

2022/2023 Grant Recipients

Total Amount Awarded: \$164,595 Grant

Awards

Statewide

Polynesian Association of Alaska (\$10,000)

Early Childhood Empowering Youth Building Community Resilience

To address prolonged negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as more general issues within the community, the Polynesian Association of Alaska hosts a class called Early Childhood Empowering Youth Building Community Resilience. This is designed to strengthen families and promote healthy relationships between parents and children, while also increasing education and awareness about how child abuse and neglect can be identified and reduced. Grant funding supported this ongoing project, which brought education, skills, support, and resources to eight families from Alaska's Pacific Island community. Parents heard from State leaders and members of local organizations about how best to communicate and engage with their children in a healthy manner. Children were given tools and skills to use in situations where they felt stressed and did not know what to do. Meanwhile, PAOA learned more about its wider community and identified potential signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, as well as common barriers to care which families experience. At its conclusion PAOA was able to host a dinner for the families who completed the course, celebrating their growth and increased ability to identify, prevent, and reduce child abuse and neglect.

Western/Interior

Native Village of Mary's Igloo (\$5,000)

Mary's Igloo Culture Camp

The Native Village of Mary's Igloo is a federally recognized tribal government which provides administrative services and self-governance for the people of Mary's Igloo, who now reside in nearby Teller. Grant funding supported Mary's Igloo Culture Camp, a program which for ten years has brought together children and youth with Elders and local cultural experts. The program is designed to prevent high-risk behaviors such as consumption of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs by giving youth a positive outlet for their time and energy, while empowering them with a sense of place and tradition. Campers, guided by Elders and chaperones, travel upriver to the historic land of Mary's Igloo and camp there for a week, learning traditional values, lifestyles, native language, and skills such as plant harvesting, egg hunting, net fishing, food preparation, and shelter making. Elders speak about history and tell stories about the place and the land, promoting cultural pride and resiliency.

Nome Community Center (\$10,000)

Camp CRAVE 2022

The Nome Community Center provides a wide range of programs, services, and activities to youth, family, and elders in and around Nome. Grant funding supported Camp CRAVE, a summer program which has been held each year since 2013, providing a healthy and safe outlet for youth to learn, grow, and enjoy the outdoors together. Funding helped NCC add specific prevention-focused elements to its camp CRAVE programming including tobacco prevention, alcohol awareness, healthy nutrition, abuse recognition, cultural values, and nature preservation. Youth left camp with lifelong memories, a supportive peer network, a better understanding of healthy life choices, and skills for recognizing, speaking out about, and safely addressing issues in their own lives as well as the lives of others.

Native Village of Afognak (\$10,000)

Family Activities

The Native Village of Afognak is a federally recognized Alutiiq Alaska Native tribal entity, originally located on the island of Afognak and now based in Kodiak. With its grant funding, NVA was able to host six activities designed to promote community resilience by providing families with fun programming, establishing connections and support networks among parents, and teaching traditional cultural practices to younger generations. Activities included trick-or-treating for Halloween, making gingerbread houses, crafting Alutiiq Valentine cards, tide pooling, gardening, and Alutiiq mask painting, with snacks and refreshments as well as prize incentives for participation provided at each gathering. These events offered children and families a safe and interactive environment to develop family and community peer relationships.

Native Village of

Unalakleet (\$5,000)

Strengthening Families

The Native Village of Unalakleet (NVU) is a federally recognized Alaska Native Tribe, located on Norton Sound along the eastern coast of the Bering Sea. With grant funding NVU created Strengthening Families, a project of its Food Bank which aimed to reduce potential at-risk situations for child abuse and neglect by providing concrete service to economically stressed families in times of need, addressing the prohibitively high costs to access food supplementation and infant supplies off the road system. During the grant period, the project distributed supplemental food boxes, infant supply boxes, formula, and diapers to low-income families, foster families, and Elders raising grandchildren. This greatly reduced the financial burden on caregiving in the community.

Railbelt Mental Health and Addictions (\$7,500)

Youth Mental Health Trainings

Railbelt Mental Health and Addictions is a community-based behavioral healthcare provider from Nenana, with a mission of supplying high-quality education, support, outpatient services and continuing care programs for individuals with substance use disorder, mental health, or co-occurring issues. Due to increases in suicide attempts and mental health crises among the region's adolescent population, RMHA identified the need for a program that offers prevention and intervention skills to those who are struggling and those wishing to reach out to them. The organization used grant funding to train individuals in Nenana, Anderson, Healy, and Cantwell in Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) as well as Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR), while collaborating with the Nenana Native Association to schedule trainings for council members, staff, as well as Tribal Court staff and judges. RMHA also trained Nenana City School and Nenana Student Living Center personnel and plans to train more students over the course of the 2023-2024 school year. The program has brought conversations about Suicide and Mental Health to the forefront of the community, providing a safe space for honest discussion about the struggles which youth and adults each face. Community members are now far better equipped to reach out to those experiencing mental health challenges, while adults feel more comfortable discussing suicide with youth and providing them with prevention resources.

