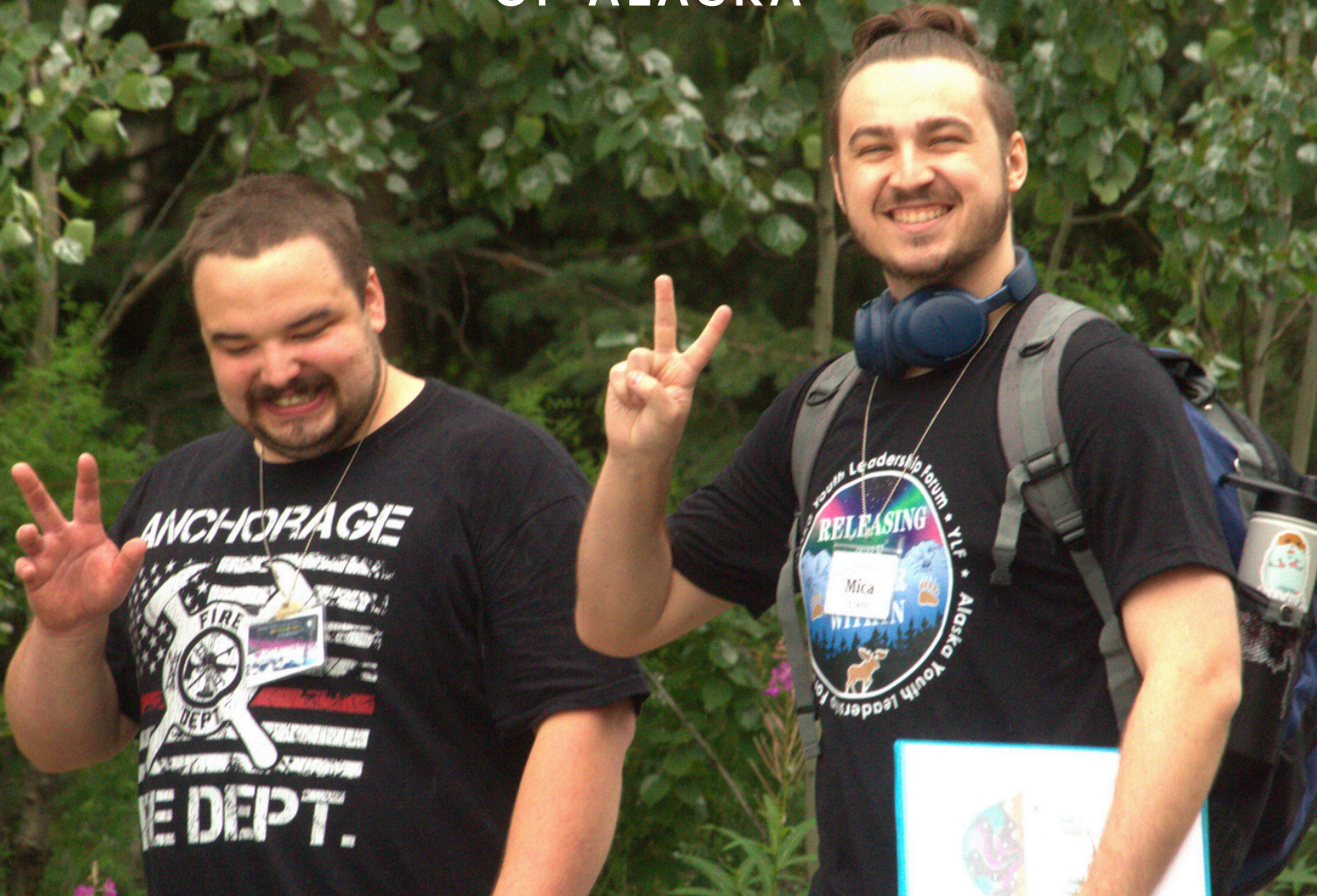


SILC

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL
OF ALASKA



"They helped me find my voice, and I realized that my voice MATTERS." - Monica, YLF Participant

