On Saturday, November 5, 2016, more than 130 guests gathered at the Hilton Downtown Anchorage for our Annual Gala. This year our theme was “Celebrating the Spirit of the Elder.”

While dinner was being served, the Anchorage Unangax̂ Dance Group delivered a standing ovation performance! The group is led by Ethan Petticrew. Ethan and Ed Bourgeois provided some exhilarating laugh-out-loud entertainment for the Paddle Raise Party with a skit called Tugidam Uhngii—Moon’s Sister which raised over $6,000!

This year, our generous donors provided 38 live auction items! Items donated included: a 3-foot Aleutian style kayak model made and donated by Desirae Roehl, who learned how to construct under the guidance of Teresa Smith at the Urban Unangax̂ Culture Camp; St. Paul Island Birding Tour, courtesy of Tanadgusix Corporation; Silver Tlingit Bracelet by Jennifer Younger of the Eagle Clan; Full Crown Chief’s Hat hand carved and painted by O. Patricia Lekanoff-Gregory; Fat Tire Bike with contributions from Aleutian Housing Authority and Dr. Gary Ferguson; Open-Crowned Visor adorned with a mask carving made of Killer Whale jaw bone and Walrus ivory by Dustin Newman; a finely woven Unangax̂ Basket donated by master weaver Agnes Thompson. Teresa Smith donated a beautiful Aleutian Kayak Model with a miniature paddle and stand, an Unangax̂ style full-crowned beaded headdress made and donated by Sally Swetzof, and Pen Air tickets donated by Orin Seybert and Danny Seybert!

We are very grateful for the support of our community. Your support through donations, contributions, sponsorships, attendance and volunteering make the APIA Gala an extraordinary event!
The holidays are here! I hope you all had a very Happy Thanksgiving and are ready for Christmas and the New Year.

We just completed our Board meeting during the week of December 5 – 8. I wanted to share a few items from my report to the Board.

We thank Arlene Gundersen and Bruce Foster for their many years of service on our Board as the Pauloff Harbor Representative and Unga Representative, respectively. Over the many years Arlene and Bruce were on our Board, we accomplished a number of great things for the Association, Tribes, Region and our people. Some of those things that we owe Arlene, Bruce, and the others on the Board during this time great gratitude for are: Formation of two bingo establishments & satellite pull-tab operations; Publication of two Aleut Art books; Production of “Aleut Evacuation: The Untold War Story” documentary; New Health Facility on St. Paul Island; Re-establishment of communications with Aleuts on Commander Island; Construction of Unangam Ulaa and the Gateway to the Aleutsians; Publishing of the Qaqlamiugux Traditional Foods & Recipe Book; and New Branding and Logo of the Association. We thank Arlene and Bruce for their service, leadership and support during their many years on our Board.

Hillary Smith is the new representative for Pauloff Harbor. Hillary has acted as the Alternate before and has done well representing the Pauloff Tribe.

We also have James Kenezuroff back as the representative for the Belkofski Tribe. We thank Delores Kochuten for her years of service on the Board.

The Unga Tribe is in the process of appointing a new representative for our Board.

We thank all of our Board members for their service.

**APIA Overview:** Currently, we have a total of 156 staff—92 in the Region and 64 in Anchorage. We are administering about 44 Programs.

**Continuing Resolution:** A Continuing Resolution is in effect until December 9. As a precaution, our usual practice is for managers to submit their FY17 in-house budgets with a built in 5% cut. So we expect to be able to run all programs without interruption until a final fiscal year 2017 budget is passed by Congress.

**Meeting with Ounalashka Corporation:** On October 5, we met with Ounalashka Corporation representatives Chris Salts, CEO, Sandra Moller, Director of Operations, and Lydia Gordon, Executive Assistant. I gave them a brief update on the A-Team’s fiber optic RFP. We also spoke about the status of the new health facility and housing, as well as assisted living options. Chris mentioned that the OC Board will be considering our request for support of our Head Start program this month. They also mentioned the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Unalaska being next year and asked if APIA would be willing to help plan. I told them that we certainly would, and that I have asked Charles to have Janice work with the corporation on this...
I marked June 1 – 4 out on my calendar for next year so I can be in Unalaska for this event and their annual meeting on June 3.

