

First Alaskans Institute



Progress for the Next 10,000 Years



First Alaskans Institute Announces Community Engagement Initiative

First Alaskans Institute announces a new pilot project, Community Engagement Awards, a funding initiative for projects that demonstrate collaborative efforts among community organizations to plan and implement innovative, lasting programs that contribute to healthy and thriving communities. Funding will be available for results-based activities that include family and community partnerships in the following areas:

- early childhood education activities that better prepare children for success in school;
- increasing high school graduation rates;
- connecting Elders and youth in cultural learning; and
- promoting youth leadership development opportunities.

The Community Engagement Awards pilot project is the result of the Native Community's feedback and recommendations that came from participation in Education Summits, the Summer Internship program, Elders & Youth Conference, Policy Center research projects and discussion series, and participation in statewide and local advisory groups.

A total of \$500,000 will be awarded in the second half of 2007. Visit www.firstalaskans.org or call (907) 677-1700 to learn more about the application process and timelines.



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2007 Summer Intern Program

Native Leadership has changed over the last 100 years because the needs of Alaska's first peoples have changed. What skills are required of Alaska's future leaders in order to ensure our future needs are met? First Alaskans Institute knows that Native values, cultural protocols, and history are imperative attributes in the development of Native leaders, who must be grounded in their own Native identities and origins.

First Alaskans Institute kicked off its 2007 Summer Intern Program, focusing on the development of Native leadership for Alaska Native graduate and undergraduate students on June 4. Since 2004, the 10-week summer session placed approximately 100 interns with various employers. In 2006, a third of the participants were placed outside of Anchorage in locations such as St. Mary's, Barrow, Kotzebue, Sitka, Juneau, Fairbanks, and the North Slope. Partner organizations ranged from village clinics, regional hospitals and tribal organizations to Anchorage-based regional corporation affiliates, British Petroleum (BP), and ConocoPhillips.

In addition to gaining valuable on-the-job training, interns will gather periodically for half-day sessions focused on career skills such as etiquette, resume writing, interviewing, dress, financial management, investing, personality testing, facilitation, and strategic planning; an understanding of Alaska history and the attitudes and issues of importance; Alaska Native history including the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; subsistence; mental, physical, and spiritual wellness; Alaska Native culture, art, and tradition; public speaking and debate; education and research; leadership and governance; conflict resolution and problem solving; and community service.



Intern activity at orientation



Intern orientation

See an intern placement list on page 5



Janie Leask, President & CEO

Message from the President

Spring brings renewed energy as Alaskans emerge from the darker days of winter. We, at First Alaskans Institute, feel re-energized and have a number of new initiatives, many of which are described in this newsletter.

The Community Engagement Awards are our way of trying to “move the ball forward” on issues of importance to our Peoples and communities. Our summer intern program kicked off in June. This program brings 30 eager, young minds from a variety of universities and colleges who are carefully matched with employers statewide. These interns will not only gain on-the-job experience, but will learn about our shared history and culture.

Plans are already underway for the Oct. 22-23 Elders & Youth Conference in Fairbanks. It’s important to listen to the voices of our Elders and youth as they bring observations, recommendations and commitments back to their communities. I hope your community has provided a forum for their collective wisdom.

The Alaska Native Policy Center is making presentations on the Rural Development Poverty Measures, participating in an Anchorage Chamber of Commerce energy study, and sharing the online capabilities of our Census Information Center with organizations and researchers as a way to provide information to rural regions of the state on a variety of topics.

Finally - I invite you to visit our website www.firstalaskans.org. We’ve made some changes which we hope will make it a more “user friendly” place for you to learn about our organization and to take advantage of the studies and activities of all our initiatives.

Best wishes for the summer!

Janie Leask, President & CEO

First Alaskans Website Updated for Easier Navigation and Use

Visitors logging onto the First Alaskans Institute website,

www.firstalaskans.org, will find a fresh look and updated content.

The site, which launched May 31, was redesigned to improve navigation, better reflect the organization’s mission, and make it easy for individuals and organizations to post events and opportunities.



The navigation bar across the top of each page highlights First Alaskan’s three primary initiatives: Alaska Native Policy Center, Leadership Development, and Community Engagement. Content within each section can be accessed through the cascading, drop-down menu or by clicking on the section and using the links in the right-hand bar.

On the left side of each page is another vertical navigation bar that quickly links the web visitor to key areas within the site, including Census Information, a Library of reports and research, and Community Spotlight to provide information on internship, job, scholarship and fellowship opportunities, as well as events and other community information.

