



Celebrating 50 Years 1965-2015

Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.

Dear Friends of Community Action,

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. This represents an opportunity to reflect on what we have accomplished through our many programs that have engaged and empowered Alaskans. Over the years, RurAL CAP has provided early childhood education, affordable housing, job training, energy efficiency services, subsistence advocacy, and youth development programs helping improve the lives of Alaskans in almost every community of the state.



The promise of community action is to change people's lives, embody the spirit of hope, improve communities, and make Alaska a better place to live. We care about the entire community and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

As we commemorate our 50th anniversary, we are also focused on the opportunities and challenges still facing people in need. Communities continue to struggle with job security, housing, wages not keeping pace with the cost of living and a range of other local challenges. Fifty-one years after President Johnson's declaration of "an unconditional war on poverty in America" we continue our work strengthening families, increasing opportunities for all, and affirming the dignity and value of all people.

Governor William A. Egan spoke at RurAL CAP's first Board meeting August 26, 1965, and said, "You will be personally rewarded as you see the results of your work in the months and years to come." So, as we commemorate RurAL CAP's 50th anniversary, we remain focused on fulfilling our vision of healthy people, sustainable communities and vibrant cultures.

Thank you to the Board of Directors, partners, staff and volunteers who do the work of Community Action every day.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Dailey, President
Board of Directors

David Hardenbergh
Executive Director



CREDITS

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Empowering Alaskans for 50 Years



Board meeting in Kake in 1971

Since 1965, the lives of tens of thousands of Alaskans have been touched and improved by the people and programs of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP). Over the years, Alaskans have spoken about how they or people they know have been helped by affordable child care, nutrition assistance, job training, early learning programs, affordable housing, wellness, and weatherization.

Fifty-one years have passed since President Lyndon B. Johnson first declared a War on Poverty in his State of the Union address on January 8, 1964. Shortly after his State of the Union address, he sent a draft of the Economic Opportunity Act to Congress and on August 20, 1964, President Johnson signed the Act into law, creating Community Action Agencies and other programs such as Job Corps, Medicare, VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and Legal Services. One year and six days (August 26, 1965) after the President signed the Economic Opportunity Act, RurAL CAP held its first Board meeting in Juneau. Ralph Purdue of Fairbanks served as RurAL CAP's first Board President.

Governor William A. Egan addressed the first Board meeting on August 26, 1965 by stating the following, *“Congratulations to all representatives of the various areas and federal, state, and private agencies. This is a big step forward for Alaska. As time goes on, we will all find that as a result of the manner in which you are delving into just how to proceed, a stable program will be set up which will be of value, not only to the particular areas, but to all of the people of Alaska. This and other programs being evolved this year are in bare infancy. They represent what the Native people all over Alaska have dreamed of for many years. The support of the state is behind your efforts, not only 100 percent but 1,000 percent, if there was such a thing as 1,000 percent. I am happy to see such a turnout and conscientiousness in approaching your responsibility. You will be personally rewarded as you see the results of your work in the months and years to come.”*



Jacquelyn Andrews (at left) as a precocious Chevak Head Start student in 1987. Photo by David Hardenbergh
Jacquelyn Kashatok today (at right) with her youngest child, Misty, who is enrolled in the Parents as Teachers program in 2010.
Photo by Angela Gonzalez

Coming Full Circle - From a Child in Head Start to a Policy Council Member

In 1987, David Hardenbergh encountered a striking young girl in a beautiful parka with a smile that could light up a dark winter day. Young Jacquelyn Andrews was as precocious as she was photogenic. The photo adorned the cover of RurAL CAP's first ever annual report.

Jackie graduated from Head Start and went on to live out her childhood in Chevak surrounded by friends and family. In 2003, Jacquelyn was selected to serve as a Member of RurAL CAP's ARCTIC AmeriCorps program. Jacquelyn says, "I never really thought about volunteering, but it really makes a difference." During her year of service, she opened up the library to give teens something to do. Chevak did not have a teen center at the time, and Jacquelyn fixed up the library and opened it every other day. She also organized community clean-ups and volunteered at the Chevak Head Start.

Now married, Jacquelyn Kashatok and her husband have three children who have each participated in RurAL CAP Parents as Teachers or Head Start programs in Chevak. In 2011, she was a parent volunteer at Head Start and was voted in 2011 onto the Regional Parent Committee and also elected to the statewide Child Development Policy Council (CDPC). Comprised primarily of Head Start parents, the CDPC makes important policy, hiring and budget decisions for Head Start programs across the state.

