

FRONTIER COMMUNITY SERVICES NEWSLETTER

SUBMIT NEXT MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS TO: AFAULKNER1@FCSONLINE.ORG

UPCOMING EVENTS

* 11th Annual Kenai pumpkin Festival

October 10, 2026

Celebrate fall at the Kenai Pumpkin Festival with pumpkins, hayrides, games, crafts, food trucks, pumpkin painting, and the famous fire truck pumpkin drop! Kenai Greenstrip 11:00 AM–3:00 PM

* Beyond the Behavior FACETS Training (Free)

Oct. 15– Nov. 19, 2026

Learn practical strategies for supporting individuals with brain-based differences such as FASD, ADHD, and Autism by understanding behavior through a brain-based lens. At Frontier Community Services Thursdays, 6:00–8:00 PM.

* BGCKP Truck or Treat

October 24, 2026

Enjoy a free community Trunk or Treat with candy, games, activities, free hot dogs, and plenty of Halloween fun for the whole family! Costumes encouraged. Located at Old Carrs Mall in Kenai. Event is from 12:00–3:00 and is Free!

* Halloween Party

October 28, 2026

Halloween Party FREE to the public happening at Hope Community Center 1pm–3pm. Details will be planned at hope community center on oct. 1 from 2–4.



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and this year's theme, "Celebrating Value and Talent," speaks to how far we have come... and how much further we can go. There was a time when people with disabilities were largely shut out of the workforce altogether. When doors finally began to open, opportunity often came with limits. People with disabilities were often offered only a narrow range of jobs based on assumptions about what they could do, rather than their individual strengths, interests, and goals. Disability employment advocacy asks us to move beyond simply making room for people. It challenges us to recognize talent wherever it exists, to see strengths before limitations, and to create workplaces where those strengths can grow into meaningful contributions. No person should go through life believing they have nothing to offer because the world failed to recognize their abilities. Everyone has value. Everyone has something to contribute. And every community is stronger when we make room for all of that talent to be seen, developed, and put to purpose.



Not only is October National Disability Employment Awareness Month, but Governor Mike Dunleavy has also proclaimed October 4–10, 2026, as Alaska Employ People with Disabilities Week. The week celebrates the contributions of Alaskans with disabilities and promotes inclusive employment across our state.

Down Syndrome Awareness Month



October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month. Down syndrome is a naturally occurring genetic condition in which a person is born with extra genetic material from chromosome 21. Approximately 5,775 babies with Down syndrome are born in the United States each year, making it the most common chromosomal condition diagnosed in the country. About 95% of cases are Trisomy 21, with translocation and mosaic Down syndrome occurring less often. A Down syndrome diagnosis has historically carried assumptions about a person's potential, particularly in education, employment, and independence. Advocacy has helped shift the focus from others defining what people with Down syndrome can do to supporting people in defining that for themselves. Although October gives us an opportunity to raise awareness about the Down syndrome, it is equally important to remember that a diagnosis is only one piece of a person's story, not their identity. Just as we would never define someone by a diagnosis like a broken foot, Down syndrome should never become the label through which everything else about a person is viewed.

This Month in Disability History

October 31, 1963 — A Step Toward Community-Based Services

On October 31, 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed landmark legislation that expanded federal support for community-based mental health services and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The legislation helped advance a growing shift away from institutional care and toward supporting people within their own homes and communities. More than 60 years later, that principle remains at the heart of disability services: people belong in their communities, with opportunities for choice, independence, connection, and meaningful lives.

Updates from AADD

Here are a few upcoming opportunities and updates from the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD):

- **LEEDD Flex – Apply by Sept. 30:** Employment-focused training and leadership development. About 5–6 hours per month with a \$750 completion stipend.
- **AADD Fall Meeting – Oct. 27–28:** A two-day gathering in Anchorage focused on current issues and the future of disability services in Alaska.
- **DSP Summit – Oct. 29:** A one-day Anchorage event for DSPs who are nationally certified or currently working toward certification. Limited travel assistance is available.
- **AADD Board Members Needed – Sept. 18:** AADD is looking for provider leaders interested in helping shape Alaska's developmental disability services.

