



2017 AWARDS

Alaska Head Start Association



OCTOBER 16, 2017

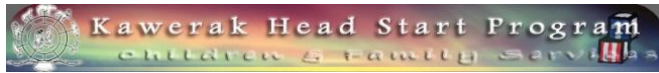
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

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Assistant Teacher of the Year

Fanny Kuzuguk



My name is Lucas Trunkey. I'm a new BSSD head start teacher. I would like to nominate Fanny Kuzuguk for the AHSA Assistant Teacher of the year award; for her consistent quality of work, long-time dedication, passion for student learning, and ability go above and beyond her job description. She has been a long time dedicated Kawerak Assistant Teacher for over 13 years; starting December 2004.

I have had the pleasure of working with Fanny Kuzuguk for the 2016-2017 school year. She mentored me during me entry process and created a smooth transition into the Shishmaref Head Start Classroom. She comes into work early and stays late. She always has a great positive attitude, is looking for ways to help me in creating lessons, and treats all the kids like her own.

Fanny is always cleaning, keeping up on paperwork, and making sure students needs are met. I can always count on her to teach daily as well as when I'm not able to be in the classroom. I'm able to create quality lessons with multiple perspectives from her many years of teaching. She is a wonderful, kind, and loving teacher. If I ever need anything she is the first person I ask. I would like to nominate Fanny Kuzuguk for the AHSA Assistant Teacher of the year award; for her consistent quality of work, long-time dedication, passion for student learning, and ability go above and beyond her job description.



Content Area Specialist of the Year

Kelsey Beecher



This letter is to serve as nomination for Kids' Corps Health & Nutrition Coordinator Kelsey Beecher for the AHSA Specialist of the Year.

Kelsey is very dedicated in helping the Family Advocates through her best ability. Kelsey would help provide a "who's due" list of children who have no source of ongoing health and dental care and referrals.

Kelsey helps and supports with resources for nutritional guidance, assists parents in understanding the importance of good health, nutrition and dental habits.

Kelsey volunteers to help solve difficult situations by requesting dental and physical exams. We appreciate her willingness to help everyone with faxing and calling dentists and doctor offices to request exams. She also helps to answer phone calls when the PSA is busy or unavailable.

When Family Advocates have a difficult time getting providers to send documentation of needed health documents, Kelsey is there with guidance and a helping hand. I have watched her personally make phone calls to nearly 20 different providers back to back in order to get the documentation we needed.

Kelsey has worked tirelessly with providers, families, and staff members in order to organize treatment that was needed for children in the program. When families were without insurance, she found ways for them to receive the extensive dental treatment that was needed.

Kids' Corps. is very fortunate to have such a caring and committed person to watch over the health needs of these children. In addition, I am very glad to be able to call her my friend and supervisor.

Kelsey is a ray of sunshine on a stormy day. She is always willing to lend a hand and is a true team player. Kelsey went out of her way to sit with and help a parent who had fainted in the hallway. As Kelsey sat in the hallway with the parent, she eased the parent's embarrassment by making conversation to make the day lighter. This is just one small instance of Kelsey's compassion for others and her commitment to the families we serve.



Kelsey goes “above and beyond” with teachers at KCI. When asked for lesson support she does not just pass on general info or ideas she has full lessons, kits and takes the time to educate the teacher so they can provide a better service. She is always willing to make tough calls to parents and she does so in an effortless way that leaves everyone feeling supported. She has endless patience for answering the same question repeatedly. She is brilliant at making children comfortable and safe while providing healthcare. She does not just do her job, she does it to a high standard of excellence that never falters and deserves to be commented on.

Maintenance Staff of the Year

Ginger Ameigh



I am pleased to nominate Ginger Ameigh for AHSA's Maintenance Staff of the Year. Ginger goes the extra mile every day to keep the center clean and ready for staff, children and families. Our center is as clean and fresh looking at the end of the year as it was the first day I returned for the year. That is saying a lot for Ginger's cleaning, because during the summer the center is deep cleaned and we have a professional cleaning company come in and strip and wax our floors.

Ginger goes out of her way to attend center events so she can meet the children and their families. She always asks if there is anything she can help with during our family events. She visits with our families and children so she gets to know them.



There are several things that Ginger does besides keeping the building fresh and clean. We have a closet that we keep extra winter gear and clothing in, that was kept somewhat a clean and organized way. She also took that project on and it is always neat and tidy, and you can find clothing and winter gear for the children with ease. Ginger leaves note for all the staff just to tell them to have a great day with the children. Also, we have a large fish tank in the main hall of the center. With a little embarrassment I have to say it was not kept as clean as it should and could have been. Ginger took over the care of the fish tank and it is now amazing. All the children and families enjoy sitting and watching the fish. Anyone that visits the center comments on the beautiful fish tank.

Without Ginger our center would not be the clean, safe environment for our staff, children and families.

Thank you for considering Ginger for AHSA's Maintenance Staff of the Year. All the staff at the Chugiak site is proud to have her as our janitor and cannot think of a person who is more deserving of this award. Once again it is my pleasure to nominate Ginger Ameigh for AHSA's Maintenance Staff of the Year! - Bonnie Monson

Please accept this nomination for Ginger Ameigh for AHSA's Maintenance Staff of the Year Award. Ginger has been with our agency for three years cleaning and maintaining one of our centers and our Administrative Office. Other centers are always trying to woo her over to their center, however, Ginger is proud of what she calls 'her school' and 'her folks' meaning not only the staff but also the families and children as well. Ginger has a day job but often takes leave from that job to attend center and agency events or arranges her schedule so she can be at 'her school' during an evening event so she can interact with everyone and help out.

Ginger is warm hearted, energetic, giving, and very enthusiastic. She performs her duties with high quality and great efficiency and also always puts in extra effort to find ways to make things better or to make someone smile. She often stops in the Admin office during her lunch hour to say hello, ask a question or play a practical joke; she has an excellent sense of humor.

We performed skits as entertainment at our end of the year party and Ginger has a role in both the Chugiak Center skit and the Admin skit. She also won the prize for the best 70's outfit. Oftentimes, evening janitors and maintenance workers are more distant from the day to day workings of the program. Ginger makes the effort to find other ways to contribute to the successful achievement of our mission. She makes a difference in so many ways and definitely has a Head Start heart. We love her. - Cathy Gruver

Bus Driver of the Year

Benjamin Tompkins



I would like to nominate Mr. Benjamin Tompkins from

FNA Head Start for Bus Driver of the year. Ben is an excellent bus driver. He is meticulous in his pre and post trips of the bus. He is safety first always. But he is way more than bus driver to our children and families.