**Aleutian Pribilof Islands Restitution Trust (APIRT):** Over the past couple of months I have met with the APIRT Board, Jake Lestenko, Joe Bereskin, APIRT Board Chair, and others that are affiliated with the Trust. The primary topic was how to administer the Trust now that Jake is retiring. The APIRT Board decided to enter into a management agreement with APIA - at least for the interim - to work with the APIRT Board to oversee the Trust during this transition. I have included Mark Hamm, our CFO, in many of these discussions. We will work closely with the APIRT Board as the Interim Administrator of the Trust until they decide what their long term plans are for the Trust. The APIRT Board plans to meet again sometime in January.

**A-Team Regional Broadband Feasibility Study Update:** A-Team members have agreed to contribute funds towards this project to conduct a feasibility study about region-wide broadband community by community. To maximize funding, SWAMC (Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference) submitted a grant to EDA’s (Economic Development Administration) Economic Adjustment Assistance Program. This opportunity allows for A-Team funds to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the federal government and possibly cover the next phases of the project (technical/engineering and business planning). We are waiting to hear back about the grant proposal before having the contractor start this work because we would be unable to retro-charge the grant for services rendered. Once the work of the feasibility study begins, each regional tribe, city, and other community entities will be contacted to gather necessary information for the study. We will keep you posted on the developments of this project.

**Spirit of our Elders – Gala:** Our Gala was held November 5 at the Hilton Hotel. As I mentioned before, we contracted with the Element Agency to try to bring our Gala to the next level. This was a great event, with the theme of Spirit of the Elder. Thank you to Chris Merculief, our Board Vice Chair, for joining us as he was in town. This is a wonderful opportunity to give exposure to the region, our tribes and the Association.

**Christmas Donation:** The checks for the $2000 Christmas donations went out in early October. Hopefully, Tribes received them early enough to plan holiday activities.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. God Bless.
Spiral of the Elder Gala Photos

April Brown, Auctioneer & Rob Hyatt, Master of Ceremonies

Ethan Petticrew, Dance Leader

Unangax Aayagas!

Wonderful Guests!

Exenia, Dina, and Shelee
Employee Spotlight: Michael Nemeth, Public Safety Coordinator/VPSO 1SG

- How long have you been with APIA?
  14 1/2 years.

- What communities have you lived in and for how long?
  St. George Island 3.5 years, Nelson Lagoon 6.5 years, and Anchorage 4.5 years.

- What’s your favorite food?
  Cured meat, cheese and good bread.

- What’s your most memorable moment while working at APIA?
  Truly being able to make a difference in the lives of community members in the region.

- Who has inspired you in your life and why?
  By my grandfather and father’s military service. I was working in corrections in Arizona when I decided to join the U.S. Army as a 19-D cavalry scout. After my time in the army, I wanted to stay in Alaska serving its people and applied with APIA for the VPSO position on Saint George Island. I have never looked back. So, for the last 21 years I have been serving my country and/or community because of my family’s inspiration and support.

Tribal Child Support

The APIA Tribal Child Support Program (TCSP) acknowledges that our children are our future. TCSP is designed to assist parents in supporting their children emotionally, socially and economically through a holistic approach.

We would like to share some common misconceptions about APIA’s Tribal Child Support Program:

**Myth:** I am not an Aleut or Alaska Native. Therefore, I don’t qualify for APIA’s Tribal Child Support Program.

**Fact:** APIA can provide child support services for ANYONE who lives in the ten communities we serve: Atka, Akutan, Unalaska, Nelson Lagoon, Sand Point, St. George Island, Nikolski, King Cove, False Pass and St. Paul Island. Additionally, we provide child support services to members of the 13 Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region Federally Recognized Tribes as well as APIA employees.

**Myth:** It’s better to not “rock the boat.” I get my payments already from the state.

**Fact:** APIA can easily take over your child support case from the State of Alaska. Your payment will not change unless there has been a significant change in the other parent’s income.

**Myth:** APIA’s Tribal Child Support takes subsistence forms of payment, but I don’t want subsistence, so I won’t bother applying.

**Fact:** APIA is different from State child support programs in that we can accept subsistence food, fuel, etc. as a form of child support payment. However, it is ONLY if both parents agree.

**Myth:** Only fathers pay child support.

**Fact:** Child support payments are mostly determined based on which parent holds primary custody and hence requires greater support.