**JANUARY 2026
ISSUE NO.01**

LEARN ABOUT OUR
YOUTH PROGRAMS

WWW..ALASKASILC.ORG

Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MICHAEL CHRISTIAN

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AMANDA COELHO

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
JENNIFER MARTIN

YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR
MICA STEWART

YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR
LISA BASS



Above Image: From youth leadership sessions to mountain views, SILC Youth Program Coordinators Lisa Bass and Mica Stewart pause at Denali National Park, reminding us that meaningful impact and breathtaking moments often go hand in hand.

mica@alaskasilc.org
lisa@alaskasilc.org

WWW.ALASKASILC.ORG
INFO@ALASKASILC.ORG

Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska



Above: SILC Advocacy in Juneau, 2025

From the SILC

Youth Leadership programs are transformative for young people with disabilities. They create spaces where their voices, strengths, and perspectives are not only welcomed but valued. These programs encourage Alaska's youth to build confidence, practice self-advocacy, and explore their own potential in ways that traditional environments don't always allow.

When young people with disabilities are encouraged to lead, they begin to see themselves as capable decision-makers who have the right to shape their own futures.

They acquire tools to direct their own lives—building skills in communication, decision-making, and self-advocacy that are fundamental to independence. When youth are encouraged to lead, they learn to speak for themselves, make informed choices, and take an active role in shaping their futures. This is the foundation of true autonomy.

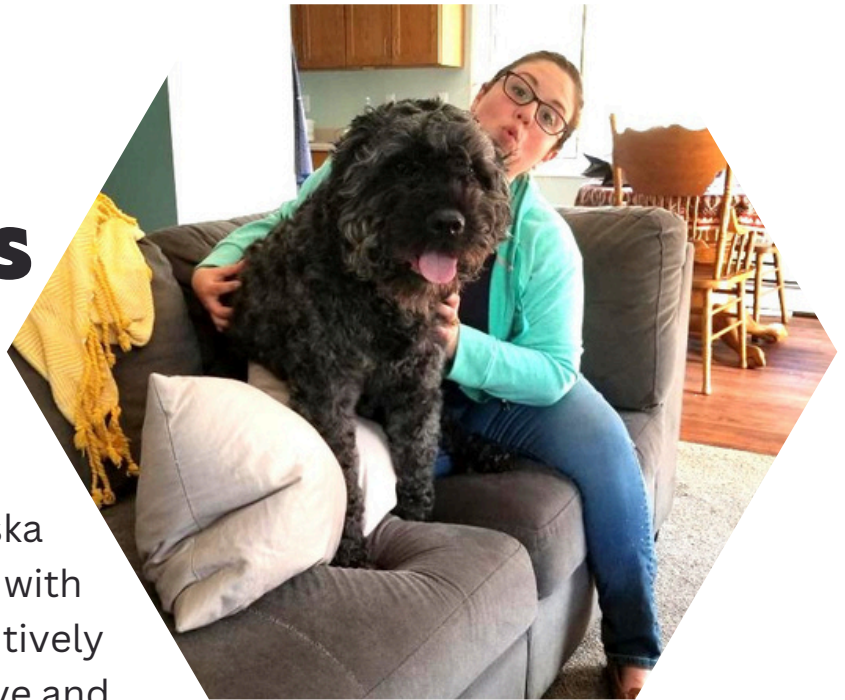
For so many of Alaska's youth with disabilities, these programs are not just beneficial—they are essential. Leadership development opens doors to independence by connecting youth with mentors, peers, and resources that help them advocate for their needs and pursue meaningful goals.

Investing in these programs ensures that young people with disabilities can fully participate in their communities, contribute their talents, and transition into adulthood with the skills and support they deserve.

Pathways to Partnerships

PATHWAYS MISSION

Increase the number of Alaska youth and other individuals with disabilities who are competitively employed through innovative and collaborative programs involving key agencies and organizations.



Above: SILC AED relaxing with Seamus after escaping her many spreadsheets.



