

## ISA STORIES

(All recipients are referred to as male to preserve confidentiality)

**We currently have 10 high school seniors** in our program services; 8 of them are graduating. The other 2 have stayed in school this year and are pursuing GED's, which for them is a major accomplishment.

Of the 8 graduates, 4 of them received testing and tutoring at the Sylvan Learning Center, through ISA funds. Their case managers report that the youth would not have graduated without this support. 1 student was given guitar lessons, paid for with ISA funds, to build on interests/strengths and was used as an incentive for passing school grades. It worked.

2 youth were given laptops using ISA money to address educational needs. 1 youth received transportation assistance paid for with ISA funds in order to stay in the home school as the youth was intermittently homeless.

2 of the youth are continuing to UAA this fall.

Of the 8 graduates, 4 are in a Treatment Foster Care program, 3 are in home based services and 1 is in a group home.

**A 13 year old youth** has been getting special tutoring (\$20/hr) that "incorporates visual and textile stimulation." The tutor makes "word windows" that are just big enough to focus in on 2 sentences and the youth moves the window as he reads...The teacher has also made flash cards for learning words. The youth uses glitter and glue to write the words so that they "get" the words in two different ways.

"Since the youth began tutoring 6 months ago, he has gone from reading at a pre-primary level (2-3 year old) to a first grade (6-7 year old level). The youth has also progressed from writing 1-2 words to writing 2-3 consecutive sentences and is now able to read an entire book and able to retain the information to share the stories with his family."

**This youth has been in our program since April, 2008 and is now 6 years old.**

Diagnostic issues include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Enuresis and is a person with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The youth has been sexually, emotionally and physically abused, has witnessed domestic violence (D/V), experienced

multiple moves or placements, has been kicked out of 3 day cares due to his disruptive and out of control behaviors, and parental rights have been terminated with the father and relinquished with the mother. ISA services have included: respite, a Polly Movie, multiple activities that otherwise would not have been available, some sports equipment so that he could participate with one-to-one supervision. We are creating the youth's ability to have a life like other children, to learn skills, to work on improving developmental delays, to build some positive thoughts and activities, and to generate a feeling of accomplishment with success and self esteem. Also the youth was able to receive some hospital services that were not previously available but opened up due to the ISA.

The Polly Movie helped the youth in developing some success with thinking and activities as well as feeling safe that were tied to the PTSD, ODD, ADHD and FASD concerns. The Polly Movie has traditionally been successful with FASD and Autistic children in re-training the brain and the way that an individual thinks. This made quite a positive impact with this child. The Respite provided a break for the foster parents and helped teach this child a different perspective while allowing additional teaching of social, coping, communication and problem solving skills. This child also learned to participate in a sport with additional one-to-one support from our staff. We obtained the equipment that was necessary for the youth to be a part of the activity. This child has clearly improved and gained positive influences due to the ISA services provided. The youth has experienced things that were not possible in the past.

**This 17 year old youth has been officially in our program since March, 2009 but we have worked with him prior to that time.** Diagnostic issues are: PTSD, ODD, FASD, Mood Disorder, and has sustained a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The youth has had multiple moves and placements. The youth was so far behind in school he was ready to quit and go to Los Angeles to join a gang. The youth had witnessed D/V and parental rights have been terminated.

ISA services included: gym membership to develop positive activities, to support playing sports in school, to offer a positive alternative to using drugs and alcohol, to work out and develop himself physically. Instead of quitting, the youth has maintained academic progress, joined wrestling, and plays football. We were also able to get him athletic equipment that could not previously be obtained so that he could see that others doing their best for him and supported his efforts to do his best as well. This was great for his self-esteem also.

Last year he wrestled even though he could not participate in meets due to his grades. Since that time he has brought up his grades so that he can participate in athletics. At

the end of the wrestling season the coach allowed him to participate in one meet as a reward for his efforts. The youth has also received one-to-one tutoring. This has helped encourage him to stick to it. It is the merging of services from our agency and ISA funding that has helped this be a success story instead of another failure.