He engages with families in a positive way, as one grandma helping to raise her 3 of her grandchild shared with me this year on a home visit "they wouldn't be able to come if Mr. Ben didn't pick up them up. He is a life saver to us." On every home visit and interaction she would ask me to let Mr. Ben know how thankful she was of him and the service he provided. She knew that all 3 of her grandchildren were considered high special needs and she knew it took extra time to load the one child on the bus that ended our center, she shared with me that she never felt rushed, or worried that Ben would leave without the child. She said: he was so patience even on the days when my grandson was throwing a fit. Ben would tell me (grandma) "It's going to be okay. He'll be fine once we get going. We will contact you later if he is not." She shared how even though she was grandma and knew as a parent that her grandson was fine but how it was so nice to see a bus driver share encouraging words and support her and her grandson during these tough transition. It help as this little guy by the end of the year would ask every day if Mr. Ben was coming to get him; even on the weekends.



Ben is also known to help around the building fixing things that go awry in our offices, he can be seen shoveling snow during storms or sweeping a classroom. He helps often before we even ask.

Ben also connects with our children in the classroom. I have seen Ben build relationship with some of our children who happen to have the hardest challenging behaviors, having the hardest time connecting to teachers and have watched these children flourish under Ben. One of the instances was when we ended up inside due to weather. Ben joined our Pm classroom in the block area and had printed out a structure that was built with wooden blocks. Ben began to build as the children joined him he gave little instruction to start and then step back and let the picture and children take over the learning experience. The children learned so much that day from Ben; they were talking about length, height, weight, velocity, special concepts, and colors. The children were problem solving on area at the same time learning to communicate using words and tactical learning with blocks and other items that were in the block area. The documentation the teachers were able to get this day alone was amazing.

Another example of Ben's connecting with children is one of our children whom has special needs. This little girl often would not come when called or re directed by her teacher. She liked to take care of babies and do her own thing. Ben's office happens to be adjacent to the classroom, meaning if his door is open he can see and hear the classroom. All Ben would have to do it walk out his door, walk to the little girl and say her name, she would jump up with the biggest smile and follow Ben to wash her hands, and join snack or whatever activity it was. Ben was one of the few to convince her most of the winter to wear her winter gear and keep it on. Her smile each time was priceless. This same child attended another school in our school district where our program has a classroom. One day Ben was visiting for a field trip and this child saw and started to yell his name and get

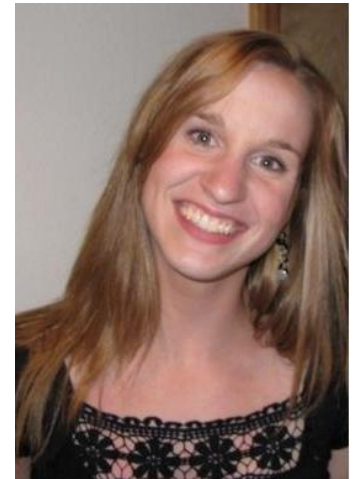
excited. When Ben said hi and explain to the teachers who he was. They were impressed because this showed how connected this child was to Ben and how much the child had grown in social emotional development in regards to people and connecting them.

Leadership Award of the Year

Emily Urlacher



Have you ever known someone who makes you want to be a better person just by being in his or her presence? A person you deeply admire, respect, and think, “The world is a better place because of this person.” Being in Emily’s presence encourages me to be the best version of myself.



Emily is a center director for Kids’ Corps, Inc. and has been with us since July of 2014. To my knowledge, this job is Emily’s first experience with supervising but; I have a feeling Emily has “led” people since her own preschool years.

This year Emily’s intentionality with creating a safe and nurturing environment for children, families, and staff was impressive. She set out with the goal of making the “Muldoon Family”. Where staff build each other up and not tear each other down.

An environment where staff ask for help and where staff give help. I have never seen a center work so well together. I know from observing her and hearing the feedback from her staff that much of this goal was accomplished through Emily role-modeling desired behaviors to her staff. She is an influence.

I asked Emily to tell me how she went about creating this environment. She told me that she conducted weekly meetings, that the Muldoon Center staff created goals together and, that in the middle of the year when morale was low she prepared an activity where she set out cards and they all wrote nice things about one another. She explained it was like a light switch went off and morale went back up. I found this interesting because Emily will tell you she is not a touchy feely person. I think she recognized her own staffs needs and was able to get out of how comfort zone in order to meet their need for affirmation.

The following are excerpts from her staff’s own words.

Natye Briggs, Teacher

Emily is so awesome! She is a joy to work with and very encouraging in so many ways. I had a huge transition this past year and could not have asked for a better supervisor. Emily went out of her way to make the transition process so smooth. Emily has helped me personally and professionally by listening to my feelings and pointing out my awesomeness that I neglect to see sometimes.

When I came into the classroom although the children connected with me quickly, it was Emily’s insight that helped me through the storm. Her encouragement kept me smiling; her gratitude supported my perseverance, and her willingness to back me I deeply appreciate. Emily is the “Model Supervisor”. I look forward to working with her next year.

Chawanda Reynolds, Teacher

Emily has been a strength at Muldoon Center. I could not have asked for a more warm and caring person to work with. When I first started at Muldoon, she had me and another assistant teacher meet with her to go over her expectations and our responsibilities. During that meeting, she let me know that she was there for me in any way I

needed. Emily consistently stood by her words throughout the year. She has been a huge help in the classroom, with documentation, and giving children much needed one on one time. The children enjoy having her in the classroom each day. I am thankful to Emily for a great first year at Kids' Corps, Inc.

Tulua Falealili, Family Advocate

What a wonderful opportunity to work with Emily! From the instant I began working with her there was connection. I have so much fun working with her. I have seen how hard she works in the classroom and in her role as supervisor. Emily has so much love for the children and families. She is always willing to help me when I need to have difficult conversations with parents. Emily never loses her patience with staff, parents, or me. She is there any time I need help. I want to thank her for being so flexible and good at leading.