The website will continue to evolve to take advantage of improving technology. Content will be reviewed and updated regularly to provide users with the most current information and news.

Register Now for 2007 Elders & Youth Conference

Celebrate Alaska Native intellect! Encourage young people and Elders to attend the AFN/First Alaskans Institute Elders & Youth Conference Oct. 22-23, 2007, at the Carlson Center in Fairbanks, Alaska.

The conference stimulates dialogue among young people and Elders, encouraging them to maintain traditional Native values while thriving in the modern world. Conference participants are encouraged to take what they have discussed and learned to share and apply within their communities.

The Elders and Youth Council, which includes Elders and youth from 12 ANCSA regions, was elected at the 2006 conference. The council is currently determining the conference theme, speakers and agenda.

For Fairbanks lodging and travel information, visit Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau at www.explorefairbanks.com/afn or call the lodging reservation line toll-free at 1-888-768-3282 ext. 40.

For additional details on the 2007 AFN/First Alaskans Elders & Youth Conference, including online registration, visit www.firstalaskans.org.



Policy Center Hosts Discussions with Census Bureau Statistician

The Alaska Native Policy Center had the pleasure of hosting two luncheons featuring Dr. Michael Levin, a Census Bureau statistician who is currently pursuing his Master of Public Administration degree at Harvard University. Twenty-nine guests attended the two events to listen to presentations on Census data pertaining to Alaska Natives and American Indians and to learn how to access additional information.

The March 29th discussion titled “Developing Alaska Native Population Fact Sheets” was attended by Alaska Native leaders. The purpose of the discussion was to get feedback on the types of demographic data that would be beneficial for their work in policy development for their respective agencies or effecting policy change to better social, economic and educational outcomes for Alaska Native people. Dr. Levin also gave an overview of Alaska Native population information highlighting some issues with the data.

The second luncheon on March 30th titled “Alaska Natives Statistical Data Base” targeted an audience of Alaska research professionals. The purpose of this discussion was to present current Census Data on Alaska Native populations, view trends, and to get participant thoughts about what the numbers mean in Alaska. Participants were asked to identify what data is missing or unavailable to Alaskans and to suggest how the Policy Center might collect and disseminate this data. Dr. Levin gave an overview of how to gather Census Data, what data he has gathered for the Policy Center, and additional thoughts on how to use the data.

The Policy Center is completing two web searchable resources which should be available in July 2007. The first is Census information on Alaska Natives 1880-2000 and the second is an Alaska Natives 2000 Census Handbook (a guide to accessing Census 2000 data).



Greta Goto, Alaska Native Policy Center, and Dr. Michael Levin, Census Bureau, lead a discussion on Census data at First Alaskans Institute.

Alaskans Learn How to Utilize Census Bureau Data

The Census Information Center at the Alaska Native Policy Center facilitated four U.S. Census Bureau workshops during the week of April 9th. Cam McIntosh, a Census Bureau information specialist, traveled to Anchorage, Dillingham, and Nome to conduct the workshop titled “How to Use Census 2000 Data.”

The workshops introduced and provided an overview on using the Census Bureau website to find information on Alaska Native community demographics. Thirty-three workshop participants, representing Native corporations, local government, the school district, and self-employed Alaska Natives, learned how to query Census 2000 data specific to their needs for planning, research, and grant writing.

First Alaskans Institute and the Alaska Native Policy Center thank Cook Inlet Tribal Council, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Bristol Bay Campus, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Northwest Campus for hosting these workshops.

If your community or organization is interested in hosting a Census Bureau workshop, contact Adrienne Fleek, Alaska Native Policy Center research projects manager, at (907) 677-1707 or adriennefleek@firstalaskans.org.



Cam McIntosh leads Census information training at Cook Inlet Tribal Council in Anchorage.

Where Are They Now: Malia Villegas

In 2005, Malia Villegas, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, participated in the First Alaskans Institute Summer Internship Program and was employed by the Alaska Native Policy Center and the University of Alaska Anchorage Institute of Social & Economic Research working on the “Alaska Native Student Vitality: Community Perspectives on Supporting Student Success” report. Today, she is finishing her third year of doctoral work in education at Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, Mass., and will be spending 10 months studying with the Maori, in Aotearoa, New Zealand, to learn how they develop their indigenous policy and research organizations, as a Fulbright Scholar.



Malia Villegas

Villegas is one of only 10 doctoral students from across the U.S. selected to participate in the Fulbright Fellowship in New Zealand and will be working at the National Institute of Research Excellence for Maori Development and Advancement in Auckland. She plans to incorporate some of the education work she completed for the Alaska Native Policy Center with their strategies in an effort to strengthen the relationship with the Maori.

