

# First Alaskans Institute

AFN/First Alaskans Elders & Youth Conference  
October 23-24, 2006  
Egan Convention Center  
Anchorage, Alaska

First Alaskans Institute hosted the 2006 AFN/First Alaskans Elders & Youth Conference in Anchorage, Alaska at the Egan Convention Center on October 23-24, 2006. This final conference report includes planning activities, the participation of the conference planning committee as well as the Elders and Youth Council, an overview of the conference agenda and highlights, the regional caucus reports, registration information, conference evaluation and additional follow-up items.

## Conference Logo and Theme

### Respect for Native Life: Restoring Balance & A Sense of Belonging

#### *Native Life:*

Our land, our values, and our cultures are the foundation for who we are as Native peoples.

#### *Sense of Belonging:*

To ensure, regain, and restore healthy communities, we need to know our languages and histories; and we need to know the importance of being Alaska Native. When we know these things we know we are okay and that we belong.



#### *Restoring Balance:*

Our Elders teach us that we live a healthy life when we make good choices for ourselves and when we contribute to our family and to our community. We know it is time to choose to live a healthy life.

## Conference Planning Project Team

First Alaskans Institute recognizes the Conference planning team: **Ethan Schutt** (Koyukon Athabascan), **Maniksaq Baumgartner** (Iñupiaq), **Tiffany Tutiakoff** (Dena'ina Athabascan), **Debbie Dommek** (Iñupiaq) and **Rocky Estrada** (Tlingit).

The planning committee was responsible for development of the conference theme, the overall structure of the two day event, and the agenda. The team identified speakers, presenters, dance groups, and helped develop the Conference theme.

## Elders and Youth Council

The 2006 Elder and Youth Council members were elected during the 2005 Elders & Youth Conference. Council members identified meaningful ways in which Elders and youth would interact and how each participant would benefit from his or her activities. Many served as conference “emcees” during the Conference. The following were very active in conference planning and communications:

- **Shelly Bogenrife**, Sitka – Chugach Region Youth Alternate
- **Isabella Brady**, Sitka – Southeast Region Elder Alternate
- **Fawn Renee Chya**, Old Harbor – Koniag Region Youth Representative
- **Lorna David**, Mentasta – Ahtna Region Youth Representative
- **Rev. Anna Frank**, Minto – Doyon Region Elder Representative
- **Willie Goodwin, Jr.**, Kotzebue – NANA Region Elder Representative
- **Daniel Karmun Sr.**, Nome – Bering Straits Region Elder Representative
- **Amber Lampe**, Hoonah, – Southeast Region Youth Representative
- **Jalene Pequeno**, Chevak – Calista Region Youth Representative
- **John Reft**, Kodiak – Koniag Region Elder Representative
- **Feona Sawden**, Port Graham – Chugach Region Elder Representative
- **Florence Sheakley**, Juneau – Southeast Region Elder Representative
- **Lexi Staheli**, Kiana – NANA Region Youth Representative
- **Roy Tansey, Sr.**, Copper Center – Ahtna Region Elder Representative

Special thanks to Elders **Sidney Smith** and **Iver Malutin** (Kodiak) who also served as Conference emcees!

## Call for Presentations and Agenda Development

In August a call for presentations was issued to the public, soliciting conference presenters, panels, and workshop topics. Preference was given to Alaska Native presenters. Proposals were reviewed by the planning committee for:

- Facilitated interaction between Elders and Youth
- Relevance to the conference theme
- Connections to the conference purpose and outcomes
- Potential to engage participants during the presentation
- Appeal to the Elders and youth audience
- Usefulness to participants
- Clarity of proposal

In addition to the call for presentations; the Conference planning committee included presentations suggested by the Elders & Youth Council. The Committee sought to create a balanced agenda which included a number of issues that remain important to Alaska Native Elders and youth. These issues include language revitalization, education issues, drug and alcohol prevention, and cultural traditions. The final agenda can be downloaded from the First Alaskans Institute website at [www.firstalaskans.org](http://www.firstalaskans.org).

## Plenary Speakers

**Mayor Edward Itta**, of the North Slope Borough, elaborated on the conference theme during the opening keynote address. From an Elder perspective he remarked, "I believe there is no more important link for Native people than the link between the past and the future. It is a spiritual connection between the timeless truths of our ancestors and the energetic, hopeful vision of our young people." Mayor Itta also commented that there is nothing more durable than joining together the strength of age with the flexibility of youth—what he calls cultural concrete. He also talked about the need for finding balance and how healthy communities are important to maintaining Native strength. Our families and communities provide comfort, renewal, and a safe haven.

**Debra Dommek**, an Iñupiaq student studying at the University of Alaska Anchorage, continued the keynote address by talking about the responsibility of youth. She highlighted the importance of learning, especially of the rich Alaska Native cultures, and pointed out the tradition of storytelling for passing on knowledge and teachings.

**Feona Sawden** (Port Graham), along with two student volunteers, demonstrated how to prepare fish for drying while the **Aniak Dragon Slayers** gave an interactive presentation on fire safety.

