

New Possibilities




Camp Fire
Alaska

2020 Rural Alaska Program Report

WELCOME

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Our Mission

To give every child the opportunity to find the best in themselves and others in a fun, safe, learning environment.



New Possibilities

Dear Friends,

What a year! When 2020 started, no one anticipated what we were all about to experience. As COVID-19 evolved, the needs of youth programming in rural Alaska shifted. We feel fortunate that our organization and Rural Alaska Program were able to adapt to the circumstances and continue responding to the needs of youth and families throughout the state during such uncertain times.

With the guidance of our partners, we decided to adapt our traveling camp model into a take-home version of Camp Fire that would support the health and safety of the communities. Due to the increase in food insecurity and school closures, we expanded shipping food resources to include youth meals, healthy cooking activities, and Elder care packages. With an additional focus on workforce development, we employed and trained local staff to distribute these essential resources from June through September.

While this year's Camp Fire experience was different, we discovered new possibilities to serve youth and communities and truly learned the value of teamwork. Generous contributions from our partners, volunteers working to assemble activity kits, and hours of staff time planning and recruiting in rural communities allowed us to deliver programs and reach more youth and families than ever before. As we look forward to the future, we're excited and grateful for the support and efforts of everyone who played a part in making our program a success.

With Gratitude,

Stacie Baker

Stacie Baker

Manager, Rural Alaska Program

- ▶▶ Re-wrote the program into a remote delivery model that could deliver during a pandemic.
- ▶▶ Focused on hiring local staff in rural communities.
- ▶▶ Health and safety trainings included sanitizing, distancing, wearing gloves and face coverings.
- ▶▶ Shifted from in-person activities to take home activity kits, allowing us to reach more families.
- ▶▶ Increased partnerships led to doubling our food delivery program.

Youth Kits

8,553 made

microgreens and crafts

each kit designed to serve 5 individuals

Teen Kits

955 made

beading and stress balls

each kit designed to serve 3 individuals

Family Kits

2,123 made

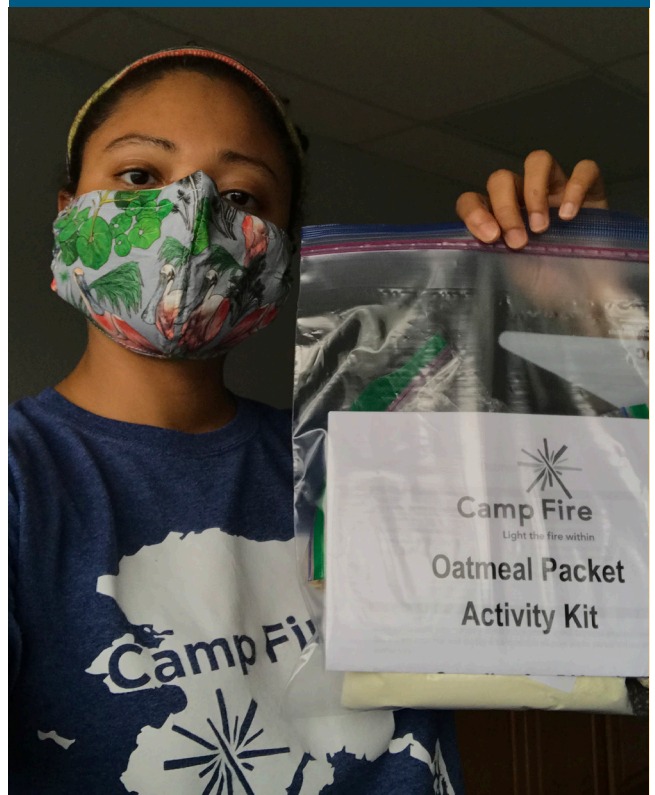
cooking and string stories

each kit designed to serve 8 individuals

Total Kits: 11,631



Kit distribution encouraged Camp Fire staff to connect with youth.



Packing up activity kits in our Anchorage warehouse to ship out.

OUR STORY



Inspiring creativity is an integral part of our wellness model.



Berry picking is popular with kids and encourages a focus on healthy, traditional foods.



Activities focus on wellness, family, culture, community, and fun.



