

**AGENCY:** All Aboard for Kids

**LIAISON:** Sandra King

**DATE:** November 2020

1. **Need for the Program.** Run by founding couple, Michael and Lisa McCarty, All Aboard for Kids is a four-week summer enrichment program for all school-aged children with special accommodations for children on the autism spectrum and with related developmental disabilities. Kids entering K-8 are served in the Full STEAM Ahead program (K-5) and the STEAM Academy (In summer 2019, two half-day sessions were in operation; STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math. In 2020, due to COVID, the summer program was cancelled and funds were redirected toward the 2021 program. ASSET funding is used for scholarships, which are based on financial need and family circumstances.

The summer enrichment program continues to meet the funding priorities for United Way, City of Ames, and Story County as follows:

- United Way – Education: children enter school developmentally on track.
  - City of Ames – Youth development services and activities.
  - Story County – Services addressing safety and well-being needs: Social and educational development and opportunities.
2. **Program Strengths.** A key strength of the program is that it fills a gap in Story County by focusing on kids on the autism spectrum for social and cognitive enrichment. Programs like 60 Minutes have featured a growing number of organizations that are beginning to see the benefit of untapped talent that adults with autism have to offer. All Aboard for Kids is a priceless community asset that serves as early preparation of eligible kids for future self-sufficiency.
  3. **Program Weaknesses.** I didn't observe any weaknesses. However, COVID has a way of exposing weaknesses from which we can learn in future years.
  4. **Financial Outlook.** Funding is sought to keep tuition costs low. Currently, tuition is \$200 per week. ASSET funding is used to provide scholarships. In 2019, 19 kids were served, with 2/3 at the K-5<sup>th</sup> grade level.
  5. **Internal Management Practices.** All Aboard for Kids is run by founding members, Lisa & Michael McCarty. It also has an eight-member board with members with varying backgrounds and experiences.
  6. **Agency Comments/Suggestions.** The agency President, Lisa McCarty, expressed appreciation for the current ASSET support and a strong desire for continued support.

**GENERAL ASSESSMENT.** All Aboard for Kids appears to be in the very early stages of brainstorming and exploring offering program for older kids (i.e. life skills and vocational skills). Because this is in the early stages there is nothing additional to report. The program is impressive and should receive continued if not additional funding.