

AANG
AANG



ANĠAĠIN
ANĠAĠINAS

REMEMBERING AKUTAN WWII VETERANS

This summer, we received a generous donation of a 48-star American flag from Richard J. Stepetin of Akutan.

The flag, which once belonged to flag carrier, Peter J. Kudrin, and was protected and stewarded by Mr. Stepetin for the past 25 years. He believes it was flown during the Aleutian Campaign in World War II, when Unangax peoples were evacuated to southeast Alaska, and Unangax men returned as a part of the Alaska Territorial Guard to protect their homelands.

APIA depends on contributions like this to help promote, strengthen, and preserve our heritage and to honor our veterans & their families through our stories. We are committed to remembering the events that took place in the Aleutians during World War II, events that forever changed our traditions and our communities. The war brought hardship, displacement, and loss to many Unangax families, leaving wounds that are still remembered today.

We are honored to add the flag to our growing collection where it will be preserved, shared, and exhibited to continue sharing stories to our communities and beyond.

It is Richard's wish to remember Akutan's WWII Veterans:

Peter J. Kudrin
Mike J. Kudrin
Sergie J. Kudrin



George J. Kudrin Sr.
Larry Mensoff
Luke Shellikoff
George McGlashan

Enlisted/Drafted
Tom Petikoff
Arthur Stepetin, Sr.

We are also seeking photographs and information regarding Unangax veterans from our region. Our goal is to preserve these community sto-

Continued on page 4

~INSIDE~

President's Message.....	2
Celebrating Dimitri Philemonof	4
PRC.....	5
Chain of Wellness.....	5
Behavioral Health.....	6
Pathway to Healing	7
Eldercare Services	8
Environmental Health Services.....	10
Southwest AHEC.....	11
APIA Culture Camp 2026.....	12
Culture Camp Photos	13
Retired & Senior Volunteer Program.....	14
Employment, Training & Related Svcs.....	14
Breaking Waves	15
Tobacco Prevention.....	15
Head Start.....	16
Information Technology.....	17
Family Programs.....	18
Memory Eternal—Boris Merculief.....	19
Memory Eternal—Doug Veltre.....	20
APIA Board of Directors.....	24

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dimitri Philemonof, President/CEO

We see the signs of Fall turning to those of Winter with an actual mild snowfall on October 1. Just like the seasons, we closed our fiscal year out on September 30 and have a new one starting. We have heard fishing has been tough in some areas, with some areas having a more profitable season. Overall, we hope this has been a good summer for you all.

Our Fall board meeting took place on August 24th. See below highlights from my report to the Board. Our next Board meeting is scheduled for December 14—18.

Funding Update President Trump signed the full year funding for the balance of FY26. We are watching FY27 grant opportunities and already awarded funds. At this time, we have received the majority of our FY26 funding. Our fiscal year 2026 budgets, is ending at about \$30Million as anticipated.

Energy Assistance We are anticipating an increase in energy assistance needs this upcoming winter. With this in mind, we have continued correspondence and meetings with the State of Alaska, Alaska Department of Health and state legislators. On July 15th, we posted a public notice stating we were planning to lower amounts to stretch our existing funds in order to help more households. This approach was intended to allow us to stretch the dollars to help more households although for a lower amount. On the 5th of August, we heard back from the State LIHEAP that for our FY27 amount they are raising our allocation - this will mean if for 2026 an award was \$1,000, then for 2027 that same award will be \$1,400. With these additional funds, we will

no longer need to lower the awards but rather make them higher – this is great news. Many thanks to MaryEllen and Jacob for their efforts to seek additional LIHEAP Funds.



JVCP / Unalaska Clinic Update

We are happy to report that after a long period of negotiating with the Ounalashka Corporation (OC), we have reached a 35 year lease agreement for the proposed project Chigidax site. Final execution of the lease is contingent upon completion of the Phase II site assessment and IHS approving the Joint Venture Construction Project packet due by

December 31, 2026. We are very excited to finally be at this point. We are so very grateful to the OC leadership and the OC Board for their site approval cooperation and approval! I cannot thank Jessica enough for her commitment to this project; and for her resilience to keep pressing on traveling to Unalaska time and time again to answer questions and fulfill the many requests. I also appreciate Tarrissa, Louise and Trina for their efforts in supporting Jessica and the project. IHS has been clear that they are here to support us along the way. We are on track to submit the Program Justification Document (PJD) and the Program of Requirements (POR) for approval by IHS Headquarters by the December 31, 2026 deadline.

Community Visit - Atka

I traveled with Jessica Mata Rukovichnikoff, Tarrissa, Angie, Freida and Trina to Atka July 20 – 22 to meet with community members, Tribal



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

leadership and our local APIA staff at the clinic and VPSO William Dushkin. We hosted a community meet and greet at the tsunami shelter which was well attended. Afterwards Tribal President and Mayor of Atka, Crystal



Dushkin, took us on a community tour, during which she shared its history and culture, and concluded our time at the St. Nicholas Orthodox Church where she and her daughters performed traditional songs with Jessica Mata Rukovishnikoff and I. This was a very special time for us all and deeply meaningful to me. APIA Chairman Mark Snigaroff and his wife and our clinic front desk receptionist, Jennifer, greeted us all with warm hospitality inviting us into their home for great company and delicious reindeer dinner. We arrived on time and had absolutely beautiful weather during our time there. Jessica, Tarrissa, Trina and I left a couple of days before Freida and Angie, as they had another community event planned. Many thanks to

Crystal, William, Mark, Jennifer and the entire community for a great trip!

Community Visit – Unalaska On the return flight from Atka, we were on weather hold in Unalaska and were able to have a community visit there as well. We were able to visit with community leaders, community members and our staff throughout the community. We were honored to have a chance to visit with Mayor Vince Tutiakoff just after his birthday, APIA Board Vice Chair Nick Tutiakoff and several Qawalangin Tribal leadership and staff. We visited the Tribal Office, the Clinic, the Senior Center and ran into several others along the way. We were also able to drive by and take a look at the potential new clinic site. This was also a great community visit.



