

# Fairbanks Native Association Highlights

A Voice for the People of Fairbanks

Winter 2020



L-R: A candy boutonniere is pinned to a label. A young woman has a lash applied. Even the toddlers went to the prom. Here is a young boy with his bow tie and suit. A young woman lifts her dress from the floor.



## A safe place for homeless youth

Rebecca Buckles works with young people who sleep in the woods, live in tents or couch surf in other people's homes.

She helps them find housing, learn to manage money and be good parents as part of her job as director of Fairbanks Native Association's Street Outreach and Advocacy Program.

She finds room for fun, though.

This fall Buckles and other FNA staff hosted a Candyland-themed prom for those homeless/at risk young people.

"Years ago, I noticed that kids who got GEDs or finished school online never attended a prom," said Buckles, SOAP's program director and therapist. "We talked about that with the kids and they asked for a prom. We've been doing one ever since."

This year the gym at FNA's Ralph Perdue Center was decorated in confectionary colors of pinks, blues, greens and oranges. Tables had lollipop centerpieces. A DJ, husband of one of the staff, played dance tunes.

But before any dancing began, the young people tucked into a meal of pizza, fruit, chips, dips and drinks.

"We provide a hot meal with our activities," said Caroline Ramos, FNA director of Youth and Young Adult Services. "The kids always appreciate it."

SOAP provides a variety of services to children 10-25 years old who are homeless or currently at risk of becoming homeless. Buckles and staff give SOAP

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Executive Director



# Construction at Poldine Carlo building underway

Construction crews have started renovating the south wing of the Poldine Carlo Building, turning office space into Head Start classrooms.

“This is an important project we have pushed for a long time,” said Steve Ginnis, FNA executive director. “Once finished, we will have more classrooms for Fairbanks families in one location.”

Ginnis thanked the Rasmuson Foundation, Doyon Ltd. and the U.S. Office of Head Start for their contributions to the \$1.5 million price tag on the remodel. FNA contributed \$650,000 from the sale of a Fairbanks property.



*Work on the south wing of the Poldine Carlo Building started last fall. The construction includes five new Head Start classrooms to be completed June 2020.*

The new wing will hold five classrooms for children ages 3-5, a teacher workroom, laundry, Head Start kitchen and offices. The work is expected to be completed by June 2020.

GHEMM Company is the general contractor and Bettisworth North did the design work. Currently workers are adding new support beams, digging trenches for new sewer and water and putting up wall studs.

Eric Fitzgerald, FNA director of property maintenance and contracts, said they'll reuse all current doors and windows to reduce waste.

## How FNA SOAP helps

- 575 food bags were distributed in November,
- School youth get two food bags: one for lunch and one for in the evening.
- 102 bus tokens given
- 324 items of clothing were given out.
- 355 hygiene items
- 67 food boxes, including a Thanksgiving box, were given to our SOAP youth.
- 40 packages of diapers and wipes to our moms.
- Three youth secured housing this month, and seven youth gained employment.

## Prom continued from pg. 1

food boxes, as well as clothes. Some of the youth are parents themselves. Buckles makes sure their little ones have good food, clothing, and diapers, too. She also works as a therapist with the young people, helping them work through problems.

FNA took in the program, after Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption closed in June 2017.

“It was important for us to help those kids who live on the streets of Fairbanks,” said Steve Ginnis, FNA executive director. “We want to give them connections to caring adults and protect them. We provide resources or direct the youth to resources. It’s part of FNA’s mission and values.”

At the prom, young women

## How to help SOAP kids

Contact Rebecca Buckles at 452-6251, ext. 6419 to find out specific needs SOAP may have. Always welcome:

- Hoodies
- Warm winter gear
- Food (call for specifics)
- Holiday items, depending on holiday
- Household items
- Infant/toddler items
- Bus fare
- Hygiene products

couldn't help but daintily lift a satin skirt to walk across the floor in fancy shoes. Young men accepted their peppermint boutonniere for their lapels. Soon the floor was filled with dancers.

“The goal is to create special memories,” Buckles said. “It’s all about the kids.”