If you would like more information about TCSP, please contact Program Coordinator, Margaret Warren at (907) 222-9716.
ANA Program Update

The second year of APIA’s Administration for Native Americans (ANA) grant is off to a great start! Since the last newsletter, the Atka Summer Language Intensive has wrapped up, as well as the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island’s Unangam Tunuu Download Camp.

The outcome has been nothing short of amazing! Sally Swetzof spent the summer in Atka with the “Where Are Your Keys” team and the youth hires of Atka to learn techniques for teaching Niigugim Tunuu. Now she is back in Anchorage teaching these techniques and the language at a weekly language circle held at the APIA Cultural Heritage office with Moses Dirks. The small group of learners is working on short introductions in Unangam Tunuu. The Eastern Dialect learners have taken what they’ve learned at the St. Paul Island Unangam Tunuu Download Camp and expanded their reach in various forms. For example, Silvia Leon-Guerrero is holding language circles every weekend in Wasilla and weekly at the TDX office. Anna Melovidov is holding a language circle every weekend at the Kaladi Brothers on Jewel Lake where she “hunts the language” from Iliodor Philemonof and Simeon Kuzakin or they play “Go-Fish” in Unangam Tunuu. Bobbie McNeley, one of our Unangam Tunuu Advisory Council members, is also starting a language circle at the University of Alaska Fairbanks where she is currently attending school.

The Atka group, led by Crystal Dushkin, meets everyday at the school. They also hunt the language from their elder speakers twice during the week, continuing their tasks from the Atka Summer Language Intensive.

The St. Paul group continues to meet daily with the school-aged children. They’ve also begun having their songs recorded by the local Polovina Studios. These can be played at the radio station KUHB which airs for both St. Paul Island and St. George Island! When not at school teaching the young children Unangam Tunuu, they are planning the next Summer Language Intensive for 2017.

The ANA core team members meet weekly with others interested in Unangam Tunuu on Fridays. A line is open to anyone who would like to learn more about our language revitalization efforts. Please call in at 1-800-356-8278 and use conference code 535209 on Fridays at 4:00 p.m. Alaska Standard Time.
Medical Director
We are pleased to announce that we hired a new Medical Director. Theresa Unger PA-C began on December 1st. Theresa currently resides in Unalaska and has been a provider for IFHS for the past 2 years. She brings many years of experience and a passion in caring for the people of our region. We are very excited to have her aboard.

Health Fairs Members of the APIA Health Department traveled to Nikolski and Atka in November to host health fairs, a color run, family movie night, soap making, and jam making activities. The health fairs provided community education on topics such as coping skills, tobacco use prevention, diabetes management, sugared beverages, domestic violence prevention, and community safety. All events were well attended! We look forward to future events and, if you have any specific requests or feedback, please contact April Arbuckle at 800-478-2742 or aprila@apiai.org.

Farewell—Best wishes!

Long Time APIA ICWA Child Advocate and Case Worker, Kathy Dirks, Retires
Kathy Dirks has been a valued APIA employee for the past 17 1/2 years. She has been a joy to work with and we will miss her dearly! Her last day was November 30. We bid you farewell, Kathy, and thank you for all you have done for the Association, the Aleut people and our Region.

Assistant Primary Care Services Regional Administrator After nineteen plus years with APIA, Melissa Robbins has moved out of her position as Assistant Primary Care Services Regional Administrator and over to the Aleutian Housing Authority as their new Housing Services Director. Melissa started off as a program assistant for the Health Department while we were still in the Fireweed building. We are very proud of her and look forward to working with her in the Region in her new role as Housing Services Director.
Aang, Aang from the Head Start Program! The 2016-2017 Head Start school year started with our annual pre-service training the week of August 22nd. We were fortunate to have been able to bring six staff from the communities of King Cove, Sand Point, St. Paul, and Unalaska to join us in Anchorage for the week-long training which was held at the APIA office. Two staff attended by teleconference in King Cove and Sand Point. Information critical to the operation of our Head Start program was presented by the Central Office Staff and guest presenters. Pre-Service was highlighted by Thread, which provided overview training on supporting children’s social and emotional development.

In August 2016, Head Start welcomed Gary Stein as the new Head Start Education & Disabilities Coordinator in the Anchorage office. She comes from the Anchorage School District with a Special Education Background and we are happy to have her join our team.

September came and went quickly as both Central Office Staff and Site Staff ensured timely screenings of enrolled children within the 45 day window.