Congratulations to our Board Chairman. Mark Snigaroff and his wife, Jennifer on their recent Church Wedding! Mark and Jennifer were wed in the St. Nicholas Church in Atka by the visiting clergy during the Bishop's visit to Atka in 2026. May God grant them many happy years together!

To read more about Archbishop Alexei's Aleutian travel this summer, visit www.odosa.org/news



REMEMBERING AKUTAN WWII VETERANS CONT.

ries and share them with the descendants of those who served.

This flag was recently shared at the 2026 Alaska Native Cultural Health & Resilience (ANCHR) Gathering in Unalaska – where SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program hosted talking circles for Veterans, family members, and the community to remember the Alaska Territorial Guard, and the impacts of WWII on Unangam Tanangin.



Photo Collection shared by Tina Gauen of Akutan who shared stories about her uncle Pete for the ANCHR Gathering 2026



CELEBRATING DIMITRI PHILEMONOF

The APIA Board of Directors is proud to congratulate Dimitri Philemonof, APIA's President / CEO, on being selected by the National Indian Health Board as the recipient of the Alaska Area Hero's in Health Award on Wednesday, August 19th at the National Tribal Health Conference.

For more than 48 years, Dimitri has dedicated his life to serving the Unangax (Aleut) people and the communities of the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands. Since becoming APIA President and CEO in 1985, his leadership has helped strengthen health care, expand services,

advance major health infrastructure projects, and preserve and celebrate Unangax culture.



Beyond the accomplishments, Dimitri's greatest legacy is his unwavering commitment to his people. His humility, vision, and dedication have made a lasting difference in our communities.

We are proud to celebrate Dimitri and this well-deserved recognition.

Congratulations, Dimitri, and thank you for a lifetime of service to our people.

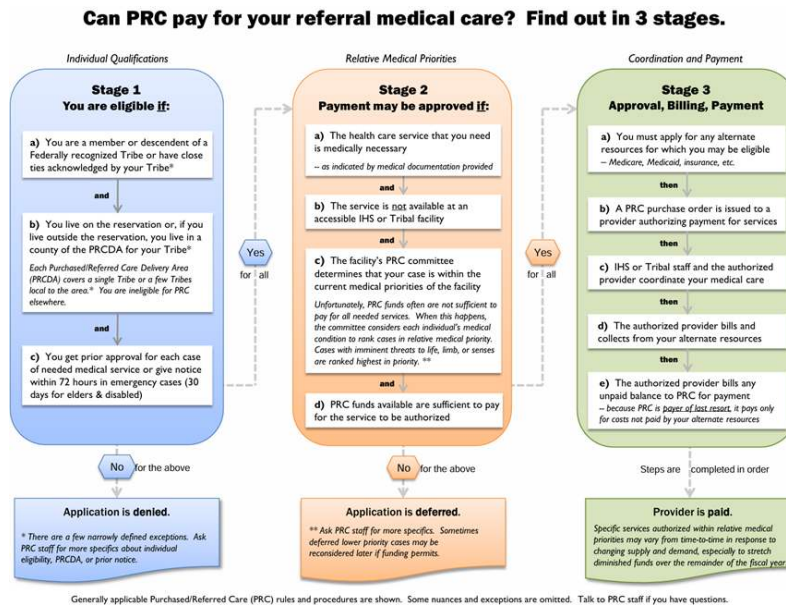
~APIA Board of Directors



PURCHASED REFERRED CARE

Important Message: Understand Your Purchased & Referred Care (PRC) Benefits Before Receiving Outside Care

Purchased & Referred Care must approve outside care before non-emergency treatment begins. Patients should make sure the care has been authorized by PRC before receiving services whenever possible. If care is received without the required authorization, PRC may not be able to cover the cost, leaving the patient responsible for the bill. All medical referrals must be initiated by a provider, and all outside care must be approved by PRC.



must be notified within 72 hours of the start of emergency services. Patients 65 years and older have 30 days to notify PRC.

Use IHS Facilities When Available

IHS facilities must be used instead of private facilities when an IHS facility is available. You can visit the IHS website to find a list of Tribal clinics and hospitals.

When in doubt, contact PRC before receiving outside medical care.

PRC Contact Information

Phone: 907-729-2470

Toll-Free: 800-478-1636

Fax: 907-729-2483



CHAIN OF WELLNESS COMMUNITY HEALTH EVENTS

APIA Primary Care Services (PCS) is continuing its Chain of Wellness Community Health Events across our communities. Tasha Hillhouse, PCS Diabetes Coordinator; Lori Jackson, PCS Medical Director; and Sharayah Foster, PCS Administrator, are leading efforts focused on diabetes awareness, prevention, and healthier living.

The events provide practical, regionally relevant education on nutrition and lifestyle choices while helping community members better understand prediabetes, diabetes risks, and ways to improve A1C outcomes.

2026 Community Events:

- St. George: May 2026
- Nikolski: August 2026
- Unalaska: September 2026
- Atka: September 2026

In St. George, Sharayah Foster and Danelle Shellikoff led an engaging Diabetes Awareness event featuring interactive education and diabetes-themed bingo. Through these community events, APIA continues to make health education fun, accessible, and meaningful for our communities.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral Health Aide Program

Behavioral Health Aides (BHAs) continue to play an important role in APIA's Behavioral Health department through direct care, community outreach, and support of APIA's Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP). In April, BHAs traveled to Anchorage to participate in the Behavioral Health Aide Forum, which provided them with the opportunity to gain knowledge, strengthen clinical skills, and build connections within Alaska's BHA workforce. We are proud of the continued growth and dedication our BHAs demonstrate in supporting clients and communities.

Team Updates Melanie Prokopiof (BHA II, Unalaska Itinerant) has successfully completed all required coursework for the Behavioral Health Aide Program! She is now gaining the clinical experience needed for her BHA III certification. She has expanded her clinical responsibilities by conducting Alaska Safety Action Program (ASAP) intakes for individuals referred following impaired driving offenses and by providing individual behavioral health services to a growing caseload.

