



August 15th, 2023

Contact: info@firstalaskans.org, 907-677-1700

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LARGEST STATEWIDE GATHERING OF ELDERS & YOUTH ANNOUNCES THE THEME AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED

Dgheyey Kaq’; Dena’inaq etnen’aq’ qilan (Anchorage, Alaska; lands of the Dena’ina) – On October 15-18, 2023, we celebrate the 40th Annual First Alaskans Institute Statewide Elders & Youth Conference (Elders & Youth; EY), we will be hosting in-person in Dgheyey Kaq’ at the Dena’ina Center. Elders & Youth is open to all who want to learn and immerse in a gathering that centers our Elders and our youth in Native ways of knowing and being. In order to participate, you must register and agree to the rules that help keep our conference safe for our Elders and our youth. The registration link is included below.

Each year, we incorporate an Alaska Native language into the conference by randomly selecting one before the gathering ends. Our goal is to feature every one of our Alaska Native languages, and uplift each in our work throughout the year. At the 2022 Elders & Youth Conference, the Lingít language was chosen. After consulting with our Lingít language community and our Elders & Youth Council, the following theme was selected:

WOOSHT GUGANÉIX

Let it be that we heal each other

The richest detailing of our history, values and knowledge systems are encoded within our languages. We recognize our responsibility as Alaskans to reconnect and uplift our Native ways of life that have carried us since time immemorial. We invite all Alaskans and the world to participate as relatives in the Elders & Youth Conference that lift up our peoples. We look forward to seeing everyone and celebrating this amazing place and the people who have made it magnificent for thousands of years.

Register NOW for Elders & Youth 2023

<https://tinyurl.com/eldersandyouth23>

School Districts

We invite School Districts across the state to join the movement in ensuring students and teachers can fully participate in the conference, as a part of their daily school attendance. We work with school staff and boards to help with enrollment and so that this unique, critical learning time at Elders & Youth is credited to each student and teacher. Association of Alaska School Boards and the EY Conference participants passed a resolution many years ago to ensure attending E&Y does not count against their in class learning or against their attendance. We are grateful to see the shift in the districts and student’s participation. Please email us at leadership@firstalaskans.org for more information.

Call for Proposals

As we adapt and grow, so does our conference. We invite our community to share knowledge, art, ideas, songs, dances and brilliance each year with our [Call for Proposals](#) and [Dance Group Interest Form](#), or on our website at www.firstalaskans.org. Please consider applying and sharing this opportunity with language teachers, artists, culture bearers and providers, Elders, community organizations, educators, leaders, dance groups and performers to engage and share at Elders & Youth. If you have any questions, please email us at leadership@firstalaskans.org.

Our Statewide Council

We are thankful for the leadership of the 2023 Elders & Youth Statewide Council for helping us shape a fantastic 40th celebration. The EY Council discusses and gives input into the conference design, topics and issues relevant to their community's current events, challenges and solutions. They build a strong statewide network and have opportunities to grow their leadership by speaking up on issues they care about. The EY Council is elected by their peers each year at the conference. They serve as ambassadors for their regions, catalyzers for positive change they are part of, and are asked to increase their advocacy skills through observation and participation. We thank them each for their service:

- **Ahtna** – Youth: Jalene Voyles & Carmelo Jackson. Elders: Faye Ewan & Christopher Gene.
- **Aleutian Chain & Pribilofs** – Youth: Chloe 'Qaadaġ' Bourdukofsky & Anfesia 'Sweetie' Tutiakoff. Elders: Delores 'Doll' Kochuten & Dottie Tutiakoff.
- **Bristol Bay** – Youth: Bailee Olson & Mai Webb. Elders: Evan Loonhola & Carol Luckhurst.
- **Interior** – Youth: William Fisher & Natalie Newman. Elders: Anna Frank & Irene Sherry.
- **Kodiak Island** – Youth: Cienna Johnson & Teague Simmons. Elders: Marci Orth & Lisa Cooper.
- **North Slope** – Youth: Aaron Stackhouse & Jayden Lampe. Elders: Ayalhuq Evelyn Williams & Delbert J. Rexford.
- **Northwest Arctic** – Youth: John Roy Ramoth, Jr. & Ashley Rexford. Elders: Nellie Ballot, & Lena Hanna.
- **Norton Sound** – Youth: Cameron Minix & Jade Greene. Elders: John Waghiyi & Andrew Miller.
- **Prince William Sound** – Youth: Samantha Eleshansky & Shania Tanape. Elder: Pete A. Kompkoff, Jr.
- **Southcentral** – Youth: Riley Malone & Larissa Schierholt. Elders: Selena Malone & Lyra Abruska.
- **Southeast** – Youth: Nathaniel Blake & Tria Bowers. Elders: Paul Marks & Genevieve Guanzon.
- **Yukon Kuskokwim Delta** – Youth: Michele Andrews & 'Luqutay' Glenda R. Afcan. Elders: Lillian Johnson & Cyndi Reeves.

Community Hall Booths

We create space within our conference for the sharing of Native arts, language, song and dance and other cultural offerings as well as exhibitor space for those interested in sharing their services and programs with our participants. The Community Hall space helps bring folks at their own pace to enrich our shared learning by drawing upon and passing on the knowledge of our Ancestors and opportunities that may be available to the participants. Visit [here](#) for more information.

Sponsorship Opportunities

As a small non-profit organization, our values-driven commitment to serving our community is inherent in all we do, including continually Indigenizing the operations of our work. Sponsorships are vital to ensuring a successful convening of our precious Elders & Youth and provide a meaningful way for organizations and businesses to support this important annual gathering. Visit our [sponsorship packet](#) for more information.

Gunalchéesh to all our community, partners, and friends for supporting our work! You may also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) and e-newsletters to learn about all the ways to be involved.

At First Alaskans Institute, 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, please visit www.firstalaskans.org or contact us at info@firstalaskans.org.