She has been working with data related to the National Indian Education Study, the Census, and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act to better understand how to make use of information on Alaska Native students to improve their educational experiences.

“The First Alaskans Institute Summer Internship Program was one of the best experiences I have had. I met some amazing seasoned and emerging Alaska Native leaders, heard important stories about our community history, and developed my research skills working in service of Alaska Native students and communities,” said Villegas.

“For my intern project, Rebecca Prieto and I interviewed community leaders about what Alaska Native student success means, which had a very powerful impact on me. I heard personal stories of perseverance, struggle, and hope as it relates to education and leadership. Every time I return to the transcripts of these interviews, I am newly inspired by the possibilities of Alaska Native people and communities improving the quality and meaning of education for our young people and for each other,” she added.

Welcome Kristel Komakhuk as Development Assistant

Kristel Komakhuk, who most recently worked for The Tatitlek Corporation joined the First Alaskans Institute team as development assistant. She is responsible for assisting with the development and fundraising strategies for the organization.

Komakhuk recently received her bachelor’s degree in business management from the University of Alaska Anchorage. She has held positions with Chugach Alaska Corporation and the Chugach Heritage Foundation while completing college.

During her free time, Komakhuk enjoys the outdoors, reading, and spending time with her family. She is Alutiiq and Inupiaq.



Kristel Komakhuk

Her father is from the Bering Straits region and her mother is from the Chugach region.

Funder Spotlight: Wells Fargo

The success of several of First Alaskans Institute’s initiatives is contributed in part to the support and contributions of corporations such as Wells Fargo bank. Over the past three years, Wells Fargo has contributed \$30,000 to underwrite the major costs of the annual AFN/First Alaskans Elders & Youth Conference.



“We truly appreciate the monetary support that we receive from businesses such as Wells Fargo—an exemplary example of a national company based in Alaska with a true commitment to the Alaska Native community throughout the state,” said Janie Leask, First Alaskans Institute’s president & CEO.

In addition to being a major sponsor of the Elders & Youth Conference, Wells Fargo’s Native Peoples team member resource group has volunteered to read to Tyson Elementary School as part of the First Alaskans “Breakfast Club” literacy program.

“Wells Fargo stands with First Alaskans Institute in its efforts to enhance the lives of Alaska Natives through its innovative research projects, advocacy and youth leadership development,” said Richard Strutz, Wells Fargo Alaska regional president. “We are committed to giving back to Alaska and its people, especially in the areas of education and economic development.”

Wells Fargo’s commitment to Alaska Natives and rural Alaska is driven by its goal to build secure financial futures for Alaskans. Wells Fargo Alaska Native Liaison Asta Keller works closely with Native businesses and groups to support the Native community. In addition, Wells Fargo adopted the Community Agent Program, started by National Bank of Alaska in 1993, as a way to serve small Native communities in the state. Currently, Wells Fargo has community agents in Unalakleet, Galena, and Sand Point.

Thanks to Wells Fargo for their commitment to and support of the Alaska Native community!

Janie Leask Receives 2007 ATHENA Society Award

First Alaskans President and CEO Janie Leask was presented the prestigious 2007 ATHENA Society Award at the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce's ATHENA Society award and induction luncheon March 30, 2007, at the Egan Civic & Convention Center.

The ATHENA Award Program recognizes individuals for professional excellence, for providing valuable service to their community, and for assisting women in reaching their professional goals and leadership. Members of the Anchorage ATHENA Society are nominated by their peers and selected by past Anchorage ATHENA Society award recipients

Leask, a well known Alaska businesswoman and Alaska Native advocate, was recognized for personifying the ATHENA Leadership model: Authentic Self, Celebration and Joy, Collaboration, Courageous Acts, Fierce Advocacy, Giving Back, Learning and Relationships. She was also acknowledged for her mentorship of young women entering into Alaska business and facilitating meetings and networking sessions for many of Anchorage's young leaders.



Janie Leask is congratulated by students from the West High School Native Culture Club after receiving the 2007 Athena Society Award.

Twelve other Alaska women were inducted into the Anchorage ATHENA Society, including Margie Brown, president & CEO of Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI), and Alexandra J. McClanahan, CIRI's historian.

