



F • N • A

MARCH 2009

NEWSLETTER

Fairbanks Native Association

## Enhanced detox center focuses on chronic inebriation and mental health services Gateway to Recovery opens doors; community welcomes new facility

Allies in the struggle toward sobriety opened an exciting new facility last December. Located near FNA's headquarters, the building houses "Gateway to Recovery". This adult detoxification program replaces the older detox unit in FNA's Ralph Perdue Center.

The building houses a 16-bed unit and is the result of a six-year planning and construction process. The team of leaders who got it underway were convinced there was a better way to treat chronic inebriation in Fairbanks. The result is a program that integrates detoxification with mental health services. It is the only one in the state that offers this integration.

The facility is operated by a partnership of agencies that includes FNA, the Fairbanks Community Behavioral Health Center, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. FNA is operating the Enhanced Detox Center, providing nursing and care coordination.



Guy Patterson

This is clearly the most comprehensive effort Fairbanks has ever made to tackle its public inebriation problem.

Guy Patterson is the director of FNA Behavioral Health Services. He oversees the new detox program and works closely with our managers. Patterson is a cross cultural specialist, and a former teacher in a Bush community in Saskatchewan. In Alaska, he's worked in Kotzebue for the Northwest Arctic School Dis-

FNA membership places new people on board; see story on page 4



At FNA's annual meeting on March 3, the primary activity was the election of three board members. Following speeches by seven candidates, members who turned out voted for their favorites.

trict and in Fairbanks he ran a substance abuse clinic at the local hospital. He's also managed earlier programs at TCC and FNA.

Patterson is optimistic about the Gateway to Recovery program. "It offers a continuum of care that's not found in other detox units," Patterson says. "We include families in our approach, looking closely for opportunities to use their perspective in our therapy."

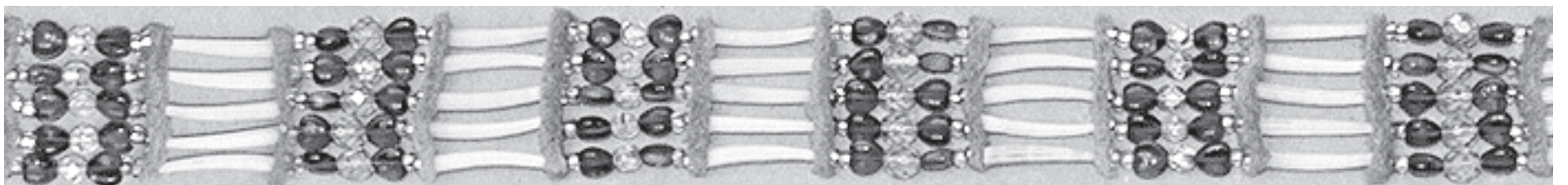
The program employs four full-time adult detox nurses. Cultural specialists are available

24 hours a day. Treatment that's culturally relevant is important because Fairbanks is an anchor for the network of Bush communities that surround it.

"Alcohol and substance abuse is probably the number one issue that we have in Fairbanks," says Patterson. "We're all at risk when you consider that we share the roads with impaired drivers."

Patterson includes nicotine from tobacco

**Gateway Continued Page 2**



## Report to Members

By Steve Ginnis, Executive Director

### Greetings: Alaska Natives and Native Americans living in Fairbanks

It's a pleasure to inaugurate the first issue of a quarterly newsletter that aims to highlight news and events from the Fairbanks Native Association. FNA is a venerable institution in Fairbanks; many people rely on some or many of its services, but many others don't have a full appreciation of FNA's mission, services or how it's governed. I intend to use the newsletter to fill that gap while recruiting new members to the FNA family.

Bringing in new members demonstrates levels of interest that helps sustain grant funding. And as our numbers increase, so does our political footprint. The benefits of active membership cannot be underestimated. Join us today.

I joined FNA last November after a career in Fort Yukon tribal government and management positions at Tanana Chiefs and Interior Regional Housing Authority. At each point along the way, I've tried to use my skills to eliminate waste, optimize functions and make the best use of personnel.

FNA is a social service agency that works to improve the quality of life for the community we serve. After reviewing FNA's programs and its staff, I'm impressed with efforts to educate and inform each other and our members. FNA's staff are dedicated professionals; we are grateful for their investment in this organization.

One of my personal goals is to substantially increase the membership in FNA. Not only do head counts matter, but FNA offers a range of services, especially for children, that are attractive additions in the life of our youth. FNA offers cultural links to village life that many parents value. I encourage you to look at the list of activities and services we provide.

