

Nupuat

A quarterly publication of Chugachmiut, the tribal not-for-profit organization serving the Alaska Native peoples of the Chugach Region.



Summer 2023 Edition

Chugachmiut Regional Health Center Groundbreaking, page 8



Chugachmiut board members Larry Evanoff, Vice Chair, Fran Norman, Chair, and Arne Hatch, Director.
Photo by Mackenzie Banbury

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | | | |
|---|----|--|----|
| Chugachmiut Career Opportunities | 2 | Tatitlek Cultural Exchange | 11 |
| Step Challenge, Health Fairs & Recovery Camp .. | 3 | Qutekcak Native Tribe Technology Upgrades ... | 12 |
| Fire and Forestry Programs Update..... | 4 | Boating Safety | 12 |
| Education..... | 6 | Nunaka Game App Released..... | 13 |
| Realty – Probate Process..... | 7 | Finance Team Spotlight | 14 |
| Regional Health Center Groundbreaking | 8 | Employee Spotlight - John H. Yakanak, Jr. | 15 |
| Qutekcak Native Tribe Celebration..... | 10 | Contact Us and Board List..... | 16 |

Career Opportunities

Employee Benefits

Chugachmiut is a rapidly growing 501(c)(3) non-profit agency the Tribal consortium created to promote self-determination to the seven Native communities of the Chugach Region. We are seeking highly motivated, talented candidates to join us on our journey to excellence. At Chugachmiut, you not only start a job but a career that truly makes a difference in the lives of others. Chugachmiut has a hiring preference for qualified Alaska Native and American Indian applicants pursuant to P.L. 93-638 Indian Self Determination Act. Reach out to our HR department at Employment@Chugachmiut.org with any questions.



Scan this QR code to learn more.

Benefits for Full-Time Employees

- Medical and Prescription Insurance – 100% of premiums paid for employees, 50% for eligible dependents
- Dental & vision plans – 100% of premiums paid for employees, 50% for eligible dependents
- Life insurance
- Short and long-term disability
- 401(a) pension plan
- Voluntary 403(b) TDA with Roth contributions
- Employee Assistance Program
- Aflac Voluntary supplemental benefits
- Subsidized gym memberships
- Paid time off
- 13 paid holidays
- Bereavement leave
- Professional Development Plans

Career Opportunities

We are hiring for several positions at Chugachmiut around the region! We offer robust benefits to full-time employees. We would love to have you join our team!

Opportunities Throughout Region

- Addictions Counselor Specialist (Anchorage)
- Department of Education Director (Anchorage)
- CHAP Director (Seward)
- Facilities & Quality Improvement Manager (Anchorage)
- HRIS Coordinator (Anchorage)
- IT Support Specialist (Anchorage)
- Strengthening Families Program Assistant (Any Regional Community)
- Timber Cruisers (Nanwalek & Port Graham)
- Timber Cruiser Assistants (Nanwalek & Port Graham)
- Village Advanced Practice Provider - NP or PA (Seward)
- Village Public Safety Officer (Tatitlek)
- Youth Advocate (Any Regional Community)

APPLY TODAY

www.vscyberhosting.com/Chugachmiut

Step Challenge, Health Fairs & Recovery Camp

Striding for Safety - 2023 Step Challenge

Cama'i! Join the step challenge for summer 2023 – Striding for Safety on July 1st-August 31st! It is not too late to join this safe and fun way to get more activity this summer. We will hold various prize drawings for 5K, 7K or 10K daily step averages over the challenge period. Sign up with the [Movespring app](#) or scan the QR code (at right) with your mobile device for link. All previous challenge participants are automatically enrolled in this new step challenge. Contact Joseph Nyholm, MS, RDN, Registered Dietitian/Diabetes Program Coordinator, with any questions at JosephN@Chugachmiut.org. Quyanaa & AwA'ahdah for joining the step challenge!



Save the Date for 2023 Health Fairs!

Join us for the annual community health fair in Port Graham, Nanwalek, Chenega and Tatitlek! Participate in this year's exciting activities and take steps towards a healthier lifestyle. Win prizes for floor bingo and survey drawings!