# Tribal Home Visiting to start recruiting

Fairbanks Native Association is taking names of those interested in the Tribal Home Visiting Program. THV will honor traditional Alaska Native/American Indian values in creating a system of support for parents. The program will also help families raise children who are safe, healthy, happy and ready for school, all with the aim to reach the child's full potential to be successful in life.

THV is using the Parents as Teachers home visiting program model, with the addition of cultural enhancements that promote Alaska Native/ American Indian culture as a protective factor for the families in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Jennifer Zawislak is THV director. Shirley Holmberg and Shonti Mayo are parent educators. A third parent educator position under recruitment.

The program is open to families with Alaska Native/American Indian children from prenatal to age 5, and reside in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Also, teen parents, regardless of ethnicity, as well as adoptive and foster parents of Alaska Native/American Indian children are also eligible. There are no income requirements.

Parents receive one and half hour weekly or bi-weekly visits with our highly qualified and certified parent educators. There will be two cultural group connections a month, as well as resource networking and parent/child activities that promote school readiness. We will also provide annual developmental, hearing, and vision screenings.

We will have a Parent and Child Resource Library, distribute children's books, and a center based store where participating parents use punch cards to get items such as diapers and developmentally appropriate toys for children 0-5.

Home visits are tentatively to start in February.



## Contact information

Jennifer Zawislak, THV director

Phone: 907-452-1648

Email: [THV@fairbanksnative.org](mailto:THV@fairbanksnative.org)

www: <https://www.fairbanksnative.org/our-services/tribal-home-visiting-thv/>



Make sure you write in your tribal affiliation on the Census 2020.

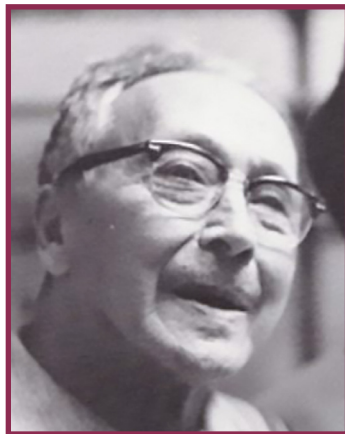
# Dreams of our founders

## Champions of the past set the future for FNA

**Nick Gray** pulled himself from his sickbed to address the first statewide gathering of Alaska Natives held in 1966 in Anchorage.

Gray, an Inupiat, had leukemia, but he felt strongly that Alaska Natives would have to be organized in order to become an important political, economic and social force in Alaska.

The Anchorage meeting was called because Alaska Natives were already feeling pressure as traditional lands were being selected by the State of Alaska under the statehood act. Subsistence hunting and fishing were being threatened with overreaching state and federal regulation. Alaska Native children were being separated from families to attend boarding schools. Jobs for wages were hard to obtain for Alaska Natives.



*Nick Gray, courtesy of Alaskool/Steve Smirnoff.*

Despite all these hardships all the Alaska Native communities had in common, it was their differences that kept them from being unified. Never before had Inupiat, Athabascan, Yup'ik, Aleut, Supiaq, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people banded together. The purpose of the October gathering was to address ways their Native leaders could put aside their differences and come together.

It was Gray who urged them to unite.



*Nick Gray, is fourth from the right, in this undated photo taken at Alaska Native Hospital. Gray was one of FNA's founders.*

“A time has come when we as men—citizens— are ready to assume responsibility that go with citizenship, as well as benefits,” Gray said.

“We want to be able to look at any man, anywhere in the world and say, ‘I am as good a man as you are.’”

Many credit the speech as the major factor that caused the diverse group of Alaska Natives to unite and create the Alaska Federation of Natives.

As a result of that speech, AFN and the Native leadership were able to negotiate at the highest levels the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, said John Shively.

“It was a defining moment for me personally, and I think for others in the room,” said Shively, who went on to become a commissioner for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. “I think that’s a lesson. Even today, the Native community does much better when it works together.”

Gray died at age 65, two weeks after his Anchorage speech.