FNA is sustained by state, federal and private grants. While we appreciate our grant partners, competition for funding is keen while the pot of available money is shrinking. I intend to pursue alternative funding sources to help build an unrestricted fund account, a reserve that will give FNA greater flexibility in program creation. One of these alternative ventures recently opened its doors for business. Chena Bingo, located in the former Chena River Convention Center, is a partnership between TCC and FNA.

As we move ahead, I welcome ideas from staff and our membership.

## Gateway Continued From Page 1

in the list of ills that plague society. "The costs of alcohol and tobacco are huge," he says, "there's a significant impact on the community."

The enhanced detox project originally grew out of community meetings among social service managers. Called the Golden Heart Project, the group comprised every organization impacted by chronic inebriation. This includes the Alaska State Troopers, the Fairbanks Police Dept., the Downtown Association and the Fairbanks Correctional Center.

Planning and construction funding for the new center came from the state, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Rasmuson Foundation, the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, the legislature, the Denali Foundation, Doyon and TCC.

Noting the economic problems facing the nation, Patterson says that funding is always at risk. He's hopeful, however, that the commu-

## Gateway Continued On Page 4

### 46th Annual Potlatch Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall Saturday, March 21, 2009

#### Miss FNA Eligibility

Single women  
(never married, no children)  
1/4 Alaska Native or American Indian  
Fairbanks resident (30 days)

Judging will be based on:  
Cultural knowledge  
Public speaking skills  
Personality  
Traditional Native regalia

#### FNA Princess Eligibility

13-17 years of age  
1/4 Alaska Native or American Indian  
Fairbanks resident (30 days)

Judging will be based on:  
Traditional Native regalia

Applications are available at:  
FNA  
605 Hughes, Suite 100  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

## Fairbanks Native Association

605 Hughes Ave.  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Ph: 907-452-1648. Fax: 456-4148  
info@fairbanksnative.org

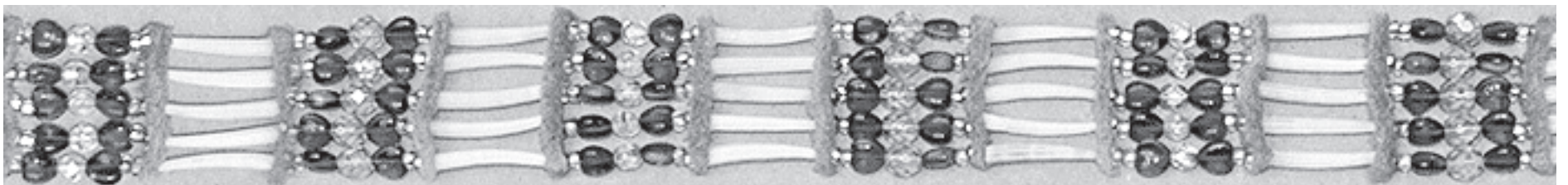
#### FNA's Mission

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  
Shelly Carlson, WCCIH Program Director  
Perry Ahsogak, Ch'eghutsen' Program Director  
Donald Heckert, Graf Program Director  
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



Kimberly Dullen, Miss FNA, made an appearance at the annual meeting and spoke to the audience. Kimberly's Native name is Neegezooos (owl). Her maternal grandparents are Bonnie Thumma, Alatna, and Karl Thumma. She is a volunteer at the FNSB animal shelter, a student at UAF and has plans to attend veterinary school.



**Photo highlights  
FNA board of directors election**



*Longtime FNA member Winnie Atwood prepares to cast her ballot. During the 20-minute voting period, the ballot boxes are supervised by election judges.*



*Kimberly Carlo came to the annual meeting because she knows that the election of board members is a responsibility of membership. The wide-eyed youngster is her two-year-old son, Nations Jordan.*



*Benno Cleveland casts his votes for FNA's board. Cleveland and other veterans opened the meeting by presenting the colors. Standing by are election judges, Allen Todd, left, Doyon, Limited and Jerry Haugeberg, center, Cook & Haugeberg LLC.*

**Ch'eghutsen' slated to close; grant funding ends  
Directors plan transition to scale back services**

Trauma has marked some of the youngest among us; these children's earliest experiences have been so affecting that healing often takes years and the steadfast cooperation of families and communities to achieve. Eleven years ago, a program was created to bring a new level of professional care to these seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) children and their families.

Ch'eghutsen' was formed in 1998 as a partnership between Fairbanks Native Association, Tanana Chiefs Conference and the University of Alaska. TCC and FNA assured that the program followed culturally-based criteria while the university social scientists determined goals and objectives that provided measurements and an evaluation process.

