



Supporting Families



2021 Rural Alaska Program Report

WELCOME

What's Inside

- 2 Highlights
- 3 Our Story
- 4 Impact
- 5 Wellness
- 6 Traditional Values
- 7 Staff
- 8 Elders and Youth
- 9 Culture Camp Support
- 10 Our Partners



Our Mission

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



Dear Friends,

Over the past 18 months, the world has been challenged by a global pandemic. After consultation with our tribal partners and daily review of CDC recommendations, it was clear that in-person programming was not advisable. With safety in mind and protecting Elders and families at the core, we decided to continue the activity kit distribution model established in 2020. With that reality, our goal was to provide the best service we could and improve distribution from the previous year.

We cast a wide net for partner support. Without their commitment, we would not fulfill our mission to support families in communities we serve. With great gratitude, a special thanks goes out to our tribal council partners and 15 local staff members who were integral in the local distribution of nearly 100,000 activity kits and over 35,000 meals served to youth and teens.

Over the summer we were honored to be invited as guests to support two culture camps by offering positive youth development activities as part of their official schedules. This included 10 days with youth and families in Huslia and four days with the Nondalton Tribal Council at Lake Clark National Park. The memories and relationships gained through sharing experiences with members of these communities will be held close to our hearts. They will help guide our programming, staff training and logistic preparations in the future.

We are optimistic and hopeful about a return to in-person programming for summer 2022 but are also prepared to respond if COVID-19 conditions require us to continue with an activity kit distribution model. Our planning has commenced with great enthusiasm and the intention of making next June and July extra special for youth, teens, families and Elders throughout Alaska. See you soon!

Joe Slowinski, Marnie Stewart, Timotheen Charles

Joe Slowinski, Marnie Stewart, and Timotheen Charles

- ▶▶ Continued delivering program in a remote delivery model for safety during the pandemic.
- ▶▶ Focused on hiring local staff in rural communities.
- ▶▶ Nearly **doubled** youth activity kit delivery and more than **tripled** teen activity kits from 2020.
- ▶▶ Added Elder Activity Kits to encourage intergenerational and family connection.
- ▶▶ Invited to participate in culture camps in Huslia and Nondalton in Lake Clark.

Youth Kits

63,560

Teen Kits

11,504

Family Kits

21,780

Elder Kits

3,005

Total Kits: 99,849

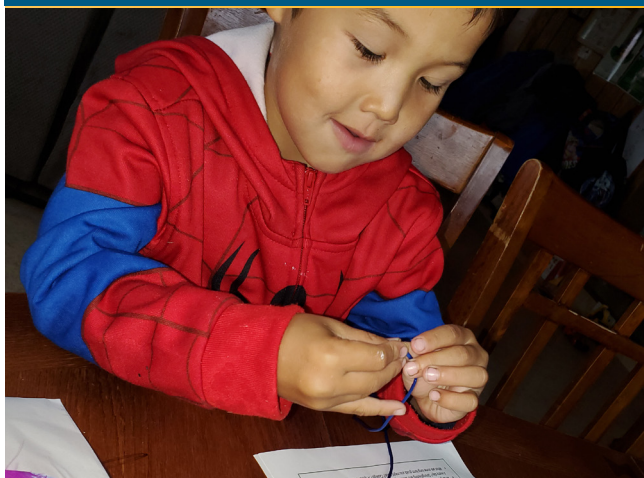


Activities encourage youth to connect with the land around them.



Families enjoy spending time together while completing activities.

OUR STORY



Inspiring creativity is an integral part of our wellness model.



Berry picking is popular with kids and encourages a focus on 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.



Families and the community are very appreciative of the snacks, especially during loss of jobs and fishing, subsistence, and a lot that has affected many during COVID. We thank you all very much.

— Cheryl Joseph, Rural Staff Member

Communities

Akiachak
Akiak
Alakanuk
Aniak
Atmautluak
Chevak
Chuathbaluk
Crooked Creek
Hooper Bay
Huslia
Lower Kalskag
Upper Kalskag
Karluk
Kongiganak
Kotlik
Kwethluk
Kwigillingok
Marshall
Mountain Village
Napakiak
Napaskiak
Nondalton
Pitkas Point
St. Mary's
Tuluksak
Tununak
WhiteMountain



27 Communities

8,533 Lbs of Produce

99, 849 Activity Kits

36,116 Meals*

*Youth and Teen Meals: 35,340

Elder Meal Boxes: 776



The food was extremely beneficial. I received much feedback saying it saved them money - especially with the village store prices.

— Native Village of Hooper Bay



Camp Fire promises to provide safe, fun learning environments for ALL youth to thrive.



Homemade Calming Jar activity allows youth to slow down and reflect on their emotions.



Fresh produce for the whole family!



Making time for self care—enjoying some fun in the water and soaking up the sun.

From healthy recipes to building a gym, most of our activity kits had wellness at the core.