**Joy Shockley** (Koyukon Athabascan) read poetry and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority showed a video titled "**Guiding Voices**."

Students from West Anchorage High School and East High presented a **Village Council Meeting Skit**. The skit discussed the elements of a successful school, but more importantly focused on what made a successful student.

During the plenary, **Jason Metrokin** and **Maniksaq Baumgartner**, facilitated a roundtable discussion in which participants were able to ask questions, reflect on issues raised, encourage peers, and make comments. The issues raised during the roundtable discussion included: fishing permits, dangers of tobacco use and alcohol abuse, compliments to the conference and to the dancers, cancer-awareness, assisted-living homes and Elder health-care, and diabetes prevention.

The NYO demonstration by **Anchorage Native Youth Olympics** on healthy living was very positively received. Furthermore it set the stage for the discussion of drug prevention. APD **Deputy Chief Ross Plummer** presented on the dangers of methamphetamine use and associated criminal activity in Alaska.

**Terzah Poe** and **Doris Hugo-Shavings** (Iñupiaq) presented on Leadership, specifically on how to participate in developing your future.

**Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle** (King Island Iñupiaq) and **Deanna Strunk** (Yup'ik) presented on behalf of the Inuit Circumpolar Youth Council; their presentation "Taking Responsibility of Our Languages, Our Culture, and Our Future," focused on Native language preservation.

## Workshops

The call for presentations identified relevant workshops in which conference participants could meet and share creative ideas, opinions, solutions, and stories. Workshops were built around the conference theme and were facilitated by a number of community organizations from throughout Alaska.



### **Every Native American Makes a Difference**

Howard Rainer, Creek and Taos Pueblo

### **Raven Odyssey**

Ishmael Hope, Tlingit and Iñupiaq, and P.J. Paperelli; Perseverance Theatre

### **The Power of Vision**

Brian Frejo, Pawnee/Seminole; Culture Shock Camp

### **Stop the Drop(out): Crossing the Line**

Greta Goto, Yup'ik, Malia Villegas, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, Dewey Hoffman, Koyukon Athabascan; Alaska Native Policy Center

### **Gwisheei: "Knowledge," in Gwich'in**

Chief Dr. David Salmon, Gwich'in Athabascan and Janet Curtiss, Gwich'in Athabascan

### **We know our land best. Help us help the land.**

Crystal "Cusquq" Leonetti, Yup'ik/Aleut; Natural Resources Conservation Service

### **Creative Ways to Learn Your Native Language**

Ronald Brower, Iñupiaq; Alaska Native Language Center and Donita Peters, Denaina Athabascan; Alaska Native Heritage Center

### **Traditional Values/Contemporary Solutions**

Allan Hayton; Gwich'in Athabascan; Association of Alaska School Boards

### **Choosing a College and Paying for It**

Andrea Kavlaq Van Ravenswaay, Iñupiaq /Hopi/Luiseno

### **Encouraging Alaska Native Youth to Strive for Professional Level Careers**

Nasruk Nay; Iñupiaq; Alaska State Troopers

### **Got Games?**

Charlie Ess, Ernestine Stepetin, Chris Ivon, Willie Attie, Natalia Inga; Alaska Job Corps

### **Organizing Events in Native Communities**

Matthew Sena, African American, Mexican, and Taos Pueblo; Chugachmiut

### **Voices of Native Elders: Preparing for the Future**

Charmaine Ramos, Tlingit, George Charles, Yup'ik, and Jim Labelle, Iñupiaq; AARP Alaska State Office

### **Subsistence Knowledge and Relationships: Ways to Celebrate our Identity**

Joy Shockley, Koyukon Athabascan; Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments

### **Boarding School Roundtable**

Reggie Joule, Iñupiaq, Irene Sherry, Athabascan, Malia Villegas, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq

### **How I Found Balance for My Life**

Ramy Brooks, Athabascan/Yup'ik; Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

### **The Alaska Gas Pipeline: Preparing for Jobs, Careers and the Economy**

Dave Rees and John Horskotter; BP Alaska

### **Establishing Financial Success in College through Rural Student Services**

Kay Thomas; Aleut; Rural Student Services, UAF

### **Place-Based Education: Community Collaboration**

Clare Johnson; Interior-Aleutians Campus Director

### **ELDER + STUDENT = SUCCESS**

Margie Hastings; Yup'ik; Chief Ivan Blunka School

### **Dance Groups**

The dance presentations were a highlight of the two-day conference. Thanks go to members of the Hawaiian Delegation, the West High School Dance Group, the King Island Dancers, the Minto Dancers, the Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers, the Tlingit and Haida Dancers of Anchorage, the Mt. Edgecumbe Yup'ik Dance Group, and the Tikigaq Traditional Dancers of Point Hope.



