

2005

Rural Providers' Conference

Bethel, Alaska



Strong Families:
Yesterday,
Today and
Tomorrow

*Ilaakuyutellriit
Umyuallgutekluteng:
Akuaguaq,
Ernerpak, cali
Unuaqu*

About Bethel

Bethel is located at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River, 40 miles inland from the Bering Sea. It lies in the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, 400 air miles west of Anchorage. Summer temperatures range from 42 to 62 degrees Fahrenheit. Winter temperatures range from -2 to 19 degrees Fahrenheit.

Bethel was first established by Yup'ik Eskimos who called the village "Mumtrekhlogamute," meaning "Smokehouse People," named for the nearby fish smokehouse. There were 41 people in Bethel during the 1880 U.S. Census. At that time, it was an Alaska Commercial Company Trading Post. The Moravian Church established a mission in the area in 1884. A post office was opened in 1905. Before long, Bethel was serving as a trading, transportation and distribution center for the region, which attracted Natives from surrounding villages. The City was incorporated in 1957.

A federally-recognized tribe is located in the community – the Orutsararmuit Native Council. The population of the community consists of 68% Alaska Native. The traditional Yup'ik practices and language remain predominant in the area. Subsistence activities and commercial fishing are major contributors to residents' livelihoods. The sale of alcohol is banned in the community, although importation and possession is legal. The 2004 census indicated a population of 4,888 residents in Bethel.

Some residents are connected to the central piped water and sewer system. Approximately 75% of households have water delivered and sewage hauled by truck. Several facilities in Bethel have individual wells and septic tanks.



photo courtesy of Alaska Military Youth Academy

The Moravian Church grounds was the stage for Culture Camp activities and camping for the 2005 Rural Providers' Conference in Bethel.

2005 Rural Providers' Conference

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Editor/Graphic Designer: Janice Berry

Photographs: RurAL CAP Staff unless noted otherwise

RPC Logo Design: Rose "Sugar" Henderson

Pictured on Cover: Bethel Native Dancers during the opening ceremony's welcome dance



Introduction

The Rural Providers' Conference (RPC) is an annual gathering of substance abuse service providers, youth, elders and family members interested in celebrating and encouraging the continual growth of the Alaska Native Sobriety Movement. The RPC embraces and unites traditional Alaska Native knowledge and modern treatment methods in the battle against alcohol and drug abuse. The conference features ceremonies, talking circles and cultural events. Workshops and group sessions are geared toward clinicians and the lay public as well as those in recovery. This year marks the RPC's 22nd year uniting people from all over the state. Last year a new element was added to the conference-Culture Camp-to demonstrate the many traditional customs that survive and help keep communities healthy. The RPC has special sessions for participants ages 10 through 20 as well. The Youth Track operates simultaneously during the adult workshops and at the Culture Camp,

where youth learn valuable skills such as team work and have fun at the same time.

Since its formation in 1984, when 60 participants gathered at Camp Carroll in Anchorage, the RPC has grown significantly with nearly 500 people attending annually. The conference has traveled to 11 different Alaskan communities, each of which hosted the

conference for two years.

This year the RPC returned to Bethel after ten years. In 1995-1996 RurAL CAP and the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation co-sponsored the RPC's first time in Bethel. Ten years ago the conference coordinators for the RPC were Ruth "Wally" Richardson and David Hardenbergh (then RurAL CAP's Alcohol Director and now its Executive Director). This year, Wally returned to the helm helping to organize the annual gathering once again along with her daughter Rose "Sugar" Henderson, and



Rose Henderson, Bethel RPC Coordinator, YKHC, Marian Estelle, RurAL CAP RPC Coordinator and Ruth Richardson, Bethel RPC Coordinator, YKHC

Marian Estelle, RurAL CAP's Wellness Coordinator.

RPC attendees received credit for their participation in the conference:

Professional Certification

Credit for up to 20 hours of Alcohol Counselor Certification was approved by the Alaska Commission for Chemical Dependency Professionals Certification (ACCDPC). Licensed Social Workers, Licensed Counselors and Psychologists could also receive up to 20 hours, including six hours each of Alaska Native cross-cultural studies and substance abuse training.

University of Alaska Fairbanks Credit

Academic credit was available through UAF Rural Human Services. Attendance of a minimum of 14 hours of conference sessions and completion of a final written exercise was required.



