

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release – May 11, 2010**

**Contact:**

Kristel Komakhuk, Development  
907-677-1700  
KristelKomakhuk@firstalaskans.org

**FIRST ALASKANS INSTITUTE RECEIVES \$350,000 GRANT FOR  
RACIAL HEALING AS PART OF W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION  
\$75 MILLION EFFORT TO TACKLE STRUCTURAL RACISM AND  
PROMOTE RACIAL HEALING**

***America Healing Initiative will Expand Opportunities for Vulnerable Children***

**(May 11, 2010 -- Anchorage, AK)** – First Alaskans Institute has been awarded a \$350,000 grant for a 2 year project, “Alaska Native Dialogues on Racial Equity,” amounting to \$175,000 each project year beginning June of 2010. This project will be run through the Alaska Native Policy Center – a Native think tank.

This grant to conduct “Alaska Native Dialogues on Racial Equity” is one of 119 awarded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to support racial equity and healing. “We are excited to move forward on this critical and timely project for Alaska Native people and all Alaskans,” said Janie Leask (Haida-Tsimpsian/Irish-German), President/CEO of First Alaskans Institute.

In an unprecedented effort to address the devastating impact of racial inequities on communities across the country, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation launched today, May 11, 2010, a five-year, \$75 million initiative – America Healing – that aims to improve life outcomes for vulnerable children and their families by promoting racial healing and eliminating barriers to opportunities.

The major goal of the Alaska Native Policy Center project is to catalyze a statewide discussion around the elimination of racism in Alaska. In order to spark this conversation, First Alaskans will use the upcoming 2012 timeline for the constitutionally mandated ballot question to the people of Alaska about whether to hold a constitutional convention to launch this much needed discussion. First Alaskans and the Alaska Native Policy Center are capitalizing on this moment, as it only arises once every 10 years, in order to elevate the issue and create a viable forum to genuinely engage about racism in Alaska and solutions towards its elimination.

Children of color are over-represented among the 29 million low-income children and families in this country, particularly among families living in concentrated poverty. According to data from the National Center for Children in Poverty, about 61 percent of African American, 62 percent of Latino, 57 percent of Native American, 58 percent of children with immigrant parents, 30 percent of Asian American children and 26 percent of white children live in low-income families.

The goal of the *America Healing* initiative is to help make that vision a reality by engaging communities and supporting them in the hard work of racial healing and addressing the effects of historic and contemporary structural issues, such as residential segregation and concentrated poverty.

During the first phase of *America Healing*, 119 organizations will receive grants totaling \$14,613,709 specifically to support community-based organizations' healing efforts among racial and ethnic groups that address historic burdens, disparities and barriers to opportunity. Their efforts will focus within local communities to increase opportunities for children in education, health and economic areas. Grantees represent 29 states and the District of Columbia and all racial and ethnic population groups. To highlight the desire of communities to work together on racial healing, the foundation created a signature video, capturing the spirit of the initiative. The video can be viewed at [www.AmericaHealing.org](http://www.AmericaHealing.org).

Moreover, the *America Healing* initiative complements the racial equity approach in all of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant-making directed at supporting vulnerable children, their families and communities. The new initiative will continue to focus on issues at the core of structural racism and will align with the foundation's program areas: Education and Learning; Food, Health and Well-being; and Family Economic Security.

To learn more about *America Healing*, please visit <http://www.americahealing.org>.

#### **About First Alaskans Institute**

First Alaskans Institute is a non-profit Alaska Native organization whose mission is to advance Alaska Natives Peoples and communities through community engagement, information and research, collaboration, and leadership development. For more information, visit [www.firstalaskans.org](http://www.firstalaskans.org).

#### **About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

Established in 1930, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation ([www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org)) supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society. Grants are concentrated in the United States, southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The foundation is based in Battle Creek, Mich.

###