In addition to her direct clinical work, Mel continues to engage in regular community outreach in St. George, strengthening relationships and increasing access to behavioral health services. Mel traveled St. George with Dr. Dusty Irwin in April and with Dr. Keri Boyd in June to offer clinical coverage and facilitate community outreach activities, including nature walks, art activities, and a movie night. These events were aimed at encouraging social connection, promoting wellness, and providing opportunities for community members to engage with Behavioral Health in an informal setting, while increasing awareness of available services.

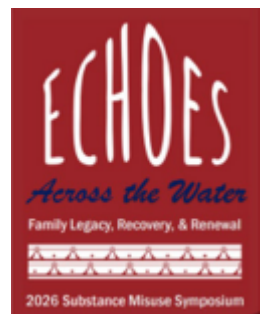
Reena Bucaneg (BHA Trainee in Unalakaska) completed all required coursework for her BHA I certification and is working to gain

practicum experience by observing intakes, providing case management services, and engaging in outreach activities in Unalaska. Reena has also been collaborating with primary care to support case management services for individuals receiving medication treatment for substance use disorders through APIA's Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program. We appreciate Reena's commitment to developing her clinical and case management skills, and to her continued growth in the Behavioral Health Aide Program.



Art from outreach activity in April

APIA proudly hosted the **4th Annual Substance Misuse Symposium** from May 6–8, 2026, bringing together participants from across Alaska. The symposium provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen partnerships.



The symposium successfully enhanced collaboration both within APIA and among community, academic, and state partners. The event featured participation from UAA faculty and scholars, staff from the Center for Addiction Studies, Alaska Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), the Tribal Liaison and Outreach Coordinator from

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTINUED

Continued from page 6

Careline/988, and State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health.

Together, these partners along with APIA staff delivered educational training, community outreach, and professional development opportunities focused on substance misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery.

A heartfelt thank you to the residential staff in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor for welcoming and hosting our staff and partners. We are also grateful to our Anchorage-based staff who traveled to attend and support this meaningful event.



Don't Let Your Motivation Fall This

Autumn! As the seasons change and the days get shorter, it can be easy to lose motivation to stay active. However, maintaining regular physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. When combined with a healthy diet, physical activity can help prevent and manage several chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke. Staying active can also support your overall physical and mental well-being, improve energy levels, and help you maintain strength and mobility.



Don't Let Your Motivation Fall This Autumn

Saaqudikinga masxal aguun mazat suglatachġiiganaġtxin(W)

Saaqudikingan waagaguun masatxin suglatachġiiganaġtxin(E)

Don't let the cooler weather stop you, keep moving, stay motivated, and make your health a priority this autumn!

You Don't Have to Face Recovery Alone Substance misuse can affect individuals, families, and entire communities. Asking for help can be difficult but taking that first step can make a meaningful difference. APIA is here to help.

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) provides support for individuals struggling with opioid or alcohol misuse. MAT combines prescribed medication with compassionate care to help reduce cravings, manage the physical effects of substance use, and support individuals as they work toward recovery.

At APIA, we understand that recovery looks different for everyone. Our MAT team works closely with Behavioral Health to provide a whole-person approach to care, connecting individuals with the support and services they need along their journey.

Most importantly, you do not have to go through this alone. Whether you are reaching out for yourself or are concerned about someone you care about, we encourage you to take that first step. If you or someone you know is struggling with substance misuse, please call APIA at 844-359-0001.



Reaching out for help is a sign of strength. APIA is here to listen, support, and walk alongside you on the path toward recovery.



ELDERCARE SERVICES

Elder Care Services continues to create meaningful opportunities for Elders to stay active, connected, and engaged through programs that support healthy aging, lifelong learning, and social connection.

This spring, Rural Elder Liaison, Rebecca Newman completed the construction of a



new hydroponic gardening system with the help of more than seven Elder participants. Together, they planted leafy greens and herbs while learning about hydroponic gardening and enjoying time with one another. The project

has become more than a gardening activity; it provides a welcoming space where Elders can build new skills, work together, and enjoy meaningful conversations while caring for the growing plants.

Wellness remained a priority throughout the season as Elders continued participating in the Walking Program twice each week. Participants tracked their steps, encouraged one another, and were reminded of the importance of staying hydrated and maintaining regular physical activity. For many, the program supports managing chronic health conditions while promoting independence and overall well-being.

Weekly Elder gatherings also provided opportunities to exercise the mind through trivia, popular phrase games, crafts, baking activities, and recipe sharing. Whether learning a new recipe, creating crafts, or enjoying friendly conversation, participants strengthened memory, creativity, and lasting friendships.

Nutrition remains an important focus as Elder Care Services distributed more than 470 food boxes during the spring, helping ensure Elders throughout the region had access to nutritious food. During a biweekly luncheon

at the King Cove School, Elders also shared their knowledge by teaching students how to clean, prepare,



and enjoy traditional badarkies. The activity celebrated cultural traditions while creating meaningful connections between generations.

Through programs that promote wellness, culture, nutrition, and community, Elder Care Services continues to strengthen connections and support healthy, independent living for Elders across the APIA service region.

Throughout the summer, Elder Care Services expanded its outreach efforts by connecting with Elders in Sand Point and Unalaska, helping community members learn about available resources while strengthening local partnerships.

During June and July, Rural Elder Liaison, Rebecca Newman partnered with Amy Mack of the Qagan Tayagungin Tribe in Sand Point to visit with Elders, identify community needs, and share information about the services available through APIA. These visits helped increase awareness of Elder Care Services while creating valuable opportunities to listen to the needs of community members.

In June, Elder Care Services Administrator Daniel "DJ" Lieberman and newly hired Elder Case Worker, Virginia Kelly traveled to Unalaska to provide outreach, enrollment assistance, case management support, and home visits. Their visit included a welcoming "Coffee, Tea and Conversation" gathering at the Senior Center, participation in a community lunch, one-on-one home visits, and meetings with local partners.