Opening Day Agenda - Monday, June 6, 2005

5:00 PM Conference Registration, Kilbuck Elementary School Cafeteria

5:00 PM **Opening Reception, hosted by Sea Lion Corp.**

7:00 PM **OPENING CEREMONIES**—Moderators: **Rose “Sugar” Henderson** and **Ruth “Wally” Richardson**

Welcome Dance—Ayaprun Elitnanuvik students

Opening Blessing by **Paul John**

Color Guard—Bethel JROTC

Recognition of Elders

Welcoming Remarks:

- **Henry Hunter**, Chair, for Chief Antone Anvil, Orutsaramiut Native Council
- **Myron Naneng**, Association of Village Council Presidents, Inc., Sea Lion Corporation, United Utilities, Inc.
- **Hugh Dymont**, Mayor, City of Bethel
- **Mark John**, President, Calista Elders’ Council
- **Mary Kinik**, Bethel Native Corporation
- **Mary Kapsner**, State Representative
- **Lyman Hoffman**, State Senator
- **Gail Pass**, Finance Compliance Officer, First Alaskans Institute
- **Mike Williams**, President, Board of Directors, RurAL CAP
- **Ruth “Wally” Richardson**, for Gene Peltola, Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation

Recognition of Conference Honoree—**David Trantham**, City Council member

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Edgar Blatchford, Commissioner, Dept. of Community Economic Development

Overview of the Conference and Announcements

Closing Blessing by **Joe Lomack**

Welcome Dance—Bethel Native Dancers/Upallret



Ayaprun Elitnanuvik students

Tuesday's Agenda, Day 2 - June 7, 2005

8:00 AM Registration—**Continental breakfast provided by GCI**

8:30 Daily Presenters and Speakers Meeting

9:00 General Session

Opening Blessing

Housekeeping and Announcements

Presentations by **JROTC** and **Blood Family**

Morning Addresses—**Mike Williams, John and Teresa Pingayak**

10:15 Break

10:30 Youth Track—Blood Family, JROTC, Native Dance

10:30 Adult Workshop Sessions:

- Celebrating the Success of AVCP's Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat: "Securing a Future for Our Children"
- Eye of Awareness: A Direction for Healing Using Individual Core Values
- Where Does Community Readiness Fit Into Your Wellness Plan?
- Developing and Implementing a Tribal Court in Rural Alaska
- Establishment and Administration of Culture Camps

1:15 Youth Track—Earl "Keggulluk" Polk III

1:15 Adult Workshop Sessions:

- Employment and Training Opportunities in Rural Alaska: An Overview of the Village Health Provider Training/Education and Employment (ViP) Initiative
- Community Wellness Circles: Kickin' Alternatives

3:00 Culture Camp, all ages

4:30 Open Mic

5:30 Community Pot Luck

7:00 Culture Share

8:00 Youth Drop-in

8:00 12 Step Meeting



Keggulluk



The JROTC drill team stomped to the rhythm, demonstrating their national award-winning routines.



Wednesday's Agenda, Day 3 - June 8, 2005

8:00 AM Registration—**Continental Breakfast provided by Bethel Native Corporation**

8:30 Daily Presenters and Speakers Meeting

9:00 General Session

Opening Blessing

Housekeeping and Announcements

“Parenting for Strong Families”—facilitated by **John and Teresa Pingayak**

10:15 Break

10:30 **Youth Track—Aniak Dragon Slayers**

10:30 Adult Workshop Sessions:

- Celebrating the Success of AVCP's Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat: “Securing a Future for Our Children (Part 2 of 3)”
- Oxford House Recovery Homes—Overview & NAHASDA Funding Opportunities
- Mentoring for Success (Part 1 of 2)
- Culturally Appropriate Approaches to Treatment of Co-occurring Disorders

1:15 **Youth Track— Aniak Dragon Slayers**

1:15 Adult Workshop Sessions:

- Speaking Out (Part 2 of 2)
- You Did WHAT Last Night?! The Dos and Don'ts of HIV Counseling
- Mentoring for Success (Part 2 of 2)
- A Cultural Approach to Residential Psychiatric Treatment Centers (RPTC)—Inhalants & Substance Abuse—Lessons Learned
- Empowering the Community—Developing an Action Plan

3:00 **Culture Camp**, all ages

4:30 Open Mic



photo courtesy of Alaska Military Youth Academy



- 6:00 Ceremonial Sweats, led by **Maynard Eakan, Ed Peele** and **Gary Ten Bear**
- 8:00 12 Step Meeting
- 8:00 Talking Circles—men and women
- 8:00 **Youth Dance**—DJ, **Wilson Green**





