



JUNE 2009

THE

NEWSLETTER

Fairbanks Native Association

Ahsogeak to lead Graf Rheeneerhaajii

Perry Ahsogeak has been named the director of Graf Rheeneerhaajii. The program is a treatment center for Alaska Native youth, 12-18 years old. It is housed in a facility located on 80 acres in west Fairbanks. Perry comes to the position after five years managing Ch'eghutsen', an out patient healing program for children, adolescents and their families.

In contrast, Graf Rheeneerhaajii clients live at the facility, having been referred there by health corporations, social workers, juvenile officers, school counselors or family members. It has a capacity of 12 beds.

Graf Rheeneerhaajii (the healing place) is a fully accredited drug and alcohol rehabilitation program. It aims to break the cycle of dependency that is caused by the abuse of these substances. If successful, the residents return to their homes as effective members of their communities.

"I'm eager for the challenge, said Perry. It's a new setting with more responsibility, but I'm looking forward to it.

"My experience and connections within the Native community are a great asset and one I will draw on. But this is primarily a team effort, and I'll work with the staff we've in place.

"As in any transition, there'll be opportunities to look at the program model and assure ourselves that it's the best fit."

Graf's program allows for flexibility given that it accepts clients from around the state. At any one time, the program may include rural and urban clients from Southeast, Arctic Slope, and the Aleutians. The cultural diversity is evi-

9th annual event: 189 students, 34 schools, 60 volunteers JOM basketball engages youthful energy

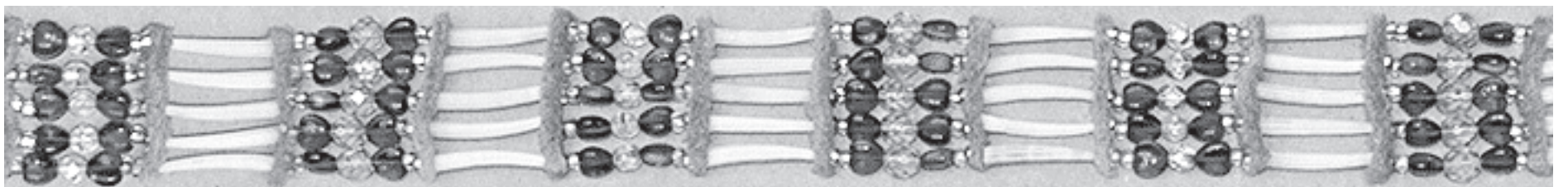


Top to Bottom: JOM staff: (L-R) Theresa O'Brien, Martha White, Linda Woods, and Niki Guthrie; coaches Tracy Snow (R) and Eddie Puryear rally their team during a time out; JOM volunteers Steve Ginnis, FNA's executive director and two of his staff, Maurine McGinty and Doreen Deaton enjoy the games.

When it comes to basketball, the Alaska Native Youth Basketball Tournament offers some of the best play to come across the boards in Fairbanks.

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Ahsogeak moves to Graf - the healing place

dent in the art and crafts that can be seen at the facility.

The emphasis on culturally-sensitive treatment is mirrored in the staff. FNA and Tanana Chiefs operate the facility as a joint venture, sharing funds and personnel to bring the strengths of each to Graf. One of these strengths is a diet and nutrition assessment that helps determine the course of care.

While at Graf, clients have the option of working on a general education degree, a GED. It's a distance-based program, one that gives clients the opportunity to move ahead on several fronts.

There's lots of talking therapy at Graf, this includes one-on-one, in groups and with family. People learn things about drugs and alcohol they never knew. But the program also works around old habits by building new ones. Clients are challenged to develop new social

skills and explore cultural awareness groups. Physical fitness and outdoor activity are important components of the program, and often major parts of the aftercare process.

Perry's connections to the welfare of the youth community don't end with Graf, however. He retains oversight of the downsized Ch'eghutsen' program. (See March 09 FNA newsletter.)

Additionally, Perry sits on a 20-member community-wide steering committee which aims to understand the gang threat in Fairbanks and forward proposals to reduce it. It's called GRAIN: "gang reduction and intervention network".

"This is a problem that deserves a close look, said Perry. Town and cities across the country are following this lead. We need to be involved.

"There are indications that gangs are moving from the Lower 48 to Alaska. The smart thing to do is take a close look."

