

# First Alaskans Institute

## News Release

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## 2019 AL ADAMS YOUNG POLITICAL LEADER FELLOW ANNOUNCED

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute (FAI) is excited to announce **Elizabeth Aqpaluk Ahkivgak (Iñupiaq)** will serve as our 2019 Al Adams Young Political Leader Fellow. She will be placed in the office of **Senator Dan Sullivan** during two back-to-back congressional sessions. Aqpaluk will work with the Alaska Delegation to become familiar with and engage in the congressional processes, deepen understanding of the history, priorities, and evolving issues that challenge Alaska Natives and Alaska, learn about the federal law making process and the skills to navigate these systems, and hone her Native leadership skills while strengthening her ability to be a culturally connected leader.

Aqpaluk is from Utqiagvik. Her birth parents are Ethel Ahkivgak and Fernando Ortega. Aqpaluk pays respect to the influence of her foster parents, Rosie Habeich and Eben Hopson, Jr., who have fostered over 50 children throughout Alaska. Rosie introduced her to volunteering at local organizations, where Aqpaluk learned about geriatric issues and the emergency food supply network. Aqpaluk was also raised by her grandparents Jennie (Ekolook) and Herbert Ahkivgak, who taught her the values and practices of providing food for the community, the importance of spirituality, and the environment. She has volunteered for many North Slope community events and is passionate about supporting education.



Elizabeth Aqpaluk Ahkivgak and Eben Hopson, Jr. enjoy Nalukataq. Photo courtesy of Aqpaluk.

Aqpaluk has advanced progressively in the field of accounting and finance. She is most fond of serving on the Community Economic Development Task Force of her Native corporation, where she supported North Slope community investments in addition to her primary accounting responsibilities. Aqpaluk is working to earn an accounting and finance degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage. She is especially interested in advocating for people through the work of financial institutions.

### About the Fellowship

The Al Adams Young Political Leader Fellowship launched in 2013 to honor the late Iñupiaq statesman from Kotzebue who exemplified genuine and culturally connected political leadership throughout his life. He served as a Trustee of FAI and continues to have a presence in memoriam through this fellowship program, inspiring a new generation of leadership through his legacy. This is a unique opportunity to build leadership capacity while supporting a commitment to one's culture, peoples, and home community. The fellow upholds the honor of the namesake as well as that of FAI by living up to the high expectation of hard work, rigor, exemplary behavior, performance, and engagement in this fellowship and all of the opportunities it affords, and supporting the advancement of the Alaska Native community.

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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](http://www.firstalaskans.org), contact us at 907-677-1700 or email [info@firstalaskans.org](mailto:info@firstalaskans.org).*