There will be prizes for adults and kids! Prizes will vary at each location and *may* include a fitness watch, instant pot, yoga mat, massage ball set, balance board, art kit and outdoor adventure kit.

**2023
HEALTH
FAIRS!**



| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Port Graham August 1 11am-3 pm Council Building | Nanwalek August 3 11am-3 pm Community Building | Chenega August 15 11 am-3 pm at the Community Building | Tatitlek August 17 11 am-3 pm Community Building |
|--|---|---|---|

Contact Joseph Nyholm, MS, RDN, with any questions at JosephN@Chugachmiut.org.

Llangarwiik Recovery Camp in Valdez

**LLANGARWIK
CHUGACHMIUT
RECOVERY CAMP**

SEPTEMBER 10-24 IN VALDEZ

***Join us for 14 days of wellness and recovery -
holistic, natural and traditional.***



Past campers appreciate reconnecting and describe it as fun, deeply felt, and a good start toward a new tomorrow. To enroll, contact Eydie at 907-602-8644 or eydief@chugachmiut.org.

Fire and Forestry Programs Update

We are excited to bring you the latest updates from the Chugachmiut Fire and Forestry programs. Over the past year, our program has experienced significant growth and progress. We extend a special thanks to the incredible team who serve as the Chugachmiut forestry and fire workforce. Your commitment and hard work are invaluable, and we truly appreciate everything you do. If you have any forestry or fire-related questions, please reach out to us at forestry@chugachmiut.org.

Denali Wildland Fire Module

After a two-decade hiatus, we are thrilled to announce the return of the Denali Crew to Chugachmiut as the Denali Wildland Fire Module established in a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. The 10-person fire module crew will manage fires rather than suppress them. Allowing fires to burn in a controlled manner allows fire benefits without putting other values at risk such as homes and fish camps and Native allotments. The crew is starting out as a development crew that will progress into an innovative, safe, highly mobile, logistically independent, and versatile fire module crew to help maintain fire's role as a natural ecological process within wildland fire management and incident operations. This crew will be stationed at our headquarters in Kenai and will assist the Forest Service with project work and dispatch to wildland fire with the Yukon Crew.



New Denali Wildland Fire Module logo!

Yukon Fire Crew



The Yukon Fire Crew has managed to stay busy despite a slow fire season. In mid-June, the crew was dispatched to pre-position up near Delta Junction because of drier conditions and expected lightning. While the rain kept fires low this season, the crew participated in some interesting construction projects including building a fire lookout for the Alaska Division of Forestry (pictured at left). The Alaska fire season is all but over, and the crew will soon be dispatched to the lower 48 to assist in seasonal firefighting efforts.

Yukon Fire crew members cut logs.



Some Yukon crew members did project work for the U.S. Forest Service. Left to right: Peter Seton, Jr., Gavin Bennett, Peter Tomaganuk, Devlin Mekiana, Preston Kvasnikoff, Gregory Rivers, Jr. and Ernest Ryan David. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service - Chugach National Forest.

Fire and Forestry Programs Update, continued

Welcome to Our Team – Paige Peterson

Paige Peterson has joined our team to manage our hazardous fuels program at a Fuels Planner. She will focus on the planning and implementation of projects that reduce the threat of wildfire in communities and support our fire crews with project work during their off-assignment periods. She previously worked as the Forestry Resources Coordinator with the Association of Village Council Presidents in Bethel and has a deep passion for Alaska and its people. Paige is eager to continue learning and growing in her new position and we are fortunate to have her on the team.



Forest Inventory



The forest inventory of Native allotments in the Port Graham and Nanwalek communities has continued this summer. Despite the wet and cool spring, we were able to get one productive inventory trip into our most difficult to reach allotments. We are planning another trip for late summer. If you are interested in forest inventory work, please apply to the “Timber Cruiser” job posting in Port Graham and Nanwalek on our website. *See application link on page 2.*

Forester Nathan Lojewski checks his GPS for the next plot location.