Camp Fire has served more than 100 communities across rural Alaska in 57 years of programs.

Camp Fire's relationship with rural Alaska began in 1964, in response to a massive earthquake. With the support of the national Camp Fire Fund, volunteers delivered the first Camp Fire youth programming in impacted communities, freeing local adults to devote their full energy to cleanup and reconstruction.

Following this initial outreach, Camp Fire's Rural Alaska Program quickly expanded to address the high drowning rates in Alaska by offering swimming and teaching children about cold-water safety. Our program has now grown to include healthy life skills, boating safety, creative arts, cooperative games, outdoor recreation, teen activities, and community events.

Camp Fire Programs strive to emphasize the importance of wellness, reduce high-risk behaviors, and encourage youth and community engagement wherever we go.

“

On behalf of the whole community, thank you so much for providing us food and supplies this summer. We hope to do this again in the future.

— Mathew in Kongiganak

Communities

Akiak
Alakanuk
Aniak
Atmautluak
Chevak
Chuathbaluk
Crooked Creek
Eyak
Lower Kalskag
Upper Kalskag
Kongiganak
Kotlik
Kwigillingok
Marshall
Napakiak
Napaskiak
Old Harbor
Pitkas Point
St. Mary's
Toksook Bay
Tuntutuliak
Tununak



- ▶▶ Focusing on local workforce development allowed for an increase from 6 to 16 staff—all from rural Alaska.
- ▶▶ Expanding our program meant that food packages were delivered long after the end of a typical summer season.
- ▶▶ Adapting from in-person to take-home delivery led to nearly 80% increase in youth served.



I am so pleased and impressed with your combined efforts to serve rural kids and families amidst a health pandemic. You committed to a high level of accountability to protect everyone in the community.

— Luz Smeenk, MS

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

22 Communities

4,189 Participants

8,353 Lbs of Produce

11,631 Activity Kits

34,000+ Meals Provided*

*Youth Meals: 31,680

Elder Care Packages: 900+



Camp Fire promises to create opportunities for discovery to help youth thrive.



Learning how to grow microgreens and to incorporate them into meals.



Getting creative with healthy food by making a “lava cake.”



Emotion Engine activities help youth identify and manage their emotions.

The Wellness Curriculum is a monument to thoughtful design. Now several years into delivery, the curriculum marries Western beliefs to the holistic wellness doctrines observed by Alaska Natives, where health is defined as the sum of four quadrants: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Program activities range from silly, active games to introspective, guided workshops.

This year we pivoted into a take-home program that could still support our wellness model while keeping everyone healthy and safe. From increasing healthy food-based activities such as microgreens and recipes to try at home, we also added traditional art projects that focused on the outdoors, subsistence, and traditional values. We added family activities like card games and string stories, as well as beading and stress ball kits for teens. Our goal was to provide a variety of wellness and imagination-based activities that could include an entire household during a time of physical distancing from others.



Every day, kids would ask me if there's “real Camp Fire.” I would remind them that we're giving out supplies and snacks this year.

— Cheyanne, Camp Fire Staff

TRADITIONAL VALUES



Elder care packages and fresh produce provided staple food items for use in family meal planning.

As a way of strengthening wellness for youth and communities, we constantly explore methods of unifying our program with traditional Alaska Native values. Last year, we learned from local Behavioral Health Aides who provided a traditional healing framework for activities.

Each year, we strive to share new resources and opportunities by listening to recommendations and feedback from communities. As we learn about traditional values from those we engage with, we continually adapt our program to use a strength-based and community centered approach to working with youth.

We continue to deepen our program by focusing on traditional values and intergenerational connections in planning and designing our activity kit model. Our activity kits included subsistence recipes provided by the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, string stories, beading and other crafts, as well as card games to promote family engagement.