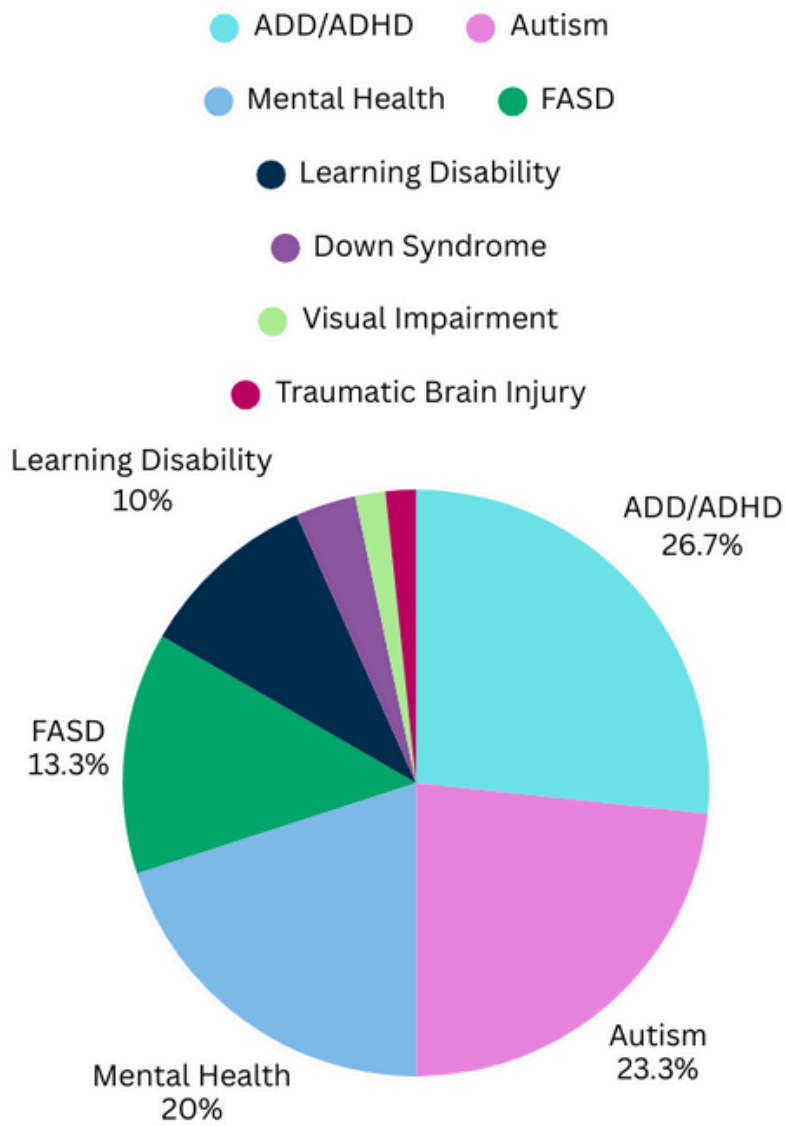
Above: YLF participant owning the UAF computer lab with a smile that says, “Future in progress.”

NOTE ABOUT FUNDING

In collaboration with key agents of change, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) received a \$10 million, 5-year grant to implement an innovative model demonstration project to mitigate challenges faced by children and youth with disabilities in preparing for the workforce. SILC’s Youth Programs are made possible by this grant.

Strengthening Statewide Advocacy and Workforce

Percent Served By Disability



Above: Pie chart showing the percentage of youth served by disability type.

Youth served represent a wide range of disabilities, strengthening advocacy efforts and workforce readiness across Alaska. By engaging youth with diverse lived experiences, our work helps build a more informed and representative pipeline of future advocates, leaders, and workers—ensuring systems and workplaces are shaped by the voices of those they serve.

These experiences extend beyond individual programs to inform leadership development, policy engagement, and employment pathways statewide. By supporting youth across disability types, we contribute to a more inclusive, responsive, and resilient workforce—one that reflects the diversity of Alaska’s communities and strengthens long-term advocacy and economic participation.