Kayla Reed, Assistant Teacher

I have had the pleasure of working with Emily since I began in December 2015. Emily is amazing. She is kind and has been the best supervisor I have ever had. Emily is a great role model. She has taught me how to be patient and calm at the hardest times. Emily had supported me all year. It has been a tough year for our classroom. We have many high needs families going through varying crises. Emily has been right by my side. She never gives up on me. She demonstrates great strength and tenacity. I walk into work early every day to see Emily with her morning smile, coffee, and fun ideas. Emily is there any time I need her for just about anything. I want to thank her for everything she does and recognize her for her support and leadership. I hope I get to work with her again next year.

I have worked at Kids' Corps, Inc. for almost twelve years and rarely do I come across someone as special and well suited for leadership. It is clear to me that Emily loves to serve. She makes leading look easy. She is a great role model for her staff, her peers, her families at Muldoon, and me. I want to recognize her for her amazing contribution to Kids' Corps, Inc. I have watched Emily publicly recognize several of her peers as well as staff she supervises. It is time Emily is recognized for her amazing leadership and contribution to Head Start. Without hesitation, I recommend Emily Urlacher for the Alaska Head Start Association's Leadership Award.

Katrina Ahlfield

Human Resources Manager

Kids' Corps, Inc.

Head Start Mother of the Year

Emelina Haring-Furment



I would like to nominate Emelina Haring-Furment as Head Start Mother of the Year for many reasons. Last year, I nominated her for AHSA Beating the Odds Award and shared her story. This year her story continues and she is still working hard toward self-sufficiency for her family. Being a mom is no easy task, add in that she is a single teen mom and has two children currently under the age of 3 years old in our KCI EHS program, most adults could be easily overwhelmed in this same situation.

Emelina has been with me since our 2014-2015 school year with her first-born daughter Elliana starting in our Home Based program. Once age eligible, Elliana attended our Center-Based Full-



day program. To be in full-day services, previously parents must be working or schooling full-time and qualify for childcare assistance. Emelina maintained that for these past two school years for the most part. When she gave birth last summer to her son Israel, she could not get child care assistance due to staying home on FML and transferred back into our Home-Based program for summer services. She then returned to Center-Based at the start of this past school year as Emelina returned to work. She worked at a local McDonald's trying her best to make ends for these past two years. She transitioned out of the shelter once receiving housing assistance and has been able to maintain the same stable housing she acquired over a year ago. She stopped attending ASD high school because it did not fit her needs and began Nine Star services. She finished her requirements and will be walking in her graduation ceremony 6/22/2017.

Motherhood is a choice Emelina makes every day. To put her child's happiness and well-being ahead of her own. She teaches the hard lessons and strives to do the right thing for her children. Being a single mom does not hold Emelina back from setting goals and making her dreams come through. With her recent completion of high school, she recently turned in her notice at McDonald's and started new employment. Her last day at McDonald's she was so elated, for that starts the next chapter in her life. She is also in process of applying to work at KCI as an Assistant Teacher or Substitute since she is always volunteering and attending our events, she loves the community/team work culture we have here at KCI and wants to be a part of that.

Emelina is always planning for her future, you hear her say aloud how important it is for her to have both children in our program. She is always recruiting families and advocating about our services. She waited several months to get her second child in our program and in the upcoming Fall, she will have to transport the children to two different sites that are miles apart due to their ages. She is always scheduling appointments and check-up for the children. She completed an allergy test because her daughter was having allergy reactions and even a referral for language development when she was concerned working with PIC. She took her daughter to the dentist several times and even tried new treatment and got dental surgery removing her front teeth. For her son she tried different formulas to find the right one and is in process of getting his allergies tested too since mom and sister have food and other allergies.

Emelina is always volunteering in the classrooms even when we do not have scheduled events. She brings her friends/relatives, and talks about our program with such pride. She attended our agency advisory and gave input to support our site. We are so proud of Emelina, she recently received a grant to start college in the Fall at ACC. Emelina Haring-Furment is very deserving of this Head Start Mother of the Year Award to show her, her hard work as a mom is worthwhile, is noticed and much appreciated.

Thank you, Selina Ellis

Administrative Support Staff of the Year

Kim Brown



Kim Brown is our Operations Manager and has been a part of the CCS Early Learning family for 14 years. Her organizational skills are amazing, efficient and

very productive. Kim is a pro keeping up with four centers; making sure all their licensing requirements are current along with making sure each center has exactly what they need to function efficiently and safely. From snow removal in the parking lots, licensing so our doors can be open, down to the liquid hand soap in the restrooms, Kim has got it covered!

If an appliance breaks down, Kim is the one to call; If there are bus issues, Kim gets that squared away; if the playground equipment is in disarray, Kim comes to the rescue; when we have been in between janitors, Kim picks up the slack; finding



office furniture or kiddo equipment and then making sure it ends up at the right location when needed- yes, that is what she does also. Need a battery, (any size) a tool of some sort, super glue - Kim. Need interior decorating tips for your office, tips on keeping an efficient file cabinet – Kim. Need a problem solved – Kim!

Now that I have expressed some of the reasons why she is amazing, let me express why I believe she is worthy of this award. Kim will work around the clock, over weekends and holidays to make sure CCS Early Learning is in compliance in the areas she is responsible for, licensed and ready to provide for the children that come through our doors. The love she pours through her work is evident in everything she touches.

A human body is made up of many crucial parts that are necessary for it to operate smoothly, so is our team at CCS Early Learning and Kim is a very crucial part who is necessary for us to operate smoothly. Nominating Kim for an award is a wonderful way to show our appreciation for all that she does for our Head Start!

Administrative Support Staff of the Year

Marti Corpuz



Marti began her involvement with Head Start when her child was a student. Her career with Tlingit and Haida Head Start began in 1988 on the Management Team as an Administrative Assistant 1. With her knowledge and excellent organizational skills she was soon promoted to an Administrative Assistant 2.

Presently she is our fearless Program Operations Coordinator supporting programs and staff in 10 South East Alaska communities serving 15 classrooms.

Thanks to her expertise and Wonder Woman secret powers, she processes paperwork through the Tlingit and Haida HR system, organizes invoices, codes and pays bills and creates financial systems without breaking a sweat.

Marti daily utilizes her professional administrative skills and her get things done attitude to provide the nuts and bolts at all levels of the program. Marti has participated in and weathered several Federal Reviews. Her components are always well organized, accurate and complete. During these stressful reviews, she would take time out of her day to provide support and encouragement to other team members ensuring the program's success.