- 8:00 AM Registration—**Continental Breakfast provided by Orutsaramiut Native Council**
- 8:30 Daily Presenters and Speakers Meeting
- 9:00 General Session**
- Opening Blessing
 - Housekeeping and Announcements
 - Keynote Addresses by Alaskan Youth—**Jaye Ulak, Jimmie Walker, & Jennifer Borbridge-Bentley**
 - “Communicating Across the Generations”**—facilitated by **Stakeholders and Planners**
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 Youth Track—Blood Family, JROTC, Native Dance**
- 10:30 Adult Workshop Sessions:**
- Celebrating the Success of AVCP’s Kingulamta Ciunerkaat: “Securing a Future for Our Children” (Part 3 of 3)
 - Grief Recovery Workshop (Part 1 of 2)
 - YKHC’s Family Spirit Project
 - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD): Moving Forward
 - Yup’ik Beliefs and Values
- 1:15 Youth Track—Earl “Keggulluk” Polk III, facilitator**
- 1:15 Adult Workshop Sessions:**
- Creating Successful Youth: Assets and Traditional Values
 - Grief Recovery Workshop (Part 2 of 2)
 - Communities Against Family Violence
 - Honor, Support, and Empower Alaskan Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
 - Binding Together: Spirituality and Western Thought
- 3:00 Drum of Life “Yuuyaraq,” Earl “Keggulluk” Polk III**
- 3:00 Culture Camp, all ages**
- 4:30 Open Mic
- 7:00 Youth Drop-in
- 8:00 **Dance (Live Band) “Delta Boyz”** — Music for all ages
- 8:00 12 Step Meeting
- 8:00 Talking Circles—men, women, youth



Friday's Agenda, Day 5 - June 10, 2005

8:00 AM **Continental Breakfast provided by RurAL CAP**

9:00 AM Breakfast Gathering

Moderated by **Earl "Keggulluk" Polk III**

Youth Presentation of Yupik dance honoring RPC

10:00 **General Session** – Moderators: **Stakeholders**

Opening Blessing by Joe Lomack

Housekeeping and Announcements

CLOSING CEREMONIES

Stakeholders Present:

Tom and Jennifer Young

John and Teresa Pingayak

Ed Peele

Closing Prayer

11:30 AM **Adjourn Conference**

Dancing - Upallret



photo by Charlene Florence

During the closing ceremony the Alaska Military Youth Academy cadets performed the song and dance created during the week to honor the conference. Olinka Nicholas from Kasigluk leads them, guided by John Pingayak and Keggulluk.

Keynote Speakers

Edgar Blatchford, Commissioner, Dept. of Community and Economic Development



“We have a population growth in rural Alaska, greater than at any other time in the history of the state. We have a great burden to provide more economic activity -creation of jobs for all the young people that are coming right behind us. How do we do it? Rural Alaska has always been a place where the entrepreneur spirit was alive and well. It’s still alive. That spirit is taking care of yourself, your families ...with the materials that nature gave us. Hunting, fishing, and gathering - that was economic development in the truest sense of the word. Using the natural resources to provide for our families - there must be economic activity to make jobs. Every family must be strong. Strong families make strong neighbors, and strong neighbors make strong communities. If you have strong communities, you can control your own destiny. The opportunities are there.”



Mary Kinik, Bethel Native Corporation

General sessions offered opportunities to learn not only from the elders, but from the upcoming generation with new ways of communicating, such as rap. Both youth and adults had the chance to interact, exchange ideas and receive the wisdom of parents who have raised strong, healthy children using traditional values.



Lyman Hoffman, State Senator and Board Chair, Bethel Native Corporation



Henry Hunter, Chairman, ONC



Hugh Dymont, Mayor



Myron Naneng, President, AVCP



Mary Kapsner, State Representative



Mark John, Director, Calista Elders Counsel



Keynote Speakers



Mike Williams, President, Board of Directors, RurAL CAP

"Remember we need to be strong families, self-determined. We own and regulate the resources and land in our communities. Respect needs to happen first. I appreciate all of you taking the time to come to this meeting. Go back to your communities. Don't just come here to feel good, work on building strong families in your communities."

John and Teresa Pingayak, with daughter Valerie (middle)



"Help those people, especially the ones who've been having problems with their mind and their heart. You have been doing the work. It's time for us to stand up and start saying words to our young people. We have to pass on that love. We have to take responsibility. We have to stand up and declare war on the issues that are affecting our people right now."

John Pingayak, teacher, Kashunamiut School District, Chevak

"We the silent majority need to start being involved with our people. We need to help the people who are in leadership. We really need to start speaking out against drug abuse and alcohol. We need to be the voice for our children because they cannot speak for themselves. It's you and me that are going to determine their generation."

Teresa Pingayak, RurAL CAP Regional Head Start Manager, Chevak

I always tell anyone who'll listen what a wonderful, culturally enriched, and positive experience RPC is for those involved or affected by substance abuse.
Conference Participant



Keynote Speakers

Blood Family aka Scammon Bay Rappers



Jaye Ulak

Jimmy Walker

Running Out of Time

We only get one shot to live life and I'm running out of time.
And moving too fast I better slow down.