Above: Celebrating the 2025 Youth Leadership Forum Graduates!

Youth Leadership Forum

The Youth Leadership Forum is a week-long program that teaches youth with disabilities the transition skills they need to achieve independence and success in adulthood. Based on a model that has seen success in over 30 states since 1992.



Above: YLF participants bringing visibility to invisible disabilities through open discussion.

The Youth Leadership Forum educates our youth on topics such as:

- DVR and tribal VR services
- Assistive technology
- Navigating disability benefits and financial resources
- Living with an invisible disability
- Disability history and rights
- The micro-enterprise grant program
- Transition goal setting
- Routes to higher education or employment
- Personal leadership
- Self and systems advocacy

“I know I appreciate your programs for making my daughter feel valued and ongoing support in her 5 year planning the program assisted her in creating. Making someone who is different not feel so different.” - Jaris, parent of a YLF participant

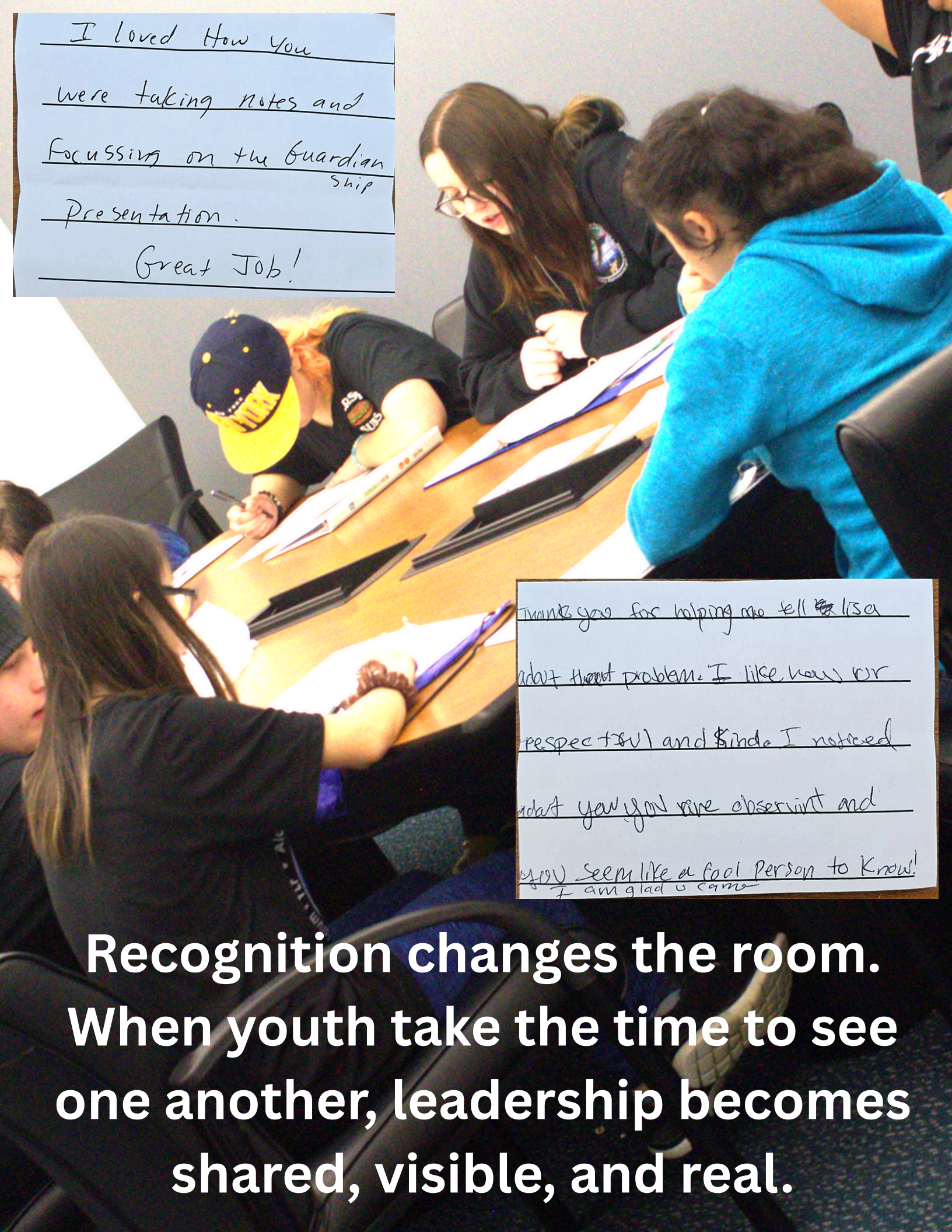
YLF participants leave with an understanding of the many resources and supports available to help them become successful adults with disabilities.