Marti has been a hands on supervisor though numerous classroom and office moves. She has no problem rolling up her sleeves and moving desks, toys, equipment, and computers in and out of moving vans. Along with providing direction in packing and moving, she would ensure food and water was readily available for all.

Karin a previous co-worker stated, “Marti has long been an important element of the Head Start Management Team. Often when wondering what step to take next, the advice given is, ask Marti. During meetings or retreats Marti is the model of efficiency for stocking supplies and encouraging food donations from co-workers. Following her around and helping is like following a whirlwind”.

With Marti’s varies promotions and job changes, she has had to wears many, many hats. One of those hats was a party hat! She knows the importance of supporting and celebrating teachers and coworkers and takes this responsibility very seriously. Marti will often take the lead to organize celebrations, potlucks, ensure birthdays are recognized and honoring people who have had major accomplishments in their work life. By the way, she makes the best cakes ever!

Marti knows firsthand the joys and challenges of living in a small native community. She brings her native cultural values of humor, sharing and hard work to her job. You will never see her standing in front of an auditorium of people to talk or take a bow, but she is there. She is the behind the scenes unsung hero who makes things happen.



Thong Lor



Thong Lor is an exemplary teacher. We deeply appreciate all she does to support children, families, and co-workers at Kids' Corps, Inc. She creates an optimal learning environment for the children in her classroom by exuding a sense of enthusiasm and wonder about the world. Thong creates a safe, loving, learning environment in which children feel they belong, are capable, and thus are able to develop to their fullest potential. Her children in her classroom love being around her; she ensures that each child feels valued and loved each day. If you could clone a teacher Thong would be a prime candidate.

Thong is dedicated to her own professional development and continues to increase in knowledge and skills. In November of 2009, Thong was hired by KCI as a substitute teacher. By June of 2010, she became an assistant teacher and had completed her CDA credential. She quickly gained speed and with perseverance achieved her academic goals. Thong became a teacher and completed her 2 year degree in Early Childhood Studies by October of 2011. Although she was already a teacher, Thong kept working towards a higher education. In March of 2014, Thong had completed her bachelor's degree in Human Services.



Thong is a joy to be around. She is always smiling and greets everyone inside and outside her classroom with a warm, inviting presence. I think that is why the children and families respond so well to her. Every year families request Ms. Thong and are even willing to move to a completely different center so their child can be with her. Thong communicates with families respectfully providing support, encouragement, and reassurance. One child was having an extremely difficult time each day on the bus to the point the grandmother who was raising the child was going to withdraw him. Thong calmly spoke to grandma about the child's behavior, reassured grandma that together they could work through it, problem solved and found solutions by creating a sticker chart reward system to implement at school and at home with rewards for the desired behavior. Parents look forward to home visits with Thong. She creates and brings homemade activities and "homework" binders that are individualized for every child. Parents love them and often request more activities.

I have seen children with extreme behaviors when starting in her classroom, learn to manage their feelings, ask for help, and remain calm in situations that would normally be a trigger. Ms. Thong always has an abundance of activities in her classroom, almost to the point you don't know where to look because the children are so busy busy busy. She walks around the room asking questions to the children that increases their higher order thinking skills. She shows on a daily basis what an exemplar teacher looks like by her detailed planning and effort to scaffold topics together for children to understand. Ms. Thong is also dual language and so effortlessly caters to the languages in her classroom by using Hmong and English to support their language development.

Thong works well with everyone and is a natural leader. Co-workers often come to her for advice on how to approach a situation with a child or family. Thong is always professional and openly communicates with others in a collaborative, respectful manner. She keeps everyone informed of the events in her classroom and the schedule and makes all feel welcome in her classroom. You can feel the sense of belonging and family from the children and Ms. Thong and you are welcomed into their community when you visit. In short we believe Thong deserves the Teacher of the Year award because she never stops giving to the children in her classroom, their families, or her coworkers around her.

Thong Lor worked as an assistant teacher at Kids' Corps, Inc. during the mid-to-late 2000s but left to help support her family. When reviewing her employment application in November of 2009 I was delighted to see an application from Thong as she was known as a hard worker and very dedicated to KCI and the children and families we serve. Although there were not any assistant teacher openings at the time, Thong enthusiastically

accepted a substitute position. As soon as an opening became available I promoted her into an assistant teacher position and I have never regretted that decision. Thong worked diligently and received her CDA within 6 months. Thong received an A.A. degree in ECE in October, 2011. For the next couple of years Thong would graciously support KCI by taking on interim teaching positions when a vacancy would occur during the school year. During this time all I received was positive feedback from her supervisors. The feedback would include how receptive Thong was in learning to be a teacher and continually improving her performance. January, 2013 I promoted Thong into a permanent teacher position and the children and families she has served have been very grateful. Thong has continued her professional development and was awarded a B.A. in March, 2014. I cannot think of a person more deserving of the Alaska Head Start association Teacher of the Year award than Thong Lor!

Community Advocate of the Year

Debi Baldwin



I would like to nominate Debi Baldwin, RurAL CAP Child Development Division Director, for the Alaska Head Start Association's Community Advocate of the Year Award. Debi has been shaping and advocating for Head Start, and early childhood programs in general, in Alaska since 1998.

Debi embraces all Early Childhood programs and is a staunch advocate for high quality, comprehensive early childhood services. Debi is, and always has been, one of the first in our early childhood community to share with the legislature, the governor, and our representatives in Washington about the importance of a broad spectrum of high quality early childhood programs and choices for Alaskan families. Debi epitomizes the Stephen Covey principle of "seek first to understand, then to be understood." She's a great listener, one of the qualities that make her such an effective advocate. Additionally, she's really good at being understood too--her message is always very clear and tailored to her audience.



Debi has served as AHSA's representative to the Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC) since the council's inception. She also is serving on the Board of Best Beginnings, is a member of the March of Dimes Advisory Board and the Nutaqsiivik Advisory Board, the Parents as Teachers Alaska State Leader, a Help Me Grow Alaska Leadership team member, and a committee member for Learn and Grow.