Bark Beetle Monitoring

We have continued the bark beetle trapping program outside of Port Graham for the eighth year. We have not detected any notable increase in bark beetle populations this year. We hope to keep this monitoring effort continuing as the threat remains high. We are grateful to our beetle trapper Ben Meganak, Jr. for his dedication managing our beetle traps for eight summers now. His grit, knowledge, and experience in the woods has been much appreciated!

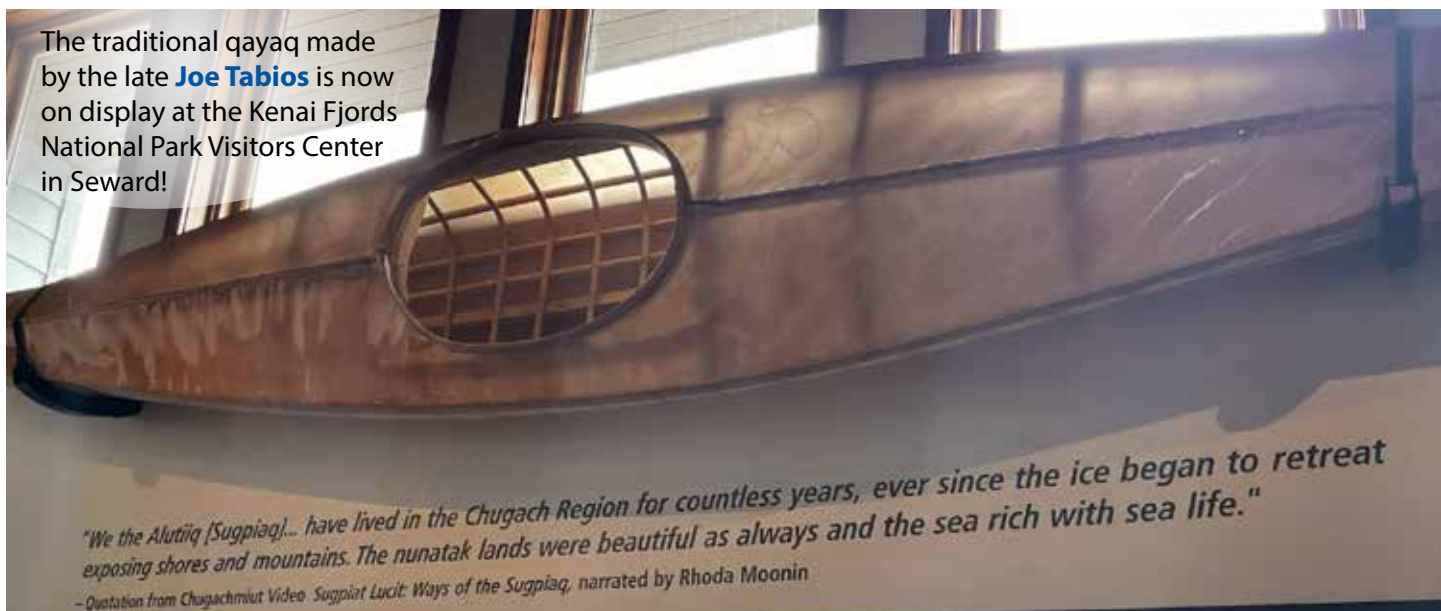


Port Graham’s Ben Meganak, Jr. setting bark beetle traps for the 2023 trapping season.

Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation Education

The Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation department has had an active summer of cultural engagement in the Qutekcaq (Seward) community. This past year Kenai Fjords National Park (KFNP) and Chugachmiut have engaged in a joint project to build a traditional qayaq from the Chugach Region. Master Builder Joe Tabios guided this project with two apprentices, Chris Tabios and Jonathon Sawden. Sadly, Joe Tabios passed away last fall. The skinning of the qayaq was completed by Andrew Abyo, both a master builder and good friend to Joe. A dedication and celebration will occur later this summer.

The traditional qayaq made by the late **Joe Tabios** is now on display at the Kenai Fjords National Park Visitors Center in Seward!



