

# First Alaskans Institute

## News Release

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*“Interpersonal, institutional, and systemic racism is alive and well in Alaska. We can’t ignore it, pretend that it doesn’t exist, or take comfort in the delusion that it doesn’t affect us. We’ve seen the damage that racism can have on people, families, and communities. Racism is not dead; racism is deadly.... My fellow Alaskans, let’s call it out when we see it, let’s examine ourselves and be mindful of our own attitudes and behaviors, and not let modern forms of racism kill our community.”*

-- E.J.R. David, Filipino community advocate and a summit keynote speaker

The Alaska Native Policy Center at First Alaskans Institute (FAI) is pleased to announce **“Partners for the next 10,000 years...A Racial Equity Summit”**, which will take place February 1-2, 2016 in Anchorage, Alaska.

“Today, as we stop to think about the vision shared by Martin Luther King Jr. we recognize that our country, our state, our communities have so much further to go,” said Liz Medicine Crow President/CEO of First Alaskans Institute. “We cannot forget that together, in the co-creation and ownership of our just society, we each have a critical role. All are welcome who aspire to make Alaska a better place for our children.”

To truly achieve a racially equitable society for all Alaskans – from newborn to Elder – all sectors must be engaged in creating and living it. To contribute to this societal imperative, FAI launched the *Advancing Native Dialogues on Racial Equity* (ANDORE) project to engage our diverse, statewide community - Alaska Natives and all others who now call Alaska home - to identify and advance racial equity goals, with a special focus on Education, Law and Policy, and Public Advocacy. This summit is an action item, identified through ANDORE, to help bring Alaskans together and mobilize this effort.

The summit will offer transformational keynote speakers, community catalyzers, interactive workshops, and tap participant’s experience and knowledge, along with opportunities to build solutions and identify actions. Emphasis will also be placed on expanding statewide networks, growing alliances, and nurturing personal commitments to advance this work.

It will feature powerful, thought-provoking, and challenging presentations, including:

**Tim Wise** - among the nation's most prominent antiracist essayists and educators. He has spent the past 20 years speaking on methods for dismantling institutional racism.

**Maori Whanau** - featuring Kate Cherrington and invited guests - the indigenous peoples of New Zealand have a unique voice and experience that can inform and inspire us to look beyond the status quo at what is possible when respect for indigenous peoples is the foundation upon which the wider racial equity movement is built upon.

**Jay Smooth** – a New York-based hip-hop scholar and cultural commentator, best known for his award-winning Ill Doctrine web video series, shares messages that both call out what is happening while giving solid instruction and ideas on how to transform our society.

**Gyasi Ross** - an attorney, author, and spoken word artist from the Blackfeet and Suquamish Reservations. Ross uses storytelling to deepen the understanding of Native American and social justice topics, giving us the opportunity to better understand, from a creative, cultural, and political context how history, oppression, and laws work.

**E.J.R. David** – a professor at the University of Alaska Anchorage, from Barrow, known for his advocacy and commitment to his Filipino heritage, and his research and publications on micro-aggressions, internalized oppression, and post-colonial psychology, to name a few. He is also a founding member of We Are Anchorage and is a member of the FAI ANDORE Visionary Council.

**The 1491s** - a sketch comedy group based in the wooded ghettos of Minnesota and buffalo grass of Oklahoma using humor to bring light to issues that indigenous communities face in America today.

There will also be an array of other Alaskans dedicated to racial equity, with powerful stories and expertise to share. The speakers will also have an opportunity to host inter-active workshops and dialogues for deeper connection to their work, methods, and knowledge.

The theme is built upon respect and inclusion, and the summit is open to those interested in advancing racial equity as a shared value of all Alaskans. This is a working summit, so participants should be prepared to be part of making it a great experience. It will be an intergenerational, multicultural gathering, and youth under 18 are welcome with a chaperone. Our goal is that participants will leave the summit inspired and prepared to act and engage in exponential change at all levels – systemic, institutional, interpersonal, and personal.

Media credentials are available upon request. The registration fee will be waived for students and Elders. **Register today at <https://akequitysummit2016.eventbrite.com>**

First Alaskans Institute is a statewide Alaska Native non-profit dedicated to '*progress for the next ten thousand years...*' and our mission is 'true to identity, heritage, and values, Alaska Natives are informed and engaged in leading the decisions that shape the future.' To learn more about our organization, please visit [www.firstalaskans.org](http://www.firstalaskans.org).

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