## Regional Breakout Sessions

During Regional breakout sessions participants discussed the elements of a healthy community; participants asked the question: “**What is it we need to let our leaders know, that will enable them to work towards healthy communities?**” and asked of themselves: “**What am I going to contribute towards a healthy community where I'm from?**” During regional caucuses, participants elected representatives for the Elders and Youth Council and completed evaluation forms. The following are reports from the regional caucuses:

### Ahtna Region

Elder Representative: Roy Tansy, Sr., Cantwell

Youth Representative: Peter Ewan, Glennallen

#### Regional Discussion:

- Obesity: diet and exercise: revert to Native lifestyles/food
- Drug and alcohol: efforts to reduce do not seem to have impact
- Subsistence rights to teach youth and create a sense of belonging
- Successes are not recognized
- Sobriety/abstinence: recognition for success
- Be a good citizen/ religious
- Disregard for littering laws
- **More community activities**
  - Camping trips
  - Community effort/teamwork to accomplish goals
  - To clean, pick up trash
  - Exercise/sports activities
  - Communication within communities
  - Opportunities to share between Elders and Youth
  - Storytelling time
- Vote for good leaders to organize communities
- Visiting among community members
- Turn off TV's and other distractions to take time to visit neighbors.
- Youth should check on/visit Elders: Elder and youth “buddies”
- Youth desire knowledge of culture and language
- Young people feel disconnected from their culture and want to help to know their culture
- **Education:**
  - Culture in schools within curriculum
  - Kids need to read and write
  - Native teachers in schools
  - Youth given \$ for education but didn't come back: need incentives to come back
  - School principal has offered time for culture if someone can teach
  - Need to create materials to teach Native curriculum in computer/audio/video Medias and develop curriculum.
- Cultural activities should also be taught outside the school
- Indian education at school needs to hear from community members to make the changes
- Learn from the Hawaiians: Elders/Kupuras teaching in the schools
- Bridging gaps between Native and non-Native: eliminate discrimination
- How can VPSO's contribute to the community?
- Chitina youth need transportation to activities
- Organize an “Indian Day”
- Community involvement (in community effort/teamwork)
- Youth voice: there's nothing for us to do
- Corporation should find dollars for children to travel for knowledge
- Rayann in Copper willing to organize activity for basketball and storytelling and transportation for Chitina youth
- Carlene will encourage her son to become a teacher in her community

## Aleut Region

Elder Representative: Nora Newman, Sand Point

Youth Representative: Sophia Zacharof, St. Paul

### Regional Discussion:

- Entities need to work together
- Need leaders to do what they are supposed to do
- Hold accountable those we elect
- **Need for smoke-free communities**
  - Start with helping parents to quit so children do not start.
  - Teach families the impact, more prevention education
  - Build connections between parents look out for one another's children
  - Fewer/stop tobacco products
  - Gatherings should be smoke-free
  - Public spaces should be smoke-free (even the Egan Center)
- **Reduce High School Drop-out Rate**
  - make school more interesting
  - interactive lessons, use games, drama and creative instruction
  - shift attention so its not just on sports
  - put focus on music, dance, etc.
  - Shift control of high school to Aleut Region
  - Village should have control and choice of teachers/curriculum
  - Teach the differences between a high school diploma over a life time: employment options, salary, advancement
  - Aleut history woven into curriculum
  - Is the exit exam process hurting our community
  - The curriculum is not challenging enough
  - Encourage leaders to participate on school boards
  - Alaska Native student drop-out rates are increasing, though we make up a large percentage of schools, we are increasingly dropping out
- **Drug and Alcohol Control**
  - Increase drug awareness: illegal drugs on islands
  - No beer/alcohol on islands, No bootlegging
  - involved in the planning, implementation, enforcement
  - check track record of those enforcing the rules
  - "local option law" – use drug sniffing dogs
  - More drug/alcohol-free meetings on weekends
  - bring awareness that it is a crime
  - Again, consider 'local option law'
  - Share with my friends the consequences of making the choice to do drugs
  - Teach those children younger than me to be healthy. Being a role model even as a youth
  - Learn from those who have given up drugs and alcohol—those who know how to live sober lives
- Preserve Aleut language: put into our curriculum as a required course
- Count towards language requirement
- **More Community Gatherings**
  - Community centers needed
  - More picnic grounds
  - Benches, grills, area for children, more public spaces
  - Gathering events and spaces
- Work together to address problems
- Look at good examples across regions for ways to share resources and models
- Elders taskforce
- Wellness project
- Contribute to/participate in our wellness movement
- Elders tea party, pancake breakfasts, home cooking
- Share myself by volunteering
- Be the person to get it started

- Share my ideas with my community
- Encourage each other to go for it
- Keep a young person motivated by never telling them to be quiet
- Make our work together be work that we enjoy
- Wanting to help even from far away
- Know that it is about choices that we make everyday.
- Wake up and make a healthy choice for myself

## Arctic Slope Region

Elder Representative: Priscilla Sage, Barrow

Youth Representative: Christina Aiken, Barrow

Regional Discussion:

**What is it that we need our leaders to know, that will enable them to work towards healthy communities?**

- Know the facts, know the story-in order to make better decisions
- Help one another—unity i.e. computers hunting
- Learn
- Listen
- Anyone working for community togetherness
- More activities i.e. games with Elders and youth
- Camps – natural resources educational camps
- Don't wait to learn
- Stay away from drugs