EMPOWERMENT CARDS!

Thank you for being kind, patient,
helpful & thoughtful to those
around you. Don't lose your
kindness & happiness to life.

Youth Leadership Empowerment Cards are a high-impact tool that turns leadership concepts into action. During YLF, youth have the opportunity to recognize one another by giving cards that highlight self-advocacy, teamwork, and respect-reinforcing skills that drive confidence and lasting outcomes.

I loved How you
were taking notes and
Focussing on the Guardian
Ship
Presentation.
Great Job!



Thanks you for helping me tell ~~the~~ lisa
about ~~that~~ problem. I like how you
respectful and kind. I noticed
about you you are observant and
you seem like a cool person to know!
I am glad u came

**Recognition changes the room.
When youth take the time to see
one another, leadership becomes
shared, visible, and real.**

Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska

Person Centered Planning Workshop

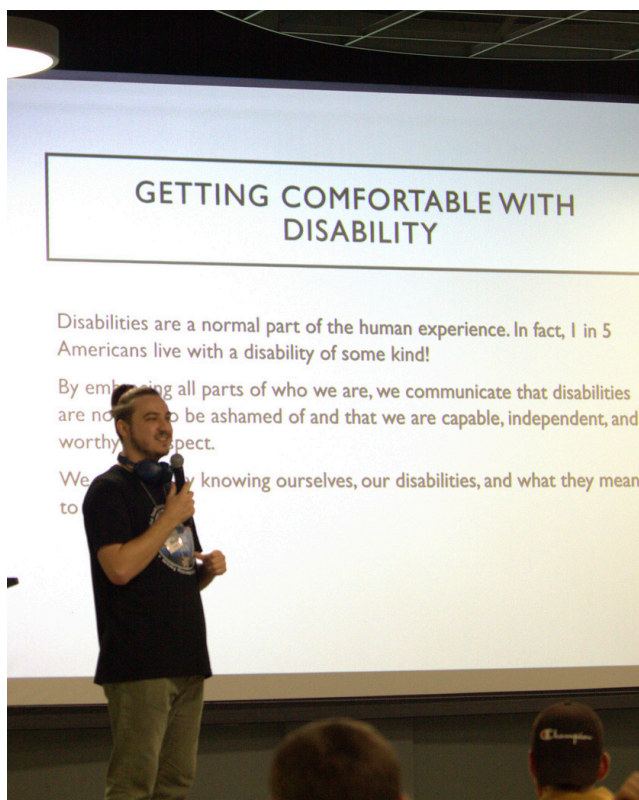
Person Centered Planning (PCP) Workshops are intensive 2-day workshop that supports successful employment and transition outcomes by building our youth's capacity for self-advocacy, problem-solving, communication, independence, and personal leadership. The PCP workshop prepares youth for adulthood by teaching them to evaluate barriers, identify opportunities, set transition goals, and use available resources to improve their lives. A core focus of the PCP workshop is transition goal planning. By designing the workshop around person-centered practices, SILC encourages youth to take a leading role in their own transition planning and build skills that will support increased independence in adulthood. Long-term follow-up support maximizes the odds of success and results in fewer youth slipping through the cracks.

