



Youth Programs Report May 2026

Workforce Wellness

Since the last report, PMC Youth Programs has continued to prioritize staff wellness, morale, and retention. We experienced a few winter staffing transitions, including one mentor moving into another role within PMC while continuing to provide occasional support to Kinder Skog, which has been tremendously helpful. These changes created brief periods of short staffing, but the team remained flexible and maintained program quality.

We have hired a full team of 16 mentors for summer 2026, including our first former participants who progressed through the Mentors in Training (MiT) program. This milestone reflects the strength of our youth development model and leadership pipeline.

New hire Gavin O’Neil, a former participant and MiT, was recognized as a runner-up for the Alaska Spirit of Youth award, a reflection of his commitment to being a positive role model and community volunteer. Additional recognition includes the Youth Programs Development & Advocacy Coordinator receiving Honorable Mention for the American Camp Association’s Golden Lens Award, honoring excellence in storytelling and visual media, and being named to Alaska’s 40 Under 40 Class of 2026.

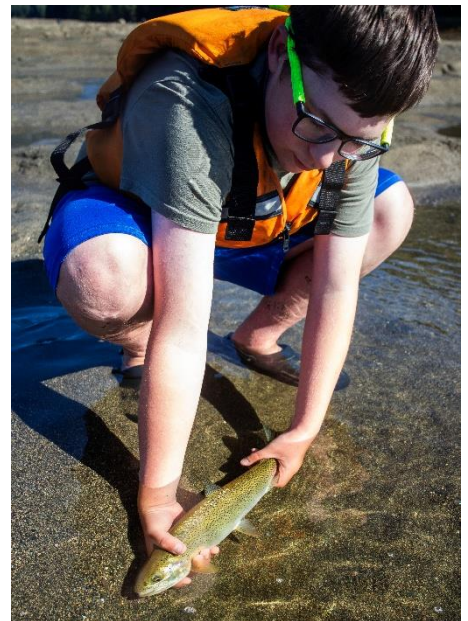
We are pleased that 75% of our summer staff are returning mentors this year, supporting program continuity and leadership development.

Returning staff not only foster strong, consistent relationships with campers, but also take on greater ownership in designing and leading programs, strengthening overall program quality and long-term sustainability.

Ongoing Focus: maintaining adequate staffing coverage during PTO/absences, supporting staff during high-intensity programming, and sustaining strong recruitment and retention practices. We are also focusing on developing a summer training week based on staff recommendations and suggestions.

Community Engagement

Community engagement remains a central pillar of PMC Youth Programs, embedded in daily programming and partnerships. This spring, our Skoggies launched a “Trash for Cash” initiative, inviting community members to sponsor youth-led litter cleanup efforts throughout Petersburg. Participants set a goal of collecting 50 bags of trash by the end of May; despite slower progress due to lingering snow, they have already collected approximately 30 bags since February, an impressive contribution to community stewardship.





A primary cleanup focus has been the local muskegs, where participants are actively working to protect sensitive frog habitat. Skoggies continue to support ongoing citizen science efforts monitoring Columbia Spotted Frog populations and were once again the first to identify frog egg presence this spring. In partnership with Eric Castro and the United States Forest Service, youth are assisting with tracking habitat locations, observing water quality, noting environmental changes, and monitoring development, providing meaningful, real-world science experiences even for our youngest participants.

In addition, we maintain strong collaboration with the local school district to support student engagement and regularly coordinate visits with Long Term Care residents to foster intergenerational connection. Ongoing partnerships with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the United States Forest Service continue to strengthen program delivery and expand opportunities for youth to engage with natural resource professionals.

Patient Centered Care

While PMC Youth Programs serves youth rather than traditional patients, we remain aligned with patient-centered care principles by prioritizing accessibility, inclusion, and proactive support. A key milestone since the last report was the addition of a Huckleberry Hiker, an adaptive mobility device that allows youth with varying physical abilities to fully participate in outdoor programming.

