

Chugachmiut

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ALASKA NATIVE GAME CELEBRATED FOR LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION New Mobile Game Featuring Sugt'stun Language Wins Award

Anchorage, AK – Since its 2023 release, Chugachmiut's game *Nunaka: My Village – Where Language Comes to Play* has won four educational video game awards and received two additional nominations. This 3D learning app engages children in the Sugpiaq culture and Sugt'stun language of Alaska's Chugach region. It serves as an early childhood introduction to cultural heritage while supporting essential school readiness goals for Chugachmiut's federally funded Head Start program.

In recent competitions, *Nunaka* was honored with the following:

- **Silver** in the "Education, Art & Culture—Education or Literacy Platform" category at the [4th Annual Anthem Awards](#), 2024
- **Winner** in the "New product or service (Pre-K)" category of the [2024 EdTech Awards](#)
- **Gold Medal** in the [Serious Play Award Program](#) in their annual international competition (2024)
- **Best Formal Learning (Elementary)** game at the [James Paul GEE! Learning Game Awards](#), 2023

In addition, *Nunaka* received two notable nominations, including the 2024 Kidscreen Awards, Best Learning App – Original, *Finalist*, and 2024 Games 4 Change, Diverse Voices – New Stories Contest, *Nominee*.

Chugachmiut incorporated *Nunaka* into its Head Start centers in Nanwalek and Port Graham, where most of the children are of Sugpiaq heritage. The game is a supplemental tool, engaging children through interactive adventures that promote enthusiasm for their community, the Sugt'stun language, and Sugpiaq cultural values. It features culturally relevant games such as berry picking, sea creature identification, and qayaq riding, designed to improve fine motor skills and cognitive development.

To ensure cultural and linguistic authenticity, FableVision collaborated with the Nanwalek IRA Council and Port Graham Village Council in 2022. Elders provided voice recordings for scripts, and young Sugt'stun speakers tested the game for Chugachmiut's Head Start program. Their voices are included in the final product.

"We are grateful for the invaluable input from Elders and Sugt'stun language bearers in developing this culturally relevant learning platform for the Chugach region," says Angela 'Jan' Vanderpool, Executive Director of Chugachmiut. "With *Nunaka*, children can connect to their culture, language, and environment while achieving key school readiness goals."

"There were a lot of intricacies of working with Sugt'stun. This language has been passed down via oral tradition rather than as a written language, and there is an extremely small number of master speakers remaining, many of whom have lost some of their knowledge of the language over time," said Anne Richards, VP of FableVision's audio division.

Explore *Nunaka's* vibrant visuals and activities in the [trailer](#) and [introductory video](#). *Nunaka: My Village* is free to download from the Apple and Google Play app stores. The app was made possible with generous support from the U.S. Department of Education.

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About Chugachmiut

Chugachmiut is a 501(c)3 non-profit established in 1974 to serve and promote the self-governance of the seven Native tribes of the Chugach Region of Alaska. Chugachmiut offers a range of services to its seven constituent tribal communities, including primary care, dentistry, behavioral health, addictions counseling, trust and land management, heritage preservation, and wildland firefighting. Learn more at www.chugachmiut.org.

Photos:

1. Azalyn Ukatish-Evan plays *Nunaka: My Village* at the Nanwalek Head Start. Photo courtesy of Chugachmiut.
2. A fictionalized Sugpiaq village comes to life in *Nunaka*, featuring vibrant characters and activities. Image courtesy of Chugachmiut.
3. Create an avatar in *Nunaka*, complete with Sugpiaq regalia and traditional headdresses. Image courtesy of Chugachmiut.
4. Engage in culturally inspired activities, such as berry picking, in *Nunaka*. Image courtesy of Chugachmiut.
5. Since its 2023 release, *Nunaka* has earned four prestigious educational awards. Image courtesy of Chugachmiut.