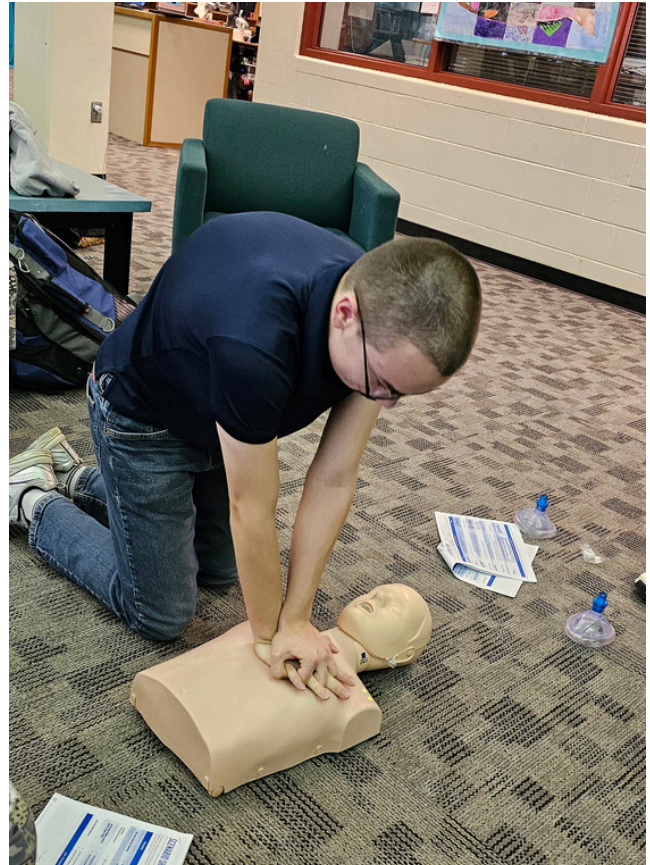
Youth also build key skills for navigating life with a disability, such as disability disclosure, accommodations, and effective self-advocacy.



Above: PCP Participant using our AI tool to design his future his way

Below: Mica turning PCP lessons into leadership moments at the 2025 YLF.