My life is not going to last. It makes people frown.
I thought about it and then I asked when will I leave my town.
I have dreams of the past. Back then life was a clown.

So much to do, so much to see. God, I want to be with you. I want to be free.
I don't know what to do and I don't know what to be. I am going to have a child.
Some day I want to fly like I was born to be wild. Sometimes I want to die.

Kids look up to me and I ask why?
They don't want to see a young native die. Do you think I could be a role model?
I'd be a fool to drop out of high school. That would not be cool.
Everything I've spoken, my painful words have broken the locks to our doors.
Every time I feel hopeless, my friends get me back to focus.
This is for the teens. Now is the time to set our feelings free.

"I have a lot of experience with elders. I was raised by my grandparents. The young people don't understand why the elders have their ways, their morals, and their values. I consider my main goal to try and be that bridge between the people my age and the elders. I feel very privileged and honored to have that ability to communicate between the elders and youth, and to try to help them understand each other."

Jennifer Borbridge-Bentley



photo by Bill Hess



Workshop Descriptions



Gail Pass, Mark John, Maynard Eakan, and Gary Ten Bear

Tuesday morning sessions

Where Does Community Readiness Fit Into Your Wellness Plan?

The Tri-Ethnic Center's Community Readiness Model focuses on the degree to which a community is prepared to take action on an issue. Knowing the readiness of your community in reference to a specific issue such as substance abuse, gives you and your community the skills to be more successful in knowing how to intervene and increase awareness and impact the behavior of that issue. This model is widely accepted and being requested by numerous funding sources. Participants were invited to share their knowledge of this model and learn more about how to use this tool for their communities.

Marilyn Irwin and **Trish Contway**, State DBH, Section of Prevention & Early Intervention, Program Coordinators of FASD, Substance Abuse, and Suicide Prevention Grants

Celebrating the Success of AVCP's Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat: "Securing a Future for Our Children" (1 of 3)

This four-year old program has proven to be highly successful in empowering communities to make needed changes. The sessions provided an overview of the work of Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat. An overview of the program was followed by panel presentations by staff, youth and elders who share what is working or changing in their communities.

Facilitator: David Charlie, Assistant Director; Unit Coordinators: **Wilson Monutoli**, Tuntutuliak; **Janet McIntyre**, Eek; **Joan Sundown**, Scammon Bay; **Paul John**, Elder Visioning Committee, Toksook Bay; **Norbert Beans**, St. Mary's

Establishment & Administration of Culture Camps

Culture Camp administrators and staff from around the state discussed the process of establishing and administrating camps. Topics included collaborative partners, funding operations, capital expansion, administration and programs.

Facilitated by **Gail Pass**, Compliance Finance Officer, First Alaskans Institute; **Mark John**, Director, Calista Elder's Council; **Maynard Eakan**, Traditional Counselor, Maniilaq Mavsigviq Family Treatment Camp (Spud Farm); **Gary Ten Bear**, Substance Abuse Program Coordinator, Hudson Lake Treatment Program, CRNA

Eye of Awareness: A Direction for Healing Using Individual Core Values

This workshop looked at life's Change Cycle which examines the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical

aspects of life. Every culture has a method of examining life and the ways humans cope with challenges. The choices they make can determine whether they can live a healthy, productive, positive life. In a light-hearted setting, participants shared ideas for working through a broad spectrum of emotions and how they affect our behaviors.

Joe Green, CDC1 Senior Counselor, Phillips Ayagnirvik Treatment Center, YKHC



Joe Green



Workshop Descriptions



Wilson Green, Richard Slats, Bing Santamour and Ray Watson

Developing and Implementing a Tribal Court in Rural Alaska

This workshop gave an overview of developing and implementing a tribal court in a village or urban setting. Participants learned how to establish judicial codes, train judges and develop a court.

Facilitated by **Ray Watson**, Tribal Judge, ONC Tribe
Panelists: **Wilson Green**, Therapeutic Court; **Gloria Simeon**, Tribal Judge; **Bing Santamour**, Tribal Judge; **Richard Slats**, ONC Tribal Court Administrator

Tuesday afternoon sessions

Employment and Training Opportunities in Rural Alaska: An overview of the Village Health Provider Training/Education and Employment (ViP) Initiative

This workshop provided an overview of the Village Health Provider Training/Education and Employment (ViP) Initiative. ViP builds upon and expands the Alaska Tribal Health System's Community Health Aide/Practitioner Program. Job opportunities in rural Alaska for behavioral health aides (mental and substance abuse), dental health aide positions and personal care attendant positions were discussed. The ViP Initiative also focuses on the



Charmaine Ramos

enhancement of the tribally managed Personal Care Assistance Program for elders residing throughout Alaska.

