



# THE SUMMIT COMMUNITY CENTER

The Jaureguy & Karls Family (from left, PJ, Tim, Raquel, and Camden)

Designed for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

BY ERIN BREWER, SCC CO-FOUNDER AND CO-BOARD PRESIDENT

Meet neighborhood residents Raquel Karls & Tim Jaureguy and Alison & Kirby Winfield. They share in the many challenges and triumphs of raising their families that would resonate with many parents. Unique to their journey is that their families also include children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Alison & Kirby, parents of Kate who has Down syndrome and Tim & Raquel, parents of PJ who has Autism, also experience a special set of challenges and triumphs.

These families have spent years navigating the medical and education systems and now in some regards face one of their largest challenges yet, to ensure their children can live meaningful, productive lives and be part of a community that accepts and appreciates them once they exit the formal education system.

“The problem we’re trying to solve is: what happens when the school bus stops coming?” Raquel notes. “I feel like we’ve found a purpose that will be with Kate far beyond her school years and will ultimately be more impactful in the long run,” Alison agrees.

The Summit Community Center (SCC) is being created for young adults with intellectual and developmental

disabilities (IDD) to create a place for them to continue learning, growing, making friends, and engaging in the community. Young adults with IDD represent a key marginalized community that deserves quality services, support, and opportunities to thrive throughout adulthood.

## HOW THE SCC BEGAN

In the Spring of 2021, Raquel, Tim, and Alison joined a small group of parents and community advocates to brainstorm on the myriad of issues facing young adults with IDD across all facets of their lives, notably the lack of services and opportunities for true independence and community integration for this population. From these initial conversations, the idea of the SCC was born and opened its doors in March 2023.

“These young adults are chronically underserved and underemployed and we wanted to change that,” said Tim. “Just like any parent, we want PJ to have a fulfilling life and to be a happy, independent, productive member of



From left, Alison, Kirby III, Kirby and Kate Winfield

the community.” It’s an unfortunate reality that services and opportunities fall off a cliff after students matriculate from formalized schooling. “I look ahead into the future and want to ensure Kate has the opportunities she deserves to connect with her community in a fun and inclusive environment,” adds Alison.

“I think about the exponential impact the SCC can have,” adds Raquel. “If these young adults have the social contact, growth opportunities, and fulfilling activities they deserve, they show up with those skills at their jobs and in the broader community -- everyone benefits.”

**THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE SCC**

The SCC will offer programming across four core pillars – Education, Recreation, Community, and Growth -- to provide a range of classes and clubs that appeal to all the different abilities and interests of the SCC members. The goal is to create a variety of exciting options and to foster a true sense of belonging and community where members can go to learn, grow, recreate, and develop a sustainable social network.

Alicia Nathan, the founding Executive Director, leads a passionate and engaged staff and volunteer team. A Member Advisory Board will work with the staff to help grow and evolve programming and the SCC will feature an array of opportunities for leadership, mentorship, and vocational exploration. Many notable community partners, including WA Special Olympics, Outdoors for All, and Seattle Theatre Group, are already on board to expand opportunities at the SCC.

**CREATING COMMUNITY**

The SCC is designed to create both a vibrant community within its walls and foster deep integration into the broader community. “We are starting relatively small, with ages 18-29, but the potential is huge,” said Alison. “We have an amazing opportunity to grow and impact not only our members but truly the whole region in conjunction with our partners

and community support.” Tim and Raquel agreed, “the SCC will grow along with these young adults as a lifelong support system to maximize life skills, build friendships, and be leaders in the community.”

**GET INVOLVED!**

You can get involved in the SCC in 3 key ways:

- Financial Support - please consider a donation to support the SCC’s programming and long-term sustainability [www.summitcommunitycenter.org/donate](http://www.summitcommunitycenter.org/donate)
- Membership - if you or someone you know could benefit from the SCC please contact us at [info@summitcommunitycenter.org](mailto:info@summitcommunitycenter.org)
- Community Involvement- we are looking for volunteers, peer mentors, and local professionals to get involved - contact us to schedule a tour!

For more information, please visit our website at: [www.summitcommunitycenter.org](http://www.summitcommunitycenter.org)



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