Jacquelyn believes that Head Start makes a positive difference for young children and helps prepare them for kindergarten. As a teacher aide, she saw the difference between those children who attended Head Start and those who did not.

From her days as a Head Start child, to serving as an AmeriCorps Member, to becoming a parent of a Head Start child, and to serving on the Child Development Policy Council, Jacquelyn Kashatok came full circle through RurAL CAP programs. She appreciates the importance of early childhood education and volunteerism. She encourages other parents to participate actively. "I encourage parents to support our Head Start by volunteering and continuing to be involved," she says.

The 1960s



Board meeting in Point Hope in 1968

Soon after President Johnson declared his commitment to ending poverty, Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 which created Community Action Agencies and other programs such as Job Corps, Medicare, VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) and Legal Services. The Alaska State Community Action Program (ASCAP) developed as a result of the Economic Opportunity Act, which stated in part: “It is therefore the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by opening, to everyone, the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity.”

ASCAP initially operated under the auspices of the state Office of Economic Opportunity and separated from the Alaska OEO in 1966, incorporating as a private, nonprofit organization. In 1968, ASCAP changed its name to the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP), the name many people would correlate with Head Start, Weatherization and many other programs that make a positive difference in people’s lives.

Head Start

Since 1965, RurAL CAP has provided Head Start services to more than 30,000 children statewide. Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs serving low-income children and their families. The programs work to ensure children are healthy, thriving in all aspects of development, and that parents understand the needs of their children and how to assist them in their health and development. The agency currently operates programs in 24 communities statewide.

Community Service Corps

The Community Service Corps component of RurAL CAP was designed to involve local populations in the development and implementation of their own anti-poverty programs and to provide a coordinated approach to all efforts for economic improvement in the state. It organized delegate nonprofit regional development corporations and set up regional RurAL CAP action centers. By 1969, it included Bristol Bay Development Corporation, Southwest Regional Development Corporation under the Association of Village Council Presidents, Inupiak Development Corporation, Kikiktugruk Development Corporation, Koyukon Development Corporation, Kodiak Area Community Development Corporation, Upper Yukon Development Corporation, Prince William Sound-Copper Valley Development Corporation, and Southeastern Alaska Community Action Program (SEACAP). Other delegate non-profits, such as the Upper Tanana Development

The 1960s, continued



Old Harbor Head Start

Corporation, joined RurAL CAP. By the late 1970s these organizations began “spinning off” from RurAL CAP. Many formed the basis of today’s non-profit Native associations which provide valuable services to Alaskan Natives are the Target Area Representatives on the RurAL CAP Board.

Surplus Acquisitions Program and VEMP

The Surplus Acquisitions Program, which RurAL CAP developed with U.S. Senator Ernest Gruening, acquired and transported surplus military heavy equipment from the Lower-48 and the orient for use in rural Alaskan projects. The equipment, was used in the Village Equipment Mobilization Program (VEMP) of the early 1970s. VEMP supplied the heavy equipment for village construction projects on a rotating priority basis, making it possible for much needed projects to be completed. The projects included surfacing and leveling runways, road construction, erosion prevention, and hauling materials.

Alaska Village Electric Cooperative

In 1967, members of the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC) approached the ASCAP Board and asked for support and assistance in coordinating their program. A partnership developed between ASCAP and AVEC. In order to bring electricity to villages at affordable rates, AVEC setup power plants across rural Alaska. RurAL CAP provided 26 generators to AVEC through the Surplus Acquisitions Program. No longer associated with RurAL CAP, the cooperative continues to serve today’s village electric needs.

AVTEC

In 1969, RurAL CAP and U.S. Senator Gruening secured funding from the United States Department of Education to create the Seward Skills Center currently known as the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC). In the early days, the Center trained rural Alaskans in the operation, maintenance, and repair of heavy equipment acquired through the Surplus Acquisitions Program. No longer associated with RurAL CAP, today, AVTEC is one of the leading vocational and technical training centers in Alaska.

Alaska Legal Services

RurAL CAP established Alaska Legal Services as a delegate agency in 1967. Finding themselves unable to recruit attorneys from within the state, Alaska Legal Services brought in 12 VISTA volunteer lawyers who worked out of regional and village offices. Alaska Legal Services, Inc. continues to serve legal needs of Alaska’s economically disadvantaged.



Head Start children in Kwethluk learn by watching a movie using a 16mm movie projector in the 1960's. Head Start children in Chevak use a Smartboard for interactive learning today. Photos by RurAL CAP staff

Operation Mainstream

Operation Mainstream, at three-year partnership between RurAL CAP and the U.S. Department of Labor, was designed to provide jobs at a living wage for adults with histories of chronic unemployment. It provided job training and wages to village workers for locally initiated projects. By the time the program ended in 1970, it trained approximately 400 people and completed many statewide projects.