Staff enjoy sharing Sugpiaq traditions with school youth through multiple classroom visits, teaching about foods found in the intertidal zone, plants gathered to make baskets, and traditional masks in the region. This engagement fosters cultural preservation, inspires diversity, curiosity, and cultivates future advocates.

Nick Jordan gives a cultural presentation at Seward Elementary School.



Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation has partnered with the Seward Chamber of Commerce to promote cultural engagement in the Seward community through an informative display. Sugpiaq art, cultural items, and artifacts from the Chugach region are displayed along with information about each item. By sharing local Indigenous culture, we can foster understanding, appreciation, and respect for the rich heritage that shapes our diverse communities.

Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation Education

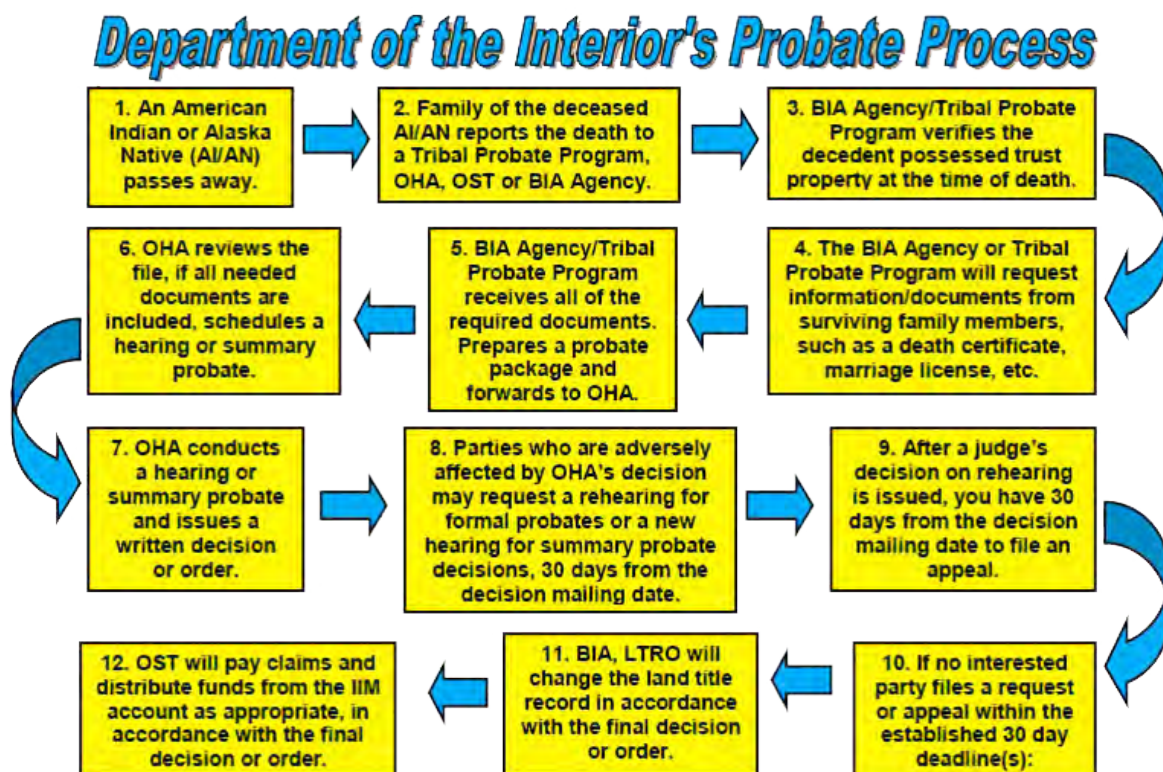


Seward area kayak guide training

Every year, we actively engage with local kayak guides to share our traditional knowledge and cultural traditions. Through this training, we ensure the dissemination of accurate cultural information about our vibrant communities throughout the region. By educating the guides, we empower them to provide precise and authentic information to the thousands of guests who visit Seward annually.