The outreach resulted in 12 new Elder enrollments while identifying additional needs



ELDERCARE SERVICES

related to food-box assistance, case management, dementia and Alzheimer's support, and chore worker services. Home visits were especially meaningful for Elders with mobility challenges or cognitive health concerns who may not have been able to attend community events.

Elder Pet Food Program For many Elders, pets are family. Through the APIA Elder Pet Food Program, Elder Care Services helps ensure those companions remain healthy while reducing financial stress for their owners.



pets are family. Through the APIA Elder Pet Food Program, Elder Care Services helps ensure those companions remain healthy

Since partnering with Meals on Wheels Loves Pets in 2024, the program has continued expanding its reach across the region. During the 2025–2026 program year, the program served 81 Elders in all 13 communities throughout APIA's service area.

More than 7,100 pounds of pet food were distributed to dogs, cats, chickens, rabbits, turtles, and even a parakeet. Applications were coordinated through Tribal partners, clinics, and community organizations, allowing pet food to be shipped directly to Elders in their home communities.

Participants expressed heartfelt appreciation for the program, sharing that it helped offset the high cost of pet food and shipping in rural Alaska while ensuring beloved companions remained well cared for.

Following the success of the program, APIA has secured funding to continue pet food assistance while exploring a new veterinary services pilot in select communities. The

pilot will focus on preventive veterinary care, helping both Elders and their pets remain healthy together.

Anchorage Elder Gatherings The weekly Anchorage Elder Gatherings regularly welcome up to 20 participants for mornings filled with learning, laughter, and friendship.



Lead by Lorraine Thomas, Elder Services Coordinator, the gatherings offer refreshments, educational presentations, guest speakers, trivia, games, and cultural activities that encourage social connection while supporting brain health and lifelong learning. Community partners including the Anchorage Public Library, AARP, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, Anchorage Museum, and other organizations regularly visit to share resources and answer questions, helping Elders stay informed about programs available throughout the community.

This summer also featured a special intergenerational gathering where APIA youth prepared Indian tacos before joining Elders for games, conversation, and bingo. The event celebrated culture while strengthening relationships between generations.

Transportation assistance provided by APIA staff ensures more Elders can participate, while the Virtual Dementia Tour continues helping caregivers, employees, and community members better understand the daily experiences of individuals living with dementia.

Together, these programs create welcoming spaces where Elders can learn, connect, and continue building meaningful relationships.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Last fall, APIA's Environmental Health Services Office (EHS) was awarded funding from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) through a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) subaward entitled "Climate Resilience Regional Challenge" (CRRC) to strengthen emergency preparedness, climate resilience, and adaptation planning throughout the region. On May 14, APIA facilitated a kick-off meeting that brought together tribal, municipal, and corporate leaders to learn about the resources and technical assistance available through this project. The funding runs September 30, 2029, giving us several years to do this work right.

One of our current efforts already underway is a partnership with the Aleutians East Borough (AEB) to support the update of its 2021 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP). FEMA requires hazard mitigation plans to be reviewed and updated every five years to maintain eligibility for certain federal disaster assistance and hazard mitigation funding opportunities. While the current plan covers municipal jurisdictions within the Borough, the updated plan will also incorporate participating tribal jurisdictions within these communities. This expanded approach will help ensure that tribal priorities, concerns, traditional knowledge, infrastructure needs, and

mitigation strategies are reflected in regional hazard planning.

We are also committed to working with tribal communities across the region to ensure

they have up to date their Small Community Emergency Response Plans (SCERPs). SCERPs provide communities with a practical framework for organizing and responding during the critical first 72 hours of an emergency, when outside assistance may be delayed or unavailable. In addition to emergency response planning, communities also need current hazard mitigation plans that identify risks and establish long-term actions to reduce future losses.

Through this project, we are working to close

gaps in both emergency response and hazard mitigation planning, community by community.

Central to our work over the next several years will be the development of a regional adaptation plan. We envision this as a collaborative process that brings together representatives from communities across the region through regular quarterly meetings. Those conversations will help us identify shared concerns, community-specific vulnerabilities, emerging risks, regional priorities, and practical adaptation strategies. The process will also help determine which sectors, such as infrastructure, transportation, water and sanitation,

Continued on page 11

SOUTHWEST AHEC

Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Students from across rural Alaska explored careers in healthcare through several hands-on learning opportunities offered this spring and summer.

In Sand Point, 17 high school students completed an Introduction to Allied Health



course, earning college credit while receiving CPR, First Aid, and Stop the Bleed certifications. Students toured the Eastern Aleutian

Tribes clinic and met healthcare professionals from a variety of disciplines, gaining valuable insight into careers that support their communities.

In Naknek, eight students from communities across Bristol Bay successfully completed the Emergency Trauma



Technician course, earning college credit and multiple healthcare certifications. Through realistic emergency scenarios and practical skills training, students gained confidence while preparing for future careers in healthcare.

AHEC Scholars also traveled to Unalaska, where healthcare students representing several disciplines participated in professional development, community service, cultural learning, and behavioral health training.



Highlights included providing naloxone education to local students, touring healthcare facilities, attending symposium sessions, and participating in cultural events throughout the community.

These experiences continue expanding educational opportunities while helping prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals to serve rural Alaska.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES CONT.

tion, food security, health, fisheries, cultural resources, and emergency services, should receive the greatest attention in the regional plan.

At the heart of it, this work matters because the strength of regional resilience depends on the preparedness of each individual community as well as our ability to work together across the region. Our communities face many interconnected hazards and changing environmental conditions, yet their needs, resources, and capacities are not identical. By strengthening local emergency response and hazard mitigation plans while developing a

shared regional adaptation strategy, we can identify gaps before disasters occur, coordinate resources more effectively, protect critical infrastructure and community assets, and establish priorities for future funding and investment. Most importantly, this process will help ensure that the region's future preparedness and adaptation efforts are guided by the knowledge, priorities, and experiences of the communities themselves, and that everyone, including visitors, can know what to do and where to go in an emergency.