In October we said goodbye to our Head Start Health & Nutrition Coordinator, Julia Sargent. Julia accepted a position in the Health Department as the Assistant Community Health Services Regional Administrator. Julia closely monitored the health, nutrition, environmental health, behavioral health, and safety areas of Head Start along with cook training and the CACFP grant. We would like to express our sincere appreciation for her 12 years of hard work and dedication to the Head Start program. Qagaalakutxin, Julia!

Sand Point recently went through a transition after both Lead Teacher and Teacher Aide positions resigned. Central Office Staff, Gary Stein and Leilani Hamik were quickly on the ground there to ensure a smooth transition for all. We have successfully secured a Lead Teacher, Carrie Sanders and Teacher Aide, Sheena Foster. Welcome aboard to both!

Staff credentialing continues to be an important part of our program. In addition to having qualified teacher in the classroom, it is a requirement of the Head Start Act. This year, three Head Start employees are pursuing their Child Development Associate or CDA.

Unalaska: Marie Schliebe Pilita Fernandez
King Cove: Earlene Mack
St. Paul: Platonida Hapoff

Bonnie Mierzejek was chosen to participate, on behalf of the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (PMFO) and the UCLA Anderson School of Management—in the New Directors Mentor Initiative Program that took place at UCLA from October 12-14, 2016. Bonnie will be under the mentorship of a seasoned Head Start Director for the next year. Bonnie is very excited to begin this endeavor that will create a network to strengthen relationships enhancing the management education and entrepreneurial skills of being a Head Start Director!

APIA is funded for 65 slots and we currently have 38 slots filled. Current issues affecting full enrollment include lack of transportation in two sites, qualified staff (bus driver certification), and mobility of families from home communities due to economic challenges. These factors cause difficulty in predicting the numbers of age eligible children. Recruitment efforts are ongoing as we continue to work with OHS Technical & Training Staff to address these issues.
Head Start is at its best and is most effective when we are able to work closely with families through Parent Committee meetings and child-centered events. Partnerships with organizations in the community such as schools, clinics, health care providers, and other community groups make for a strong and effective program. Please contact your local Head Start Center in Unalaska, Sand Point, St. Paul, or King Cove to find out how you can be a part of our family and help make a positive impact on the lives of children and families.

Head Start is always accepting applications for new students starting at three years of age. Applications for enrollment at Head Start are accepted on a year-round basis. Paperwork should be submitted as soon as possible to increase the chance of acceptance. If you know of a child who is 3 to 5 years of age and is not eligible for Kindergarten, please call or stop by your local Head Start center and pick up an application for enrollment. As space is limited, it is important that applications are turned in early.

L-R: Marty Newton (King Cove), Nancy Gearhart (Anchorage), Gary Stein (Anchorage), Karen Walls (Sand Point), Pilita Fernandez (Unalaska), Platonida Hapoff (St. Paul), Elizabeth Chiesa (Sand Point), Leilani Hamik (Anchorage), Bonnie Mierzejek (Anchorage) & Earlene Mack (King Cove)

King Cove Head Start Students picking berries 2016

Akutan Visit 2016

Sand Point Head Start students enjoying snack time

2016-17 Head Start Annual Pre-Service
The Health Department was surveyed by HRSA in October to measure compliance with the stringent program requirements. HRSA is the federal agency tasked with improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated or medically vulnerable and is one of our primary funding sources. The surveyors were impressed and complimented APIA for the quality of care provided to our patient population. Although they did identify some administrative deficiencies that need to be corrected, we have already started the correction process. We thank our dedicated staff and the Board for providing the leadership and resources to make this possible.

Our Behavioral Health Clinician based in Unalaska, Thelma Serrano, completed training to become a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (CTP). A trauma informed professional is trained to be aware of signs and symptoms associated with exposure to traumatic experiences. Working with a CTP, individuals will have the opportunity to tell their stories in a safe environment, going at their own pace. Individuals are offered time to share as much information as they want, at any given time and in visit by visit with the CTP. Through the process, individuals become aware of the trauma symptoms and are able to acknowledge the role trauma has had in their lives. The self knowledge gained in this process is validating, helping clients feel better equipped to navigate strong feelings and work through the hard times. If you or someone you know is interested in this process, please call APIA OWC to make an appointment at: 1-844-357-2742.