Community Enterprise Development Corporation

The Community Enterprise Development Corporation (CEDC) formed in 1968 from RurAL CAP's earlier Cooperative Enterprise Development Program. CEDC established Alaska Native fishery, consumer, and arts and crafts cooperatives. Five army T-boats acquired through the Surplus Acquisitions Program were used as tenders for CEDC fishery cooperatives. CEDC was so successful that within a year it was self-sustaining and became independent of RurAL CAP. It is now known as Alaska Village Initiatives.

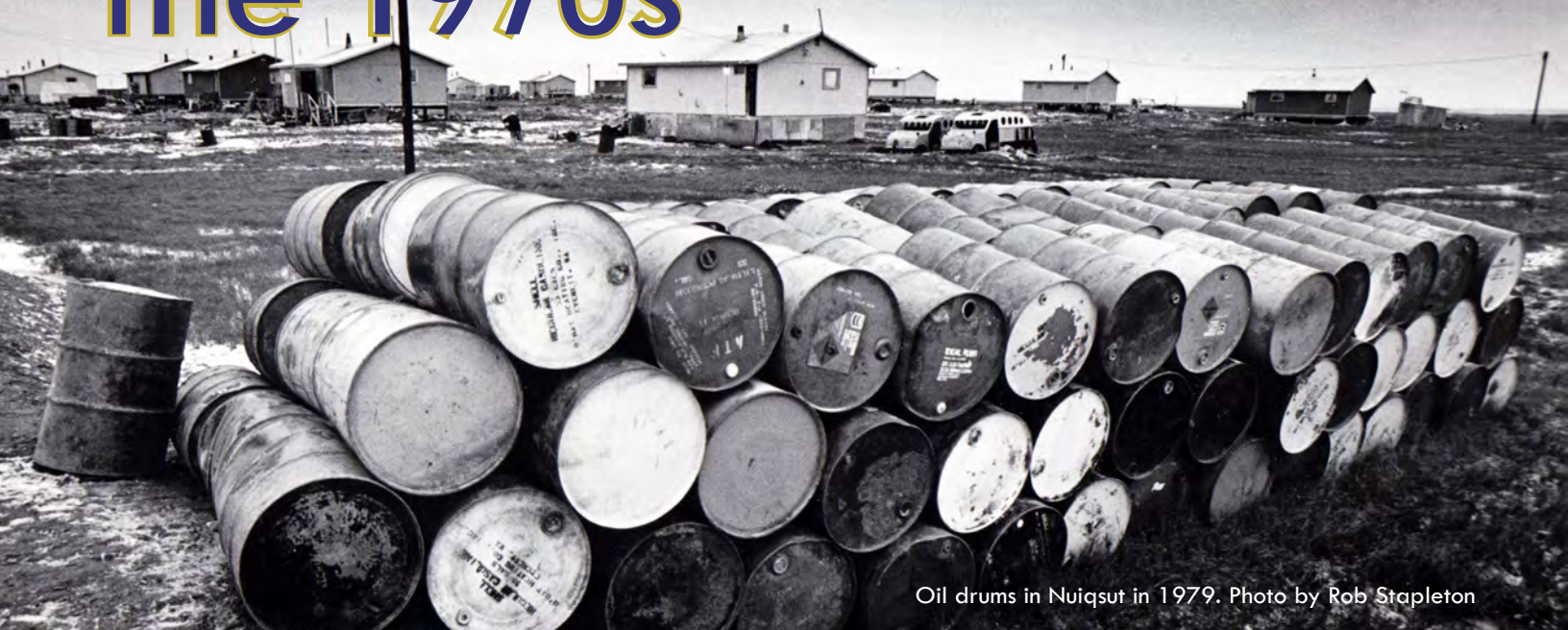
Land Claims

The right to access and use their traditional lands became the catalyst which unified Alaska Natives for the first time. They spoke with one voice – a voice that would force developers and government officials to listen. As a non-profit agency receiving federal funding, RurAL CAP was precluded from engaging in political lobbying activities. However, part of RurAL CAP's mandate was to organize people in rural areas and facilitate their participation in issues that could impact their lives.

Working closely with the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), which held a RurAL CAP Board seat from 1967 to 1987, these groups were able to pressure Congress to pass the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971.