Debi is solution-focused. If she runs into a road block, she finds a way to get around the problem, and typically ends up improving services to children and families. A perfect example is Project PAK. Alaskan Head Start (especially Early Head Start) programs serving remote communities were having a difficulty meeting the EPSDT requirements for Well Child Checks (WCCs). Debi was a part of the group that conceptualized the partnership between the Office of Head Start, State of Alaska, University of Alaska School of Nursing and Alaska Head Start programs that created Project PAK where nursing students, accompanied by their UAA School of Nursing faculty travel out to EHS communities and conduct WCCs. A roadblock overcome.

And she doesn't stop there. Debi is so committed to increasing capacity and improving families' access to high quality early childhood services, that she shares her expertise and Head Start knowledge with programs and communities all over the state. Debi serves as the EHS/CC partnership start up coordinator for Kawerak, in addition to working with the community of Barrow to help them open the Barrow Early Learning Center. She is also working with the community of Nuiqsit and the Copper River Native Association to expand child care in their communities.

I am proud to nominate Debi as AHSA Community Advocate of the Year.

Humanitarian of the Year

Charmaine Lundy



It is with great pleasure the Kenaitze Indian Tribe nominates Charmaine Lundy for the Humanitarian Award. Charmaine demonstrates caring and community-minded values in a variety of venues within the Kenai and Kenaitze Indian Tribe. Mrs. Lundy is the consummate professional. Her initiative and drive are rarely seen. In everything that she does she works from a place of respect and love for children and families. She is a role-model and instills resiliency for Native people. She provides support and is a strong advocate in obtaining help and educational support for situations that some would deem difficult and perhaps impossible. She embodies strong traditional values in her professional roles. Her insight and dedication to Native people are both key elements in the design and implementation of after school programs as well as fundraising, advocacy and direct service. Charmaine researched and developed the elements of successful after school and early educational support and has worked closely with the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center as part of their Colonies of Learning and ACF to advance the quality of early childhood education.



Her respectful demeanor and approach allows her to address the needs of our children and families without judgment and with profound sincerity. She is supportive and empathetic and strives to unlock the full potential of all children that she serves. Charmaine understands the need for families to be actively engaged and develop the ability to be accountable for the growth of their children. She gives her best effort in assisting all families in becoming successful and well adjusted. She provides assistance with the Head Start team, after school programs and is respected by her peers as a subject matter expert in multiple areas.

Her dedication to Native families is unyielding and evidenced by the way she celebrates the smallest of victories in the biggest and most wonderful ways. She is a champion in bringing out the best in children and her perseverance is incomparable. She strives to be innovative and creates opportunities to bolster the confidence of those around her as they learn. Charmaine imparts the spirit of "believing in yourself" to all who she meets. She is recognized by peers and our Head Start families for her unyielding ability to encourage and motivate. She is our friend, our peer, our mentor and the best that we have to offer. She embodies those same qualities as an exceptional example of humanity and kindness within the Head Start model of education and caring.

It is my most humble pleasure to nominate Charmaine Lundy for the Head Start Humanitarian Award.

Early Head Start Teacher of the Year

Kattie Sutherland



I would like to nominate Kattie Sutherland again as Early Head Start Teacher of the Year. Kattie has been with our agency since August 2012 starting as a Substitute. Kattie has always shown a commitment to our mission, and has an amazing work ethic. Kattie worked regularly as a substitute at various head start sites of ours having great reviews from regular classroom staff and supervisors.

I have been working directly with Kattie as her supervisor since February 2014 when she began subbing full-time for our Early Head Start Program. In March of



2015 we encouraged Kattie to apply for our full-time EHS Assistant Teacher opening, she was selected by EHS parents and staff and it was a smooth transition since Kattie had been subbing at our EHS program regularly. Continuity of care was easily maintained with Kattie, she quickly developed an obvious passion for working with infants/toddlers. 3 months later by June 2015 she had completed and received her Infant/Toddler CDA.

From the start, she was an amazing fit to work with our infants and toddlers. She has a quiet, easy going personality and the children absolutely love her! The children see her pull-up in the parking lot and get so excited, saying “Kattie, Kattie, Kattie!” Somehow they will see her from the classrooms in the teacher office and will cry out for Kattie to come see them. She always takes the time for the children no matter what she is doing. She went on leave for a little bit this school year to work on her college courses and every day they would ask about Kattie.

Kattie applied when she was ready and then was promoted to lead Infant Teacher in 2016. We had previous openings but she did not feel ready and remained our AT. This school year was her first year starting and finishing as lead Infant Teacher. She has amazing parent involvement, both in the classroom and attending events. She went through roster changes and we recently experienced staff changes. With Kattie being Hmong, we are seeing families feel more comfortable placing their Hmong child in our full-day program. This year she has worked with three Hmong families and embeds so much culture into her classroom teaching. Kattie still maintained her high standards and did not miss a beat even with all the change. She did not miss deadlines or requirements. She would work over-time opening/closing the center and offer support wherever was needed. She trained the new staff so quickly, that when it came to observation time the observer did not even realize they had not been working together very long and that we had new students. Their scores were phenomenal because of the systems and expectations Kattie has instilled for her classroom.

Kattie has been pursuing her college degree during her time here at EHS too. It has not been easy seeing how we are a Full-day year-round program. She has tried two different local colleges trying to get her degree in our Early Childhood field. It has been struggle trying to find the ECE classes she needs to fit her degree plan with the availability of times she needs. She has signed up for classes and they have been cancelled due to not enough enrollment. Kattie has not let that stop her in pursuing her dream. Kattie shows so much perseverance and dedication to reaching her goal that I know here in the future I will be attending her college graduation from UAA.

Kattie is very well deserving of this EHS Teacher of the Year award, thank you for your consideration.

Family Advocate of the Year

Janice Uisok



Janice is an outstanding Family Advocate working with the Head Start program in Emmonak. Over the years in her position, she strengthened her knowledge and understanding of her community and earned the trust of the families enrolled at Emmonak Head Start. Janice started out as a substitute – that’s how she learned the roles and responsibilities of the Cook and Maintenance Specialist. She lent a hand in the classroom – that’s how she learned about what the Teacher and Teacher Aide do all day.



Janice understands just what makes a successful Head Start program tick. She steps up to help her team wherever the needs are, while always keeping her work with families as her highest priority. She provides strong leadership with her parent group, encouraging and supporting them to participate in the program in a variety of capacities.

She helps families to connect with resources to get follow-up care for their child's dental and health needs, or to address other family goals.