APIA CULTURE CAMP 2026

From June 8—12, 2026 APIA hosted its 17th annual Culture Camp. This year, over 400 community members gathered at APIA to celebrate our Unangax culture. This included 215 registered participants of all ages, 29 camp staff, 4 volunteers, and 166 visitors.

Activities included: Children's Art, Traditional Foods, Dance, Unangam tunuu, Beaded Glass Balls, Beaded Headdress, Beaded Medallions, Basket Weaving, Visor Carving, Drum Making, Mask Carving, Unangax Darts, and Model Iqyax construction.

Events like this are only possible with the support of a dedicated community. Together, we made the 2026 APIA Culture Camp an unforgettable event!

We extend our deepest gratitude to our Elders and Culture Bearers for sharing their vital knowledge. And, many thanks to the generous donors, APIA programs, volunteers, and camp staff and APIA staff who gave their time and resources.

Instructors and Apprentices

Patty Gregory
Lydia Vincle
Teresa Smith
Josy Shangin
June McGlashan
David Gregory
Erin Levesque
Makarius Swetsof
Mason Kvasnikoff
Nic Vincle
Nikkita Shellikoff
Lydia Dirks

Moses Dirks
Lynnette Mack
Tina Gauen
Tim Shangin
Hugh Pelkey
Chyonne Buterin
Daniel Shellikoff
Charlotte Rutherford
Isabella Iparraguirre
Nathanial Vincle
Christian Powell
Laila Shellikoff



Angunasix qağaalakuxtxin! ~ Qağaasachxuzakuq!
Many Thanks!



DEBRA G. CORBETT & DIANE HANSON



RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), volunteers continue making a lasting impact across Alaska by creating warm, handmade items for Elders, children, and individuals experiencing homelessness.

Project Warm-Up volunteers Ursula Parks and Joan Brewer have dedicated countless hours knitting hats for distribution throughout APIA's service region. Since March, volunteers have contributed more than 484 volunteer hours while creating over 175 handmade hats.

The hats have been distributed during Elder Gatherings, monthly potlucks, APIA events in Unalaska, and to communities throughout the

Aleutian and Pribilof Islands region. Additional donations have supported Anchorage homeless shelters and Anchorage School District Title I elementary schools.

Project Warm-Up provides older adults with an opportunity to share their talents while giving back to others. Whether volunteering from home or participating at a designated site, each handmade item represents compassion, generosity, and community care.

As RSVP closed out Fiscal Year 2025, volunteers continued demonstrating that service has no age limit and that every stitch helps keep someone warm.



EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING & RELATED SERVICES

Employment, Training & Related Services (ETR) continues to see increased



need across the region as families experience the ongoing economic impacts of fisheries disasters and changes in fish processing. This has resulted in more individuals and families qualifying for

assistance programs than in previous years.

The 2026 Energy Assistance season closed April 30 after receiving a record number of applications. A total of 224 households received assistance with their home heating and electricity costs, compared to 181 households in 2025 and 145 in 2024.

The State of Alaska approved increased funding for the upcoming season, which will allow Energy Assistance benefits to increase.

Depending on federal funding, the 2027 season is expected to begin in November 2026.

Emergency Assistance also helped provide a second 6,500-pound shipment of water and supplies to Nelson Lagoon, supporting 19 eligible households. Additional contributions from Aleut, Family Programs, and community members helped bring even more water to the community.

The AANG Program continues to provide employment support to individuals with disabilities. Sixteen participants have completed their employment plans this year, exceeding the program's goal of 15. ETR is also preparing to provide higher education and vocational training scholarships to 17 students for the upcoming fall semester.

If you are interested in or have any questions about our ETR programs, please give us a call at 907-276-2700 and ask for ETR staff.



BREAKING WAVES

The Breaking Waves program brought regional youth together in Anchorage for a week of culturally grounded substance misuse and suicide prevention education. Participants learned practical skills for making healthy choices while exploring cultural traditions, building confidence, and strengthening resilience.



The week concluded with the first Elder and Youth Gathering, where participants shared meals, played bingo, and spent meaningful time together. Youth prepared Indian tacos while Elders shared stories and encouragement, creating lasting memories across generations.

Planning is also underway for the fifth annual Alaska Native Cultural Health & Resilience (ANCHR) Gathering in Unalaska. The gathering will bring together Alaska Native veterans and their families for several days of cultural learning, storytelling, wellness activities, language, traditional practices, and peer support. Grounded in the values of belonging, mastery, interdependence, and generosity, the gathering reflects APIA's continued commitment to honoring veterans while promoting resilience, healing, and community wellness.



TOBACCO PREVENTION

The Tobacco Prevention and Control Program continues supporting healthier communities through education, partnerships, and cessation resources.

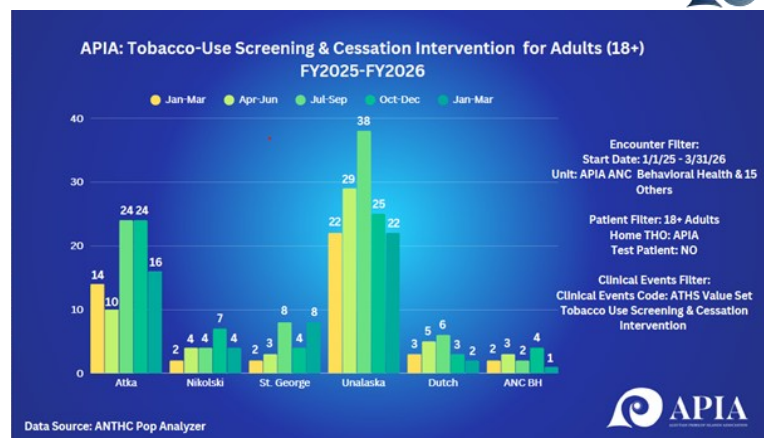
This spring, staff presented information to Elders about tobacco use and surgery, sharing educational materials and answering questions about the health benefits of quitting tobacco.