During this period, RurAL CAP undertook a major campaign to secure Native Allotment lands. The Allotment Act of 1906 allocated 160-acre land allotments to individual Eskimos, Indians, and Aleuts that could prove they occupied the land and used it for subsistence purposes – seasonal hunting, trapping, fishing, berry picking. With the passage of ANCSA, the Allotment Act would close. Few Alaska Natives were familiar with the intricacies of the Act and many had not taken advantage of the Act. RurAL CAP helped file approximately 10,000 applications in 1970 and 1971 before the program deadline expired. When up to 9,500 of these allotments were jeopardized in 1973, due to the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management claim that use and occupancy had not been proven, RurAL CAP, AFN, and Alaska Legal Services mounted another campaign to file affidavits witnessing proof of use and occupancy.

The 1970s



Oil drums in Nuiqsut in 1979. Photo by Rob Stapleton

Due to the national energy crisis, rising concerns about alcohol use and focus on subsistence in rural Alaska, RurAL CAP developed several innovative programs to address these issues in the 1970s.

Alcohol Prevention Programs

RurAL CAP knew of and was addressing the alcohol problem before others would admit there was a problem. As early as 1966, the agency was training and educating rural Alaskans on the harmful effects of alcohol through counseling and training workshops and Alcoholics Anonymous activities. By 1969, RurAL CAP had alcohol information centers in seven communities. In 1971, the agency's Alcohol Prevention Program was formally established to provide technical assistance, training, and intervention strategies to help rural communities define and address alcohol problems in ways that worked for them.

RurAL CAP coordinated a counselor trainee program; potential trainees were selected by the regional non-profit corporations and brought in to Anchorage for intensive training under direction of the State Office of Alcoholism, the state Department of Labor and Anchorage Community College. The trained counselors returned to their communities to do personal and family counseling, to make referrals to appropriate agencies when needed and to serve as community resources and leaders. When the Alaska Native Commission on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ANCADA) formed in 1972, RurAL CAP housed the organization until it established its own headquarters in 1974. Ralph Amouak, former RurAL CAP Alcohol Director, became ANCADA's director in 1973.

The Energy Crisis

In the mid-1970s skyrocketing fuel costs caused by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) oil embargo proved to be a severe hardship on cash poor people in rural communities. Phil Smith, then Executive Director, created an Energy Program and secured federal energy funds to develop a revolving fuel loan program and made grants into loans so that rural recipients were able to pay their energy bills. RurAL CAP's Energy Program Director, Mary Stachelrodt, was appointed to Governor Jay Hammond's Rural Energy Task Force, and RurAL CAP entered into a joint fuel data gathering project with the Alaska Energy Office in order to promote future energy legislation. RurAL CAP was also involved in later programs to develop bulk fuel storage facilities in villages to reduce overall transportation costs of fuel shipments.



At left: A Gwich'in Athabascan boy holds a "Save Our Caribou" sign in the 1970s. Photo by RurAL CAP staff

At right: Keisha Joseph uses social media hashtags to support subsistence at the Hunt Fish Share and Vote Rally in Anchorage during AFN in 2015. Photo by Angela Gonzalez

During 1979, the agency conducted Energy Advocacy Workshops, resulting in the creation of the Alaska Regional Energy Association (AREA), with delegate and alternate members representing the 12 Alaskan regions. AREA was formed to address energy problem issues such as fuel transportation, alternative energy resource development, appropriate technology, weatherization needs, and home heating.

Weatherization

Since the mid-1970s, RurAL CAP has weatherized more than 10,000 homes throughout Alaska providing warmer and safer homes to low-income people and saving millions of dollars in fuel costs. Weatherization remains one of RurAL CAP's most cost-effective and appreciated programs. It provides weatherization improvements free of charge to qualifying, low-income people. RurAL CAP identifies eligible homes, hires and supervises local labor, and provides insulation, new doors and windows, high-efficiency heaters, other energy-saving features, and smoke detectors. Utilizing Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's energy rating program, AK Warm, homeowners experience reductions up to 50% in heating costs after Enhanced Weatherization services. With adequately insulated homes, people can save as much as \$300 to \$500 per month on heating fuel costs, which is a considerable savings in communities where unemployment is high.

Subsistence

Closely tied to land claims and other economic and poverty issues, Native subsistence rights emerged as one of the agency's top priorities during the 1970s. As more people moved to the state, with the production of oil, there occurred a simultaneous increase in competition for resources. The Marine Mammals Protection Act of 1972 included a provision to protect the right of Alaska Native people to continue harvesting marine mammals. RurAL CAP began to advocate for Alaska Native subsistence rights. The agency sponsored statewide government hearings, policy planning meetings, and subsistence conferences, and kept people informed of issues and developments through newspaper and newsletter articles and through testimony before government bodies. In 1977, the RurAL CAP Board identified subsistence as its number-one priority. At a Board meeting in Copper Center, the Board of Directors adopted a resolution that contained the elements of what would become Title VIII of ANILCA. The agency's Subsistence Advocacy Program formally began in 1978.