As a Family Advocate, Janice seeks out and participates in many opportunities for her development as a professional. Among other topics, she completed training in Family Empowerment, Family Development Credential, Tobacco Use Prevention and our new Parenting Curriculum, Circle of Security. She puts her training to immediate use in her work with families, and shares her knowledge with the rest of the staff.

Janice isn't just a wonderful and dedicated Family Advocate, she is also fun to work with! She fills the Head Start center with her laughter and positive outlook, and if your day isn't going so well, you can stop by Janice's office for a hug. Thank you Janice Uisok, for all you do for Emmonak Head Start, for your community and for RurAL CAP.

Corporate Award

Providence Alaska Medical Center



Thank you for the opportunity to nominate an organization that has opened their hearts to our families and children enrolled in our program for over the past 8 years. I would like to nominate Providence Alaska Medical Center for the "Corporate Award".



For the past eight year, Providence Alaska Medical Center staff have "adopted" the children in our program, assuring that each child enrolled received a box of gifts for Christmas. Providence staff, including Donna Dean, Danielle Martin and Kathleen Hollis coordinated with all the different departments of Providence Medical Center to set up and decorate four Angel trees around the Providence campus. They go around and speak with department heads to promote the Angel trees and then hang the names of over 450 children from families in Kids' Corps programs on the trees. Each tag includes information on the child's age, clothing sizes, needs and wishes. Providence staff select tags and purchase items for the child on the tag. In the end, every single child gets a Costco paper sized box wrapped in holiday paper filled with gifts. Donna stated that people loved to get a name and have lots of fun picking up the goodies for the child's box.

Setting up Angel Trees for so many children is a long, complicated process that begins well before the holiday season. The 450 boxes are wrapped in holiday paper during the summer months when various volunteers find time to assist. Everyone gets into the spirit of wrapping and stacking and storing the many boxes needed for the undertaking.

As the items start being collected, these ladies, plus a few others, take them and put them in a wrapped box with the child's name tag attached. Sometimes boxes don't have much to go in them, when this happens, these ladies go out and buy additional items on the child's wish list to fill the box.

As the boxes start being put together, Danielle, Kathleen and Donna set up sections of their office space to organize them by center. Each center typically receives 25-35 boxes per classroom. Keeping all this in some semblance of order is a masterpiece in organization. The ladies track which tags have gifts returned for them. If a name was taken off the tree but nothing was brought for them, they go out and buy things themselves to make sure each box is filled. Sometimes a gift card is given with tags instead of gifts. When this happens they gladly go out and shop for the child with the gift card knowing the child would be delighted to receive gifts rather than just a card. What a beautiful thoughtful way to remember the children of our most needy families.

After all the gifts are collected and boxes are organized and sorted they are delivered to each of KCI's nine centers according to the centers party dates. The nine delivery dates/times were not always the most convenient for Providence staff, but they always made it happen.

For all of our families, these gift boxes means their child will have something for Christmas. It also allows the parents to spread out their money a little more, make ends meet a little easier during the difficult holiday season. This year, our enrollment numbers were lower, so instead of putting together less boxes, they offered to provide boxes for siblings of the Head Start children in addition to the enrolled children. A total of 457 children from infant/new born to teens received a Christmas box in 2016. For some families, this was every child. This helped bills to be paid and food purchased during a month when things are extremely tight, not to mention cold and dark.

Our families were so blessed, they expressed their gratitude with tears and heartfelt Thank you's for remembering them in this busy, mad dash and expensive time of year. Some of our families expressed that they were not going to be able to get their children anything for Christmas and the boxes were a God send. The loving gifts received from these beautiful strangers were very much appreciated and most families were overwhelmed by their generosity.

This selfless act of caring for our neighbors should be recognized and celebrated. Thank you for considering the wonderful people from Providence for the Corporate Award. They truly deserve the recognition. - Ronnie Brown

I would like to nominate the staff at Providence Hospital for the Corporate Award. For the past few years they have been working with Kid's Corps. Inc., collaborating with us in supporting our family's holiday needs. At first, they supported only one of our several locations servicing about 40 children. Once they heard about our high needs and the families we service being low-income, they took on all 300+ children we service providing all children enrolled an individual holiday box that is filled with items the families requested.

KCI staff meet with our families at the end of October/November asking about the needs of their child and submit it for the gift donation. Providence then puts out the information much like the Angel Tree's you would see in the community, and their staff have an option to participate or not. Some are individual workers who shop out of pocket for the wish list items, and some are departments that pool money together and shop for the children. You should see the boxes we receive, filled to the tops with various wish list items! Every box is different, and a mix of items that were listed from the family as a need such as a winter coat, clothes and with toys for the children. I have seen boxes have had written notes from the staff wishing the families who receive them, Happy Holiday's and word of affirmation. Some have food and some have even had \$100 or more gift cards for the families to do even more shopping!

I work at our Early Head Start Site with infants, toddler, and their teen parents our boxes have much needed items that are extra on the side like diapers and formula. That helps very much for our families for the two weeks we are closed for winter break that the children do not attend school to have those much need, very expensive items provided to them. Each year each center gets to plan how we present these boxes to the families. At my site, we host a holiday party having Santa come and present the boxes to the children. We take photos with Santa and provide dinner for that night; it becomes a memorable special night. Other sites per family request, send the boxes home with the families and they wrap them as gift to use for Christmas for their children.

This year was extra special; Providence wanted to give even more than they already were! They included getting our siblings a holiday box too! When my families heard about this resource, it was such a blessing and could not have come at a better time.

Providence is going above and beyond by supporting our families with this holiday resource, it is so impactful and meaningful to the families we enroll. It would be so wonderful to be able to present them with the AHSA Corporate Awards plaque for them to display showing our appreciation to their program and especially to show their staff who take the time and money to give to families who really need it.

Thank you, Selina Ellis

Cultural Awareness

Kenaitze Yaghanen Youth Program



It is with great honor we nominate our own Kenaitze Yaghanen Youth Program for the Alaska Head Start Association's Cultural Awareness Award.

Yaghanen "a safe place" is where youth come to develop life skills, learn culture, make friends and stay on track academically. They are a prevention and early intervention program open to pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students, offering a wide range of fun and educational activities.



