

First Alaskans Institute

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ANNOUNCING THE 2020 FIRST ALASKANS INSTITUTE STATEWIDE ELDERS & YOUTH CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND CONFERENCE GUIDES

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute’s 37th Annual Elders & Youth Conference (Elders & Youth) will begin on Sunday, October 11 and close out on Wednesday, October 14 in a reimagined and culturally-enriched virtual environment. Our 2020 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, “We Are Making a Good Path,” confirms our ancestral responsibilities, and through Elders & Youth, our keynotes and conferences guides will help us do this together:

Elder Keynote

Dr. Rev. Traditional Chief Trimble Gilbert (Gwich’in) will be joined by his beloved wife, Mary. They are from Vashrajj K’qq (Arctic Village). He is a Tribal Leader, an Episcopal priest, a Native knowledge and culture bearer, and Gwich’in teacher. He is the Second Traditional Chief and spiritual leader for Tanana Chiefs Conference and the 52 Athabaskan Tribes that they serve. He serves as an Elder Advisor for the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Doyon annual shareholders meeting. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where he often serves as an Elder and mentor in classes bridging Western knowledge taught in the classroom with our lives in rural communities. Trimble is also a well-known fiddle player.



Trimble and Mary Gilbert.
Photo by Crystal Dzehgak Frank.

Youth Keynote

Kiley Kanat’s Burton (Eyak/Aleut/Iñupiaq/Koyukon) is 15 years old, and her Eyak name, *Kanat’s*, means little wolverine. She currently lives in Cordova. Her parents are James Burton and Diana Riedel. She attends Cordova Jr./Sr. High School and hopes to work in the science field as a surgeon or a marine biologist. She enjoys hunting, commercial fishing, skin sewing, sports, and fashion. *Kanat’s* appreciates her culture, way of life, and traditions that have been carried on through the generations. She looks up to her mom, aunt Raven Cunningham, and grandma Monica Riedel because of the cultural knowledge they have shared with her.



Kiley Kanat’s Burton.
Photo by Diana Riedel.

Conference Guides

Dustin Unignax Newman (Unanga̅/Deg Hit'an) lives in Anchorage and has family roots in the communities of King Cove and Anvik. His maternal grandparents are the late Rudy Demoski and Agnes Beaver and paternal grandparents are the late Robert Newman and Clara Smith. He is a kayak builder, storyteller and dancer with the Anchorage Unanga̅ Dancers. *Unignax* currently serves as the Youth Services Coordinator at the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association.



Dustin *Unignax* Newman.
Photo by Matthew Waliszek at Yuit Comms.

Andrea Ts'aak Ka Juu Cook (Haida) is from Hydaburg where she grew up berry picking and salmon fishing. She is a graduate of Mt. Edgecumbe High School and attending the University of Alaska Southeast where she is working toward a degree in Northwest Coast Art. She comes from a long line of carvers and hopes to become a carver one day. *Ts'aak Ka Juu* is a dance group member of Xaadaas Diigwii of Juneau. Most recently, she was a First Alaskans Institute intern placed at the Sitka Conservation Society.



Andrea *Ts'aak Ka Juu* Cook.
Photo by Klas Stolpe, Daily Sitka

Elders & Youth is only made possible with the love and support of our community, volunteers and sponsors. We are currently looking for volunteers to assist with kit packaging, video editing, social media monitoring, and registration. There are sponsorship opportunities available too!

We encourage schools and communities to partner with us and consider participation in the conference as school attendance and as part of virtual school offerings for their students during this time of COVID-19. To be inclusive of our state Elders & Youth will also be livestreamed on our website and televised on GCI Channels 1 and 907, 360 North and ARCS.

Quyanaa for working with us in community and in partnership to bring our precious Elders and youth together! To get involved and for more information, please visit our FAI website at www.firstalaskans.org, calling 907-677-1700 or emailing 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.*

**In a previous release, we listed Dustin Unignax Newman lives in Seward, but we updated it to Anchorage.*