



JumpStart Helps Boost Family's Enjoyment of Community Activities



For Kelli Ngariki, introducing her two sons, Gabe and Tama, to new activities was often stressful and unsuccessful. Trying something new, even a trip to the movies, would often result in sensory challenges and the family would have to abandon the outing.

As Ngariki explains, “It is really challenging to take your kids to try new things not knowing if they are going to like it. Many time, we have had to return home, resulting in wasted time and money.”

After three years in Arc Lane County’s JumpStart program, both boys have expanded their comfort and enjoyment of trying new adventures. Ngariki attributes this positive change to the afterschool and summer programs offered by JumpStart.

“The cool thing with JumpStart is they have enough staff and other kids joining in the activities, so Gabe and Tama are more likely to want to try it.” says Ngariki. “Now that the boys are more comfortable, it has made us want to try more activities as a family.”

JumpStart staff has enjoyed watching both boys blossom during their time with The Arc Lane County. Instead of expressing anxiety and hesitation to join in activities, they now enthusiastically take part in movies, swimming, bowling, outings to the park, and playing with other children. They even enjoyed a trip to the Portland Zoo, where Gabe got to see his favorite animals, the elephants.

In addition to Gabe and Tama being a part of JumpStart, Tama’s support dog, Harley, has been a welcome addition to the group. The boys’ JumpStart classmates enjoy having Harley nearby, and they are learning how to behave around a support animal.