**What am I going to do to contribute to a healthy community where I'm from?**

**Barrow:**

- Special meeting for a gathering place- subsistence, arts and crafts once a month
- Respect for Elders and others
- Patience
- Founding one single organization for Elders and youth activities
- Delegate a leader for motivating others to coordinate activities
- Delegating liaisons—Elders school program
- Summit to follow up

**Wainwright:**

- Elders—invitations to school
- Learn subsistence way of life
- Sponsor a youth

**Anaktuvuk Pass**

- Elders and Youth club
- Youth/Elder time—games, activities, communicate
- Started commission
- Stop the excuses
- Teen pregnancy: Address this issue
- Drop out rate: Education

**Point Hope:**

- Keep following up
- Learn culture
- Learn language—more bilingual classes
- Eskimo dancing
- Drug and alcohol free community

**Kaktovik:**

- Camps, pressure lecture
- Learn traditional hunting, sewing
- Find Inupiaq teacher
- Learn language
- Integrate Elders into the school setting
- Knowledge of side effects of drugs
- Teen center

## Bering Straits Region

Elder Representative: Daniel Karmun Sr., Nome

Youth Representative: Marjorie Tahbone, Nome

Regional Discussion:

**What is it we need to let our leaders know, that will enable them to work towards healthy communities?**

- Be aware of the issues/problems
- Felt there should be NO bingo
- High unemployment rate
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- High suicide rate
- High truancy
- Too much peer pressure
- People need to be more respectful
- People need to be honest
- Need more youth activities
- Felt that during the conference and other times the Elders and youth should meet more frequently within regions to discuss issues and solutions
- Need good volunteers
- Leaders need to be role models
- Garbage problems in the village
- The youth drink too much soda
- The school books need to be translated into the native language, and the youth encourage to learn and use their native language

**What am I going to contribute towards a healthy community where I'm from?**

- Be more outspoken against bars in the villages
- Start a wellness committee for the villages
- Encourage young people to know their Eskimo name and the history attached to the name
- Teach young people the native language
- Open up youth centers
- Pick up trash – start a community group to police the area and do clean up
- Individuals will volunteer
- Encourage the youth to marry – a good foundation
- Be a good role model as a leader
- Promote the native traditions – ask for local native speakers to speak at youth functions
- Change peer pressure to promote knowledge of the cultural history
- Start a teen/learning center
- Look into starting a youth treatment center
- Be more respectful of the land by picking up trash
- Will learn the traditional dances
- Teach teens to take care of their building “police their own buildings – youth center buildings”
- Promise to start teaching the youth about life – history – ways of the past
- Find families of children with same Eskimo names and educate them on the history and bring them together
- Seek out my Apa and have him teach me the language
- Coach native games in the community
- Invite youth into tribal meetings to get more involved
- Take old/rundown buildings to make a safe place for youths
- Teach young people about “chores” – the way of life, values, and responsibilities
- Get a group together to discuss and list out our values
- Be an example
- Get organizations in the community to work together
- Partner on activities
- Encourage young people to take time to visit an elder
- Corporations should respect youth in stock and land ownership
- Anchorage should show more respect to AFN

- Need designated elder section at AFN
- More breakout time for regions to communicate their needs

### Bristol Bay Region

Elder Representative: Paul Hansen, Naknek

Youth Representative: Tabitha Holm, King Salmon

Regional Discussion:

**What is it we need to let our leaders know, that will enable them to work towards healthy communities?**

- Stop the Meth
- Lower fuel/energy cost
- Early education with fetal alcohol syndrome consequences
- Importance of sobriety
- Emphasis/focus on traditional lifestyles and language
- Behavioral problems brought out
- Parental involvement
- Teen pregnancy
- Encourage traditional values
- Good educators for our youth
- Demanding higher standards from our teachers
- Entities/corporate needs to work together towards same good
- Educate parents to be parents
- Elder and youth work toward same goal
- Encourage initiatives from youth
- Get local teachers
- Administration catered to gifted students
- Leaders within community needs to be united
- unity towards funding to be a voice for our youth
- Leaders needs to be sober
- Teach our youth of consequences
- Division within the villages
- Students encouraged to take chances toward opportunities
- Regions partner to build hotel
- LESS ALCOHOL SALES
- Resources to be available for single parent homes and support

**What am I going to contribute towards a healthy community where I'm from?**

- Term limit on leaders
- ASSET initiatives
- Adults volunteer in school
- Youth court works
- Positive praises encourage incentives for youth doing good
- Peer support
- Older kids volunteer to mentor younger kids
- Encourage parent to sit and talk with kids
- Youth leaders hold parents accountable
- Encourage healthy lifestyles
- Healthy people serving on boards
- Youth set good examples (leaders, everyone)
- Youth stands up and talk to leaders about sobriety, etc.
- Youth has lots of power
- Community leaders to train youth to be leaders

## Calista Region

Elder Representative: Dana Kopanuk, Bethel

Youth Representative: Aaron Moses, Toksook Bay

Regional Discussion:

### **What is it we need to let our leaders know that will enable them to work towards Healthy Communities?**

- Better communication between Elders and Youth
- Ancestor's prophecy—the world will change. Key point: listen to Elders
- Gathering to plan for activities or other
- Help the Elders, ask if they need help
- Elder support—cultural camps—listen to stories
- Cultural trips—St. Mary's, HS go moose hunting.
- Students get to know each other
- Elders were there to observe
- They survived rainy/cold weather
- Recommendation to include participation of Elders in school for cultural camps including language.
- Activities in the communities
- Cultural heritage every season for every grade in school—subsistence
- Students should be able to go hunting with their parents during school season.
- Accountability can be that students go and write about it
- Need good law enforcement. State is short handed and doesn't go out to villages on short notice
- A lot of crime is alcohol/drug related. People are not bad just because they commit a crime.
- Our ancestors policed their own communities. Answers are in our ancestors.

### **Sampling of personal commitments to improving community:**

Keep kids off drugs and alcohol. Need a VPSO in the village to keep drug trafficking from adults to children and teens to a minimum – Kendra Cleveland, Quinhagak

Long ago they used the Qasgiq for teaching and story-telling. People used to listen. Talking circles with teens may help. Stop playing Nintendo! – Liane Kameroff, Napakiak

Will begin doing skits with their youth group leader in her village about drugs and alcohol and encourage her friends to quit. Will become more involved with friends and family for subsistence gathering. Teach youth right from wrong. – Lauren Nukusuk, Hooper Bay

Lived with her grandma, really connected with the idea of helping out the Elders. – Renee Yupanik, Emmonak

Elders in schools, stop drugs w/ family and community, stop the bootlegging, more healthy youth activities, talk to Elders more often, go outside more, no more video games/TV, move around—don't sit still and sit/lay, practice subsistence way of life. – Allison Simeon, Aniak/Kalskag

I would like to do some research on drugs and try to stop it in my village because I am tired of family members doing it and others too. If that doesn't work I would like to keep trying. – Alexandra Waska, Emmonak

Stop chewing tobacco. – Paul Atlake, Hooper Bay

Keep our communities healthy and teach our kids what it means to live in a healthy environment. – Dustin Evon, Kwigillingok

Let Elders go to schools and teach their grandkids language and culture and have more activity nights. – Flora Phillips, Anchorage

## Chugach Region

Elder Representative: Bill Barnes, Tacoma, WA

Youth Representative: Erik George Bonnegard, Cordova

Regional Discussion:

### What is a Healthy Community?

- Kids who visit elders/learning from
- Traditional way of life
- Unity – people coming together
- Helping kids from troubled backgrounds
- Subsistence – sharing – hunting
- Better assisted living
- Create jobs
- Activities with equal access – i.e. Tatitlek exercise center is not accessible to the community
- Sharing – Story telling
- Visit
- Church religion education
- Monthly or quarterly mix up (NVE) fish, tea – youth/elders
- Elder's sewing circle
- Having 2 health aides instead of 1
- Documenting stories from elders
- Language Classes – 2 different dialects – communicate differences
- Regional / village cops > VPSO's
- Teach kids church songs, starr songs
- VPSO > Respect for dying
- Language
- Making-learning culture fun- merged w/technology
- Hunting/land preservation culture
- Leaders of village encourage education
- Bi-lingual
- Exercise/Walking
- Encouragement > tell them they are doing a good job
- Encouraging kids to pass on traditional knowledge – hunting/fishing
- Honor, respect
- Listen/learn from elders
- Spiritual – observe, pray, learn
- Respecting Law Land
- Nuciik culture camp
- Talking/Healing circles
- Knowledge of traditions
- Good roll models for youths to follow
- Language
- Grave – take care of

### Symptoms of an Unhealthy Community

- Drugs, smoking, chew, drinking
- Drop outs
- Wasting subsistence
- Drunk driving
- Social cliques
- Not passing on traditions/culture
- Lack of parenting skills
- Lack of respect
- Lack of respect/ honors elders
- Lack of spiritual leaders

### How What can I do?

- Newsletter for villages
- Elders set good example for grandkids
- Keep the education going

- Tell more people about programs like language program
- Donate to efforts like St. Nicolas, Valdez
- Encourage kids to stay in school
- Ask for help – Ask to help (elders are willing to help)
- Learn survival skills
- Don't let your native culture die down
- Put village council members in news letters
- Make Nuuciq more affordable to fly & attend
- Youth/Elders rep >write letter village corp/councils – follow up – help

## Cook Inlet Region

Elder Representative: Lois Munson, Eklutna

Youth Representative: Kristen Weber, Chugiak

Regional Discussion:

**What is it that we need our leaders to know, that will enable them to work towards healthy communities?**

- Spiritual lives: support tradition
- Children: caring for children within healthy homes
- Education
  - Racism
  - Academic challenge
  - Gifted and talented programs (more intuitive, spiritual sense)
  - Business/corporation scholarships
- Raising a child's self-esteem
- Career opportunities
- Networking—village level, CIRI
- Identifying health needs
- Southcentral Foundation: natural/traditional healing and educating the community
- Unity