2007 Summer Intern Placements

Name	Region	Employer Placement
Miriam Aarons	Bering Straits	Municipality of Anchorage Mayor's Office
Ashley Anderson	Sealaska	First Alaskans Institute - Alaska Native Policy Center
Kendri Cesar	Sealaska	USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region
Iris Currey	Cook Inlet	Rasmuson Foundation
Karol Dixon	Doyon	UAA Institute of Social Economic Research
Esther Edwards-Gust	Bristol Bay	New Stuyahok Traditional Council
Rocky Estrada	Sealaska	Kootznoowoo, Inc.
Sharayah Foster	Aleut	Calista Corporation
Catherine Fields	Sealaska	UAA - Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program
Crystal Frank	Doyon	Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council
Hans Hansen	NANA	Alaska Spine Institute
Natasha Hayden	Koniag	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Erin Hayward	Sealaska	Metlakatla Indian Community
Dora Hughes	Bering Straits	Bering Straits Native Corporation
Gussie Ivanoff	Bering Straits	Providence Alaska Medical Center - Physical Therapy Department
Nadia Jackinsky-Horrell	Cook Inlet	Smithsonian Institute - Arctic Studies Center
Amber Jenkins	Koniag	Alaska Native Heritage Center
Thecla Joe	Calista	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Adam Leggett	Cook Inlet	Financial, Inc.
Kirsten Kinegak-Friday	Calista	First Alaskans Institute - Alaska Native Policy Center
Lovina Lomack	Calista	Fairbanks Native Association
Charlene Malemute	Doyon	Tanana Chiefs Council - Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center
Derrick Mells	CIRI/Koniag	Fairbanks North Star Borough - Pioneer Park
Jesse Morris	Aleut	USDA Chugach Forest Service - Begich Boggs
Kyla Morris	CIRI	Cook Inlet Region, Inc.
Donald Richardson	Doyon	NANA/Colt Engineering
Chelsea Royal	Doyon	Eastern Aleutian Tribes
Zazell Staheli	NANA	Kiana Health Clinic - Dental
June Thiele	Doyon	State of Alaska - Department of Labor
Dean Towarak	Bering Straits	Unalakleet Valley Electric Cooperative



2007 summer interns

Meet Our Team

Janie Leask (*Haida-Tsimshian*)
President & CEO
janie@firstalaskans.org

Sarah Scanlan (*Inupiaq*)
Deputy Director
sarah@firstalaskans.org

Greta L. Goto (*Yup'ik*)
Director, Alaska Native Policy Center
greta@firstalaskans.org

Memry Dahl (*Aleut*)
Director, Leadership Development
memry@firstalaskans.org

Tracy L. Craig (*Gwich'in and Ahtna Athabaskan/Yup'ik*)
Finance Director
tracycraig@firstalaskans.org

Tammy Keith (*Tlingit*)
Office Manager
tammykeith@firstalaskans.org

Adrienne Fleek (*Tlingit*)
Research Projects Manager
adriennefleek@firstalaskans.org

Kristel D. Komakhuk (*Alutiiq and Inupiaq*)
Development Assistant
kristelkomakhuk@firstalaskans.org

Rick Mueller (*Tlingit*)
Intern Coordinator
rickmueller@firstalaskans.org

Tanya Reamey (*Tlingit and Aleut*)
Receptionist
tanyareamey@firstalaskans.org

Allison Knox (*Athabaskan*)
Communications Contractor
allisonknox@firstalaskans.org

Vision

Progress for the next ten thousand years

True to Heritage and Values, Alaska Natives are informed and engaged in leading the decisions that shape the future.

Mission

Advance Native Peoples and communities by engaging Alaska Native thoughts and voices.

Values

Integrity
Collaboration
Knowledge
Responsibility
Excellence

Meet Our Board of Trustees

Willie (Iggiagruk) Hensley, Chairman (*Inupiaq*)
Alyeska Pipeline Service Company

Sam Kito, Jr., Vice Chair (*Tlingit*)
Kito, Inc.

Oliver Leavitt (*Inupiaq*)
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

Albert Kookesh (*Tlingit*)
Alaska State Senator and
Co-Chair, Alaska Federation of Natives

Byron I. Mallott (*Tlingit*)
Senior Fellow, Alaska Native Policy Center

In Memoriam:
Morris Thompson (*Tanana Athabaskan*)
Our Friend and Colleague

V i s i t u s a t w w w . f i r s t a l a s k a n s . o r g

First Alaskans Institute

606 E Street • Suite 200
Anchorage • Alaska 99501
T 907.677.1700
F 907.677.1780
info@firstalaskans.org
www.firstalaskans.org

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We invite you to tell us what you think of the work we are doing and the content of this newsletter. We value your feedback and advice. If you have comments, please contact allisonknox@firstalaskans.org.

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, please contact info@firstalaskans.org.