Program staff also partnered with clinical leadership in Unalaska to review tobacco screening and cessation efforts, discuss referral processes, and provide tobacco cessation resources for patients interested in quitting.

This summer, APIA expanded its tobacco-free messaging by distributing new tobacco-free campus welcome mats to several regional communities and programs, reinforcing the organization's com-

mitment to creating healthier environments for everyone.

Through continued education, collaboration, and outreach, the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program remains dedicated to helping individuals make informed choices and supporting healthier communities throughout the APIA service region.



GROWING WITH HEAD START: NURTURING, BUILDING & INSPIRING

Head Start staff have welcomed children back into the classroom for a new school year!

Enrollment is open year-round for eligible children ages 3–5 in King Cove, Sand Point, and Unalaska. Head Start provides services at no cost to eligible families and works alongside parents and caregivers to support children's learning, health, development, and overall well-being.

A 10-passenger van was purchased for the Unalaska Head Start site, which serves 20 children, and the purchase of a van for the King Cove site is also underway. These vehicles will help address transportation challenges, improve access to services, and reduce barriers to attendance.

Culture and community remain an important part of the Head Start experience. In Sand Point, 16 Elders joined students for a shared meal, intergenerational activities, and cultural exchange through the Elder Lunch held in partnership with the Qagan Taya-gungin Tribe and KSDP Radio.

In King Cove, daily Unangax language

lessons were reestablished through a partnership with the King Cove School District, giving students opportunities to learn foundational language skills through numbers,



songs, and introductions. In Unalaska, the local preschool program has also been invited to participate in Qaqamiigux lessons, creating opportunities for shared cultural learning.

Families also have opportunities to participate in Head Start through volunteer and leadership activities that build skills and strengthen connections within the community. The program is currently seeking on-call Teacher Aides in King Cove and a Cook and Teacher Aide in Unalaska.

If you have any questions or would like to enroll in one of our three Head Start sites, please give us a call at 907-276-2700 and ask for Head Start!







**Head Start
Enrollment is Open!**
Apply Now!

**APIA HEAD START
REGISTRATION OPEN!**

- Openings available in King Cove, Sand Point, & Unalaska!
- Alaska Native and non-Native children, ages 3–5, are welcome to apply!
- Comprehensive early childhood education and family services are provided at no cost!
- Nutritionally balanced meals included!



To Apply

Scan the QR code or contact the APIA Head Start team at: 907-276-2700



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) DEPARTMENT

Technology continues to play an important role in connecting our staff, programs, and communities. Throughout 2026, several improvements have been underway to strengthen technical support, internet connectivity, cybersecurity, and the systems used across the organization.

Strengthening Cybersecurity and Data Protection Our IT Department and support continues to focus and keeps up with technology as it continues to evolve. Our focus will remain on strengthening connectivity, cybersecurity, reliability, and technical support across APIA. This includes modernizing aging technology, improving backup connectivity, strengthening data protection, and ensuring staff have reliable access to the systems and tools they need.

Supporting our regional locations will remain an important priority. We will

continue working with staff and programs to identify technology needs, improve reliability, and find opportunities to make systems and processes more efficient while supporting the programs and communities we serve.

Regional IT Support Our team also travels throughout the region to assess building conditions, coordinate improvements, and support onsite projects. Most recently, we supported the Head Start Division with the King Cove security camera project by assisting with budgeting, system design, and implementation before traveling to King Cove to oversee the installation. The new system, installed in designated Head Start classroom areas at King Cove School, provides an additional resource to support the safety and security of children, staff, visitors, and program property.



Do You Have a Fred Meyer Reward Card?



Did you know that every time you shop at Fred Meyer and use your Rewards card, you can help APIA earn cash that supports our annual camp? AND you still earn your award points, fuel points and rebates!

*If you've already linked your account, we want you to know we are **GRATEFUL** for your support!*

Over the past 12 months we earned \$609 in with a total of 37 contributing households!

Help us increase this number in support of APIA's largest, free event where over 400 Unangax gather every summer!

Sign up through the FM App:

- Click the  symbol on the upper left
- Select Payments & Resources
- Select Community Rewards
- Search for and Choose Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association or #GV82

Sign up Online through your account at www.fredmeyer.com/

- Select Community Rewards on the left
- Choose Add Organization
- Search for and Choose Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association or #GV82.

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Family Programs has been busy this year working on initiatives across Alaska to strengthen families, improve outcomes for children, and reduce the number of Native children in state custody. While Alaska Native people make up approximately 16% of the state's population, Native children continue to represent about 65% of children in foster care. Addressing this disparity remains a priority, and our team continues to advocate for meaningful change through participation in the Tribal-State Collaboration Group, the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact, and the AFN ICWA Initiative.



In April, ICWA held an awareness walk in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month and hosted an informational table throughout the month. The table provided guests and staff in the building with educational materials and information to help raise awareness about child abuse prevention and the importance of supporting children and families.

Closer to home, we have been actively recruiting for Family Advocacy positions and expanding opportunities to connect with families and communities throughout the region. This winter, we will be hosting a variety of events to help families learn about available resources, services, and supports.

Our team recently travelled to Sand Point for a Back-to-School Family Fun Night which brought families together to celebrate the new school year, enjoy activities, and connect with local resources. Keep an eye out for similar events coming to additional communities in the months ahead!

As we continue this work, we are also looking for individuals and families interested in becoming foster parents. Safe, loving foster homes are always needed, and staying connected to culture, community, and family relationships can make a lasting difference in a child's life.

If you've ever considered fostering or would like to learn more, we encourage you to reach out and explore how you can help support local children and families.

Through ongoing collaboration with tribal partners, community members, and service providers, Family Programs remains committed to building stronger supports for children and families throughout the region.



If you have any questions about Family Programs, please give us a call at 907-276-2700.