The youth stopped using drugs due to the requirements for participation in school athletics and for use of the gym membership. He now believes in himself and understands that others do care about him, that there are options for him and to actually plan a future. He has learned that many are watching him and care about what he does. This has been a huge impact. He has learned about trust, being responsible and effort in getting through the tough stuff and having for once in his life, a future plan with goals that he now believes he can accomplish. ISA services have helped him develop a way out of his hole and traumatic past.

The youth has done such a fantastic turn around. At one point we had lost him but we kept at it and got his attention. Now he is gaining with academic efforts after being 2 years behind and so close to quitting school. Now he is almost caught up and could be by next summer. He could graduate at the end of next year. He went to summer school this past year and made up classes, got himself able to play football and has found a place in the community. He has had no role models in his life and such low self esteem in the past. Now he has friends and a positive image in school and the community. Others actually look up to him and this has gotten his attention in a positive way. He is assisting us also in helping other youth in the community and what an example he has become. He, on his own, has gone to each of his teachers and discussed with them ways to catch up on his academic work. He is actually doing extra work. Without the ISA this youth would have been lost with no future and no hope. Now he has a life, dreams, and is talking about going to college for the first time in his life.

**This youth has been in our program since May, 2008 and is 6 years old.** His diagnostic issues include PTSD, Enuresis, Encopresis, ADHD, FASD and TBI. His mother has had her parental rights terminated and the father has relinquished them. The child has been severely sexually abused, experienced physical and emotional abuse, witnessed D/V, is developmentally delayed, has sleep and eating disturbances, and a total lack of parenting.

ISA has provided: respite, a Polly Movie, play ground equipment to improve physical development as he was very delayed in many areas. He could be safe in a positive environment and be able to play and learn normal things that he had not been exposed to in his younger years. As a result he has been able to remain in placement with his sister, is now attending school, and is making positive gains with his development and

especially with social, physical and cognitive areas. We have been able to provide more wrap-around services for him and one-to-one services for him through our program in support of what ISA provided.

The Polly Movie taught him to share and get along with his sister, who up until that point he had harassed physically and emotionally to the point of having to keep them totally separated. The Respite has provided him and the foster parents some time away and some break time as well. The youth has had the opportunity to learn a different perspective and additional needed skills with social, coping, communication, and problem solving. He is also not hoarding food as he had in the past. The play ground equipment has offered him a chance to work on his physical development especially with fine and gross motor skills as he was a couple years behind when he entered our program. It also provided an opportunity for play and being a real child, learning more social and coping skills, better self-esteem, developing a normal outlet for positive activities and better ways to deal with his PTSD and FASD concerns. He now can ride the bus to school like everyone else and prior to some of these services, that was not possible. The ISA services have been a terrific part of his improvements.

**This 7 year old youth** has been in our program since April, 2008. Diagnostic issues are: PTSD, ADHD, ODD, Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD), Enuresis, Mood Disorder and FASD. He has been physically, emotionally and sexually abused, witnessed D/V, experienced multiple placements, has been victimized, and can be a predator if not watched one-to-one. Mother has relinquished parental rights and father's rights have been terminated.

ISA has provided respite, playground equipment, and a Polly Movie. He has made great improvements in all areas though still needs one-to-one support or wrap around services but is now able to participate in jump rope activities through the school. This year is on the swimming team. Things that a year ago were unheard of or one would have thought not possible for this child are now happening. As a result of the ISA support we have been able to get him moving in a positive direction with his mental health issues and developmental delays.

This child learned about boundaries through the Polly Movie, has learned additional social, coping, problem solving and communication skills, improved sibling issues and interactions and gets a break with the respite services. The youth is learning a different perspective as well as support for the new social, communication, and problem solving skills he is learning there. He also has developed strong physical skills on the play ground equipment and interacts better socially and has better self-esteem and boundary issues.