Realty Department - Probate Process

One of the most frequently asked questions is, "Why does it take so long to complete the probate process?" There is no set time frame for the process of probating trust or restricted lands and/or trust funds. The completion of a probate requires the coordination and collaboration of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Agency, Land Titles and Records Office, Office of Hearings and Appeals, and Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians. Gathering the required documents such as death certificates, marriage licenses, and adoption decrees requires the cooperation of the decedent's heirs. The gathering of these documents can sometimes take months to complete; therefore, it is important that interested parties respond to requests for information in a timely manner. The Chugachmiut Realty department is available to help walk you through these processes. Please contact us at (907) 562-4155.



Resource: "Do You Know Who Will Inherit Your Land?" booklet info from BIA available at www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dop/your-land.

Chugachmiut Regional Health Center Groundbreaking

Architectural rendering of the Chugachmiut Regional Health Center



A ceremonial groundbreaking of the Chugachmiut Regional Health Center was held on June 3 in Qutekcak (Seward). Chugachmiut has operated the North Star Health Clinic since 1987 in Seward but, by January 2025, the 19,475 square-foot Chugachmiut Regional Health Clinic will be constructed and operating. The Center will serve as Chugachmiut's regional medical hub providing medical, dental, and behavioral health services for Alaskans in medically underserved areas within our region. Key benefits of the completed project include bringing an estimated \$60 million in federal funding to Alaska over the next 20 years; new jobs through the hiring of local contractors and construction personnel; the employment of 48.5 permanent healthcare positions, including 24 new jobs created to staff the facility fully; and improved access to healthcare for underserved populations.

"Thank all the staff and everyone that put all of their hard work into this project. This project has been on the board's strategic plan to accomplish this. We are very excited to be here today with you."

- **Fran Norman**, Chair, Chugachmiut (at right)

"I am really happy to have contributed a little bit to this great endeavor of ours."

- **Larry Evanoff**, Vice Chair, Chugachmiut (middle)



"I just want to welcome everybody here. This is a project that has been a long time coming. It is great to see it finally come to fruition. Thank you to everyone who had a part in making this happen."

- **Arne Hatch**, Director, Chugachmiut
(at left on above photo)

Chugachmiut Regional Health Center Groundbreaking

"We would not be here today without the many, many partnerships we've developed up to now. On behalf of every man, woman, and child, this clinic and its staff will bring back to health or help to prevent or ease a serious illness or death, I express the deepest gratitude to our partners."

A huge thank you to the City of Seward and the Seward City Council. Thank you so much for going through your process and agreeing to sell this piece of land to us. This is a fine site."

- Angela (Jan) Vanderpool, Executive Director



Project supporters eagerly contributed to our Center groundbreaking. Left-right: **Robert Chambers**, Director, Community Facilities & Water and Environmental Programs & Business Programs, USDA Rural Development, **Cordelia Kellie**, Special Assistant for Rural Affairs, Office of Senator Murkow and **Julia Hnilicka**, State Director, USDA Rural Development.

"This new regional health care facility in Seward, and the expanded services it will offer, is an example of how committed the Biden-Harris Administration is to providing culturally-responsive care and decreasing wait time and the need to travel for medical, dental, and behavioral health services for people who live and work far from major cities." - **Julia Hnilicka**



A reception was held after the ceremonial groundbreaking and afterwards got to see architectural renditions of the Chugachmiut Regional Health Center.



Chugachmiut Health Services Division staff join the groundbreaking. Left-right: Kelley Baker, Julie Crites and Albi Tatum.

Project Partners & Supporters

Architect, Architects Alaska
Project Manager, Converge Project Management
Contractor, Roger Hickel Contracting
City of Seward Council
Indian Health Services

USDA Rural Development
Senator Lisa Murkowski
Converge Project Management
Northrim Bank

Qutekçak Native Tribe Celebration

Qutekçak Native Tribe 2023 Celebration of Healthy Lifestyles Picnic

Quyanaa, AwA'ahdah, thank you to Qutekçak Native Tribe for inviting us to their 2023 Celebration of Healthy Lifestyles Picnic. Congratulations on having a successful picnic!