Wellness Booth at Heart of the Aleutians Festival in Unalaska  APIA hosted a wellness booth at the Heart of Aleutians Festival in Unalaska on Saturday, August 20. Many health education materials were available to the public including information on tobacco cessation, healthy eating, health literacy, diabetes prevention, healthy relationships, and more. The booth was a big hit! Hundreds of people from Unalaska and beyond visited our booth and the festival and had a great time. The event included local music, crafts and artwork, food vendors, and activities organized by the Parks, Culture and Recreation Department. Anchorage staff Michael Livingston and Suanne Unger co-hosted the booth with Unalaska staff Thelma Serrano and Kanesia Price. People of all ages visited the booth to try their luck at a game of wellness Jeopardy. Everyone who participated walked away with a prize including items such as sweatshirts, traditional Unangan/Unangas dance DVDs, APIA glasses, t-shirts, pens, granola bars, and a variety of other prizes. Many people felt that a big prize was receiving one of our 150 free samples of smoked salmon spread and crackers that were distributed to demonstrate a healthy and tasty snacking choice.

In addition to Jeopardy prizes, everyone who visited the booth was able to enter into a drawing for two bicycles! One of the bicycles was a fat tire bike donated by APIA, and the other bicycle was a girl’s bicycle donated by the Unalaska Safeway store.
These were hot items, and over 200 people entered the contest! The winner of the fat tire bike was Amy Purevsuren and the girl’s bicycle winner was Mary Lopez, both of Unalaska. The Heart of the Aleutians Festival was a great way to reach a large segment of the Unalaska community in a fun way and to highlight APIA’s wellness program.

Post Elder Summit Action Following the 2016 Tribal Eldercare Services Summit, we have been diligently working to assist several communities on their action plans. Most recently, we are supporting the Atka IRA on developing a coordinated transit plan to tap into Federal Transit Authority formula funding for an Elder transportation program.

Assisted Living Facility Study in Unalaska The Elder program has been working closely with the community of Unalaska through the tribe, the city of Unalaska and Aleutian Housing Authority. We engaged efforts with the consulting firm Agnew::Beck for a feasibility study of an assisted living facility within the Senior Center Housing in Unalaska. We will share the outcome of this study once complete.

Food Sovereignty Efforts We used community assessment information and Elder feedback from the summit to apply for a Food Sovereignty Assessment grant through First Nations Development Institute. We are excited to announce that we were awarded funding for the assessment! We will be working this next year to develop for the communities, and we’ll gather data to create a report with recommendations on how our communities can increase food sovereignty. These efforts will align with and complement the efforts surrounding greenhouses in our region. We hope eventually to provide our Elder food boxes as a sustainable funding option for the local greenhouses.

Stakeholder Meeting with APIA Region and the State of Alaska During a recent visit to Unalaska, Senator Murkowski’s staff met with Unalaska Elders and community members to discuss the challenges around Medicaid eligibility for the Elders. These voices and very articulate community members began the efforts and starting discussions that will take place early November with Senator Murkowski’s staff, The Alaska Commission on Aging, Senior and Disabilities Services staff, The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Alaska Native Heath Consortium and our APIA Elder program staff. These discussions will focus on needed changes to ensure that our Elders can access these Medicaid services, such as PCA.

Suicide Prevention Training and Mental Health First Aid for Older Adults The Elder program partnered with the Alaska Training Cooperative and brought suicide prevention and mental health first aid for older adults to Unalaska November 8th-10th. This training was funded through our Methamphetamine, suicide prevention initiative efforts for our Elders in several communities.
Thank you for your generous support!
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Many thanks to Jaquelin Pels for donating these wonderful books to the Cultural Heritage Programs!

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OUR MISSION

♦ To promote self-sufficiency and independence of the Unangan/Unanagas¹ by advocacy, training, technical assistance, and economic enhancement;

♦ To assist in meeting health, safety, and well-being of each Unanga² community;

♦ To promote, strengthen, and ensure the unity of the Unangan/Unangas; and

♦ To strengthen and preserve the Unanga³ cultural heritage.

¹Unangan [Eastern dialect], Unangas [Atka Dialect] - Aleuts, plural form; ²Unanga - Aleut, singular form ³Unangax - Aleutian, singular form

ALEUTIAN Pribilof Islands Association's Board of Directors

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