Charmaine Ramos, ViP Initiative Coordinator and PCA Consultant, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, **Alberta Unok**, Behavioral Health Aide Program Administrative Assistant, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Community Wellness Circles: Kickin' Alternatives

Overviews were presented of two successful tobacco cessation programs being conducted in the state. RurAL CAP began Community Wellness Circles, tobacco cessation groups for women. In 2005, these support groups are facilitated statewide primarily by AmeriCorps members who shared their experiences during this session. YKHC's Nicotine and Your Health program began in 1999, and is considered a leader in tribal health tobacco cessation treatment. The program has counseled more than 2,000 patients to date. Program details, ongoing research and resulting up-to-the-minute intervention treatment protocols specific to the Alaskan Native population were covered. Workshop participants learned fresh ideas for tobacco cessation that can be incorporated in any community. **Gail Schiemann**, Wellness Education Coordinator, Community Wellness Circles Program, RurAL CAP; **Carrie Enoch**, Nicotine Treatment Coordinator, Nicotine Dependence Program, YKHC

Wednesday morning sessions

Culturally Appropriate Approaches to Treatment of Co-Occurring Disorders

Panelists discussed culturally appropriate approaches to treatment for individuals with co-existing psychiatric and substance use disorders.



Carrie Enoch and Gail Schiemann



Workshop Descriptions



Mike Bricker, Ray Watson, Gary Ten Bear, and Guy Guy

Mike Bricker, Clinical Director, Phillips Ayagnirvik, Treatment Programs; **Ray Watson**, Director of Village Services; **Guy Guy**, Core Team Clinician all of YKHC; **Mike Lande**, Raven's Way Treatment Supervisor; **Gary Ten Bear**, Substance Abuse Coordinator, CRNA

Celebrating the Success of AVCP's Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat: "Securing A Future for Our Children" (2 of 3)

Facilitator: **David Charlie**, Assistant Director; **Vivian Johnson**, Director; Unit Coordinators: **Lillian Alexie**, Akiachak; **Evelyn Thomas**, Crooked Creek; **Olga Wigley**, Russian Mission; **Rebecca Tinker**, Kasigluk;

Lillian Lliaban, Elder Visioning Committee, Akiak; **Samantha Kawagley**, Youth Representative, Kwethluk

Mentoring for Success (1 of 2)

This workshop gave help to parents, mentors, community members and other concerned adults who work with youth. It offered preparation to help and guide youth through mentoring. The personal life stories of four youth were also shared. Those attendees who attended *both sessions* earned a certificate of training. This certificate met the "Mentor Training" requirement for the Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA) and is also recognized by the State of Alaska as continuing education for Foster Parents.

Joan Branch, Mentor Coordinator, Alaska Military Youth Academy; **Danielle Bean**, Team Leader, AMYA

Meet the Press: Getting the Word Out (1 of 2)

Participants learned how to use newspapers and radio to bring attention to important issues and events; why it's important to get to know the people who write the news; to make sure your story gets proper attention. Whether you want to bring people to a gathering or work for positive change, knowing how to get the word out is vital!

Facilitator: **Sandy Kleven**, LCSW, writer
Panelists representing: *Anchorage Daily News*, *Delta Discovery*, *KYUK*, *The Messenger*, and *The Tundra Drums*



Danielle Bean and Joan Branch



Workshop Descriptions

Oxford House Recovery Homes - Overview & NAHASDA Funding Opportunities

This workshop gave an overview of what Oxford Houses are, who they serve and how to fund them using NAHASDA Tribal Housing funds. Oxford Homes provide affordable housing in a peer-supported environment for people in recovery from substance abuse and people re-entering communities after incarceration. Bethel is just now opening a home.

Frank Peratrovich Jr., State Division of Behavioral Health Program Coordinator- Special Needs Housing Office; **Cliff Wilson**, Oxford House; Outreach Coordinator; **Tom Dugan**, Oxford House Outreach Worker, National Office

Wednesday Afternoon Sessions

Speaking Out (2 of 2)

Participants learned public-speaking basics, including how to make a point, how to limit anxiety about speaking, how to handle hostile questions and how to speak clearly and make a great impression. Whether your audience is the tribal council, the Advisory School Board or the people in Juneau, skills in standing up and making a strong point help you succeed. Facilitator **Sandy Kleven**, LCSW, consultant/writer

Mentoring for Success (Part 2 of 2)

This interactive workshop showed what happened when a mentor came into the lives of the four young people from the first session, and the impact a mentor has made in each of the youth's life. Participants learned to identify characteristics of people who affect the lives of others and present effective relationship building. The activities included a communication skills puzzle.