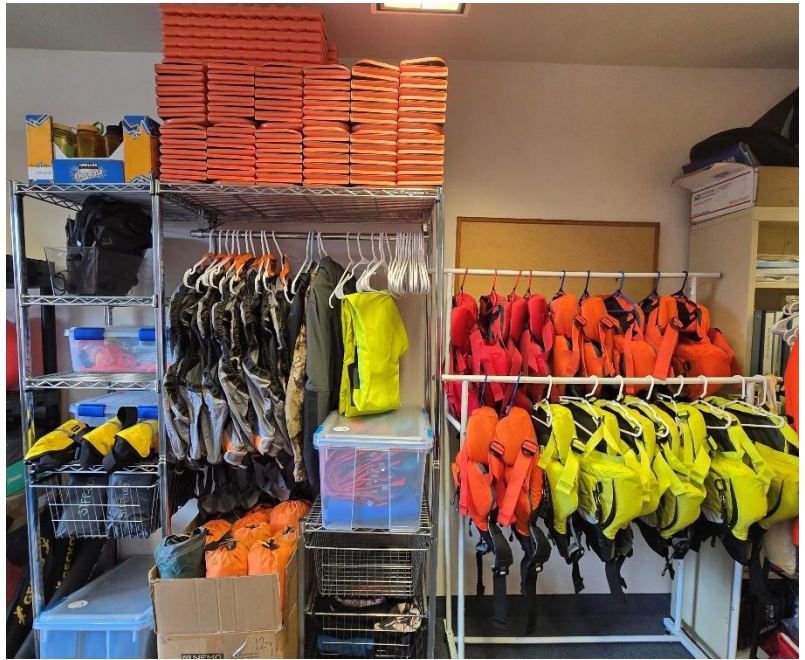
This investment reflects a shift from reactive accommodation to intentional preparedness. Rather than waiting for a specific need to arise, mentors identified accessibility as a priority and took steps to ensure that all youth, current and future, can engage meaningfully in our programs. The Huckleberry Hiker serves as a tangible invitation for participation, reducing barriers and reinforcing our commitment to equitable access.

This initiative was made possible through grant funding from the Rasmuson Foundation and The Alaska Community Foundation, whose support enables us to better meet diverse needs within our community.

Facility

PMC Youth Programs continues to operate out of rented space at Petersburg Lutheran Church. This partnership remains strong and highly functional; the location provides consistent, accessible space in close proximity to the schools, which directly supports participation, transportation logistics, and program continuity. We are grateful for this ongoing relationship and the stability it provides for day-to-day operations.

Efforts have focused on maximizing the flexibility and functionality of the rental space. Staff continue to adapt storage solutions, purchasing nearly \$40,000 worth of recreation gear has us playing gear Tetris in the space. Our goal is to move the fleet of kayaks to the WERC building prior to the start of summer programs and that will free up additional space at the “Skog Den”



Looking ahead, we are interested in being included in future planning conversations related to the next phases of the new hospital facility. As programs continue to grow, there is clear potential to expand both capacity and scope, particularly if dedicated space could be designed with youth programming, recreation, and safety considerations in mind. Access to purpose-built environments will enhance our ability to serve a broader range of needs and offer more diverse opportunities.

The primary challenge in this area remains the limitation of shared and non-specialized space, which can constrain program expansion and scheduling flexibility. Continued support in long-term facility planning and consideration of youth program needs in future capital development discussions would be valuable in addressing these constraints.

Financial Wellness

PMC Youth Programs continues to leverage a diversified funding strategy that combines grants, community partnerships, and individual giving to support both operations and program growth. Recent grant awards include \$25,000 from the Rasmuson Foundation for the purchase of recreational gear, and \$20,000 from The Alaska Community Foundation to support the kayak expedition and summer camp opportunities. These funds directly enhance program quality while reducing the need for operational budget allocations.