Fairbanks Children's Museum (\$7,200)

Baby Mingle at FCM

Baby Mingle, a project of the Fairbanks Children's Museum, was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a series of events which aims to provide a supportive environment to the growing population of infant caregivers in the Fairbanks/North Star region. At each event the museum opens early, free of charge, for caregivers and infants to share a quiet and safe space. Each gathering also hosts a speaker from a different resource agency who offers basic education as well as agency access to all in attendance. Baby Mingle events have given young parents dealing with isolation and stress an outlet to relax in a calm setting and build networks of friendship and support. Tier 1 funding helped Baby Mingle return to the community during the grant period. More military families participated than ever before, and FCM saw evidence that making new connections improved caregivers' quality of life dramatically.

Resource Center for Parents and Children (\$10,000)

Learning Together

Recognizing widespread food insecurity and homelessness in the North Star Borough, and the risks which these factors pose for child maltreatment and abuse, RCPC used grant funding to partner with other local agencies to host presentations and offer Budgeting for Healthy Meals classes that covered infant safety, budgeting for healthy meals, and child nutrition. These were

held in a local high school, as well as in partnership with the Fairbanks Native Association for its clients. Participants learned basic cooking skills as well as healthy, cost-effective recipes and each received an InstaPot as well as donated food to bring home to their families at completion of the course. Funding also helped RCPC support walk-in clients by supplying them with information and applications for resources such as SNAP and WIC.

Southcentral

Native Village of Eyak (\$10,000)

Neurodiverse Support Group

The Native Village of Eyak Traditional Council is a tribal government that promotes self-determination for tribal members of the Native Village of Eyak. Grant funding allowed NVE to create the Neurodiverse Support Group, addressing the need for more and better support faced by families with neurodiverse children in nearby Cordova. NVE found that families with neurodiverse children who live in such an isolated, rural community require a safe space and services catered to their highly specific needs. The Neurodiverse Support Group provided such a space, helping families understand and feel that they are not alone. At meetings, parents were able to share their experiences and struggles while learning different therapeutic techniques from one another, while childcare with an occupational therapist was provided for children, who also enjoyed fun activities such as boardgames and movies with necessary accommodations. As a result of the project, neurodiverse youth benefited from having a safe space to convene each month, while parents and caregivers made connections, expanded their support networks, and became increasingly comfortable reaching out to one another for help or guidance.

Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic (\$10,000)

REC Sexual Health and Wellness Peer Education

Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic is a community-based nonprofit providing sexual and reproductive health services in the southern Kenai Peninsula. Grant funding supported REC Sexual Health and Wellness Peer Education, a program designed to instill resiliency at a young age and protect children from abuse by sharing evidence-based information on anatomy and puberty, reproductive planning and birth control, sexually transmitted infections, healthy relationships and consent, domestic violence and sexual abuse, teen dating violence, sexting and digital abuse, and among other topics. Students in rural and remote public schools, alternative schools, and a local youth detention facility discussed their life goals, practiced communication, learned how to recognize abusive behavior, and received referrals to local and online youth-friendly support and crisis organizations. Each educator also researched, recorded, and produced an episode of the Alaska Teen Query (ATQ) podcast, which has become a resource

for parents and caregivers, acting as a model of and a catalyst for discussing sexual health with teens in developmentally appropriate ways.

Pop Warners Little Scholars Inc (\$10,000)

ACES Informed Youth Sports in Mat-Su

Grant funding supported ACES Informed Youth Sports in Mat-Su, an effort of Alaska South Central Pop Warner Football Association to address high rates of child abuse and ACEs in the Mat-Su valley region. The organization identifies team sports as a structured space which can provide children with primary prevention. This project saw administrators, board members, coaches, and managers of the Mat-Su Seahawks as well as several other local football organizations partner with Thrive Mat-Su and ROCK Mat-Su to complete childhood development, SafeSport, and ACES training, making them better equipped to offer support and recognize potential signs of abuse.

Kids Corp Inc (\$10,000)

A Strong Start for Anchorage Children

Kids' Corps, Inc. provides Head Start, early care, and other learning services to children in and around Anchorage. Grant funding supported KCI's Start Strong training, which teaches parents, educators, and children skills in responsive caregiving for infants, emotional and behavioral support, composure in times of stress, and recognition of protective factors, attachments, and relationships. Attendance of the course reached its highest point during the grant period, from an average of 2-6 parents up to 28, while participants demonstrated substantial growth in their capability to support and advocate for young people. Children demonstrated marked improvement in their Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) scores, while parents were observed to greatly improve their composure, responsiveness, and ability to address situations.