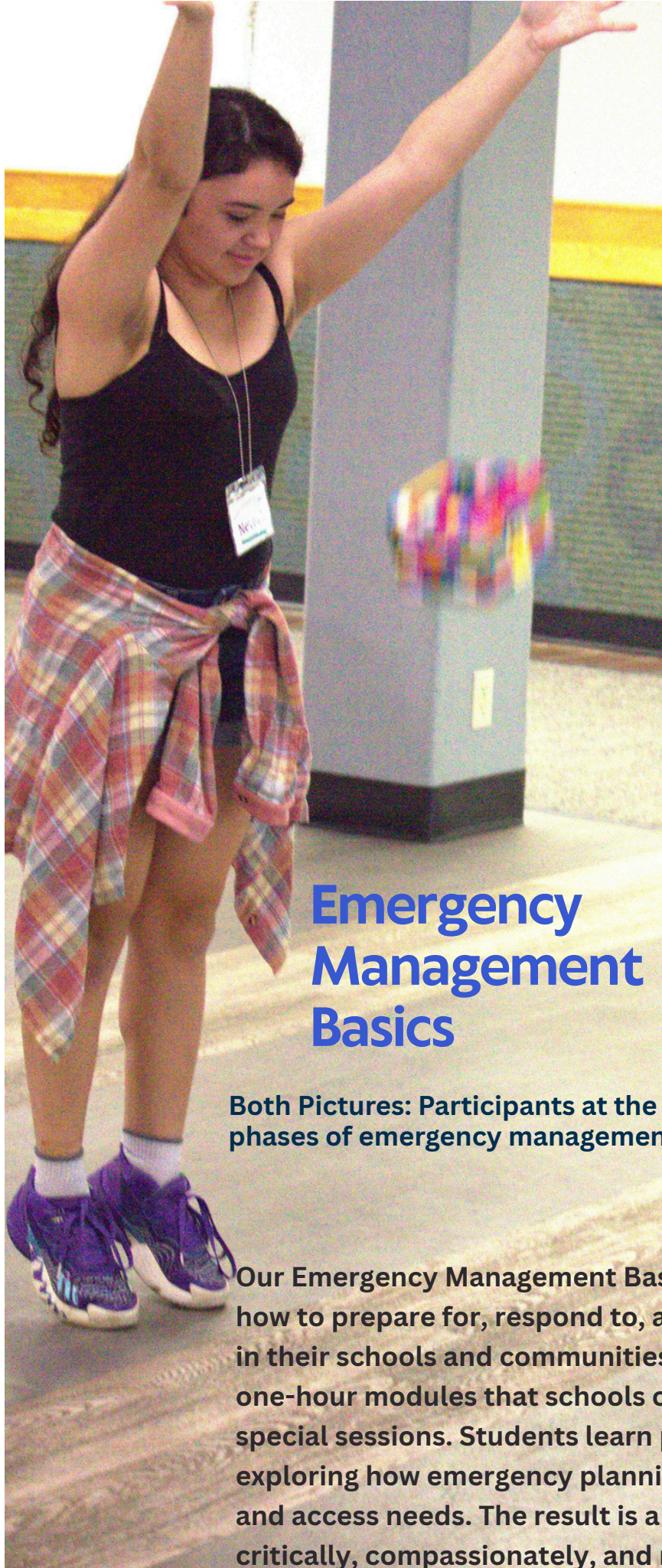


Above: RCA student in full lifesaver mode.
Left: Two participants showing that preparedness is a vibe.

**“Miss Lisa! I saved somebody’s life!
I knew what to do before EMS got there!”**
-Kenny, Youth RISE Participant, Age 13

1st Aid/CPR/AED Certification

Our free CPR, AED, and First Aid course empowers disabled and transition-age youth with practical, life-saving skills they can use at school, work, and in their communities. Participants receive hands-on, accessible training in a supportive, youth-led environment designed for real-world confidence. This course is about more than emergency response – it is about readiness, leadership, and self-advocacy. Programs like this ensure youth with disabilities are prepared, valued, and ready to step up when it matters most.



“[My son] . . . is beginning to show leadership in ways that fit his strengths, through consistency, fairness, and kindness. Programs like this give youth meaningful opportunities to build real world skills in a supportive environment.”
-Jennifer, Parent of a YLF Participant

Emergency Management Basics



Both Pictures: Participants at the Youth Leadership Forum explore the four phases of emergency management, one bold Lego drop at a time.

Our Emergency Management Basics course helps students understand how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from real-world emergencies in their schools and communities. The program is delivered in flexible, one-hour modules that schools can easily schedule into classrooms or special sessions. Students learn practical preparedness skills while also exploring how emergency planning must include people with disabilities and access needs. The result is a generation of youth who think more critically, compassionately, and responsibly about community safety.

