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INTRODUCING THE 2020 FIRST ALASKANS INSTITUTE SUMMER INTERNS

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute (FAI), a statewide Alaska Native nonprofit focused on advancing Alaska Natives for the *next* 10,000 years, is pleased to introduce our 2020 Summer Internship Program (SIP) cohort. This year marks 17 years of placing Alaska Native, American Indian, Indigenous and rural community members and students into organizations around Alaska to provide cultural, personal and professional leadership growth and employment experience. Since 2004, 361 intern alumni have completed the 10-week internship with 133 Employer Partners.

This experience strengthens our Indigenous leaders by harmonizing Native knowledge and history, transferable business skills, and community-based advocacy training while providing hands-on experiential learning in career fields relevant to each intern’s pursuits and employer’s interests. The cohort engages together through leadership enhancement and capacity building retreats and seminars that allow them to further their learning, grow their network, and strengthen their relationships with each other to aid them in their future successes.

Our 2020 Employer Partners make the program a success by investing critical time to mentor growth within each intern, inviting and valuing indigenous knowledge and perspectives to inform their work, providing meaningful employment experiences, and role modeling caring and supportive supervision practices while providing challenging leadership responsibilities and project management opportunities. In this unique year shaped by the current pandemic, most interns have been placed virtually with their Employer Partners.

“There was never a doubt that we were going to host our Summer Internship Program in the midst of this pandemic. The majority of the Employer Partners, knowing the tremendous value of this program to their work, committed to remotely host interns to support the progress of their organizations and the advancement of these leaders,” said Karla Gatgyedm Hana’ax Booth, Indigenous Leadership Continuum Director. “During our welcoming week, the cohort bonded despite the distance and challenges of virtually meeting for five days. They energetically explored Alaska Native history and culture, contemporary issues and hard truths, and ideas to capitalize on their strengths and talents of our Alaska Native peoples. We are extremely grateful to our Employer Partners who agreed to walk alongside our leaders as they broaden their work experience and gain new skills. We are equally grateful for our interns who clearly understand their responsibility to our greater Indigenous community, and we look forward to their continued service to others in advancing our ways of life.”

2020 First Alaskans Institute's Summer Interns and Employer Partners

- **Andrea Ts'aak Ka Juu Cook** (Haida) of Hydaburg is placed at **Sitka Conservation Society**
- **Brendon Ashaana Killbear Doyle** (Iñupiaq) of Anchorage is placed at **JL Properties, Inc.**
- **Brittany Tunrall'aaq Sallison** (Yup'ik) of Nunapitchuk is placed at **Covenant House Alaska**
- **Claire Watsix Tl'aa Helgeson** of Juneau and Seattle, Washington is placed at **Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA)**
- **Denbigh Añiñaaq Perry** (Iñupiaq/Yup'ik/Sami/Malimiut) of Shaktoolik is placed at **First Alaskans Institute**
- **Elizabeth Aqpaluk Ahkivgak** (Iñupiaq) of Utqiagvik is placed at **Alaska Children's Trust**
- **Gina Bodnar** (Yup'ik/Unangaġ) of Palmer is placed at **UAA Institute of Social & Economic Research**
- **Janessa Dlee na nah Howard** (Koyukon) of Anchorage is placed at **Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium**
- **Joshua Olin** (Koyukon) of Galena and Winslow, Maine is placed at **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska**
- **Kashona Notah Stevens** (Iñupiaq/Diné) of Kotzebue and San Bernardino, California is placed at **Koahnic Broadcast Corporation**
- **Kayla TanqiiInguq Rearden** (Yup'ik) of Anchorage is placed at **Koahnic Broadcast Corporation**
- **Laura Deloodeneela Ekada** (Koyukon) of Nulato is placed at **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska**
- **Olivia Uluqi Olson** (Yup'ik/Unangaġ) of Aleknagik and Anchorage is placed at **Outer Coast**
- **Samuel Hiratsuka** (Unangaġ/Winnemem Wintu/Navajo) of Anchorage is placed at **Koahnic Broadcast Corporation**
- **Sienna Reid** (Tlingit) of Sitka is placed at **Sitka Conservation Society**
- **Sierra Nalaguzruaq Anderson** (Iñupiaq) of Nome is placed at **UAF Alaska Center for Energy and Power**
- **Tricia Uqiliaq Ivanoff** (Iñupiaq/Yup'ik) of Unalakleet is placed at **Native Village of Unalakleet**

For more information about programs offered at FAI or to learn how to become an Employer Partner for the next cohort, please call 907-677-1700 or email leadership@firstalaskans.org.

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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.*