Interested in any of these opportunities?

Visit AADD's website or check the weekly AADD News & Updates email for more information and registration.



Did you Know?

Every FCS employee has access to Open Future Learning, an online platform with training videos and modules focused on disability services and person centered support. To get access, email your supervisor for a link to create your username and password.

Kyle's 15 Year Anniversary at FCS



Kyle began his journey with Frontier at just 18 years old, supporting a family member, and has since grown from a DSP into a mentor, advocate, educator, and leader. Today, as Assistant Director of Employee Relations and Training, he uses his experience to develop and inspire other DSPs while championing dignity, choice, advocacy, and self-

determination. His leadership has also taken him beyond Frontier, bringing the DSP perspective to statewide and national conversations. Congratulations, Kyle, on 15 incredible years, and thank you for the heart, experience, and dedication you continue to bring to this work!

September Employee of the Month

Congratulations to Joseph, our Employee of the Month, who is also celebrating one year as a Direct Support Professional with Frontier Community Services! Joseph brings a calm, kind, and genuinely caring presence to the people around him. His patience and reassurance have helped turn difficult moments into ones where the people he supports can feel safe, comfortable, and even smile. He also goes out of his way to make sure they feel included and connected, like at the recent parade where he made sure they weren't just there, but were truly part of the experience. Joseph is someone his coworkers can count on, and the care he puts into even the smallest moments does not go unnoticed. We are incredibly grateful to have you as part of Frontier, Joseph. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition and your first year with us!



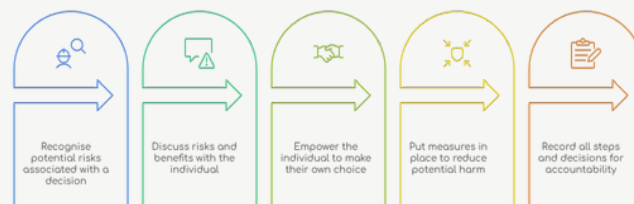
Dr. McIntosh's 25 Year Anniversary at FCS



Last month, we celebrated an incredible milestone: 25 years of Frontier's FASD Diagnostic Clinic and 25 years of Dr. McIntosh's dedication to the program! For a quarter of a century, Dr. McIntosh has been a steady and trusted presence at the heart of our clinic. As our diagnosing physician, she has shared her knowledge, compassion, and time with individuals and families from across Alaska, helping them find answers, understanding, and a path forward. Our clinic is one of only three FASD diagnostic clinics in Alaska and the only one serving both children and adults. For 25 years, Dr. McIntosh has shown up for this program and the people it serves, and we are incredibly grateful for everything she has given to this work.

Dignity of Risk

Keeping someone safe is an important part of providing support, but safety should not come at the cost of having control over your own life. Every day, people make choices that involve some level of risk. We try something new, spend money on something we might regret, choose who we date, change jobs, or make mistakes and learn from them. People with disabilities deserve those same opportunities. Good support is not about removing every risk; it is about giving people the information and support they need to make their own choices. A life with absolutely no risk may be safer, but is it truly a life someone got to choose?



Video explaining Dignity of Risk created by UVM's Center on Disability & Community Inclusion

Recent photos



DR. MAC'S 25 YEAR CELEBRATION



NIKKI THINGS...



ACTIVITY CLUB JIGSAW PUZZLE COMPETITION!!!



SEPTEMBER ACTIVITY CLUB MEETING



MEMORIES AT THE SOLDOTNA CREEK PARK



BEXX GELEIDE AND KACI WIMBERLY MEETING DR. SANDRA D. SMITH AT THE 2026 MAT-SU REENTRY SUMMIT!



FRONTIER'S COMMUNITY INTEGRATION TEAM AT THE IMPROVING LIVES CONFERENCE!