AFN was Gray's crowning achievement, but he had already helped form four Alaska Native associations in Nome, Fairbanks, Anchorage and Bethel respectively. Of those, only Fairbanks Native Association, which Gray founded with Ralph Perdue, and Bill and Poldine Carlo in 1963, remains.

Fairbanks Native Association now has 261 employees and has a \$24.5 million operating budget providing education, behavioral health, youth and elder advocacy and care. It is one of the longest Alaska Native operating organization in Alaska.

Like AFN, Fairbanks Native Association got its start as a result of the lack of equity for Alaska Natives.

"FNA serves all people now, not just Alaska Natives," said Steve Ginnis, FNA executive director. "That was the purpose behind starting FNA—to find ways to help people."

### **A passionate activist**

Poldine Carlo noticed two things upon her arrival from rural Alaska. Fairbanks seemed really big and bustling and it was hard for Alaska Natives to access that hustle.

The "No Natives Allowed" signs on restaurants and other businesses slowly began to disappear, but the attitude behind was prevalent.

It bothered Poldine and others the way Alaska Native military personnel were treated in Fairbanks. Those enlisted men were expected to give their lives for their country, but couldn't be served in a Fairbanks establishment, Poldine said. There was a need for community support among the Alaska Natives in Fairbanks.

*Founders' dreams continued on page 9*



*Inupiaq Alaska Territorial Guard soldiers performing traditional songs and dances at a Native USO club event at Ladd Army Airfield, now known as Fort Wainwright. Alaska Native service men weren't allowed in many Fairbanks establishments. Photo courtesy of Alaska State Library Historical Collection.*



*The Carlo home where Fairbanks Native Association started. It was a home away from home for many Alaska Natives in Fairbanks during the 1960s.*



*Sharon Hildebrand hugs 97-year old Poldine Carlo. Son Glenn "Manny" Carlo in back.*



*L-R: Sally Hudson and Poldine Carlo organized the first FNA craft sale fundraiser in the early 1960s.*

# We cheered on the athletics of the World Eskimo Indian Olympics last summer



A contestant tries to touch the sealskin ball in the Alaska High Kick.



FNA JOM Cultural Dancers parade into the Carlson Center for WEIO.



A contestant looks to nail his landing in the Blanket Toss competition.



Contestants try their skill in the Ear Pull. It looks easy but can be very painful.

Nick Hanson, known as the Eskimo Ninja, competes in the Two Foot High Kick.



Photos by Shaylene Dublin

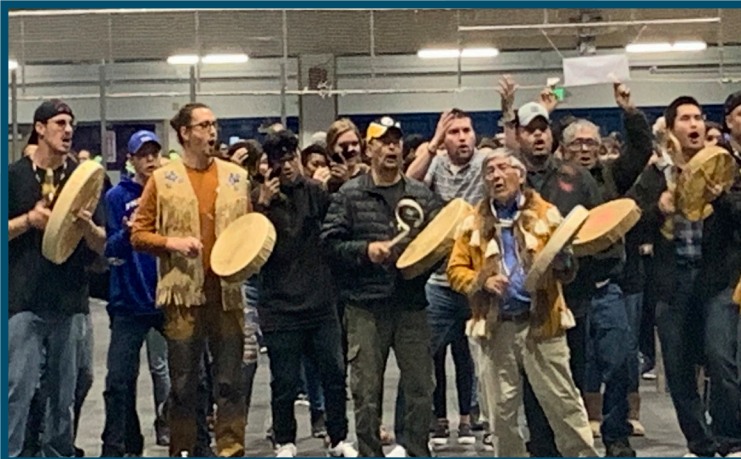
# And welcomed the First Alaskans Institutes Youth and Elders Conference and the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention last fall



All hands in during the "Finding Our Sources of Strength" held by FNA Community Services.



FNA JOM Cultural Dancers read part of Alaska's Constitution at AFN 2019. Photo by Irene Nicholai-Todd.



Portugal. The Man and friends. L-R: Aaron Schutt, Doyon, Ltd. president, John Gourley, PTM; Victor Joseph, Tanana Chiefs Conference president; Zach Carothers, PTM; Steve Ginnis, FNA executive director. Front: Eric Howk, PTM.