Photos by Mackenzie Banbury and Angela Gonzalez

Tatitlek Community School Cultural Exchange

A group of students from the Tatitlek Community School traveled to Mexico in May. A part of their trip included participating in a cultural exchange with the American School of Puerto Vallarta. They demonstrated Native Youth Olympic (NYO) games including Indian and Eskimo stick pull, seal hop, one-foot high kick, and two-foot high kick. The Tatitlek students performed Sugpiaq songs and dances in traditional regalia. They also enjoyed making a Mexican craft project. American School of Puerto Vallarta students performed traditional Mexican dances. They served tacos and shared lunch with students.



Brandon Moonin, a Sugt'stun Language Teacher, accompanied the students on the field trip. He said, "Highlights included culture exchange with school in Puerto Vallarta, Sugt'stun lessons aboard cruise in route to Mexico, and VIP access at L.A. Spark basketball game."

"We recently welcomed Tatitlek Community School for an unforgettable cultural exchange. From playing traditional games to savoring our delicious tacos, the day was filled with joy and shared experiences. Our students showcased their traditional dances, and in return, we were captivated by their rich heritage. It was a remarkable journey of discovery and connection. Thank you, Tatitlek Community School, for this incredible visit!" - American School of Puerto Vallarta



Photos courtesy of Tatitlek Community School and American School of Puerto Vallarta

Qutekcak Native Tribe Technology Upgrades

The Chugachmiut Information Technology team has been working on upgrading technology for the Qutekcak Native Tribe (QNT) office in Qutekcak (Seward). Chugachmiut applied for an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) grant to fund the project, and the Tribe was awarded the funds to replace all outdated technology.

The following has been replaced:

- A new file/print server with a tape backup system has been installed.
- New desktop computers with dual monitors and Windows 11 Pro installed.
- iPads for all tribal council members to attend virtual Zoom meetings.
- Old network wiring has been removed, and new CAT6 cables were installed. This includes new cabling in the conference room, where they only had Wi-Fi in the past.
- The new IP phone system includes a new phone in each office, a new conference room phone, and a receptionist phone with an auto attendant.



Left to right: Kevin Stanley, Network Administrator of Chugachmiut; Jason Williams, Director of Information Technology & Corporate Security of Chugachmiut; Dolly Wiles, Tribal Administrator of QNT; and Jeanette Kiokun, Tribal Clerk of QNT.

The project's final phase is to upgrade the Tribe's conference room with two 50-inch conference room monitors and webcams, an Avaya teleconference phone, and an upgraded micro-computer with Zoom.

"We are proud to announce that with the amazing help from Jason, who works in the IT department with Chugachmiut and Fastwyre Broadband, our server, and phones are fully installed and working beautifully. We have been able to transition our older server with our new server successfully and can stay connected and up to date with the latest technology." - **Dolly Wiles**, Tribal Administrator, Qutekcak Native Tribe

Boating Safety in the Summertime



Did you know there are over 600 Kids Don't Float life jacket loaner boards in the state of Alaska? To date, more than 30 lives have been saved thanks in part to a life jacket from these loaner boards. You can donate used life jackets to the loaner board program, as long as they are in serviceable condition. Learn more about the Life Jacket Loaner Board Program at www.alaskaboatingsafety.org.

9 out of 10 boating fatalities in Alaska involved people who weren't wearing a life jacket or were never found. Cold water is dangerous. Make the pledge to live—wear a life jacket.

Contact Alaska Boating Safety Program at the website above or (907) 269-8700 for more info.