**What am I going to do to contribute towards a healthy community where I am from?**

- Don't litter
- Recycle
- Healthy communities
- Healthy environment
- air, water, wildlife protection
- Drug-free community
- Education—schools
- Traditions, language, dance
- Respect
- Be an example of respect
- Encourage pride in culture
- Provide learning opportunities for culture
- Reinforcing identity
- looking at genealogy
- We'd like Anchorage school district support the Native charter school
- CIRI organize community care efforts
- clean up
- volunteer to be visible
- CIRI to back up Mayor Begich on gang issues in Anchorage, CIRI villages\

## Doyon Region

Elder Representative: Reverend Anna Frank, Minto

Youth Representative: Leslie Ambrose, Nulato

Regional Discussion:

### **What Do we need to let our leaders know to enable them to better do their jobs?**

- Respect in the home with parents as well as in the community with Elders
- Schools have responsibility to retain students and incorporate cultural activities
- Share skills
- For Doyon: Educate youth for employment opportunities and career guidance
- **Focus on ALL areas of health:**
  - Physical: i.e. spend time outdoors, hunt/trap/fish/traditional activities, basketball
  - Mental
  - Spiritual: need involvement from leaders, not just delegation of duties/responsibilities
- Health Education: Work for us, not against us
- Be accountable
- Refuse to be victims.
- Be responsible for our choices
- Say No.
- Grow our own.
- Bring Elders to the classroom
- Write grants to fund more village workshops
- Don't lower our standards
- Walk the talk.
- Open lines of communication
- Leaders: Quit fighting with one another
- Think in positive terms
- Live honorably, live to be worthy of honor
- Help our Native men to stand up and be leaders!
- Lead by example
- Address alcohol
  - Council members
  - Chief
  - Mayor
- Break the cycle
- Protect Youth
- Prevention

### **What will I do to contribute to a healthy community?**

- Create Healthy Activities: i.e. softball team
- Create outlets for communication/ self-expression: i.e. write essays, radio
- Pick the right role models.
- As parents: give our children a healthy start
- Provide youth with hope.
- Tell youth "I love you!"
- Spend time with youth: make it a priority
- Embrace people rather than push them away
- Oral history projects: spirit camp for youth
- Doyon to-do:
  - Compensate with per diem and air travel
  - Set procedures in place for full participation at all meetings

## Koniag Region

Elder Representative: Carl Christianson, Old Harbor

Youth Representative: Roslyn Delgado, Ouzinkie

Regional Discussion:

**What is it we need to let our leaders know that will enable them to work towards Healthy Communities?**

- **What is a Healthy Community?**
  - Need to work together before you can call yourself a community
  - Young people have choices – can stay in village and have a family, make that a choice.
  - Being involved and aware
  - Provide motivational speakers for youth
  - Talk to students about educational options – college in-state/out of state
  - Have respect for youth in community (at community meetings)
  - Have more options for youth – make is same in all communities region wide
  - More sports/recreation for youth
- Alcohol – adults say kids shouldn't drink but what about the parents and grandparents. Adults should not be hypocritical.
- Let leaders know of issues/situations that are harming others
- Drop out rates among students
- Education is a community responsibility. Education includes school, culture and language. Make Elders welcome in the schools.
- Discipline in schools (bullying). Don't ignore negative behavior.
- Family vs. Family – put aside family issues and work together for a healthy community as a whole – we will have a much stronger voice.
- Create jobs for youth
- Bonding with culture – have Native names like in other cultures. Ask elders to provide Native names for youth.
- Coordinate a Youth Group and set priorities for community and/or region. Priorities brought to AFN at next convention.

**What am I going to contribute towards a Healthy Community where I am from?**

- Be a positive role model
- Voice my opinion and be heard
- Stay in school
- Come back home to my community
- Be positive and give my opinion
- More interaction between the school/students/elders
- Smile
- Communicate
- Be respectful
- Put into action, not just talk
- Get elders/youth together weekly on various subjects (cutting fish, making bread, etc.)
- More adult volunteers
- Youth willing to show up
- Have adults/parents learn with the youth
- Example: Kodiak Youth Group – volunteer group meets weekly and hosts fun activities – holidays, etc.
- Kids fight for right to work in the school system
- Alutiiq language taught in the education system in each community.
- Kodiak College will offer class next year.
- Teachers respect the culture in community – educate teachers about the culture
- Provide a forum for elders and youth to interact with the school district
- Need positive parental involvement
- Have a youth member be part of local Tribal Council
- More space at AFN main convention for elders/youth, not only one report
- Use My Space as a forum to discuss regional youth issues

## NANA Region

Elder Representative: Willie Goodwin, Jr., Kotzebue

Youth Representative: Lexi Staheli, Kiana

Regional Discussion:

### What is it we need to let our leaders know, that will enable them to work towards healthy communities?

- Sober representatives. If you are going to represent us please be sober and drug-free.
- Be a positive thinker
- We have a disciplinary problem that we need to address. Bring up upstairs by youth and statewide
- Actions of our nation and state expect us to turn them in for disciplinary reasons. Our way is different—we need to take more responsibility—we talk but don't act and do not support them. We need to learn how to act and behave like Iñupiaq people.
- We have an alcohol problem in Kotzebue and throughout the region—people should decide on this—do we want to regulate it?
- Court house full of juvenile offenders and what are we doing about it? Long ago the city council used to get those folks and talk to them
  - Can the shareholders get involved and show we care—rather than acting like we don't care?
  - State changed law where the court does not need parents around to talk to the children—that's wrong.
  - Can we ask Knowles to look at changing that law?
  - How can we help each other?: Agencies work together - Encourage leaders to validate their kid's feelings—rather than being silent. Kids have feelings for their parent's to talk to each other about dangers of alcohol and smoking—learn and share stories with each other and learn from each other. Youth ask elders— it's ok to scold/get after and teach in good ways.
- Teach importance of prayer and praying for others
- Iñupiaq homeless and needy persons need food, clothing here in city—all people, Yup'ik, Indians, Doyon shareholders—winter is near—think about them as well.
- Students respecting students—students learn first at home
- Museum in Kotzebue... and its use.
- Iñupiaq language: can leaders create a language center in Kotzebue
- Iñupiaq values in place, practice them and support existing programs by cohesively working together to make sure they stay in place and working for our people.
- Healthy communities: BKL (2006) still needs water and sewer for healthy communities. We have to still follow their rules.

### What am I going to contribute towards a healthy community where I'm from?

- Vote; councils; representatives—you vote.
- 1970's suicide response was to:
  - pray first thing in the morning
  - hi to 5 people a day
  - do one good deed a day... (no cost to you)
  - pray at end of day—thankful and hopeful thoughts
- Voting. 2 bridges to no-where—funding could relocate 3 villages that are eroding.
- Volunteering at places... throughout the year—not for pay—give from heart... to your community.
- Identify yourself—who you are—stand up—put Iñupiaq identity and values, to the world, etc.
- Help each other as Iñupiaq hunters
- MRC clients need help in understanding/learning from others and believing in a higher power.
- Get more youth next year—2 per school.

## Southeast Region

Elder Representative: Florence Sheakley, Juneau

Youth Representative: Krista Lamp, Anchorage

Regional Discussion: The notes for the Southeast Region have not been submitted.

## Conference Staffing

Sarah Sherry (Lower Tanana Athabascan) and Raina Thiele (Dena'ina Athabascan) were responsible for the day-to-day coordination and planning of conference activities. Raina was hired through the First Alaskans summer internship program, in which interns experience leadership and management-level jobs.

Paneen Petersen (Iñupiaq) oversaw conference development efforts. Memry Dahl (Aleut) and Tracy Craig (Yup'ik and Athabascan) coordinated conference registration, with assistance from Tammy Kieth (Tlingit) and Nancy Wesson (Dena'ina).

Allison Knox, a communications-consultant for First Alaskans, coordinated communications efforts, including pre-event publicity, on-site media registration, event coverage, and post conference communication follow-up.

## Registration



First Alaskans saw a record number of registrants in 2006. This was due to outreach efforts to youth in the Cook Inlet region. The Anchorage School District and Cook Inlet Tribal Council both committed to sending 10 students from each high school. The Elders & Youth Conference also registered students attending from Wasilla and Palmer.

First Alaskans also reorganized registration processes, and registered **Conference Observers** and **Chaperones**. The observer's category allowed staff a more accurate understanding of the number of overall attendees. The Observers category included college students, organizational representatives, media, and other members of the general public.

In 2006 there were 454 youth registrants, 373 Elder registrants, 147 chaperones, and 58 observers registered. The total number of registrants was 1,032 participants; this was an increase from 709 registrants in 2005.

Fourteen registrants were from the 13<sup>th</sup> Region, 29 were from the Ahtna Region, 29 were from the Aleut Region, 73 were from Arctic Slope, 59 were from Bristol Bay, 62 from Bering Straits, 67 from Calista, 30 from Chugach, 300 from Cook Inlet, 30 from Doyon, 51 from Koniag, 63 from NANA, and there were 26 registrants from Southeast Alaska.

## Communications

Prior to the conference, weekly updates were emailed to interested people and public service announcements were delivered to print and electronic media. Schools, tribes and non-profits received mail-outs that included "Save-the-Date" cards, letters, registration forms, and village-life contest information. First Alaskans updated its website with conference developments: agenda, travel and hotel information and community events.

From Sunday, October 22 through Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup> the Elders & Youth Conference received local media coverage from Chanel 2 news, Chanel 11 news, and Chanel 13 news. There were also a number of articles covering the conference featured in the Anchorage Daily News.

In addition, Rhonda McBride featured Brian Frejo, guest conference presenter on her morning show on October 24<sup>th</sup>. Native America Call-in, a national call-in radio show hosted by Koahnic Broadcast Corporation featured Debra Dommek, Youth Keynote, and Elder Iver Malutin to discuss their experiences.