The 1980s



Chief Andrew Isaac
at the Rural Providers'
Conference in Tyonek
in 1985.

In the early 1980s, the organizational structure and programs at RurAL CAP developed into a core agency with four divisions representing the major concerns for rural Alaska. They included early childhood education, alcohol and substance abuse prevention, energy efficiency, and natural resources protection.

In 1980, RurAL CAP's Alcohol Program was reorganized to include two basic programs: the Counseling Program, which spun off to the regional corporations in 1981, and the Community Action Education Project. The Community Action Education Project sponsored statewide workshops for village alcohol and drug abuse counselors. In 1981, with funding from the State Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SOADA), the project created the Alaska Village Alcohol Information League (AVAIL), which maintained a statewide network of mutual support for villagers concerned with alcohol and other drug abuse. AVAIL spun off from RurAL CAP in 1984, but continued to work closely with RurAL CAP's Alcohol Program.

The first Rural Providers' Conference (RPC) was held in 1984, sponsored and planned by AVAIL, supported by SOADA, and coordinated by RurAL CAP. This annual Gathering of rural Alaskan providers of counseling and prevention services provides a forum to share information, gain skills, and participate in training to address substance abuse in specific, culturally significant ways. The conference is planned by village participants and co-sponsored by RurAL CAP.

Energy

RurAL CAP identified energy as the most critical economic problem in 1980. The Emergency Fuel Loan Program expanded that year with a \$1.5 million state appropriation, and the Energy Department worked with the Alaska Public Utilities Commission on the Power Production Cost Assistance Program. The department also started the Crisis Intervention Training Program and the Village Energy Reconnaissance & Conservation Program in the early 1980s. The Energy Department's goals by the mid-1980s were to help rural Alaskans find the best possible energy resources and the best way to use energy resources, to work toward low energy use, and to increase energy self-sufficiency. RurAL CAP advocated for rural energy needs by working closely with government energy programs and agencies, often sending proposals supporting new rural energy programs to these agencies and the legislature. The Energy Department also sponsored village Do-It-Yourself Energy Fairs and statewide Rural Energy Conferences in 1988 and 1989, and continued its energy research and data gathering activities. In the late 1980s, the agency emerged as a strong supporter of high efficiency heaters which cut fuel oil use by one third or more, depending upon the condition of the home.



Rural Energy Enterprises is the exclusive distributor of Toyostove heaters in Alaska, the northwest United States and western Canada.

Rural Energy Enterprises

The energy crisis, and need for high-efficiency heaters, led to RurAL CAP's first leap into economic development opportunities. As a result, Rural Energy Enterprises (REE) began in 1987 after receiving a federal grant to evaluate the feasibility of engaging in energy-related for-profit activity. REE, a wholly owned subsidiary of RurAL CAP, is a wholesale distributor of energy efficient products such as the Toyostove and NordicStove. REE maintains business relationships with 230 small entrepreneur dealerships in rural Alaska creating economic opportunities in many remote villages. In 2014, REE had gross sales of \$9 million with 86.5% of the total sales from Alaska.

Natural Resources Protection

When the Subsistence Advocacy Program began operations in 1978, D-2 lands legislation, pursuant to provisions of subsection 17(d)(2) of ANCSA, this was RurAL CAP's number-one priority. The agency maintained a full-time liaison in Washington, D.C. and coordinated communication between national conservation groups and the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), the Alaska Natives Foundation (ANF), and regional Alaska Native corporations. Rather than try to lead the Native subsistence priority effort, RurAL CAP's role, continually, has been to advocate, inform, and provide technical, staff, and organizational assistance to relevant Native subsistence organizations, so that people most affected have the opportunity to participate themselves.

The agency worked on issues including the Migratory Birds Treaty, the Marine Mammals Protection Act, and the Porcupine Caribou Herd treaty negotiations between the U.S. and Canada. RurAL CAP began organizing and supporting subsistence groups such as the Rural Alaska Resources Association (RARA) in 1979. At the time, the Subsistence Department's focus was to monitor laws and regulations in regard to the Alaska Native subsistence priority. RARA was formed to serve as a statewide informational network, to enable rural Alaskans to participate in decision-making, and to provide a framework for education, legislation, administrative and regulatory actions for the benefit of rural subsistence users.

The 1990s



Lindsay Church and her son, Aiden, participated in the Parents as Teachers program in Homer.