PMC Youth Programs has been experiencing ongoing challenges with both the Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) and the State of Alaska Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) since the fall of 2025. Shortly before the holiday season, CCTHITA notified families directly that it could no longer provide childcare assistance to eligible tribal members enrolled in PMC Youth Programs. This abrupt change created significant hardship for families and left many in a difficult financial position during an already challenging time of year. In response, PMC stepped in to provide temporary financial assistance to impacted families while advocacy and resolution efforts were underway. Unfortunately, progress has been hindered by limited communication and extended delays from CCTHITA representatives.

On the CCAP side, PMC Youth Programs became the first American Camp Association accredited programs in Alaska to qualify as a State of Alaska Child Care Assistance Provider in the spring of 2025. However, in the fall, PMC learned that the state had assigned programs to a designation level that does not provide adequate funding support for qualifying families. Since November 2025, PMC Youth Programs staff and PMC leadership have been actively seeking clarification regarding this designation. These efforts have been met with prolonged

response times and instances in which Child Care Program Office representatives did not attend scheduled meetings.

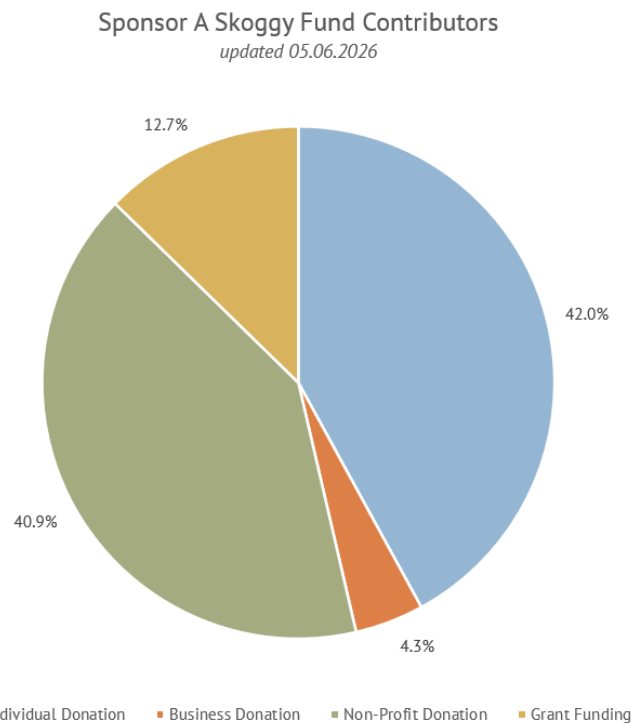
PMC remains committed to advocating for Alaska’s youth and families and continues to encourage collaboration between these organizations to develop a more sustainable and equitable solution for childcare support across the state.

Additional community support has played a critical role in offsetting program costs. Donations from Rocky's Marine and The Rotary Club have enabled the purchase of essential kayak safety equipment, ensuring programs meet safety standards without placing additional strain on departmental resources. The Petersburg Arts Council has also contributed funding for theatre camp scholarships, expanding access to arts-based programming.

A significant area of growth is the “Sponsor a Skoggy” Scholarship Fund, which has raised nearly \$30,000 to date. Notably, 42% of these funds have come from individual donors, reflecting strong community investment in youth access and engagement. This fund is a key mechanism for reducing financial barriers to participation and will continue to be a focus for sustainability and growth.

From an efficiency standpoint, the department continues to maximize external funding to subsidize high-cost program components, particularly equipment-intensive activities like kayaking. Staff are also mindful of resource-sharing, and aligning grant funding with strategic program needs to avoid redundancy and ensure long-term usability of purchased equipment.

The primary challenge moving forward is maintaining consistent funding streams to support both scholarships and rising operational costs, particularly as program demand increases. Continued support in donor engagement will be important to sustain momentum and ensure equitable access to programs without overextending departmental resources.



Summer Camp Guidebook: <https://canva.link/yhri75cy11b00db>

Sponsor a Skoggy Donation Link: <https://pmcyouth.campintouch.com/ui/forms/donor/Form>

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