Joan Branch, Mentor Coordinator, Alaska Military Youth Academy

A Cultural Approach to Residential Psychiatric Treatment Centers (RPTC)- Inhalants & Substance Abuse - Lessons Learned

This workshop explained the lessons learned at McCann Treatment Center (MTC) in inhalant and substance abuse treatment. Presenters explained the evolving role of MTC and its current mission and direction. Dissemination of outcomes, success rates and treatment concepts were discussed. In addition, an outline of the subsistence education model used at MTC were described and analyzed.

Daniel Munsey, Program Director; **Scott Hoffman**, Psychiatric Technician; McCann Treatment Center

"You Did WHAT last Night!?" The Dos and Don'ts of HIV Counseling

The Circle of Care, a federally-funded project, aims to increase HIV testing to those highest at risk. Pre- and post-test counseling as well as the HIV Quick Test are provided in rural remote villages in the Y-K Delta. Participants learned the six steps of HIV testing counseling and how to recognize and evaluate the need for risk assessment and risk reduction. The discussion included cultural sensitivity, impacts of gossip, professional sabotage and misconceptions about HIV testing.

Andrea Savage, Manager, **Carl Evans**, Outreach Worker/ Case Manager, both for the Circle of Care Project, YKHC



Cliff Wilson

Empowering the Community - Developing an Action Plan

In this participatory workshop participants experienced the process of gathering community members to address community needs, organizing the issues by category, selecting focus then developing an action plan around that focus. Identification of local resources, including elders and motivated community members, is important to this process. Even community members who are not recognized leaders can take part in the community circle working together for the community's good.

Gary Ten Bear, Community Developer, CRNA; and **Patrick Frank**, Family Systems Trainer



Workshop Descriptions

Thursday morning sessions

Grief Recovery Workshop (Part 1 of 2)

This workshop provided information to help those recovering from grief and loss. Participants had an opportunity to review their personal history. Presenters identified different types of loss and explored what is needed for individual healing. Alaskan Native, Native American, spiritual and contemporary approaches to healing were explored. Beliefs, culture and myths that can prevent healing were discussed.

Myra Heaps, CDCII, Substance Abuse, TCC, Old Minto Family Recovery Camp and Regional Mental Health Technician, Fairbanks Community Mental Health Center; **Carol Rose**, CADCI-IBC Bear Robe Youth Substance Abuse Program, Pauma Valley, CA



Julia Kanuk and Annie Wassilie

Celebrating the Success of AVCP's Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat: "Securing a Future for Our Children" (Part 3 of 3)

Facilitator: **Matthew Prince**, Field Liaison; Vivian Johnson, **Director**; Unit Coordinators: **Emma White**, Quinhagak; **Susie Walter**, Tununak; **T. Billy Teeluk**, Kotlik; **April Morgan**, Youth Representative, Tuntutuliak; **David Charlie**, Bethel; **Sebastian Cowboy**, St. Mary's; **Ben Tucker**, Bethel

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD): Moving Forward

This panel discussion provided an overview of FASD, introducing the diagnostic process, discussing services available in the YKHC region, and explored future trends regarding fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

Facilitated by **Gail Schiemann**, Early Decisions FASD Prevention Project Coordinator, RurAL CAP
Panelists: **Mary Whitaker**, FASD Diagnostic Team Coordinator, **Valerie Warren**, Clinical Coordinator for Outpatient Svcs., and **Scott Sidell**, FASD Program Coordinator—all of YKHC; and other regional FASD program partners.

YKHC's Family Spirit Project

This successful Y-K Delta project is in its ninth year. Family Spirit Project is a wellness conference held in villages selected by the Office of Children Services to address problematic issues such as substance abuse or addiction by parent(s). The program helps to keep children and families safe while not being removed from the village. Agenda items selected by a local planning committee are relevant to that particular village.

Julia Kanuk, Behavioral Health Coordinator, YKHC; and **Annie Wassilie**, Field Supervisor, YKHC

Yup'ik Beliefs and Values

In this workshop the panelists discussed Yup'ik beliefs, values and spirituality as they pertain to the Yup'ik way of life. The way of prayer through traditional celebration and rituals were also discussed.

Theresa Arevgaq John, Assistant Professor UAF, Kuskokwim Community College, **Elizabeth Sunnyboy**, Behavioral Health, Service Coordinator, YKHC **Agatha Shields**, Principal, Ayaprun Elitnarviik School

Thursday afternoon sessions

Grief Recovery Workshop (Part 2 of 2)

In this continuation of the morning session, time was provided to process participants' thoughts and feelings. Confidentiality was strongly stressed. Myra and Carol, as well as other conference counselors, made themselves available during and after the session.