Our activities included:

- ✓ Making super hero shields of self-strengths
- ✓ Positive journaling
- ✓ Creating a stress relief bottle/jar
- ✓ Making a stress ball
- ✓ Sharing a gift of gratitude
- ✓ Developing empathy by seeing someone else's perspective
- ✓ Understanding food labels by being a food detective

And more!



Wellness is a choice practiced every day. Strong Kid activities are fun ways for kids to experience wellness. This year they cooked at home with their families using indigenous ingredients. They enjoyed being physically active every day. They practiced breathing exercises, shared their emotions and found new ways to relieve stress. Playing games with their breath helped them discover their own reasons to stay tobacco free. Wellness is more than numbers on a scale, it actually feels good!

— Luz Smeenck, MS, RD, Community Educator, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Diabetes Program

TRADITIONAL VALUES



Traditional knowledge being shared between Elder and youth.

Each year, we are advised by tribal councils and tribal partners on adding support for Alaska Native cultural activities which bring youth, teens, families and Elders together. We are honored to support and facilitate more traditional activities.

Some recommendations we have received recently include:

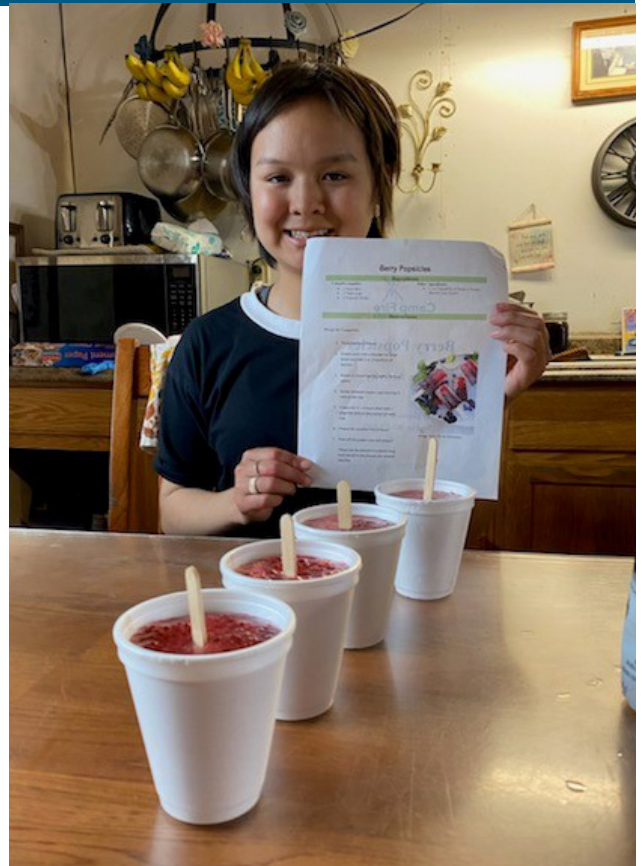
- ✓ Subsistence gathering trips and nature walks with Elders to learn traditional knowledge & lifestyle
- ✓ Yuraqing (dance), making substance tools, and going out to the tundra to teach survival skills to youth
- ✓ Participate in Cuanaq Camp
- ✓ Cultural activities like Eskimo dancing

This summer, two staff members completed a Native Youth Olympics coaching course and we facilitated Native Youth Olympics activities in communities.



Activities that are done with families are one of the highlights that I noticed. Parents working with their children created more togetherness in families in our community

— Community Member



Making popsicles with locally harvested wild berries.



Program activities are designed to bring the entire family together.

CAMP FIRE STAFF



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

Staff Highlights

We would like to thank all of the local hires who helped make summer 2021 a success under difficult conditions. Without their help, we would not have been able to distribute food and activities to community members.

2021 Staff

Akiachak
Shannon Ekamra

Kotlik
Taezah Akaran

Alakanuk
Andrea Joe
Arlene Joseph
Cheryl Joseph

Kwigillingok
Ernestine Martin
Lewis Martin

Aniak
Allison Simeon

Marshall
Becky Short

Atmautluak
Nancy Pavilla

Napaskiak
Jackelyn (Gussy) Steven
Mildred Nicholai
Fannie Evon

Chevak
Savannah Smart
Frances Napoleon

Staff update: Lewis from Kwigillingok returned for his fourth year with Camp Fire and was joined by his mother for a second consecutive year. 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.

“

Thank you very much during this trying time of COVID-19.

— Native Village of Kalskag



Elder food deliveries included items specifically requested.

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. 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 provided Elders with fresh produce, pilot bread, tea, coffee, rice, and other items that they indicated they would appreciate. In addition, responding to recommendations by tribal councils, we added activity kits designed with Elders in mind. These included resources for activities such as making a story knife, beading, skin sewing, upcycled self-portrait, and laughing games.