Ch'eghutsen' is an Athabascan word that means unconditional love; Ch'eghutsen' uses this to mean "children are precious". Expressed in language, the value also describes the program's motivations. All children and adolescents need care, guidance and love, no matter if they are severely disturbed.

According to Perry Ahsogeak, Ch'eghutsen's director, the program offers wraparound treatment. "The family and the child, birth to 22 years-old, have the option of choosing the team that creates a plan of care," says Ahsogeak. He points out that the program uses formal and informal resources within a community.

In the act of choosing a team, the family and the child retain a level of autonomy that encourages greater involvement and investment in the outcome.

Therapists know that if treatment is going to be successful, a systems approach is required. Behaviors that harm children and leave lasting emotional damage occur within families and at home. Ch'eghutsen' came into being because local therapists and mental health workers knew that the healing process needed to include each member of the family.

Alaska Native culture is tied to family. An emotionally disturbed child can't be easily separated from the family or the community. Ch'eghutsen's approach provides a full continuum of care within this dynamic. This includes a planning team's analysis of the home environment and recommendations that focus on the child's strengths and needs.

To assure that its clients get the best care possible, relationships were developed with sis-

ter agencies whose services complement or extend Ch'eghutsen's.

Much of what Ch'eghutsen' is about is creating new and positive experiences in the clients it serves. Among these are after-school community events that include Disco Night, Luau, Halloween Carnival and Youth Barbecue.

Last year, 7th Generation, a Canadian Native hip hop group performed in Fairbanks as part of Mental Health Summit day. The group also held a workshop for Ch'eghutsen' youth, one that inspired participants to use music to express themselves.

Ch'eghutsen' is a regional program; travel dollars are a major budget item. Staff regularly take the program to rural villages north and west of Fairbanks. In addition to Nenana, which is on the road system, Ch'eghutsen' flies to Stevens Village, Huslia, Allakaket, Nulato and Koyukuk. In 2008, Ch'eghutsen' served 135 clients and their families.

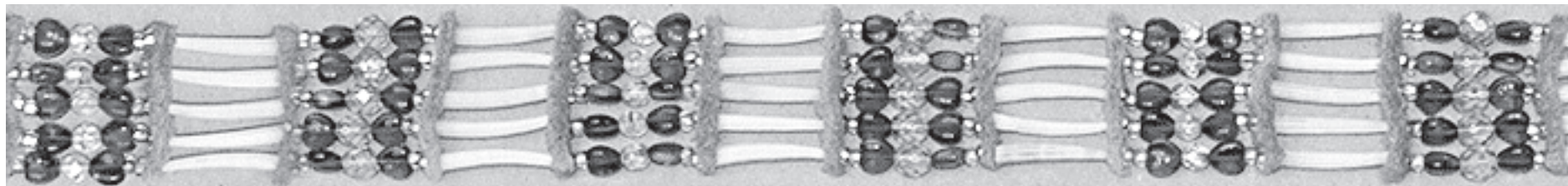
Ch'eghutsen' has developed a reputation for quality care, one that's expressed by clients and other service-providing professionals. However, it doesn't come cheaply. For the last six years, the program's annual \$1 million budget has been funded by a Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration grant.

The SAMHSA grant ends in September 2009. Ch'eghutsen' as we've come to know it will end as well. However, the strongest part of the program will be retained in a form that is being determined now. FNA managers and Ch'eghutsen' staff are planning a transition that will assure that clients are fully informed and have options for continuing care.

Closing down a program that has demanded such emotional investment from its staff is not an easy task. Alternatives structures and reduced program levels were explored by the program's leaders. No one wants to see Ch'eghutsen' dissolve. But there was no combination that coincided with expected and available dollars.

While success is difficult to measure, Ch'eghutsen' challenged FNA and its clients with some of the most innovative treatment plans in the region. Children who were struggling with identity and abuse issues, academic performance and behavior control found a calm refuge in the program. In that calmness, many regained their equilibrium and with it their abil-

**Ch'eghutsen' Continued Page 4**





Old friends, Kenneth Frank of Arctic Village, and Bob Maguire of Fairbanks, were among those who attended FNA's annual meeting.

### Craft Workers reserve your table now

If you wish you sell crafts at Doyon's annual shareholders meeting, please contact Terri Cadzow at 907-459-2030.

The event is scheduled for 9-5 at the Friends Conference Center, 1485 30th Avenue.