The 1990s brought a period of growth to RurAL CAP's community and child development programs. RurAL CAP introduced several national community service programs to rural Alaska, began providing direct services to the most difficult homeless population in Anchorage, and started two nationally recognized child and parent development programs.

Community Service

Continuing a tradition that began in Alaska in the 1960s with the VISTA volunteer programs, RurAL CAP became one of three Alaskan agencies in 1994 to sponsor AmeriCorps, a new national community service program. RurAL CAP has since created several AmeriCorps programs and a VISTA program that provide direct services to rural Alaskans in the areas of wellness, public safety, and the environment.

The Child Development AmeriCorps program, started in 1994 as RurAL CAP's original AmeriCorps program, later came to be known as the ARCTIC Program (Addressing Rural Challenges Through Intergenerational Cooperation). It served as a way for local people to address the child development needs identified by their communities. Although no longer in existence, the ARCTIC AmeriCorps program made a positive difference in the lives of hundreds of Alaskans.

Originally started by the US EPA, the Alaska EPA AmeriCorps program came to RurAL CAP in 1996 and was called the Rural Alaska Village Environmental Network Youth Development AmeriCorps Program (RAVEN YDA). The members served their communities by improving solid waste management, sanitation, energy conservation, and other local environmental issues through community-based education and direct service activities.

In 2004, RurAL CAP began the BIRCH (Building Initiatives in Rural Community Health) AmeriCorps Program. Drawing upon the unique cultures and lifestyles of rural Alaskans, BIRCH AmeriCorps members supported community members, youth, elders, families and communities in building local solutions to local health and wellness issues. While the focus of AmeriCorps is to recruit local members who work closely with community residents to determine community priorities, the BIRCH and RAVEN programs have now been replaced by the Resilient Alaska Youth program. These new members, ages 12-18, will engage in skill-building activities that promote wellness and strengthen culture.



Paul Mohamad was one of the first residents of Homeward Bound who has maintained self-sufficiency upon overcoming alcohol abuse and the underlying symptoms. Photos by Angela Gonzalez

Wellness

The Emmonak Preschool Intervention Project began in 1991 as a five-year demonstration project funded through the federal Office of Substance Abuse Prevention. Through a cooperative effort between the people of Emmonak and RurAL CAP's Alcohol Prevention and Child Development departments, the project developed a vision of health based on the "Spirit of the Family" model. RurAL CAP's Early Decisions Project developed and distributed individual Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention tools for use by FAS/FASD service providers, health care providers and schools. The goal was to educate young women about the risks of alcohol to an unborn child.

Homeward Bound

Homeward Bound is a community reintegration program targeting homeless chronic alcoholics. With a 25 bed transitional living program and dedicated staff, Homeward Bound provides chronic homeless alcoholics with the tools and resources needed to move from decades of homelessness to stable, meaningful, and personally satisfying reintegration into the community. Due to a national funding trend towards permanent supportive housing versus transitional housing, Homeward Bound will convert to permanent supportive housing in a new 20-unit facility on Third Avenue in Anchorage.

Parents as Teachers

Started in 1999, Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an early childhood parent education and family support program designed to empower parents to give their children the best possible start in life. Home visits and group socializations are offered to families throughout the state. The PAT program supports all children so that they will learn, grow and develop to realize their full potential. In 2014, PAT served 457 children in 16 communities.

Child Development Center

RurAL CAP's Child Development Center opened its doors in 1995 in an effort to provide high-quality, full-day, year-round childcare for Anchorage area families. The Center offered care for 60 children ages 18 months to 10 years old. The Center also served as a training grounds by providing parents with early childhood development education and furthering the knowledge of the employees who work as day care providers.

The 2000s



Self-Help homeowners, like Leilani Quesnal, work an average of 30 hours per week on building their own homes in Soldotna. Photo by Mi'shell French

Home to four divisions, over \$40 million in expenditures and 750 employees, RurAL CAP grew to become one of the most diverse and largest non-profits in the state. RurAL CAP's annual budget doubled over the 2000s from \$16 to \$35 million. In 2009, RurAL CAP had a total of 859 employees.

Head Start Facilities

Undertaking some of the largest construction projects in RurAL CAP's history, children and families in Chevak, Ketchikan, Marshall, Hooper Bay, Kwethluk, Haines, Pilot Station, Nunapitchuk, Toksook Bay and Savoonga received new Head Start facilities. Additions were also made to the Napaskiak, Akiak and Kluti-Kaah centers. As RurAL CAP's Head Start program neared 35 years old, it became apparent that many of the Head Start facilities were showing their age.