Myra Heaps, CDCII, Substance Abuse, TCC, Old Minto Family Recovery Camp and Regional Mental Health Technician, Fairbanks Community Mental Health Center; **Carol Rose**, CADCI, Youth Substance Abuse Counselor

Honor, Support, and Empower Alaskan Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

This workshop explored the prevalence of grandparents raising grandchildren in Alaska, the unique challenges faced by grandfamilies and offered the resources available for grandparents, and the benefits of grandparents raising grandchildren on the family, community and state.

Tami Eller, Volunteers of America, Alaska/Grandfamilies Network Coordinator



Workshop Descriptions



Theresa John and Liz Sunnyboy

Creating Successful Youth: Assets and Traditional Values

Too many of Alaska's youth are lonely, in pain and feeling they have no future. In this workshop, participants learned to organize their creative will and ingenuity to ensure a bright future for every child. This was an interactive, entertaining demonstration presenting the tools necessary for the healthy development of Alaska's youth. Through audience participation, a web of support was "built" which illustrated the protective factors that adults must provide for young people.

Shelly Eidsness, Community Engagement Educator, Association of Alaska School Boards

Communities Against Family Violence

Domestic violence affects individuals, families and the community. This workshop gave an overview of the cycle

of violence including the effects on the lives of children. The connection between alcohol and domestic violence was covered, as well as the issue of sexual violence.

Winifred Kelly-Green, Tundra Women's Coalition/Community Outreach Coordinator

Binding Together: Spirituality and Western Thought

Panelists presented experiences and practices in treatment and healing for individuals through the combination of traditional spirituality and Western psychology. The panelists have substantial experience in working with people in rural Alaska.

Facilitated by **Sam Oscar**, CDCS and CDCII

Panelists; **Vince Weber**, LCSW, **Evelyn Day**, YKHC; **Peter Twitchell**, **Paul Gregory** and **Peter Jacob**, Y-K Delta Traditional Counselors; **Ella Jones** and **Maynard Eakan** Traditional Counselors, Maniilaq Association



Winifred Kelly-Green



26 BIRCH and RAVEN AmeriCorps members from 21 rural Alaskan communities attended the RPC to attend workshops and help with conference events. Most stayed in tents at Culture Camp along with the Alaska Military Youth Academy.



Youth Track

A special highlight for conference goes this year was the group of 18 youth who came from the Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA), based at Fort Richardson in Anchorage. In their crisp, clean uniforms, the group was a welcome presence at this year's RPC, whether they were participating in a session or supplying helping hands to set up or take down various conference events.

Thanks goes to their dedicated leaders, Danielle Bean, Brian Moulton, Ryan Ray and Joan Branch. The Alaska Military Youth Academy is a program offered through the National Guard. It is a residential school for youth ages 16-18 based on the traditional military training model.

Each day the youth gathered to participate in sessions planned to engage them in activities that would inspire and challenge. They had opportunities to learn Native dance, to try JROTC marching, and to learn how to create healthy rap lyrics. Keggulluk spent time with the youth talking about healthy choices and ways to carry traditional ways into the new world.

The Aniak Dragon Slayers Candi Nickolie, Gary Conrad, and Caroline Kvamme, led by Aniak Fire Chief Pete Brown spent all day Wednesday teaching various safety techniques learned as a result of their extensive training in fire, first aid and basic EMT functions. This popular volunteer emergency medical team consists of youth ages 13-20, who serve over 2,000 people in 14 villages. The local fire department also paid a visit to show and demonstrate Bethel's state of the art fire truck.

A full array of crafts made from recycled goods was available for youth in a drop in center, led by RurAL CAP's Alaska Conservation Foundation summer intern Kim Wetzel and AmeriCorps members after and between regular conference sessions.

On the final day of the RPC, youth enthusiastically presented a new Native song and dance dedicated to the conference. John Pingayak and Keggulluk wrote and taught the song.



photo courtesy of Alaska Military Youth Academy



"I loved the feeling of sharing that resonated through the week from the gathering of 'All Of Us' in the name of sobriety."

Conference Participant



Culture Camp

Concurrent with the Conference, a **Culture Camp** was established for the week. Conference participants had opportunities to take boat rides to subsistence fishing sites and to local fish camps. Freshly caught king salmon was cut and grilled at the camp. A traditional sweat lodge was constructed and ceremonies conducted throughout the week. Participants also had opportunities to visit one of many steam baths in the community.



Esther Green demonstrates the Bethel area way to cut a king salmon caught that day from the Kuskokwim River after a boat tour for youth participants. Other conference goers got a chance to try their hand cutting fish with an ulu under her guidance.