Photos by Diana Campbell

Middle left: Singers drum in the moose head soup for the AFN Welcome Potlatch. About 3,000 people attended the free event. Bottom left: It took two moose to feed the potlatch guests. The event was hosted by FNA, Doyon and TCC.

# Rexford finishes nursing certification

William Rexford has completed the Certified Nurse's Assistant at the UAF Community and Technical College, and earned certification as a CNA from the Alaska Board of Nursing.

He is a West Valley High School student and is the first student to finish coursework as part of FNA's Allied Health Pathways Program.

William's high school grades have gone up dramatically during the fall 2019 semester, and many school staff have taken notice.

"William is a dedicated student who asks excellent questions and has good organizational skills," said Amy Gallaway, West Valley High School Global Studies teacher. "It is a joy to work with William because he is intrinsically motivated to learn and succeed."

William's mother, Donna, has noticed positive impacts that the CNA program has had on her son.

"He's had a great year," she said. "The CNA program helped in all areas of his life. It challenges him. He's very methodical. This program has helped him and given him something positive to focus on."

William spoke about his experiences in the program in front of

a large audience during a recent Fairbanks Native Associations all staff quarterly meeting. He spoke with confidence, humor, and intelligence, and received rounds of enthusiastic applause. William has presented extremely well to his peers and instructors in his CNA courses, as well.

In addition to his academic successes, William has been a positive team player from the moment he entered the Allied Health Pathways Program. He introduces himself with a smile and strong handshake, welcomes new



*William Rexford practices taking a blood pressure reading from another student.*

students and their guardians into the program, and has impeccable manners. William is a student who arrives early to meetings, and stays late to help clean up. He's inquisitive and thoughtful, and has strong intuitive skills that will benefit him in any career that he chooses to pursue.

"I am excited about being able to do the things I want to do," William said. "I look forward to working in the medical field in the future and meeting new people. Being in a working environment helps build cognitive skills and builds confidence for the task at hand."



*William Rexford waits to give a presentation to FNA staff about his Allied Health experience.*

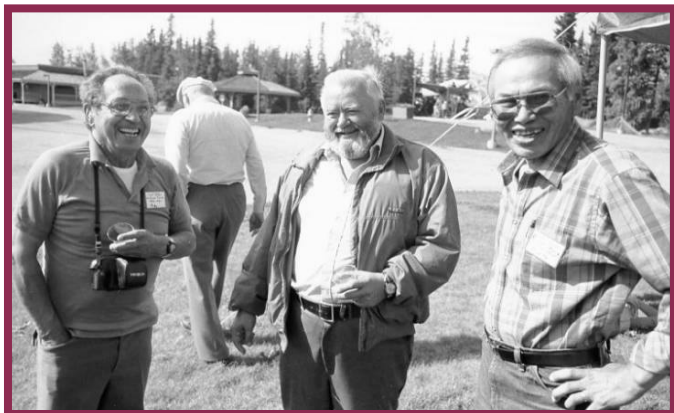


*William Rexford*



# Founders' dreams

*Continued from page 5*



*The men in the photograph are identified, l-r, as Bill Carlo from Ruby and Rampart, Lawrence Wright, and Robert Charlie, of Minto. The men were probably at a reunion for the S.S. Nenana.*

So the Carlos opened their tiny home to Alaska Natives who either visited or moved to Fairbanks. Their home in Aurora subdivision quickly became popular among the Alaska Natives and their house was often full.

“It wasn’t for me,” Poldine said in an FNA video. “It was for the people who used to come to town.”

The Carlo home gatherings became more significant, with lasting historical impact.

The formation of FNA was formally agreed upon at Poldine’s kitchen table. The new organization became a “grass roots civil rights coalition of local Alaska Native community members,” read an Alaska Legislature 2017 memorandum.

“Poldine dedicated her life to FNA’s mission,” Ginnis said. She attended almost every board meeting, membership meeting, and potlatch since FNA began. She offered advice to FNA leadership for 55 years, he said.