MEMORY ETERNAL BORIS MERCULIEF

With profound sadness, our family announces the passing of Boris R. Merculief, beloved husband, stepfather, brother, uncle, and loyal friend to many. Boris was born in St. George, Alaska, to John and Rufina Merculief.

Boris attended Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon, graduating in 1969. He became a certified welder, and his first job after high school was with Tacoma Boat Builders. A year later, he returned to St. George, where he worked for the federal government for the next seven years.

In 1971, Boris was trained by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as an enumerator for the Alaska Native Land Claims. His first of many trips to Washington, DC, came in 1972, when he met Secretary of the Interior Udall. Boris went on to participate in the Aleutian Planning Commission, which merged with the Aleut League in 1976 to become the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA). In addition, in 1979, he worked as a welder and pipefitter at the Elmendorf Air Force Base Power and Steam Plant. A man of many talents, Boris was a strong and dedicated advocate for Alaska Native people and issues. His lifelong commitment to service and to his community was evident in all that he did.

He was appointed to the APIA Board of Directors for five years beginning in 1984 and later served as Chairman for 17 years, until 2004. Boris remained an active member of the St. George Tribal Council over the years and served as President from 1983 to 1989. He served on the RurAL CAP Board of Directors for 18 years and on the Aleut Corporation Board of Directors for five and a half years, including three years as Chairman.

Boris also served as a member of the

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Trust, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Heritage, Inc., the Spacemark Board of Directors, and the Gold Cache Bingo Board of Directors, where he served as Chair for 17 years. He contributed his time to the Alaska Native Health Board, served as President of the Church Council in St. George, and was an advisor to the North Pacific Fur Seal Commission. He was Chairman of Garden Cove, Inc., formed under the St. George Trust, and served as a St. George Trustee in 1982. At

one point, Boris served on eleven separate boards.

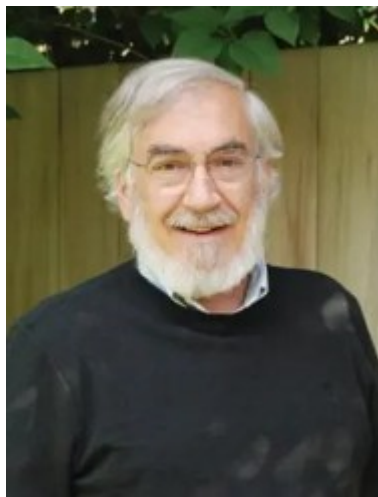
He was preceded in death by his parents, John and Rufina Merculief; his wife, Gloria Merculief; and his sisters, Mary Peggy Itta, and Julianna Gaddis (Merculief). He is survived by his sister, Barbara; his brothers, Samuel, Philbert, and John David; and many beloved nieces and nephews.



MEMORY ETERNAL DOUG VELTRE

Following a two-year battle against pancreatic cancer, Douglas W. Veltre died peacefully the morning of June 19, with his wife Kathie by his side. During those two years he endured nonstop trips to doctors' offices and hospitals for procedures and chemotherapy, Whipple surgery at Virginia Mason in Seattle in June of 2026, followed by more chemotherapy here in Anchorage. His illness caused him to lead a life of nearly complete isolation from the wider world during that time. But though the cancer defeated his body and won in the end, nothing could destroy his indomitable spirit. Doug spent those two years enjoying his home, his family, music, books, the backyard where this year as always he nurtured his tomato and squash plants, and the birds, especially the Steller's jays that eventually learned they could eat peanuts from the outstretched palm of this gentle man.

Doug was born in Newark on April 10, 1948, to Thomas and Lois Flynn Veltre. He grew up in New Jersey, enjoying idyllic summers at a small family house "down the Shore." Doug became interested in Alaska while he was a student at Brown University, taking classes on northern archeology taught by Arctic specialist Douglas D. Anderson. This interest grew when he was at the University of Connecticut, studying under Jean S. Aigner and William S. Laughlin, both Aleutian archaeologists, who encouraged him to come to Alaska in 1971 to work at Nikolski Village on Umnak Island under a National Science Foundation Grant. In 1974, after graduating from the University of Connecticut, Doug began teaching at the University of Alaska Anchorage. During summers, Doug and his wife Mary did fieldwork at Koroviniski on Atka Island,



forming the basis of his doctoral dissertation. In the years that followed, in addition to teaching at UAA from 1972 to 2017, he conducted archaeological and ethnohistorical research in Adak, Unalaska, St. George, and St. Paul islands. On St. Paul his early work focused on the Russian exploitation of the Unangax people, who were taken against their will from the Aleutians to the Pribilofs to harvest and process fur seal pelts, which were sent back to Russia to be made into hats and clothing.

While teaching at UAA, Doug served as Chair of the Anthropology Department, as a founding member and president of the Alaska Anthropological Association, and was appointed by the governor to the Alaska Historical Commission. He continued to work as a consultant for the Aleut Corporation and the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association on issues concerning anthropology, archaeology, and repatriation. One of Doug's long-term projects was to prepare for publishing the diaries of Alan May, a participant in Ales Hrdlicka's 1936 expedition to the Aleutian Islands.

At the 2015 annual meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association, Doug's work was recognized by his colleagues through a Festschrift session, following which a volume in his honor was published in the journal *Arctic Anthropology*. In 2025, he received a Professional Achievement award from the association. In the same year, in an action that was deeply meaningful to Doug, the board of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association named him an "Honorary Aleut," and adopted him as one of their own.

Doug married his wife Kathie in 1995. He reveled in being a stepfather to her three children, Karen DiBari (John), Robert Wood

(Connie), Paul Wood, and step grandfather (PopPop) to Eli DiBari, loving nothing more than cooking a delicious – usually Italian – meal for them, then settling down for an evening of conversation and laughter. Doug remained curious about local and global culture and politics and never stopped being amazed by the natural world. He paid attention to daily wonder, relishing in the beauty of a spider's web, chuckling at a squirrel scurrying along the fenceline, getting up in the night to see an astronomical event, or documenting family events with his camera. Doug had a playful nature and his jokes and smile were a major part of his personality. He greeted others with generosity and kindness. We miss him so much.