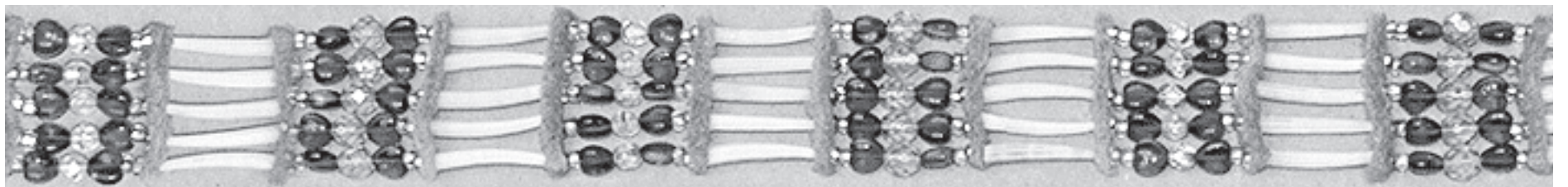
Among GRAIN's committee's members are the military police from both Ft. Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base, the Fairbanks City Police and the city mayor. The committee is looking at evidence that gang activity is eroding the quality of life for the entire community.

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The Healing Place is FNA's residential facility for alcohol and drug abuse by young people



Graf Rheeneerhaanjii is located in a rural setting in west Fairbanks. Intake is on an open basis; the length of treatment is 90 days. Graf accepts clients by referral and recommendation from around the state.



Fairbanks Native Association

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FNA's Mission

We provide our membership and the greater Fairbanks community quality services in a professional manner. These services are provided through special and innovative programs, which preserve the membership's unique lifestyle and culture, while improving the quality of life for the community.

Steve Ginnis, Executive Director
Doreen Deaton, Administrative Director
Duane Hoskins, Director of Finance
Rhonda Howard, Director of Human Resources
Leafy McBride, Senior Grants Specialist
Guy Patterson, BHS Director
Kelly Shanklin, BHS Deputy Director
John Luchansky, Gateway to Recovery Coord.
Perry Ahsogeak, Ch'eghutsen' & Graf Program Dir.
Mary Willey, Head Start Program Director
Angela Foster-Snow, Early Head Start Program Dir.
Shirley Williams, PAT Program Director
Freda Williams, Community Services Program Dir.
Louise Glynn, FASAP Program Director
Linda Woods, Johnson O'Malley Program Director

Resignation leads to new board member

According to Rhonda Joseph, the president of FNA's board, a letter of resignation has been received from Edna Riley. Ms. Riley, who had been reelected to the board at the March 2009 annual meeting, leaves the board with her colleagues thanks for her support of FNA's mission.

As called for in FNA's bylaws, the first alternate will fill the vacant seat for the remainder of its term. Brenda Krupa is welcomed to the board of directors.

Early Head Start construction zone

The Early Head Start building at 609 3rd St., near Hamilton Ave., is being renovated this summer. According to Angela Foster-Snow, the program director, the building needed a number of upgrades in order to meet federal access requirements.

The work is relatively minor, but it re-

CONSTRUCTION ZONE
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Head Start closes out the year Graduates sit still long enough to pose for class pictures



AM 2



PM 2



PM 1



FDB



FDC



AM 1

PHOTO KEY: The Part-Day classes (AM 1, AM 2, PM 1, PM 2) are housed in the Poldine Carlo Building at 320 Second Ave. FDB is the Full Day Barnette Class and is located at 1024 Barnette Ave. FDC is the Full Day Cushman Class and is located at 909 Cushman St.

FNA delivered aid to Yukon River flood victims

Though the ice has now melted and the water has returned to its channel, the Yukon River flood of May 2009 remains a painful presence. For villagers from Eagle to Emmonak, the bright, warm days of June are overshadowed by personal loss and psychological trauma.

The flood drove many people from their homes. In this region, villagers from Eagle, Beaver, Stevens Village and Tanana came to Fairbanks to escape the rising water.

FNA and its employees, along with many volunteers, worked with a collaboration of local and regional organizations to help those most affected. FNA used its fleet of vehicles to

move villagers from the airport to temporary living quarters. FNA kitchens were pressed into service to help feed the evacuees. We also stepped in to help parents by keeping children occupied with recreation and other activities.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church was a focus of relief assistance. It was here that 80-100 people were fed two meals a day during the height of the crisis. Shirley Lee, a former FNA director, was instrumental in coordinating relief efforts, acting as point person for the community response. Organizations that assisted the flood refugees included Doyon, Ltd, the Red Cross, Tanana Chiefs Conference, FEMA and the State of Alaska.

JOM B-ball Continued From Page 1

Held each March to coordinate with spring festival and dog racing, the level of play and sportsmanship demonstrates strong commitment to the program.