Historically, we have been honored to host events in communities that facilitate Elders coming together with youth and teens. We provide supplies and food while Elders share their extensive experience and knowledge. We look forward to a return to in-person programming in summer 2022 so we can once again host community events that foster intergenerational connection.

“

I love that the whole family from young to old would benefit from the food and activities your program has sent out.

— Native Village of Hooper Bay Tribal Council

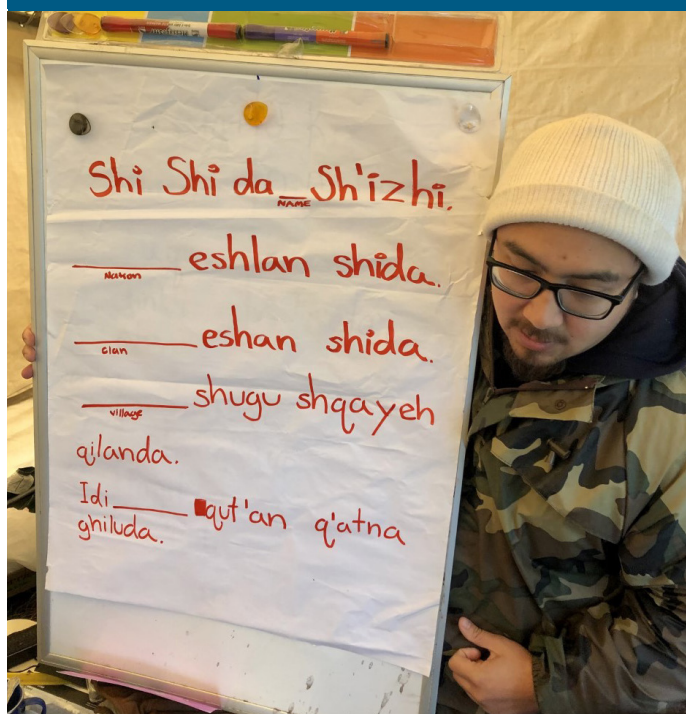


Elder teaching youth traditional frestarting methods.



Elder picking up activities and meals to enjoy at home.

CULTURE CAMP SUPPORT



Learning Dena'ina phrases to introduce yourself.



Teaching cold water and boating safety to youth in Lake Clark.



Teaching youth how to make a traditional summer treat, Akutaq.

Camp Fire Alaska was invited to participate guest facilitators in two culture camps in late summer. With our Rural Leadership team vaccinated, we evaluated evolving CDC recommendations to ensure safety for communities and Elders. We participated in the 10-day Huslia Culture Camp and the 4-Day Lake Clark Culture Camp (Nondalton).

Camp Fire Alaska staff facilitated Native Youth Olympics events, cold water safety training, arts, games, and daily camp activities. Many of the events involved participation from adults, youth, and teens.



The Camp Fire Alaska crew was absolutely instrumental in a successful 2021 Huslia Culture Camp. The structured activities offered each day was on point with the overall health and wellness goal to involve all ages participating in camp. I highly recommend Camp Fire Alaska for any community wanting to see their youth laugh, participate, learn, and compete in a healthy environment. I loved watching kids be kids. This was a time for them to just have fun and forget the stereotype of "I'm too cool" for that. I am ever grateful to the Huslia Tribal Council for having Camp Fire Alaska come to Huslia Culture Camp.

— Cesa Agnes, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Huslia Behavioral Health Aid



2021 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 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.
- ▶▶ ANTHC has been an unwavering support. Luz Smeenk, Dietician and Community Educator, was instrumental in the adaptation of wellness activities and helped us package activity kits at the warehouse. The Health Promotion Department donated wellness and recreation materials to share with communities.
- ▶▶ Air and Land Transport partnered to support shipping logistics, allowing our team to ensure that Camp Fire resources reached youth and communities this season.
- ▶▶ Northrim Bank provided a month of volunteers to help package activity kits for shipment to Rural families.

Thank You!

Air and Land Transport
Alaska Afterschool Network
Alaska Cargo Port/Lynxs Group
Alaska Commercial Company
Alaska Dept. Health and Social Services
Alaska Native Heritage Center
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Alaska Office of Boating Safety
Association of Village Council Presidents
Calista Corporation
Donlin Gold
Doyon, Limited
First Alaskans Institute
Food Bank of Alaska
GCI
Kaladi Brothers Coffee
Lu Young Children's Fund
Meyers Farm
National Civilian Community Corps
Northrim Bank
Pacific Alaska Wholesale
Red Cross of Alaska
RurAL CAP
Taiga Mining Co
United Parcel Service
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation

Join us - Rural Alaska Is Waiting

Thanks to the 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

Melissa Webber, Director of Development
(907) 257-8820 or mwebber@campfireak.org

Bring our program to your community

Joe Slowinski, Rural Program Director
(907) 257-8839 or jslowinski@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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Alaska

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