Alaska Literacy Program (\$10,000)

ALP – IMPACT Family Literacy

The Alaska Literacy Program offers literacy services to Anchorage residents and individuals throughout the state through volunteer and staff educators. Grant funding supported IMPACT, ALP's multi-lingual and multi-cultural literacy program for low-income refugee and immigrant families with young children. The preschool program helps children ages 3-5 transition either into kindergarten or specialized preschool. Parents meet twice a week in peer learning circles, attend parent/child book reading sessions, and receive training on how to interact with children in a safe and healthy way. Tier 1 funding helped ALP build its capacity, increasing Family Literacy educator hours from part-time to a full-time salaried position. This new capacity allowed staff to devote 10 hours each week to providing families with direct support around social

determinants of health, including food and housing security, while also helping them navigate the education system. Additionally, increased staff hours allowed the Family Literacy educator to complete ACT's child-abuse prevention training. This vastly improved ALP's ability to promote resilience via trauma-informed education.

NWRA - Alaska Center for Resource Families (\$4,895)

Support Connection Cafe - Foster/Adoptive Parent Support Group

The Alaska Center for Resource Families works in partnership with OCS, Tribes, and other groups involved in foster care and adoption to provide support, information, and training to Alaska's foster, adoptive, relative caretakers, and guardianship families. With its grant funding, ACRF established the Mat Su Community Connections Café, offering local foster and adoptive parents an opportunity to discuss issues while forming connections and widening their community support networks at monthly group meetings. As part of this series of programming, ACRF also hosted free activities for foster and adoptive families including an Easter Egg hunt, ice-skating, a gathering at Pyrah's Pioneer Peak Farm where kids enjoyed rides and took home pumpkins, and a date night for parents. Childcare was provided at no extra cost for events geared specifically towards adults, relieving parents' burden and allowing them to focus on addressing issues while building community together.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Southcentral Alaska (\$10,000)

Gotitas del Saber - Little Drops of Wisdom, Dual Language Early Childhood Education program

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Southcentral Alaska seek to enable all young people, especially those who need assistance most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. With grant funding, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southcentral Alaska created Gotitas Del Saber (Little Drops of Wisdom), a dual language program conducted in English and Spanish designed specifically for toddlers and their caregivers, addressing community need for dual language early education. Toddlers spent time each day engaged in Spanish language activities such as singing songs and listening to stories read aloud, with support designed specifically for native language speakers. Children in this program were visibly excited and engaged in the bilingual classroom, eager to play games, sing songs, and learn new things. Funding for this curriculum has given children access to higher quality materials that were not available before, which in turn has led to more responsive youth and a decrease in linguistic barriers faced by children in and around Anchorage.

Southeast

Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (\$10,000)

Haa Latseen – Strength of Mind Body & Spirit [NYO Games/Fitness Concepts]

The Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is a tribal government representing over 36,000 Tlingit and Haida individuals around the world. With its grant funding, T&H collaborated with Juneau School District and Sealaska Heritage to update Fitness Concepts, a course for high school students. Recognizing that cultural identity has a positive and powerful influence on risk reduction and resilience, the course was updated to teach Indigenous health and wellness practices and healthy lifestyle choices. Overall, seventeen students engaged in activities that developed skills necessary for healthy, active lives and promoted Tribal values and practices; these included traditional games, canoeing, kayaking, dance and drumming, participating in a plants as food and medicine walk, processing subsistence food, and going on a survival hike. In addition, SEARCH presented to students on important topics including diet, exercise, cardiovascular health, sleep, stress, and injury prevention.

Juneau School District (\$10,000)

Juneau Title I Elementary School Social Workers/Family Advocates

Juneau School District supports the diverse range of needs faced by students and their families in and around Juneau. With help from grant funding JSD was able to hire Family Advocates, whose roles includes providing in-school support, family outreach, community information, and referrals to students in need of care and or intervention. Family Advocates were able to support many individuals, referring those struggling with mental health concerns to crisis intervention services for short term care. The project has provided crucial services, addressing the basic needs of at-risk students and thus improving their academic engagement and achievement as they make the difficult adjustment to a post-pandemic educational environment.

Women in Safe Homes (\$10,000)

Summer Camp for Children Exposed to Violence

Women in Safe Homes (WISH) provides services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, City of Ketchikan, and Organized Village of Saxman. Summer Camp for Children Exposed to Violence is a new program which extends an existing school-based counseling program for children and youth who have been the direct or indirect victims of violence, giving them an opportunity to receive care throughout the year.

Sitka Counseling (\$10,000)

Teen Nights

Sitka Counseling provides a variety of outpatient treatment services to assist adults, children, and families with behavioral health issues and substance use disorders. Grant funding supported Teen Nights, a program of events hosted by Sitka Counselling alongside Sitka's Cloud, a teen center serving primarily LGBTQ+ and other at-risk youth. Teen Nights offered safe,

healthy, and free activities for youth ages 13-18 to hang out in a setting where they could connect with one another and interact with safe adults volunteers from various local partner organizations. At these events, participants felt comfortable discussing mental health, coming out, and other important topics. The Teen Nights program provided youth with positive structure, encouraging safe interaction and connection building. Open swims were also offered at a local pool, promoting fun and structured activities while serving as an alternative to risky behaviors like as substance abuse.