

# First Alaskans Institute

## News Release

Contact: Angela Gonzalez  
[info@firstalaskans.org](mailto:info@firstalaskans.org), (907) 677-1700

For Immediate Release  
October 13, 2017

## FIRST ALASKANS INSTITUTE STAFF AND VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute (FAI) is pleased to announce the following staff promotions, hires and volunteer highlights.

### PROMOTIONS

**Joy Gudáang'láa Demmert (Haida/Tlingit) was promoted to Indigenous Operations Manager and Colin Tass'aq Atauciq McDonald (Yup'ik) was promoted to Sustainability Coordinator.**

They have done incredible work and are increasing our organization's capacity and outreach. Like all members of our team at FAI, Colin and Joy contribute to advancing our ways of life and strengthening our communities by fulfilling their specific roles and helping host dialogues, engage in the community, help put on events, and organize fundraisers. We appreciate them for their contributions to our work and for their dedication to serving our Native peoples. We are excited to share their promotions with our community!

Joy joined FAI in 2015 as the Organizational Advancement Coordinator and was promoted to Indigenous Operations Manager this year. She works with the Indigenous operations team to advance our administrative capacity from a values-based position. She belongs to the Káat nay-st/Yahkw 'Láanaas (Shark House/Middle Town People) Clan, and is the daughter of Mark Gatti and Victoria Demmert. Joy was born and raised in Ketchikan, and attended the University of Alaska Anchorage, graduating with her Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting. Joy has participated in FAI's Public Policy Fellowship in Senator Donald Olson's office and our FAI Al Adams Internship in U.S. Senator Mark Begich's office in Washington, DC.



Colin joined FAI in 2015 as a Sustainability Assistant and was promoted to Sustainability Coordinator this year. He works with the sustainability team to strengthen our organization's capacity, support our development efforts, and to increase the financial health of our organization. He was born and raised in Bethel. His parents are Beverly Hoffman, originally from Bethel, and John McDonald, originally from San Francisco. He holds a bachelor's degree in Rural Development with an emphasis in Rural Community Business & Economic Development.



## NEW HIRES

**Karla Booth has been hired as the Indigenous Leadership Continuum Director.** She begins her position with FAI at our upcoming 2017 FAI Elders & Youth Conference. Karla is from the Raven clan and is the daughter of Clarissa Booth of Metlakatla and Glenn Somerville of Wisconsin. She is the granddaughter of the late Violet and Billy Booth of Metlakatla. She was raised in the neighborhoods of Seattle, and on the beaches and muskeg of Kake and Metlakatla. She enjoys raising her son and being a dancer with Lepquinm Gumilgit Gagoadim Tsimshian Dancers of Anchorage. She enjoys studying Sm'algayax (Tsimshian language), weaving, sewing, exploring family genealogy, and serving the Alaska Native community.



Karla moved to Anchorage in 2000 to attend the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), and obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English with an emphasis in Alaska Native Literature and a minor in Alaska Native Studies. From 2004-2017, she had the honor supporting the transition of and serving as an advocate for Alaska Native, Native American, and rural students as the UAA Alaska Native & Rural Outreach Program Coordinator and Cama-i Room Coordinator.

First Alaskans is excited to welcome Karla to our organization. She is a dedicated leader with a heart for our Native peoples. She brings the strength of her knowledge and a vision for what supporting our leaders - no matter their stage in life, career or community leadership - can be to ensure our peoples are leading the decisions that shape our future. She is responsible for leading and strengthening the Indigenous Leadership Continuum initiative which includes the FAI Summer Internship program, our annual Elders & Youth Conference, and our fellowships, amongst many other exciting leadership focused endeavors. She will also lead our work to provide indigenized leadership supports for all ages and interests.

**Angela Gonzalez was hired as the Indigenous Communications Manager in August.** Angela is the daughter of Al and Eleanor Yatlin of Huslia. She is the granddaughter of Alda Frank, the late George Frank and Minnie Yatlin, and the late Edwin and Lydia Simon of Huslia. Angela spent most of her childhood in Huslia and summers in fish camp on the Koyukuk River. She enjoys writing and photography and owns the Athabascan Woman, a blog about Athabascan culture and Alaska Native topics. She also enjoys beading and spending time with her husband and their two daughters.



Prior to FAI, Angela was the communications coordinator at the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP) for nearly 10 years. She was the former membership director at KNBA 90.3 FM. Angela holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Tulsa. She received the 2016 Bruce Pozzi Chapter Service Award from PRSA – Alaska Chapter.

Since joining our team, Angela is already engaged in strengthening our communications work. She brings her knowledge of our peoples and effective communications from an indigenous point of view with her every day, and it is such a great asset to have on board. She works closely with the whole organization, especially the Alaska Native Policy Center to ensure clear messages and strategy are used to share Native narratives about our peoples and communities. She also helps ensure our racial equity work and other important issues are effectively shared as well as working to indigenize the way we communicate both within our organization and externally to our statewide community and beyond.

#### **VISTA AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER**

**Kacey Hopson was selected as our Sustainability VISTA AmeriCorps Volunteer this year.** Kacey is the daughter of Muriel Hopson from Wainwright and Safdar Hussain from Kashmir, Pakistan. She was born and raised in Anchorage and graduated from Pomona College in 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy Analysis.



Prior to joining FAI with the AmeriCorps VISTA program, Kacey was a Summer Associate with the Environmental Equity team at the Greenlining Institute, where she developed her skills in race equity advocacy and public policy research. She was also a Research Intern for Corporate Accountability International, and spent her time at Pomona serving low-income communities of color through the Draper Center for Community Partnerships.

Kacey works closely with the Sustainability team to promote the organizational strength and sustainability of FAI. Her focus area is on capacity building and she also contributes to the overall work of the organization. Her background in policy and racial equity is a great addition of skills on the team and we are so happy she has committed to this voluntary position with us. She has also been training in our indigenous hosting process and is already using her knowledge to inform the work we do.

###

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

*At First Alaskans Institute, we know we are responsible for carrying more than 10,000 years of ancestral knowledge into the future with rigor, humor, resilience, vigilance, and love.*

*To learn more about us and what we do, please visit our website at [www.firstalaskans.org](http://www.firstalaskans.org), contact us at 907-677-1700 or via email at [info@firstalaskans.org](mailto:info@firstalaskans.org).*