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For Immediate Release
August 27, 2020

**ANNOUNCING THE 2020 FIRST ALASKANS INSTITUTE STATEWIDE ELDERS & YOUTH
CONFERENCE THEME, CALL FOR PROPOSALS, AND REGISTRATION**

Asirqamek Apruciluta (Sugt'stun)

Asisqamek Aprut'liluta (Alutiiq)

"We Are Making a Good Path"

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute's 37th Annual Elders & Youth Conference (Elders & Youth) theme, "**Asirqamek Apruciluta**" (Sugt'stun, Chugach), "**Asisqamek Aprut'liluta**" (Alutiiq) assures us that we are moving in the right direction – physically in our real world today and symbolically in life. Its translation into English is "We Are Making a Good Path." This theme exemplifies our ancestral responsibilities to protect and advance our peoples and communities, including through this time of COVID-19 and the racial justice transformation that is happening right now as well.

From the beginning of this current pandemic, our Elders have informed the critical decision-making of Tribes, communities, families, and individuals by sharing the brilliance of our peoples' ways of persevering and thriving throughout history. This theme amplifies a simple truth – we are still here and we are moving forward by protecting our ways of life, celebrating our cultures and our diversity, challenging injustice, and strengthening the many beautiful ways we are good relatives to one another. To select this year's language following our new tradition started three years ago, at the conclusion of Elders & Youth last year we drew from a basket the language of the Sugpiaq peoples: Sugt'stun/Alutiiq, which includes both Chugach and Koniag dialects. We thank our language leaders, Candace Branson and Sperry Ash, for helping us arrive at this profound theme grown from the guidance of our Statewide Elders & Youth Council, of seeing the path we are part of and believing in ourselves.

Additional Conference Highlights

This year's Elders & Youth will begin on Sunday, October 11 and close out on Wednesday, October 14 in a reimagined and culturally-enriched virtual environment. This will keep our peoples safe while also increasing access for those who have not yet had a chance to participate. Elders & Youth provides a special opportunity to celebrate our Alaska Native peoples, make connections, reinforce identity and belonging, engage in cultural practices and languages, identify issues and priorities of our communities, explore art and our creative worlds, strengthen our collective advocacy, and contribute to the greater community through the transference of knowledge between our generations. In short, we put the power of our cultures in the center and wrap our Elders, youth, and other participants in the precious collective love and nurturing environment they deserve.

On Sunday, October 11, Indigenous Elders and healers from throughout the state will share blessings and stories that will center us and excite our spirit for the following days during our Warming of the Hands gathering. On Monday, October 12, we will celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day and hear from our Elder keynote. On Tuesday, we will hear from our youth keynote. On Monday-Wednesday we will hear from other presenters, as well as participate in Community Engagement workshops, Language Circles, Men's, Women's, & LGBTQIA2+ Houses, regional-based gatherings, and hands-on Living & Loving our Cultures Workshops. We will also feature the Best of Chin'an: A Night of Cultural Celebration, which will include cultural performances over the last ten years and our version of Natives Got Talent to highlight the talents of our participants who step up to share their gifts.

Call for Proposals

Each year, incredible Alaska Native language teachers, artists, culture bearers, Elders and dance groups help to create a meaningful experience by sharing their knowledge with all of us alongside community members and organizations hosting dynamic workshops to explore topics that are important to our Indigenous world. We plan to expand our Houses to further explore our rites of passage, responsibilities and resources to strengthen who we are. This year will require flexibility and adaptability as we host virtually, but we know our peoples have incredible knowledge and innovation to share. **If you are interested in helping to create these rich learning spaces with us by sharing a cultural learning activity, topical issues of interest to our participants, teaching our Native languages, hosting learning opportunities on our ways of life and putting up foods, and the like, please submit a proposal, to be reviewed starting Tuesday, September 1 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2020EYProposal>.**

Registration

We are thrilled to announce that **registration for Elders & Youth will be free this year** thanks in large part to the generosity of our sponsors! We encourage schools and communities to partner with us and register as many participants as they'd like. **For schools, please consider participation in the conference as school attendance and as part of virtual school offerings for the students of Alaska during this time of COVID-19.** This free registration and warm invitation is our way of holding up our communities during this time, and ensure connection, learning, relationship-building, and understanding of our rich and diverse Alaska Native cultures is fostered and shared across the state. **We encourage early bird registration by Thursday, September 24 at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/81872702457>.** This will help secure a spot, allow us ample time to communicate with registrants about how to engage in the conference, and help us plan accordingly for the technical side of hosting this virtual gathering. It will also ensure there is enough time and materials to send out for the relevant Living & Loving Our Cultures workshops (space will be limited in some sessions by request of the instructors and/or ability to get materials sent out in time). Registration will continue through the conference though some sessions and items may not be available.

Community Hall

New this year, our re-imagined Community Hall will feature our Alaska Native artists and community organizations virtually as well. Those interested may submit their interest and brief videos of their artwork and/or services/programs for consideration for inclusion in the Community Hall at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/81872702457>.

Broadcast & Livestream

The Conference will be livestreamed and televised statewide, though inter-active learning, engagement, and participation will only be accessible via registration. We are committed to having a culturally-radiant and safe virtual experience for our participants where all are welcome with the understanding that we center our Elders and our youth. More details will be forthcoming.

Quyanaa and Quyanaakcak/Quyanaasinaq in Sugt'stun/Alutiiq to our 2020 Statewide Elders & Youth Council and other members of our community whose thoughtful contributions and ideas guide us each year to a memorable conference. We thank each of our Council members, their regions, and their families for the time they spent with us this year, without whom it would not have been possible:

- **Aleutian Chain & Pribilofs Representatives** – Youth: Britteny Lestenkof & Charlotte Rotherford. Elders: Patricia Lekanoff Gregory & Moses Dirks.
- **Bristol Bay Representatives** – Youth: Robin Savo, Shania Johnson & Mar-Zaray Milo. Elders: Esther Thompson, Anna May Kasak & Harry Wassily, Sr.
- **Copper River Basin Representatives** – Youth: Holli Nollner. Elders: Fred John, Jr. & Christopher Gene.
- **Interior Representatives** – Youth: Nanieezh Peter & Julia Shewfelt. Elders: Charlie Titus, Jr. & Ernest D. Erick.
- **Kodiak Island Representatives** – Youth: Mason Mullan & McKayla Peterson. Elders: Rita Stevens & Mitch Simeonoff.
- **North Slope Representatives** – Youth: Richard Gordon & Kaylie Oktolik. Elders: Martha Stackhouse & David Maasak Leavitt, Jr.
- **Northwest Arctic Representatives** – Youth: Brennen Johnson & Chad Horner. Elders: Elsie Sampson & Virginia Commack.
- **Norton Sound Representatives** – Youth: Harold Stall Brown & Alicyn Bahnke. Elders: BettyAnn Hoogendorn & Rita Buck.
- **Prince William Sound Representatives** – Youth: Dasia Gall & Emily Collins. Elders: Pete Kompkoff, Jr. & Paul Kompkoff, Jr.
- **Southcentral Representatives** – Youth: Danielle Mills, Anya Tyrrell & Ryan Esteban. Elders: Sharon Isaak & Bobbi/Roberta Oskolkoff.
- **Southeast Representatives** – Youth: Monique Clevenger & Jacob Fisher. Elders: Leona Santiago & Laveren John.
- **YK Delta Representatives** – Youth: Isis Ivie & Kylee Fratis. Elders: Jimmy P. Stevens, Sr. & Herman B. Hootch.

We look forward to seeing you all virtually this October!

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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.*