Doug is survived by his wife Kathie and their children and grandson, his former wife Mary Flanigin, his sister Lois Tar, nieces Lara Gallo and Marybeth Sailer, nephew Thomas J. Tar, and their families.

Throughout his life, Doug treasured the network of lifelong friends and colleagues he gathered over the years in Alaska and beyond. He was incredibly grateful for the support provided by his friends, family, and

neighbors during his illness. His family wishes to thank the doctors and staff at Alaska Oncology and Hematology for their excellence and professionalism, as well as the nurses and doctors at Alaska Regional Hospital who were exceptionally kind to all of us during Doug's final hours.

Doug's enduring passion during his 56-year career in Alaska was for the Aleutian and Pribilof islands: the land, the culture, and the people. He encouraged and helped develop the Cultural Heritage Department and programs at the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association. The products of his work in the Aleutians and Pribilofs will be preserved for further study at their Unangax Heritage Library and Archive in Anchorage. Instead of flowers, Doug would have favored donations to that cause through the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, 1131 E. International Airport Road, Anchorage, AK 99518 or at their website, <https://apiai.org/fundraisers/>.





Weekly Virtual Elder Exercises with Lorraine

Weekly on Tuesdays

3:15pm - 3:30pm

Facebook Live - APIA's Facebook

Please join Lorraine Thomas, Elder Services Coordinator and team as they demonstrate simple chair exercises each week through Facebook Live on the APIA Facebook page. (www.facebook.com/APIAI)

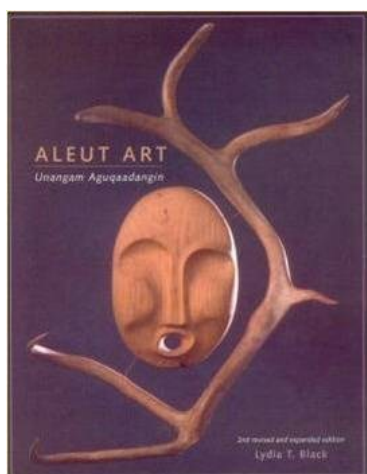
For more information, contact Lorraine Thomas at (907)276-2700 or via email LorraineT@apiai.org



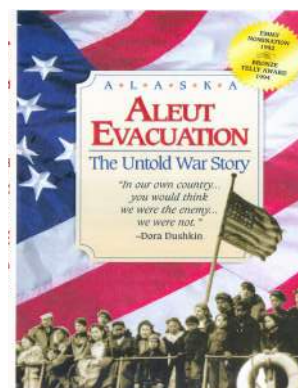
PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

Order Online! Visit our website at <http://www.apiai.org> to order these publications (*and more*) online! From APIA's homepage, select "Store" from the menu on top, then select a publication and proceed. If you would like to order by phone, please contact us at (907) 276-2700.

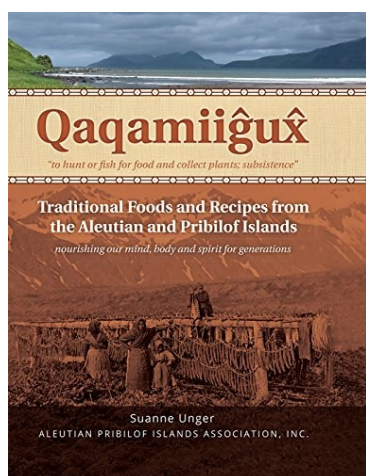
Prices do not include shipping & handling



Aleut Art
by Lydia T. Black
(Hardcover)
~~\$49.95~~ **\$25.00**

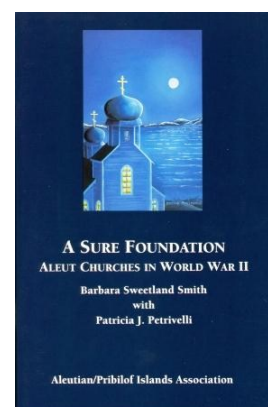


Aleut Evacuation
The Untold War Story -
DVD: \$19.95
Digital: \$15.95



Qaqamiigux: Traditional Foods and Recipes from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands
By Suanne Unger
HARDCOVER: \$39.99
SOFTCOVER: \$24.99
DIGITAL: \$9.99

A Sure Foundation
Aleut Churches in WWII
By Barbara Sweetland Smith with
Patricia J. Petrivelli
\$15.00





Connect with us!

General email:

apiai@api.ai.org

Phone: (907)276-2700

Toll-free: (800)478-2742

Fax: (907)279-4351

www.api.ai.org

Unangam Ulaa—
Home of the Aleuts

APIA's Anchorage Office

1131 E. International
Airport Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99518

www.facebook.com/APIAI

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 Unanga² cultural heritage.

¹Unangan [Eastern dialect], Unangas [Atka Dialect] - Aleuts, plural form; ²Unanga² - Aleut, singular form

ALEUTIAN PRIBILOF ISLANDS ASSOCIATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark Snigaroff, Chair—Atka IRA Council

Nick Tutiakoff, Vice Chair—Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska

Arnold Dushkin, Sgt. At Arms—Nikolski IRA Council

Etta Kuzakin, Secretary/Treasurer—Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove

Kaylyn Pelkey, Director—Akutan Tribal Council

Delores Kochuten, Director—Belkofski Village Council

William Shellikoff, Jr., Director—False Pass Tribal Council

Leona Nelson, Director—Nelson Lagoon Tribal Council

Hillary Smith, Director—Pauloff Harbor Tribe

Carla Chebetnoy, Director—Qagan Tayagungin Tribe of Sand Point

Mark Merculief, Jr., Director—St. George Traditional Council

John Melovidov, Director—Tribal Government of St. Paul Island

Amy Foster, Director—Unga Tribal Council