Energy and Environment

Responding to the continued high cost of energy in rural Alaska, Energy Wise was launched. Funding for the program was provided by the AARA and NANA Regional Corporation. The program was implemented in 2009, reduced residential energy costs and provided training and jobs for rural Alaskans.

Solid Waste Management

In 2005, RurAL CAP became a partner with the Denali Commission in fostering local self-determination through community planning by providing a staff liaison to the Commission. The Denali Commission is an independent federal agency designed to provide critical utilities, infrastructure and economic support throughout Alaska.

In 2009, RurAL CAP administered several solid waste management projects for the Denali Commission and several Community Environmental Demonstration projects for the EPA. Communities purchased burn units to help eliminate trash buildup in the landfills while other communities purchased bulldozers to clean up trash. A new partnership developed with the Yukon-Kuskokwim Coastal Association and RurAL CAP in 2013 that works with communities to address solid waste management priorities in Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta communities. The goal of this program is to protect the Yukon Kuskokwim watershed and coastal areas by improving solid waste management infrastructure.



At left: Cleaning up sea debris in St. Paul.

At right: Through RurAL CAP's RAVEN program, Ariel Lestenkof-Andrew, Tammy Papp and Annette Andrew of Marshall, led by AmeriCorps Member, Danette Myers (second from left), facilitated the collection of 15 tons of solid waste, most of which was recycled and staged for backhaul. Photo by Charlie Ess

Affordable Housing and the Cost of Homelessness

In Anchorage, the need for housing far exceeds what is available, especially for low-income, disabled individuals and families. With a significantly low vacancy rate and a high cost of living, the city has an alarming number of individuals in need of a home. Life on the streets is a costly proposition. For individuals, homelessness exposes them to more violence and poor health and for society, the economic impact is enormous. For these reasons, RurAL CAP has provided affordable and permanent supportive housing since 2000. The Affordable Housing Program provides rental apartments to individuals with limited credit and rental history. The Affordable Housing program requires a person's ability to pay rent, to care for an apartment and be a good neighbor as prerequisites for tenancy. There are currently 58 units of Affordable Housing in Anchorage.

Self Help Housing

The Self-Help Housing program provides first time home buyers an opportunity for affordable home ownership with no down payment and mortgage payments often times less than many households pay in rent. RurAL CAP established its Self-Help Housing program in 2004. The Self-Help Housing program is a partnership between RurAL CAP and the US Department of Agriculture-Rural Development and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Home Ownership Development Program.

The 2010s



Savoonga Head Start boys. Photo by Angela Gonzalez

Head Start, Weatherization, AmeriCorps and Supportive Housing continue to be the largest programs. The agency saw tremendous growth from US government stimulus funds and weatherization funds from the State of Alaska. The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided access to new revenue to RurAL CAP. In 2014, the agency operated on \$42.9 million, which included \$33.9 million for nonprofit services and \$9 million for REE. The agency is leveling back down to pre-stimulus and weatherization funds budget levels. In 2013, the agency purchased the central office building in Anchorage.

Technology

During 2013, internet bandwidth increased in 13 rural Head Start centers as a result of GCI's TERRA Project. The project developed a land-based fiber optic and microwave network that provides high speed data service to the communities in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region. It provided better communication with Anchorage staff and stable video conferencing. Computer and audio equipment was installed in 14 Head Start sites to enable live web streaming from the classroom into the central office in Anchorage. This technology allows a real-time connection with classrooms for observations and appropriate follow-up and guidance with rural site staff.

New Child Development Center

A new Child Development Center in Anchorage was purchased in 2012. The Center provides full-day, year-round care for children between ages 19 months to five years. A Head Start classroom was recently added. The 8,000 square foot facility allowed RurAL CAP to expand child care services in the Anchorage community. The Center has an open enrollment policy with a sliding tuition scale to benefit low-income families.

Weatherization

Alaska's housing needs are significant. According to the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation 2014 Housing Assessment, more than 15,000 homes are overcrowded and nearly 20,000 homes use large amounts of energy. While the specific causes of overcrowding, high housing costs and substandard homes are often intertwined and location specific, energy efficiency retrofits and housing affordability programs can help alleviate these challenges. In 2011, RurAL CAP began managing the Municipality of Anchorage Weatherization program boosting the number of weatherized homes. Between 2012 and 2013, 2,378 homes were weatherized statewide.



At left: Elder Margie Bell visits children at the Hooper Bay Head Start. Elder Mentors offer the intergenerational relationships that are important to healthy child development. Left-right: Steven Rivers, Dennis Hill II, Margie Bell, Raelena Active and Dora Bokowski. Photo by Cathie Clements

At right: AmeriCorps Member Theresa Lord (at right) supports teens in a team building exercise at the Nenana Spirit Camp.