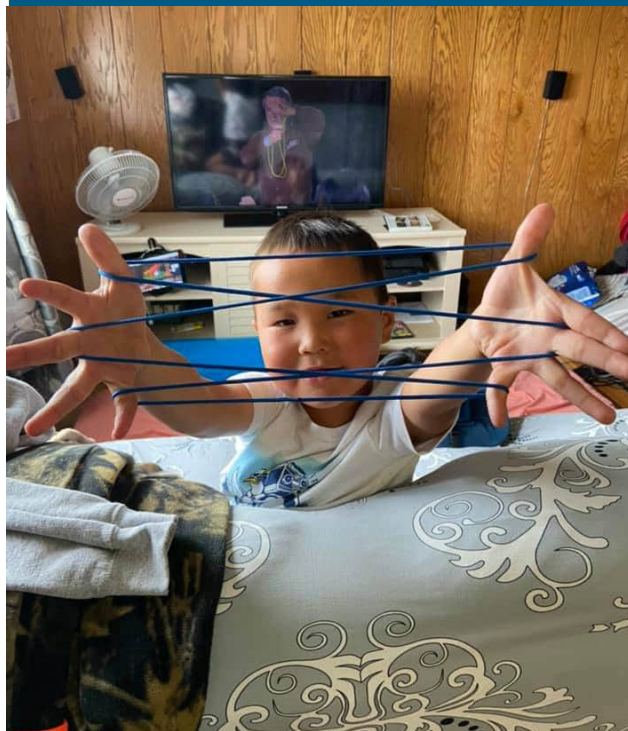


Whenever I would bring the produce to Elders and families, they would express how grateful they are that Camp Fire includes the whole community in their program.

— Leisha Lozano, Camp Fire Staff



Making chili with locally harvested moose meat.



Learning about culture and history around the world through string stories.

CAMP FIRE STAFF



Our staff are dedicated supporters, advocates, and mentors for youth.

Staff Highlights

From year to year, we hear from youth how excited they are to build relationships with Camp Fire staff.

- ▶▶ Charity from Chevak recently graduated from high school. Before working for Camp Fire, she did not know most of the kids' names in her community. Charity learned that knowing someone's name builds community and it teaches respect for one another. By the end of the season, she knew everyone's name.
- ▶▶ Lewis from Kwigillingok returned for his third year with Camp Fire. He remembers going to Camp Fire as a teenager and decided to pursue teaching because of that positive experience. Lewis enjoys getting to know people and building relationships in the communities where he works. This year, Lewis was able to do that in his home community with his mom, Ernestine, as his co-worker.
- ▶▶ NikkiAnn from Atmautluak found a long-term job in her home community because of her work with Camp Fire. The local COVID-19 Task Force saw her distributing activity kits and meals, as well as encouraging others to follow health and safety guidelines, and approached her and offered her a job.

“

I love the fact that this program was a gateway for someone to become gainfully employed in their home community.

— Kathy Nenneman
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families



A peak inside a sample care package.

The Elder Meal Program was born when a diabetes specialist from Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) strongly advocated for the restructuring of our meal delivery to include—and prioritize—serving Elders. This small adjustment would dramatically realign Camp Fire programming to the traditional values observed within the communities we serve. The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) immediately leaned in to provide the financial backing needed to launch the program in 2019.

This year we were able to secure an extensive array of food items through a partnership with Alaska Commercial Company and Pacific Alaska Wholesale. This included meal items that Elders in the communities indicated they would appreciate, such as fresh produce, pilot bread, tea, coffee, rice, and more.