The match-up was created in 1999 by Freda Williams, director of community services, and Linda Woods, Johnson O'Malley's director. However, for the past five years or so the b-ball program has relied on JOM for its organizational clout.

Niki Guthrie, JOM's program assistant, has been involved from the beginning and plays a vital role in the tournament's consistent performance.

Today, it has grown to nearly 200 players comprising 20 teams. They are co-ed and are grouped by age.

The majority of students are from Fairbanks, however, students from village schools are invited to participate. Any Alaska Native/Native American children enrolled in a federally recognized tribe are welcome to participate.

Children as young as eight make up a third grade teams; older kids fit into middle and high school categories.

Student/players are assigned to teams and coaches are assigned to teams. Everyone gets a "cold start", but this is accepted by all and everyone seems to have a great time anyway.

This year's event on March 11 went off without a visible hitch. Tanana Middle School in Fairbanks was rented for the event (students were on spring break); volunteers arrived early set up concession stands, ticket booths and first-

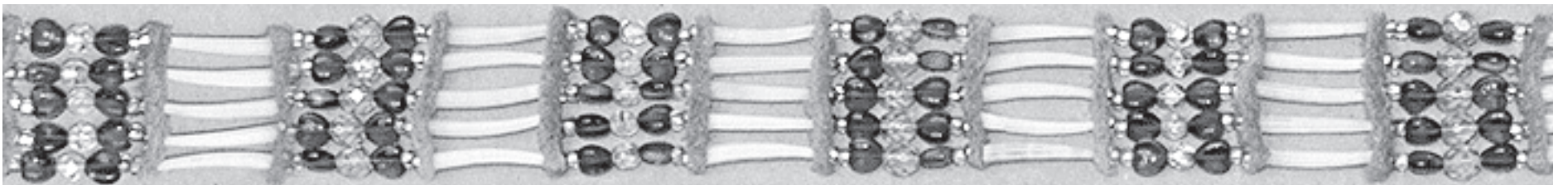
JOM B-ball
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CONSTRUCTION ZONE
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quires multiple bids and that takes time and careful planning. The program is fortunate that the work will be accomplished during summer vacation. In addition to a ramp, expanded doorways and modified bathrooms, the project also has funds to rework the sidewalk and parking lot.

The facility will be closed during the month of August to allow work to proceed. When completed, the building will be more user friendly and an attractive asset to the neighborhood.

FNA's Early Head Start/Head Start programs are tailored for children (from pre-natal to five years). Services are designed for families. To learn more about the upcoming fall term, please call Early Head Start, 451-8814 or Head Start, 456-4989.



Ahsogek

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Foremost in that review is the frequency of drive-by shootings in Fairbanks.

In an effort to collect more information, GRAIN has developed a questionnaire that it plans to distribute to young people in Fairbanks. This tactic will provide one filter through which to analyze the problem.

To learn more about Graf's programs, please phone: (907) 455-4725 Fax: (907) 455-4730. Direct comments about GRAIN to Perry at: 479-0673 x24.

JOM B-ball Continued From Page 3

aide service. Others were on hand to act as scorekeepers and to operate the clock.

The players get jerseys and the games are staffed with certified referees from the local team sports association. Not insignificant expenses, but ones that identify the event for the kids and assures a professional eye and knowledge of the game.

The high school teams take the first tip-off followed by middle-school and elementary games.

Each team has its standouts, with quick moves, fancy steps and a sure eye. But it was the next tier of players that really impressed observers. It was clear that coaches and families had passed on the love of the game. Fearless enthusiasm makes each run down the court, each pass or shot, a testament to the power of example.

Don't miss next year's tournament, if you like clean games played with passion. Linda Woods reminds fans that none of this comes on the cheap. The tournament's budget is \$6,000.

The sponsors are owed a debt of gratitude. Support them: Tozitna, Ltd., Interior Regional Housing Authority, Ron's Service, Denakkanaaga, Wright Air Service, Doyon, Ltd., Youth Sports Bingo of Fairbanks, Fairbanks Youth Sports, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Essentials Hair Salon and the FNA administration.

Board retreat rescheduled

The board of directors retreat originally scheduled in May was delayed on account of the flood emergency. It will now occur Friday-Saturday, August 7-8, at the Westmark.

The agenda calls for review of program goals and performance. As there are new board members, this event will provide introductions all around. Senior staff and the board will analyze FNA's core values in relation to its mission, capacity and funding.

Facilitating the event is Cady Lister, a senior consultant with Information Insights.

The 9th Annual Alaska Native Basketball Tournament