The Yaghanen Youth Program works with our staff in teaching traditional language and dance. In addition, many other Dena'ina lessons, such as Native Youth Olympics, hunting/fishing/gathering lifeways, and stories to teach traditional values. The Yaghanen staff work within the preschool classrooms three times a week during the school year. They also work collaboratively with our teaching staff to develop and implement the most culturally responsive curriculum.

The relationships that begin during these interactions within our classrooms develop into an ongoing relationship as the children age and move into the other programs that are offered through the Yaghanen Youth Program.

Staff from Yaghanen also support our families by offering language lessons and traditional songs and dances during our family activities, drumming at our end of year celebration and are available to provide transportation with vans or buses for educational fieldtrips.

The collaborative relationship between the Yaghanen Youth Program and the Early Childhood Center results in providing students, families and staff with a strong sense of self, cultural awareness and pride in developing life skills that will help them grow into the future leaders within our community.

Submitted by

Kenaitze Early Childhood Center Staff

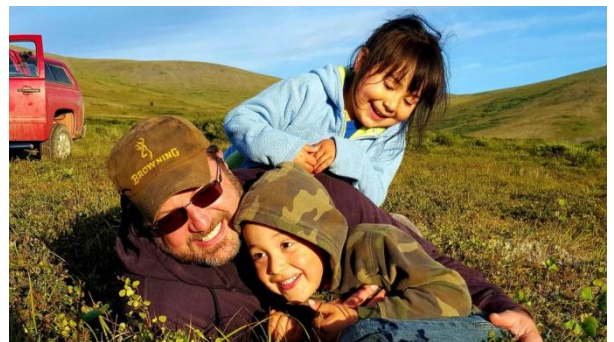
Teresa Smith, Administrator

Head Start Father of the Year

Doug Walrath



We would like to nominate Doug Walrath for the Head Start father of the year award. Doug is the father of two children (Dylan and Denali) whom one attended Kawerak Head Start this past school year (both attended last year together). Doug has done an outstanding job balancing his work life, and meeting the demands of being a single father of two young children. Doug is the director of NACTEC, Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center. NACTEC services not only our community here in Nome but also the entire Bering Strait region of Alaska which includes 15 villages. NACTEC provides high school students with the



opportunity to gain necessary skills for employment opportunities, the pursuit of post-secondary education, and independent living skills.

Aside from Doug's demanding job he has been very involved in his children's education all year long. While Doug was getting his kids to school (at two different schools) on time everyday he always made time each morning to say hello to the teachers and other staff members, as well as help his head start child with signing in and doing their morning routines before leaving to work. Doug is such a friendly guy. Doug was always willing to help with odds and ends throughout the school year, especially at different events and family fun nights we held. At these events you would often see him helping with set up and clean up, but most importantly running around and playing with not only his own children, but others as well. At these events he also invited his NACTEC students, family, and staff members to lend a helping hand, which they did. Some of his NACTEC students were also interested in beginning a career in teaching. Doug had his students volunteer in the classroom to do some one on one reading with the kids, which the teachers very much appreciated.

Alongside volunteering and helping out during events, Doug was also the president for our parent committee. He came to just about every meeting and helped with facilitating parent discussions and planning special events throughout the school year.

He took time out of his already busy day to attend meetings as well and spoke on behalf of Head Starts funding issue. He encouraged other parents to get involved as well. With his positive involvement in our program, we believe he is very deserving of this award. His help throughout the entire school year not only benefited his own child (children in the past), but all the children in both of our Head Start classrooms as well.

Cook of the Year

Lori Allen



I would like to nominate Lori Allen for the ASHA Cook of the year for FNA Head Start

0-5. Lori is the cook at our Poldine Carlo Site. Lori is dedicated to our children and families here at FNA HS 0-5. Not only does Lori make our building smell amazing with all the yummy foods that she prepares for our families and children; she also builds lasting relationships with them.

On any given day you can see Lori helping a classroom while children are discovering the world of pumpkins; even then making pumpkin bread later in the week for snack. She can observed helping to engage children in a cooking experience as they build on math and science skills. Our children love Ms. Lori: they ask for her weekly to come and do a project or learning objective with them. This year each class created flower petals using different food items with Lori. The class with Lori planned on how to do it, what would happen etc. During each activity there was a instructional teaching and learning going on. Lori would ask open ended questions and the children would response to her with their thoughts or ideas.



Our parents do as well many of our children have allergies or complex food challenges, Lori meets with the parents to review and learn about each individual child. She supports the parents in how they are treating their child's challenge/ allergy with understanding and love yet still complying with all the regulations and rules that she needs to follow. You can see Lori reading in depth down to percentages of what is in each individual item she purchase to guarantee items that are provided are safe to a child who is allergic. She spends hours researching on line information from makers and providers to guarantee what is given and prepared is the best.

She can also been seen helping our other cooks and on call cooks as needed. She is a team player in every sense of the word. Lori can be seen stepping in a classroom or taking a child on a bathroom run or listening as the

children tell her story. Just today at the beginning of class Lori was busy preparing bowls to go down to a classroom and she had 5 children lined up all talking to her about the salmon she had made for lunch. They had questions and she answered them with a smile on her face and expanding on all the children know. Lori treats each moment as a ‘teachable’ moment. At lunch a little while later one of the children who had interacted earlier with Lori was telling her classmates how lunch had been made in delight and detail just as Lori did for her.

This dedication is also seen when it comes to parent enrichment nights and family nights that the advocate team puts on. Lori is always willing team and help when needed. For thanksgiving she cooks a meal and invites all families in to join their child in giving thanks. This is a Lot of extra work for Lori , one class alone can have an extra 20-30 adults and 20 extra children joining in meaning she cooks for almost 300 -400 people that day alone.

The same love she puts in to the families also is given to staff she checks on each of us and makes sure that we are doing okay. You can tell that Lori loves her job and the families and children she serves here at PCB. We are thankful and bless to have her on our team and in our program.

Home Visitor of the Year

Michelle Thompson



She is always on time with home visits, paperwork. She gives her all into her students. she cares for all her students past and present. she has been working here for over 20 years and the enthusiasm has not changes since she first started. Michelle is always looking for new resources and knowledge to better help her families. - Angela Jones



I have worked with Michelle Thompson for over five years now. She has been a home visitor for St. Mary's for a long time! She is a positive fixture in her community, and a shining example of someone who cares deeply for the families she serves, yet stays very humble. She is helpful, kind and conscientious. She can be counted on to do what is needed, and often times goes above and beyond to provide excellent service to the families. When we speak on the phone or in person, she is respectful about any issues she is having with the families, and she is one of those people who doesn't say a negative word about anyone. I have learned patience and wisdom from her gentle ways. She also has a great sense of humor, and an easy laugh, which I know is helpful for building rapport with families. She is an easy person to be around, and open minded and hearted.