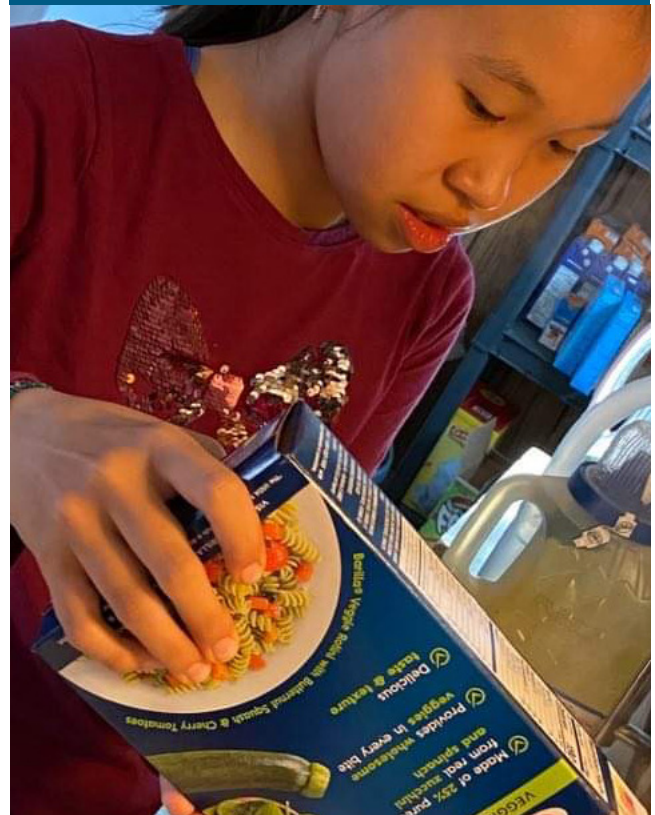


Camp Fire showed us all how much care went into listening to and applying the feedback for improvements to the Rural Program. The meals for Elders is a perfect example and makes me grateful and proud of our partnership.

— Tess Guinn
Association of Village Council Presidents



Delivering meal kits to Elders is always a highlight of our program.



Cooking for Elders shows respect and builds strong connections.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Youth enjoy picking up activity kits and meals to take home.



Volunteers help assemble activity kits for youth and families to enjoy.



Volunteer groups help us organize supplies and pack boxes for shipment to rural communities.

The challenges of the pandemic allowed our partnerships to strengthen and flourish in new ways.

The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) provided unwavering support and guided the process of adapting the program to create a structure of health and safety that allowed us to continue to operate. Other partners created connections and provided resources for recruiting and hiring, and some invested hours with us assembling hundreds of activity kits. In places where we were not able to hire staff, partners distributed Camp Fire resources to their communities.

Our program was only possible this year because of the tremendous support of our partners. We are humbled and grateful for the opportunity to work with them.

“

This was really needed this summer. The kids seemed to depend on it and would line up every day I would pass out the Camp Fire supplies and food.

Especially for the food!

— Zena, Camp Fire Staff



2020 Highlights

- ▶▶ Alaska Commercial and Pacific Alaska Wholesale coordinated to acquire food items for Elder care packages.
- ▶▶ Meyers Farm, a locally owned farm in Bethel, partnered to send out fresh produce to communities in the Y-K Delta from June through December.
- ▶▶ AVCP has been instrumental in adapting the program into a pandemic friendly version. They have been key in the success of the workforce development plan and great supporters of the Elder Care component of program.
- ▶▶ YKHC helps to align the program with wellness best practices and Native values, helping us navigate the health and safety needs of rural communities as we developed new procedures.
- ▶▶ ANTHC has been an unwavering support. Luz Smeenck, Dietician and Community Educator, was instrumental in the adaptation of wellness activities and helped us package activity kits at the warehouse.
- ▶▶ Air and Land Transport partnered to support shipping logistics, allowing our team to ensure that Camp Fire resources reached youth and communities this season.

Thank You!

Air and Land Transport
Alaska Afterschool Network
Alaska Bead Company
Alaska Cargo Port/Lynxs Group
Alaska Commercial Company
Alaska Dept. Health and Social Services
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Alaska Northern Air Courier
Association of Village Council Presidents
Calista
Chinook Printing Company
DHL
Donlin Gold
Food Bank of Alaska
GCI
Kiwanis and Key Club of Anchorage
Meyers Farm
National Civilian Community Corps
Northrim Bank
Pacific Alaska Wholesale
Rasmuson Foundation
RurAL CAP
Taiga Mining Co
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation



Special thanks for this year's report.

Join us - Rural Alaska Is Waiting

Thanks to generous support from contributors and partners, the Rural Alaska Program has now visited thousands of Alaskans in over 100 communities — and our program continues to grow.

We thank our partners, donors, staff, community contacts, and others who provided meaningful programs across rural Alaska.

Become a partner

Joanne Phillips Nutter, Director of Development and Marketing
(907) 257-8819 or jphillips-nutter@campfireak.org

Bring our program to your community

Stacie Baker, Manager of Rural Alaska Program
(907) 257-8839 or sbaker@campfireak.org

Join our team and work with us

(907) 257-8803 or jobs@campfireak.org
<https://www.campfireak.org/jobs/>



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