Nunaka Game App Released and Up for Award



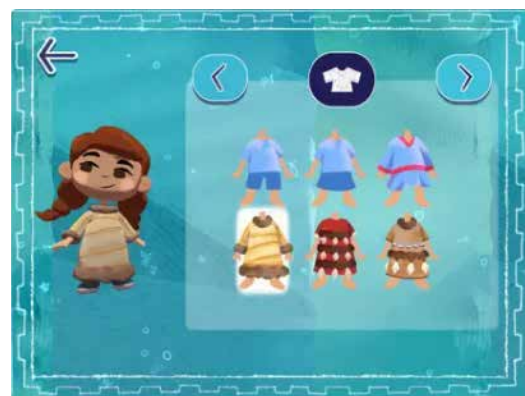
We're thrilled to announce that **Nunaka: My Village**, a fun and engaging mobile game, developed in collaboration with the Sugpiaq people, is now available in the Apple App Store! You may recognize some of the voices from the region in the app.

Brought to you by Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation Program, and FableVision in collaboration with Chugachmiut Birth to Five Head Start Program, Nunaka is a 3D learning app that includes the culture and language of our Sugpiaq heritage. This game addresses school readiness goals for kids, 3-5 years old. Players can choose their avatar (sample at right) and explore a village with their grandparents, Emaa and Apaa, making new friends and completing fun and challenging games along the way.

Nunaka is a finalist at the James Paul GEE! Learning Game Awards in the Formal Learning (Elementary) category! Quyanaa and Awa'ahdah for everyone who voted Nunaka for the People's Choice Award (winner to be announced in late July)! Learn more at www.geeawards.com.

You can search "Nunaka: My Village" in the Apple app store to download it. As soon as it is available in the Google Play App Store, we will announce it. Visit www.chugachmiut.org for more info. Share the game with the littles in your life! Share a photo or video of you and/or your child playing the game. Be sure to tag us and use the hashtag of #NunakaGame. Enjoy!

Support provided by the U.S. Department of Education. Project Title: 84.356A Llargaklluku Llucillerpet Cummi: Becoming Aware. PR/Award: S356A190035-21



Check out a trailer with our very own, **Ephimia "Apamia" Moonin-Wilson**, Port Graham Sugt'stun Language Teacher!

Finance Team

Cama'i from the Finance Team!

The Finance Team at Chugachmiut is a diverse group of individuals dedicated to supporting the overall financial health of the organization. They strive to ensure that Chugachmiut remains a strong resource for the region.

Louise Chikigak serves as the Finance Division Director. Originally from Alakanuk, a village located at the mouth of the Yukon River near the Bering Sea Coast, Louise has been residing in Anchorage since June 2013. Before moving to Anchorage, she spent 17 years in Fairbanks. With eight years of experience in the finance department, Louise is proud to work with a wonderful team. She was highlighted in Nupuat Newsletter recently for earning her MBA-Health Services Administration degree. In her leisure time, she enjoys going on walks, making gaspeqs, participating in Native dancing, camping, fishing, and gathering berries to maintain her traditional lifestyle in an urban setting. Louise and her partner, Bebincio Lliaban, Jr., and have two children named Kole Chikigak Lliaban and Shayle Ozz Lliaban. They are proud grandparents to Kylan Jonathan Patkotak Lliaban who will be three months old this month.

Christopher J. Waetjen has served as a Payroll Accountant since 2021. He came to Alaska in 1991 and permanently relocated in 1994. holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from UAA and has over 15 years of experience in the field. He finds great satisfaction in learning about the diverse range of services provided by the organization. Outside of work, he keeps busy with his four children, and enjoys activities such as gardening, chicken farming, hiking, rafting, film photography, and playing retro video games.

Anesia Sawden serves as an Accounting Clerk. With a cumulative experience of approximately 20 years at Chugachmiut, she has been associated with the organization since March 1988. Originally from Port Graham, she is the daughter of Feona and Thomas Sawden. She is a proud mother of two incredible children, Jonathon Sawden and Kiona Williams, who have blessed her with two grandchildren each. During the winter months, Anesia participates in pool leagues twice a week. Additionally, she seeks out one new adventure every summer, ranging from activities like kayaking, horseback riding, or to taking a helicopter ride.

Alma Callis serves as the Travel Coordinator. She is dedicated member of the team and has been with Chugachmiut for 32 years. Her responsibilities include processing travel and trip reports, along with other accounting duties. She is always available to provide assistance and support with travel and trip reports. She is from Port Graham.

