

First Alaskans Institute

News Release

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WINNERS OF THE ALASKA YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT CHALLENGE

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute (FAI), a statewide Alaska Native non-profit organization, is proud to announce the winners of our Alaska Youth Voter Turnout Challenge. This challenge created a civic engagement opportunity for youth, 17 and younger, to learn about the importance of voting and encourage the eligible voting age adults in their communities to get out and vote. The winners were determined by the increase in voter turnout in the 2018 general election compared to the turnout in the 2016 general election, tracked by percent increase.

Congratulations to the first-place winner Hooper Bay School with an increase of 12.76% in voter turnout! They win a \$10,000 prize that the Hooper Bay School youth plan to use to bring back an annual community carnival and to purchase books for each child in the community.

Congratulations as well to our second-place winner Newhalen School with an increase of 12.22% in voter turnout! They win a \$5,000 prize that the Newhalen School youth will use to help build a new outdoor basketball court.

Youth from both communities used a combination of handing out flyers, hanging up posters and reminding people to vote in person. The communities responded to the voting appeals of youth by sharing the message on social media and VHF radio, and by voting.

“Involving youth in our State’s civic engagement process is vital to the health and future of our communities. FAI seeks to transform the significant disengagement and systemic disenfranchisement among young people in the voting process. This was an opportunity to plant seeds for future – dedicated voters by involving them now before they are eligible to vote,” said Liz La quen náay Medicine Crow (Haida/Tlingit), President/CEO First Alaskans.

In order to participate, schools or youth groups had to apply, and in those applications, commit to a non-partisan get out the vote effort to increase voter turnout in Alaska. The incentive prizes may not be divided or distributed as cash to any individual, child, or youth, and instead must be used to purchase educational or recreational items that benefit the winning school or youth group. We thank each of the youth or school groups who participated, and again, congratulations to the youth of Hooper Bay School and Newhalen School!

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About First Alaskans Institute (FAI): *At FAI 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 visit our website at www.firstalaskans.org, contact us at 907-677-1700 or email info@firstalaskans.org.*