I whole heartedly nominate Ms. Michelle Thompson for Home visitor of the year. She clearly deserves it for her years of dedicated service to our RurAL CAP Early Head Start. - Becky Davenport

Michelle is an amazing advocate for young children and families in her remote Alaskan community of St. Mary's. Her many years of service and experience bring comfort and trust to her program. Michelle is well respected in her community; many community members and families look to her for guidance relating to young children and families. Michelle has experienced trauma in her own family, but continues to be able to provide positive support to the families in the Early Head Start program. I believe Michelle would be the perfect recipient for Home Visitor of the Year. She gets families excited about early childhood, family health and wellness and parenting using her engaging home visits and, in collaboration with the entire Early Head Start team, her outstanding group social experiences. - Alicia Notti

School District Collaboration

Alaska Gateway School District



We began our partnership with AGSD in 2012. At the time, AGSD provided a full-time Teacher and our program provided a full-time Teacher Aide for a Head Start preschool classroom in Tetlin. Scott MacManus, who was the Assistant Superintendent at the time, and Pam Gingue, the Preschool Liaison, had and continue to

have the best interests of the children and families in mind. Through our partnership we were able to open a Head Start preschool classroom in Northway in 2013. The AGSD staff have attended our pre-service and in-service trainings and have invited our staff to attend their in-service trainings. We are able to discuss concerns freely and resolve issues quickly. Pam Gingue also sits on our Policy Council as a Community Representative and shares information with the staff and school district as appropriate. Without this successful partnership we would not have been able to provide center-based services in Northway and Tetlin.



Head Start Director of the Year

Mark Lackey



How is it that Mark Lackey has been the Executive Director at CCS for over 10 years yet he has never received the Director of the Year award??! He has consistently provided excellent leadership and direction to both his own program and to the Alaska Head Start Association since he started in 2005. He has served as the Treasurer for AHSA as far back as I can find records – at least since 2007, and has done an excellent job of keeping track of the finances. He was key in getting 501 (c) (3) status for AHSA and has learned how and provided all reports to the IRS ever since - keeping us nice and legal. Mark is a key member of the AHSA Executive Board and always provides thoughtful and accurate insight. As President of AHSA, I depend on his input on a nearly daily basis. I trust his judgment, respect his opinions and recognize that he is really the backbone of the organization.

Mark works tirelessly to promote AHSA and all Head Start programs in the state. He has been the MC at many of the AHSA awards banquets and always does a great job. He also has one of the highest (if not the highest) staff and parent membership of any grantee in the State. He encourages all staff to join, and has even been able to implement payroll deductions for paying for staff memberships.

All this is above and beyond his daily job duties. His daily life is also incredibly busy! He has applied for and received both the duration grant and the childcare collaboration grant in an attempt to reduce the very long waitlist at CCS. He hosts an annual Black Tie Valentine Dinner to help increase community outreach and donations. He was voted Alaska's top forty under 40 in 2012 and last but not most certainly not least he is a loving and involved father to his three sons.

Mark has been the cornerstone of the Alaska Head Start Association since he started his position with CCS and it's certainly time that he is recognized for his hard work and dedication. - Anne Shade



Nomination #2:

Mark Lackey has provided outstanding leadership and service to the children, families, staff, and community in the Matanuska Valley for nearly 15 years. Additionally, Mark has served as a dedicated Head Start program advocate for all children and families across the state of Alaska.

It has been a tremendous honor to have worked with Mark from the first day he started in his role as the Director CCS Early Learning. During Mark's first year as the Director, he quickly learned the program was experiencing financial difficulties. While Mark had been an employee of the agency, he was unaware of the problems he would soon face. Mark immediately recognized the importance and value of sharing knowledge, and information with all staff and the Board of Director's and building a team.

Those days are behind Mark, but he has never deterred from his commitment to involve staff, parents, board members, the community, and the legislature to ensure the program continually strives for excellence.

With Mark's leadership, the program has expanded, received significant financial contributions, resulting in property and facility acquisitions, and grant funds. Last year Mark was able to secure a grant to continue the pursuit of understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), so that CCS Early Learning can become a trauma responsive organization.

I can go on and on about the many reasons why Mark Lackey should be selected for this prestigious award, but will end by saying how much I have enjoyed Mark's sense of humor, and his casual dedication to serving children and families. - Maralyn Akiyama

Beating the Odds

Lakesha Jordon



Lakesha is a hard working mom of five, who always puts her kids first. I taught two of her kids in Early Head Start. All of her children have been a part of Head Start in one way or another. Lakesha currently serves on the Board of Directors. This past year has been rough for Lakesha. She lost her best friend and father of two of her kids to cancer. Although times were tough and she was grieving, she never let that slow her down. She continues to lift other people up by posting uplifting videos to encourage others to understand that, even though times are tough, a positive outlook is very important and healthy. She also helps teens that are struggling and will often times offer them shelter and food to help get them back on their feet. Now it's time for us to give back to her. She deserves to be recognized for all of her hard work and dedication to Head Start, despite the hardships she has faced. Being a single mom and working full time is not easy. Please consider her for this great honor.



2016-17 All AHSA Award Nominations

Darling Anderson

Fawn Charles

Fanny Kuzuguk

Sia Xiong

Elizabeth Harshman

Mele Tuvaifale

Flora Matthias

Linda Brown

Tanya Malacaro

Warren Little

Irina Choulguine

Hydra Murray

Cassie Ricciardi

Alaska DHSS Obesity
Prevention and Control
Program - Diane Peck

Lukas Trunkey

Michelle Farrell

Connie Wirz

Deb Trowbridge

Kristin Ramstad

Lakesha Jordon

Tamara Toy

Kirk Brown

Tabatha Peterson

Amanda McFarland-Jicha

Janet Balice

Lily Mann

Sandy Seregin

Sarah Banks

Monika Johnson

Lisa Sookiak

Bridget Kelly