Poldine was born in Nulato in 1920 and raised by her grandparents, Joseph and Anna Stickman on the banks of the Yukon River. She lived in Tanana when she caught the attention of Bill Carlo, who worked as a hand on the riverboat Nenana. They married in 1940 and lived in Ruby and then Galena.

The couple had eight children: five sons, William, Jr., Kenny, Walter, Glenn, and Stewart;

and three daughters, Dorothy, Lucy, and Kathleen. They also took in many children giving them a chance to go to school in Fairbanks.

A small woman, her constant smile exuded her vibrant personality. She could comfortably switch back and forth between Denaakk’e Athabascan and English and wrote several Athabascan songs. She was the author of the book “Nulato: An Indian Life on the Yukon.” She received statewide recognition many times for her work.

She died in 2018 at the age of 97.

## **A quiet man**

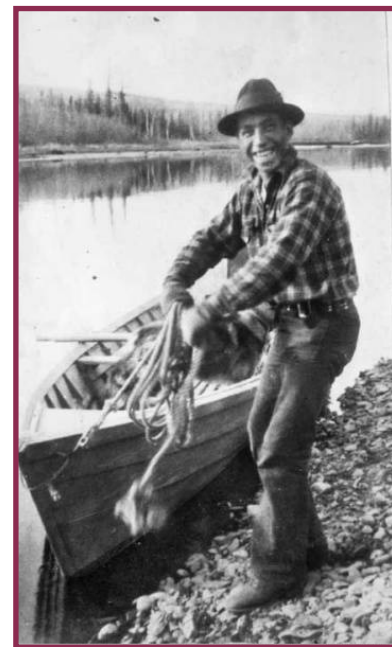
Bill Carlo was a quiet man. His actions spoke for him.

He was born in 1915 in Rampart and grew up in Ruby. His father died when Bill was five and his mother died when he was 15. He never had a formal education, but taught himself everything he wanted to know, from reading to flying airplanes.

He worked as a hunting guide, a miner, trapper, commercial and subsistence fisher, inventor, craftsman, contractor, master mechanic, and about anything he could to support his eight children and wife.

Bill Carlo’s wife Poldine was outgoing and vivacious, but Bill Carlo knew a lot of people.

Glenn “Manny” Carlo remembered his dad won a bid from Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to drive 10 Caterpillar D8 dozers, and 30 Caterpillar scrapers from Bettles to the Prudhoe Bay. The



*Bill Carlo, in his younger years, was known as a successful trapper in the Ruby/Nowitna area. Photo from the University of Alaska Fairbanks archives.*

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# Founders' dreams

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equipment was needed to build the North Slope oilfield infrastructure. He was about 18 and his dad hired him as a driver.

“Dad said he wanted an all Native crew,” Manny said. “The union said, ‘You can’t do that.’ He said watch me.” All the crew was Native, except for the cook.

They did the job in the winter and drove around the clock. They never turned off the equipment and the cook prepared meals in a shack pulled on skids. His father would fly his plane ahead to scout the best routes, Manny said. The trip took 14 days.

“He was so much fun,” Manny said. “He was more like a buddy, not a father. He was a hard worker. He wasn’t big, about 5 foot 5. Tough as nails.”

## A man of two worlds

Ralph Perdue was a man of Western and Athabascan worlds, but his heart belonged to his Athabascan roots.

He used both sides to advocate for Alaska Native rights. Born near Koyukuk in 1929, parents Kokrine and Maltilda Kriska gave 10-year old Ralph to Virginia and Eldridge Perdue to adopt. They wanted the young boy to get a western education.

The Perdues moved to Fairbanks and 17-year old Ralph became interested in jewelry making. He apprenticed with several master jewelers in downtown Fairbanks and finished his education outside.

“To me, there is satisfaction that something is done the way it should be done, whether it’s a piece of jewelry or anything that confronts me,” Perdue told the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner in 1990.

He and his wife Dorothy opened Perdue’s Jewelry in downtown Fairbanks after he finished his courses. He made himself available to local Alaska Natives who needed his help.