**This youth** was in a group home and admitted to the program after being in an out-of-state residential treatment center with severe episodes of mania and depression, lack of coping skills, and poor social skills. During the senior year, it was identified that he was behind in high school credits due to confusion between the residential school setting and transferred credits to the community high school. ISA was used to provide Sylvan tutoring for credit, which this youth accredits to his being able to successfully graduate with his peers. Recently, ISA was used to provide an initial supply of bulk food, house wares, and household cleaning items to support the transition to independent living and reduce additional stressors.

The youth is now 19-years-old, maintaining a job, church responsibilities, and obtaining a secondary education in addition to typical errands and chores that go along with independent living. He humbly states that "if it weren't for Sylvan, I don't know what I'd be doing."

**This youth** from a group home transitioned to the program from an in-state residential treatment center with a history of homicidal/suicidal intent, severe depression, and limited social/coping skills. He shared with the team his love of music and a promise he made to his deceased brother to share music with others and teach. His long-term goal is to be a Professor of Music Theory. He has natural music talent. ISA was able to provide him with a laptop, music-mixing software, amplifier, USB keyboard, and basically all the gadgetry needed for a home recording studio. So far, he's recorded one song, which he has shared with the therapist. The therapist said that, "Given his typically moody and dark demeanor, if I could have only captured the pure joy and pride on his face...it was so promising." He will begin teaching guitar to a fellow peer within the month, which will give him an opportunity to translate his confidence in his music to confidence in social interactions with others.

**This youth** is 16 a year-old boy diagnosed with Major depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, eating disorder, and PTSD. He struggles with self-esteem and self-confidence. We utilized ISA funding to get him into tumbling classes to build his self-confidence as he really wanted to get on the cheer team. With lots of praise and encouragement from tumbling coach, Tx Parent, and Case Manager he tried out for a cheer team and made it. He is building positive relationships with others his age and sees his coaches as positive role models.

**This boy** is 14 years-old from the northwest region of AK. He has been in and out of treatment (NorthStar, ACS res, ACS treatment foster care) for the past couple of years. When at home in he frequently skips school or gets suspended for “acting out” in class. In Anchorage he was transferred to Whaley due to not being able to be maintained at a local middle school. Our agency utilized ISA funds to get student in Sylvan Learning to help fill skill gaps due to student being about 6-8 grade levels below his current grade. Since starting at Sylvan student is able to communicate with his teachers to ask for help, he is passing all his classes with A’s and B’s, and has had no incidences of inappropriate bx (compared to 2-3 incidences a day). He is currently transitioning out of Whaley into regular high school. He enjoys Sylvan and has made significant progress in filling skill gaps from previous grades.

**This youth** is a 16 years old boy from a small western village in AK. He has been in residential treatment for the past couple of years and has rarely been able to see his family due to his family being unable to afford visits to Anchorage. He has expressed that his family is very important to him and he would like to return home, but knows that he will be unable to abstain from drugs at this time. Our agency utilized ISA funds for student to visit his family for a long weekend over the summer to support student in his re-unification with family and also to provide support in his current treatment of meeting the need of seeing his family. He frequently worries about his family and he reports that it was helpful to see them in person and know that they are all okay.

**This Alaskan Native young man** is 17 years old. He came into our Treatment Foster Care Program from an adoptive home that was very burned out and could no longer continue to provide the supports that he needed as a student with FASD. This young man had been doing extremely well in school with A’s and B’s in regular education and special education classes with the supports that the high school had put in place for him. He was difficult to place in a foster treatment home because of the acuity of his behaviors, the need for the treatment parents to work closely with the adoptive family and for him to remain at his current high school. He was finally able to be placed in an experienced foster treatment home willing to work with the adoptive parents. This home is located across town from the high school, more than a 2 hour city bus ride. Our agency tried to have him qualify for Kids in Transition to receive bus service but he was ineligible because of the involvement of his adoptive family. ISA funds have paid for Taxi vouchers so that he could remain at his current high school and continue his rapid progress towards a high school diploma while continuing in treatment for FASD.