Blueberry Productions also provided conference web casting. Through web casting viewers were able to log onto the internet, watch conference proceedings, and leave comments. Over the course of the two day conference there were over 3,000 visits to First Alaskans website and there were 2,400 web cast viewers.

## Development Efforts

First Alaskans recognizes the sponsors that support Alaska Native Elders, youth and healthy communities. The following Platinum sponsors contributed \$10,000 dollars: Wells Fargo Alaska, Shell Exploration & Production Company, and Providence Health System in Alaska.

The following Gold sponsors contributed \$5,000 dollars: Northwest Strategies (who's in-kind contribution included design of the conference program guide), NANA Regional Corporation, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, BP, ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc., Rasmuson Foundation, and FEX L.P.

Silver sponsors contributed \$2,500 dollars and include: Alaska McDonalds, Doyon Limited, and Bristol Bay Native Association.

Bronze sponsors contributed \$1,000 dollars and include: Alaska Permanent Capital Management, The Aleut Corporation, Kodiak Area Native Association, Alaska Growth Capital, KPMG LLP, Northrim Bank, Denali Commission, RIM First People, and the McDowell Group.

Additional sponsors include: Maniilaq Association, Association of Village Council Presidents, and Wallace Insurance Inc.

## Vendors

This was the first year that First Alaskans coordinated conference vendors. Conference vendors included:

- AARP Alaska State Office,
- Alaska VA Healthcare System,
- Social Security Administration,
- National Indian Commission on Aging,
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium,
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council,
- Southcentral Foundation,
- U.S. Department of the Interior,
- Office of the Governor,
- Sealaska Corporation,
- USDA,
- Tyonek Native Corporation,
- Regulatory Commission of Alaska,
- Office of Special Trustee for American Indians,
- the NSB Echo Grant,
- Illisagvik College,
- Alaska Youth for Environmental Action,
- AIDEA,
- Alaska Children's Trust,
- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education,
- Alaska Family Directory,
- Alaska Federal Health Care Partnership,
- Alaska Job Corps,
- Yuut Yaqungviat,
- Alaska Pacific University,
- Alaska State Fire Marshal's Office,
- Alaska Village Initiatives,
- Alaska Weather Service,
- Boys and Girls Club,
- NOAA Fisheries Enforcement,
- D.A.R.E., University of Alaska,
- Alaska Native Heritage Center, and US Fish and Wildlife Services.

## Volunteers

Sixty-eight volunteers committed to involving themselves during the Elders & Youth Conference. About half of the volunteers were referred from the Office of the Mayor and from the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau. Volunteers included registrars, greeters, runners, facilitators and recorders for regional breakout sessions. Volunteers moved boxes, stuffed conference bags, passed out door prizes and helped with the Media. Each volunteer was provided with a volunteer conference t-shirt as a way for participants to identify them during the conference and as a token of our gratitude.

First Alaskans would like to specially recognize Sassa Kitka for volunteering her time prior to the Conference to solicit for door prizes for conference registrants. Likewise, thanks go to Lena Hoffman for her assistance in developing the podium script.

## Conference Evaluation

Through participant evaluations and staff debriefing sessions, First Alaskans identified those things that worked well, and those needing improvement. Here is a brief overview:

Popular presentations included both keynote addresses by Mayor Edward Itta and Debra Dommek; the Meth Watch presentation combined with the NYO demonstration was favorite presentations. The Inuit Circumpolar Youth Council presentation on "Taking Responsibility for Language Preservation" was very well received. Favorite workshops included Raven Odyssey, Got Games, Howard Rainier, and Elder + Student = Success.

The cultural procession and dance groups were a big hit with all generations of attendees, especially the performances by the Hawaiian delegation and Tlingit and Haida Dancers of Anchorage.

Conference evaluation forms had participants rate the theme, presentations, workshops, registration, regional caucuses; the overall conference yielded a 4.4 score on a scale of one to five (one being poor, five being excellent). Efforts to improve the conference will include ensuring better technical equipment (for sound-quality), continued improvements to the registration process, and an increased involvement between Elders & Youth during the conference as well as more student-led activities.

### Support of Community Events

Special thanks go to the Fraternal Order of the Alaska State Troopers for hosting the annual youth dance and to the Anchorage Rotary for hosting the Elders Lunch.

Also, thanks go to the Office of the Mayor, the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Downtown Partnership, and the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce for their efforts in supporting the Elders & Youth Conference.

### Conference Follow-up

Conference representatives from the NANA region, Elder Willie Goodwin Jr. and youth Lexi Staheli, presented to the AFN General Convention. During the panel titled "Solutions to Urgent Issues," Willie and Lexi reported on the outcomes and discussion items highlighted during the Elders & Youth Conference. Sarah Sherry reported on the outcomes of the regional breakout discussions during the healthy community's panel, which also took place during the AFN General Convention.

In addition to the reports delivered to the AFN Convention and this written report, conference follow-up activities include a thank you ad in the Anchorage Daily News, thank you letters to presenters, sponsors, and other participants, and website updates. The input of the 400+ participants who submitted evaluation forms will also be used for improvements to next year's conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Sherry  
Program Officer  
First Alaskans Institute