He attended a meeting in Tanana where representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs gathered to convince people about

how wonderful life is on a reservation and what beautiful homes they could have. Perdue stewed about what he was hearing for two days. He spoke up on the third day.

He argued so much with the BIA representatives that they asked him to leave.

He refused.

“Who do you represent?” the BIA people asked.

“Fairbanks Native Association,” Perdue replied.

No such organization existed, but when Perdue returned to Fairbanks he decided to do something about it.

“I got to thinking, I better do something,” he told the News-Miner. “I can’t make a liar out of myself.”

Poldine

Carlo, who was Perdue’s cousin, remembered when he came to her to discuss the formation of such an organization. She didn’t think it could happen.

“He said, ‘Yes! There’s you, me, Bill and Nick Gray,’” Carlo said.

FNA’s first meeting was March 29, 1963, and Perdue convened the meeting as the first president. His wife Dorothy was also very active in FNA.

Perdue died in 2003. Their children are Karen Perdue Bettisworth and Mona Perdue Nollner.

“Many people have gone through FNA programs, and some have gone on to be leaders in the state,” Ginnis said. “I think our founders would be happy with what has been accomplished.”



*Ralph Perdue, right, and Jules Wright, look at a map in this Tundra Times photo.*



## The economics of Alaska Native civil rights

Fairbanks Native Association was the first official Alaska Native organization in the Interior when it was founded in 1963. Since then Doyon, Ltd., Tanana Chiefs Conference, Denakkanaaga and Interior Regional Housing have formed, serving the people who live in the heart of Alaska.

The organizations, as well as village corporations, have made a huge impact to the economy of Fairbanks and the Interior. In 2016 an economic impact study by Information Insights showed that 3,775 Interior residents were employed by Alaska Native organizations, with 1,541 in Fairbanks and the rest in villages.

Another 1,418 indirect jobs were created as a result of Interior Alaska Native organizations, for a total impact of 5,193 jobs. This makes them the third highest employer for civilian jobs, behind retail and wholesale trade and health and social services jobs, according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

The jobs paid \$168 million in wages, benefits, and dividends to Interior households in 2016. By comparison, the University of Alaska Fairbanks paid \$167 million for 3,474 faculty and staff in FY2015.

Fairbanks Native Association's current budget is \$24.5 million, currently employs 259 people and 41% are Alaska Native.

*Taken from a study by Information Insights, paid for by FNA, Doyon, TCC, Denakkanaaga and IRHA .*

## New reading advocacy group for children formed

FNA is a founding member of a local group that wants to encourage reading among young Fairbanks children. The new group, called Stars of Gold Readers, is seeking membership in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a national group.

A child's reading ability by third grade is a key predictor of high school graduation and career success, said Daphne Gustafson, FNA Johnson O'Malley director. Since 2017 JOM has been building awareness about this.

"We began engaging a cross-sector of interested individuals," she said. "We want to build a community-wide effort to reach children in our community."

Every year more than 80 % of children from low-income families miss the crucial milestone. The statistics are worse for children of color, according to CGLR.

Peggy Carlson and June Rogers are the new co-leaders of the local group.

Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Fairbanks North Star School District, FNSB Public Libraries, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the Fairbanks Children's Museum, Barnes and Noble, and retired school teachers and principals are also members.

They plan to submit a formal application early this year.



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Email: [info@fairbanksnative.org](mailto:info@fairbanksnative.org)

### Important dates

Jan. 21: Census 2020 begins  
Feb. 5: FNA Board applications due  
March 9-11 JOM Alaska Youth Basketball  
March 13: Annual membership meeting  
March 16-19: TCC Annual Convention  
March 20: FNA offices closed  
March 21: FNA Annual Potlatch

## FNA Employee of the Month



**Alexandria Bucholtz—RPC Intern, March 2019**



**Mary Wiley—HS Site Supervisor, April 2019**



**Alisa Chacon—Receptionist May 2019**



**Marie Kokrine—RA, BHS June 2019**



**Jennifer Pitzke—HS Data Entry, July 2019**



**Daphne Gustafson—JOM Director, August 2019**