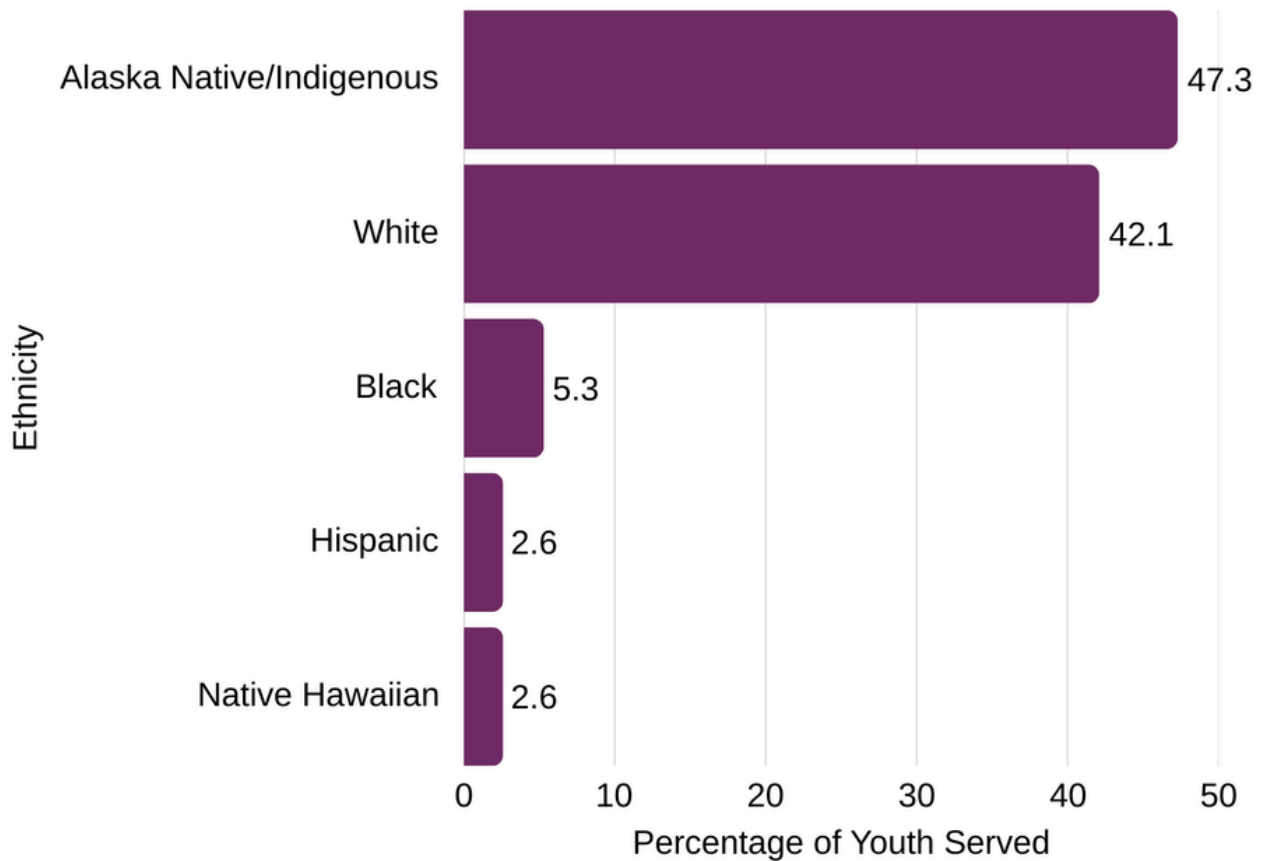
Leadership Development

We believe in creating meaningful opportunities for youth to learn, grow, and step into leadership. Our participants are introduced to disability programs and advocacy efforts both within Alaska and across the country. Youth ages 13–24 have traveled to: Chicago learning about national youth initiatives; Anchorage to support educators in creating healthier, safer, and more inclusive learning environments; and Juneau to actively participate in systems advocacy. Along the way, we hope they discover that their voices matter and that their efforts create change. Through these experiences, youth learn they can shape their own futures – and help influence the future of our state.

“They helped me find my voice, and I realized that my voice matters.” -Monica, YLF Participant, Age 16



Communities Engaged Accross Alaska and The Cultures They Represent



Participants in our programs come from communities across Alaska, bringing diverse regional perspectives together while representing a wide range of cultural and ethnic identities. This breadth of participation reflects our commitment to inclusive access, statewide reach, and ensuring that youth from rural, urban, and underserved communities can participate at no cost to them.

**Anchorage - Bethel - Fairbanks - Juneau -
Kasilof - Kenai - Nikiski - North Pole -
Soldotna - Utqiagvik - Wasilla**



From SILC youth programs to a full-time hospital career — Lacei is doing big things.

“Try It. Keep Trying. Never Give Up. You'll be amazed at where you find yourself.” - Lacei, Age 20, YLF Participant

“The Youth Leadership Forum was what pulled her out. It's what pulled the leader within her out. I would 100% recommend these programs.” -Nichola, Lacei's Mom



LOGO DESIGN BY LACEI CROWE

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACOB WOHLERS



Above: SILC Executive Director Michael and SILC staff congratulating YLF graduates after an emotional and joyful celebration of their achievements.