### Gateway Continued From Page 2

nity will rally behind the project. He's also looking to the federal stimulus package for a short-term assistance.

With a budget of over \$1 million, Patterson says he's looking to offset direct aid by moving the center to a business model. "Our goal is to begin billing Medicaid for our services; hopefully, we'll have this in place by the end of the year."

### Ch'eghutsen' Continued From Page 3

ity to succeed. Mothers and fathers who were desperate for help discovered trained professionals, people who offer non-judgmental reflections that assist healing.

Ch'eghutsen's contributions also touch the counselors who came up through the program, earning counselors associate degrees in Rural Human Services as part of their work contract. Many of these people remain in the caring professions, building Alaska's social infrastructure. This is one of Ch'eghutsen's legacies, an achievement that increases value in the work force while educating others about mental health and strong families.

## Annual meeting draws supportive crowd with questions Riley, Eddy and Darling elected to board seats

FNA's annual meeting drew about 100 people to the Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall. The March 3 evening gathering included lots of children and many old friends who were seen greeting each other as they pulled off coats and hats.

Board president, Rhonda Joseph, called the meeting to order, established a quorum and introduced FNA's board members. Alex Beckman, an accountant from Mikunda, Cottrell and Co., Inc., the Anchorage firm auditing FNA's books, then presented the financial report.

Beckman said that while FNA continues to run a deficit, the balance is less each year. "FNA is moving in the right direction; under current conditions, we are strengthening our financial position," he said.

Board president, Rhonda Joseph, then introduced Steve Ginnis, the organization's executive director. In her remarks, Joseph said that since arriving Ginnis has "taken the emotional, financial and spiritual temperature of FNA."

Ginnis spoke about FNA's origins. He highlighted FNA's early days in 1967 when a group of neighbors and others came together around Poldine Carlo's kitchen table.

Ginnis, relatively new at FNA, spoke of his efforts to visit and meet with staff at each of FNA's programs and facilities. Acknowledging that FNA's finances need strengthening, Ginnis said he's considering innovative changes in the way FNA bills for its services. "We'll be looking to additional grants and Medicaid to help fill the gaps," he said.

The housing situation in Fairbanks also captured Ginnis's attention. He believes it's time that FNA consider leading a project to build houses for it membership. He told the audience that more information would be released soon.

The executive director went on to say that his management team has communicated FNA's funding priorities to our delegations in Juneau and Washington, D.C.

Noting what some people are calling immigration, Ginnis shared his view that people who are leaving the villages and moving to Fairbanks put additional strain on FNA. Four years ago, FNA's budget was \$15.5 million; today it is \$12.8 million.

"Just on the basis of raw numbers, with more people coming to Fairbanks, it gets

tougher to maintain services when you are flat-funded," Ginnis said. "We need to build revenue."

Ginnis believes that FNA's budget may enjoy a short-term financial boost from the federal stimulus package. Details are not yet ironed out, but Ginnis noted that the Interior Regional Housing Authority received \$2 million from the stimulus funds.

After Mr. Ginnis concluded his remarks, attention turned to the main event: the election of three seats on FNA's nine-member board. Margaret Wilson, a current member, told the audience why she declined to stand for election, citing employment commitments.

Then seven people stepped forward to volunteer time and energy to FNA. They were Edna Riley, a current member of the board, Howard Darling, Karen Eddy, Darlene Herbert, Brenda Krupa, Jerry Sam, and Mike Smith.

Each candidate took a turn at the microphone, sharing their reasons for wanting to help lead the organization. When they concluded, the two election judges, Allen Todd and Jerry Haugeberg, passed out bright green election ballots and the 20-minute voting period started.

While voting was underway and through the counting process, Ginnis answered questions from the floor while board members added additional details.

Jennifer Fate wanted to know more about the financial stimulus package. A parent who relies on Ch'eghutsen' wanted to know if the rumors of closing were true. Linda Evans, the principal of Effie Kokrine Charter School, told of the need to keep student enrollment above 150 in order to avoid budget cuts and the loss of valued teachers. Another speaker called for more Native tutors in Fairbanks schools. Board member Edna Riley alerted the assembly that a school district meeting on culture in the schools was slated for the next evening at Ryan Middle School.

Prior to 8:30 pm, the election results were announced. Edna Riley had retained her seat on the board. Karen Eddy, a former Nulato teacher who describes herself as a "driven woman", was elected. Howard Darling, a former student of Eddy's, also won a seat on the board. Brenda Krupa was elected as first alternate; Mike Smith was elected as the second alternate.