Youth Wellness

In 2011, the Growing Up Tobacco Free (GUTF) project was formed to create a healthier environment for Head Start children in 23 Head Start communities by promoting tobacco cessation through education, awareness of risks and encouragement of becoming healthy, tobacco-free role models. RurAL CAP received funding in 2012 from the Alaska Department of Juvenile Justice to provide small grants to implement cultural activities and youth leadership to benefit Alaska Native youth. The Alaska Native Youth Success Resource Basket is providing training, technical assistance and support to Alaska Native tribes to increase youth success and reduce juvenile delinquency. The Elder Mentor Program was launched in 2014 to help improve children's success. Mentors provide one-on-one help with school work, model social and cultural values, and offer emotional support to children. The services are provided through the national Foster Grandparent Senior Corps Program.

Supportive Housing

The Supportive Housing Program is an innovative and proven solution to some of communities' toughest problems. It combines affordable housing with services that help people who face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy and dignity. Karluk Manor was the inaugural Housing First facility in Alaska and opened in December 2011. It serves 46 individuals who experience homelessness, serious mental illness, substance use disorder and chronic medical problems.

Safe Harbor in Anchorage provides transitional housing for homeless families and children with the goal of moving them to permanent housing within six months of entry. Currently, 50 transitional housing units are available. Adjacent to Safe Harbor, RurAL CAP is building 23 units of permanent housing with onsite child care, a common area for residents, staff office space, a playground with picnic settings, and landscaping incorporated into the design.

Sitka Place in Anchorage provides 56 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals experiencing mental and physical disabilities. The program helps individuals move to economic independence by addressing the frequent interrelated problems of homelessness, substance abuse and addiction, and mental illness, and increases access to affordable housing for low-income individuals. There are currently 176 units of Permanent Supportive Housing in Anchorage with 23 more units pending.

Leadership

2015 RurAL CAP Board of Directors

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Target Area Representatives
Jacqueline Dailey, Alaska Native Brotherhood
Zenia Borenin, Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association
Christina Changsak, Assoc. of Village Council Presidents, Inc.
Ted Angasan, Bristol Bay Native Association
Marvin Adams, Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida
Indian Tribes of Alaska
Andrea Knowles, Child Development Policy Council
Mark Hoover, Chugachmiut
Tonilee Jackson, Copper River Native Association
Steve Longley, Kawerak, Inc.
Margaret Roberts, Kodiak Area Native Association
Percy Ballot, Maniilaq Association
Nancy James, Tanana Chiefs Conference

Private Sector Representatives

Nikole Nelson, Alaska Legal Services Corporation
Betty Svensson, Alaska Municipal League
Myrna Torgramsen, Alaska Village Initiatives
Matthew Anderson, First National Bank

Public Representatives

Representative Sam Kito III, Alaska Bush Caucus
Leslie Shallcross, Alaska Cooperative Extension Service
Vacant, Alaska Dept. of Education & Early Dev.
Moses Pavilla, Atmautluak Traditional Council
Gerad Godfrey, Governor / Lt. Governor of Alaska
Steve Morris, Municipality of Anchorage
Doreen Leavitt, North Slope Borough
Dr. Jeane Breinig, University of Alaska

Past Presidents of the RurAL CAP Board of Directors

Ralph Perdue 1965 - 1966
Dan Lisbourne 1966 - 1967
Marlene Johnson 1967 - 1970
Elmer Armstrong 1970 - 1974
Gordon Jackson 1974 - 1983
Andrew Ebona 1983-1984
Gordon Jackson 1984 - 1988
Ben Nageak 1988 - 1993
Myra Olsen 1993
Dewey Skan 1993 - 1997
Al Ketzler, Sr. 1997 - 1998
Dewey Skan 1998 - 1999
Donne Fleagle 1999 - 2003
Andrew Ebona 2003 - 2004
Mike Williams 2004 - 2005
Andrew Ebona 2006 - 2013
Harold Houston 2013 - 2014
Jacqueline Dailey 2014 - present

Past RurAL CAP Executive Directors

Al Fothergill 1965 - 1966
Flore Lekanof 1966 - 1967
Larry Brayton 1967 - 1969
Byron Mallott 1969 - 1970
John Shively 1971 - 1972
Mike Harper 1972 - 1975
Phil Smith 1975 - 1981
Jim Ayers 1981 - 1982
Bob Lohr 1982 - 1986
Jeanine Kennedy 1986 - 2004
David Hardenbergh 2004 - present



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