Jose Ortega Bodan serves as the Finance Manager. He was raised in Granada, Nicaragua, and moved to Anchorage in 1999. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and business Administration, as well as an MBA in Global Finance from Alaska Pacific University. Prior to Chugachmiut, he served as the Finance Manager for Boys & Girls Clubs of Alaska for a decade. Outside of work, he enjoys traveling, meeting new people, teaching, coaching youth sports, and acquiring new skills such as carpentry and computer coding. He feels a strong sense of belonging within the Chugachmiut region.

Staff Accountant **Kristy Wimberley** and Tribal Administrator **Gwen Kvasnikoff** round out the finance team. We are thankful for a well-rounded and strong finance team!



Employee Spotlight

John H. Yakanak, Jr.

John H. Yakanak, Jr., joined the Chugachmiut team as a Behavioral Health Clinician in May. He was born in Kodiak and grew up there and in Anchorage. His father's family is from Ahkiok, a village on the southern end of Kodiak Island. His mother's family is from Cordova (Katalla area). They are shareholders of Chugach Alaska Corporation. He has multiple ties to the Chugach region and is excited to return to communities in his position, including Chenega and Tatitlek.

John recently traveled to Port Graham where his Great Aunt Augusta (Yakanak) Kvasnikoff lived and met relatives there and from Nanwalek. "It was an awesome experience getting to meet family I didn't know before that trip! I am already excited to go back and visit." He enjoyed hearing fond memories and stories of his Great Aunt.



In his position, John will be working on the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (see below for more info) and Chugachmiut's toll-free Crisis Line (1-844-891-0444). He will be a co-director of the SAMHSA grant to expand awareness of suicide and crisis provide regional support to those who call in crisis. The project is in the early stages of expanding efforts to the communities of the region and work on educating on suicide prevention and treatment options, building up an Alaska 988 Coalition for collaborating with all Alaska Native regions for best practices of culturally appropriate and trauma-informed care within communities.

Prior to Chugachmiut, John worked for Native Village of Eyak's Ilanka Community Health Center in Cordova for four years. He was formerly a year-round commercial fisherman for 20 plus years out of Kodiak and the Bering Sea. He earned a bachelor's and master's degrees in Counseling Psychology from Alaska Pacific University. He loves biking year-round in Anchorage and road trips to other places to ride. He enjoys hiking, walking, sport fishing and has been learning to edit videos. He has learned to bead, and says, "I make earrings and necklaces mostly, when time permits, or I get inspired."

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline



Learn more about 988 in Alaska at 988.alaska.gov.

Hope has a new number, 988. People who call or text 988 will be directly connected to the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. This easy-to-remember number is for those currently in a mental health or substance use crisis or for people who have friends or family in distress. 988 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. To chat, click on the chat button at 988lifeline.org.

In addition to the 988 number and if you would prefer to speak with a local counselor familiar with the region, Chugachmiut has the toll-free 24/7 Crisis Line: 1-844-891-0444.



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Anchorage, AK 99508-3463
Toll Free Phone: (800) 478-4155
Behavioral Health Crisis Line: (844) 891-0444
www.chugachmiut.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Chugachmiut Board & Executive Leadership

A seven-member Board of Directors governs Chugachmiut; each board member selected by their tribal government. The Board of Directors appoints the Executive Director who manages the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Fran Norman, *Chair*
Port Graham

Larry Evanoff, *Vice Chair*
Chenege

Jim Ujioka, *Treasurer*
Valdez

John Kvasnikoff, *Secretary*
Nanwalek

Arne Hatch, *Director*
Qutekcak

Pamela Smith, *Director*
Eyak

Nanci Robart, *Director*
Tatitlek

Angela Vanderpool
Executive Director

Nupuat Newsletter

Have some suggested topics or feedback for our newsletter? We welcome submissions from Tribal members, councils and employees. To submit ideas, articles, stories, pictures for use in the Nupuat or to update your address, please contact us at media@chugachmiut.org or (907) 562-4155.