Staking Ceremony

The staking ceremony concluded the week's activities. It is a powerful symbol of the healing that takes place at the Rural Providers' Conference. Stakeholders John Pingayak, Jennifer and Tom Young, and Ed Peele led a moving ceremony. They were accompanied by Keggulluk playing the drum, Gary Ten Bear on his flute and Maynard Eakan providing a purifying sage smudge. John spoke in Yup'ik about how he created the ceremonial stake that has been used every year for the RPC. He described how he found a rotten piece of wood and fixed it up and made it beautiful. He explained that we can heal ourselves the same way, by participating in sobriety and making a commitment to help others do the same.

The staking ceremony's roots lay in a battle between the Mandan Indians and the Lakota Sioux. According to the tale, a Mandan warrior "staked" himself to the earth during a battle with the Lakota. He believed so strongly in his cause that he refused to retreat. A Lakota elder was so impressed by the Mandan warrior's courage, honor, and commitment to his people that he stopped the Sioux who were about to kill him, saying, "Even in an enemy, we must honor this example." Instead, they nursed the warrior back to health and returned him to his people.

Since its re-creation 15 years ago by a small group in Canada, the modern staking ceremony has grown immensely, with stakeholders all over the country. Phil Lane Jr. of Alberta, Canada introduced the ceremony to Alaska. The first ceremony had one couple represent each Alaskan culture: Athabascan and Tsimshian in

RPC Stakeholders

Current Statewide Stakeholders:
Ed and Priscilla Peele
Tom and Jennifer Young

Representing Single Women:
Amanda Peele

Statewide Stakeholders:
Randy Mayo and Violet Hunt
Reggie and Linda Joule
John and Teresa Pingayak
Doug and Amy Modig

the East; Tlingit and Haida in the South; Aleut and Yupik Eskimo in the West; Inupiat Eskimo and White people in the North. In the RPC's modern staking ceremony, participants declare their commitment to

sobriety. The small stakes in the ceremony symbolize the warrior's spear. It is a way of "tying" oneself to the spear and facing the enemy — alcohol and drug abuse.

Stakes made from wood dowels hand-crafted by RurAL CAP's Homeward Bound residents were given to all who participated in this solemn event. The stakes were decorated with

black, white, yellow and red yarn and beads. Black represents the West and Black people; white is for the North and White people; Yellow is the East and Yellow people; Red stands for the South and Red people. It is hoped that this ceremony can provide healing and hope for all people.



Jennifer and Tom Young, Ed Peele, John and Teresa Pingayak



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Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation



photo courtesy of Alaska Military Youth Academy

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Liz Sunnyboy, YKHC
Melanee Stevens, Outekcak Native Tribe
Greg Rochon, North Slope Borough Health Dept.
Ray Watson, YKHC
Wilson Green, YKHC—PATC



Quyana!

There were so many people responsible for the success of this year's conference that this is by no means an all-inclusive list of people and organizations who donated their time and/or talent for:

- Conference coordination and support: Bethel Planning Committee (Wally Henderson, Sugar Richardson, Wilson Green, and other community members)
- Yupik/English interpretation of sessions and workshops: Evan Chunak, James Angaiak, and Joanne Andrew
- Donating paper products: the Bethel Ladies Auxiliary
- Boat rides: Ray Watson, Wilson Green, Todd Henderson and other local residents
- Room configurations and providing moose for potluck: Alaska Military Youth Academy
- For offering lodging accommodations and a coffee pot: the Catholic Church
- Security and Building Coordination: Gary Samuelson
- Culture Camp support: Char Florence and Pat Frank



About RurAL CAP



The Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP) is a private, statewide, nonprofit organization working to improve the quality of life for low-income Alaskans since 1965. RurAL CAP provides resources and services to enhance child and family development, improve housing, save energy, develop leadership, promote environmental conservation, prevent substance abuse and foster independent living. Governed by a 24-member Board of Directors representing every region of the state, RurAL

CAP is one of the largest and most diversified nonprofit organizations in Alaska. Annually, RurAL CAP employs more than 500 Alaskans.

The Rural Providers' Conference is coordinated through RurAL CAP's Wellness Program in the Community Development Division. The Wellness Program provides support and resources to employees and their families, as well as training and resource materials for rural communities. This program actively supports Alaska's Native Sobriety Movement. Substance abuse prevention workshops and counseling services are provided to all staff, including AmeriCorps, VISTA, Head Start, Early Head Start and child development program staff, their families and program parents.

The best part [of the RPC] I liked was the rope circle where we work together, because that is what everyone needs to do in life, and it helps a lot.

Conference Participant

Special Thanks to:



*Make plans now to attend next year's Rural Providers' Conference in Bethel
June 2006*

For more information, please contact RPC Staff at RurAL CAP, Community Development Division:
(907) 279-2511 or toll-free within Alaska at 1-800-478-7227
or visit www.ruralcap.com/RPC
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