



**2014**



**Alaska Head Start  
Association**

*Collectively advocating on issues affecting  
Alaska's Head Start children and families*

Each one of the 2014 Awards of Excellence nominees reflected the positive and important difference that Head Start families, staff, school districts and community supporters are making every day across Alaska.

**Thank you to our 2014 nominees!**

Alaina Patrick  
Alexia Cook-Griffeth  
Augusta “Gussie” Dushkin  
Bonnie Rogers  
Brittany Oliver  
City of St. Michael  
Community Connections  
Daniel Powers  
Dateline Digital Printing  
Derek Chinuhuk  
Engle Noble  
Gina Pruce  
Heizelle Jones  
John Olson Jr.  
Judith McQuerry  
Kids’ Corps, Inc.  
Lennie Brandell  
Linda J. Akeya  
Makia Daniels

Marie Bowers  
Meagan Lockard  
Melody Carroll  
Merilee Johnson  
Michelle Ross  
Mr. Tim  
Patrick Cockrell  
Patty Kramer  
Rachel Schafer  
Richard McAlpin  
Riley Snow  
Robin Anderson  
Sherine Titus  
Soua Lor  
Tamara De Los  
Santos  
Tanya Sheilds  
Tasha Post  
Veronica Augline  
Vida Conway

## **Congratulations to the Alaska Head Start Association 2015 Award Winners!**



"All of us have moments in our childhood where we come alive for the first time. And we go back to those moments and think, 'This is when I became myself.'" – Rita Dove, United States Poet Laureate (1993–95)

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Program Evaluation | Strategic Planning | Facilitation | Research | Writing

## **Mark Wasierski**

### **Head Start Director of the Year**

“The impact of what we’re doing here will be felt 100 years from now”. -Mark Wasierski

Mark Wasierski joined Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association in 2009 and has since brought excellence, leadership and a good dose of humor to the Head Start pod in Anchorage and Head Start communities located in Sand Point, Unalaska, Saint Paul and King Cove. In addition to the day-to-day operations of running our Head Start program, Mark has chaired the Alaska Head Start Association Conference Committee; in fact, he spearheaded three major conferences and was essential in combining the Head Start conference and the Alaska Early Childhood conference so all early childhood educators and staff could learn and benefit from the same programs. In 2013 he took on the additional responsibility as the President of the Alaska Head Start Association.



Above and beyond his active work with AHSA, Mark completed an amazing feat when he submitted and processed two APIA Head Start grant applications – one in the shortest clocked time ever, a mere four hours. This is unheard of with minimum routing timelines at APIA! These grants resulted in three brand new buses and over fifteen thousand dollars in additional travel funds for the APIA Head Start Program.

Overall, Mark is a conscientious, calm director that is always able to see the big picture while maintaining a detailed personable focus. He is always available to listen to and support program staff as well as empathetic, fair and consistent in his approaches. While recent lack of program funds have taken more of his time away from being directly at our program centers, Mark strives to be responsive and ensures follow up on request and questions. He genuinely empathizes the issues at hand, while at the same time, gently reminding our staff of maintaining clear understandings of their roles and responsibilities.

Mark is a strong advocate for children and families. He is very knowledgeable in early childhood practices and willingly shares his knowledge and experience with staff and parents. Mark’s Bachelor’s degree in Communication Disorders and his years of experience in providing Early Intervention Services to Rural Alaska children and families is a direct reflection of the enhanced quality of our Head Start program here at APIA.

APIA Head Start would like to recognize and celebrate the leadership of our Director, Mark Wasierski. We believe the mentioned characteristics above speak to the very reason for our nomination for Mark Wasierski as the Alaska Head Start Director of the Year!

Thank you for your consideration.

## **Aleutian Pribilof Island Association**

## **Southwest Region School District School District Collaboration**

We would like to nominate the Southwest Region School District for the School District Collaboration of the Year award in recognition of the amazing collaboration that they have with BBNA Head Start. If it weren't for SWRSD, our Head Start program would have lost 18 slots and 3 staff positions during sequestration; instead we were able to keep all students and staff as well as to add a teacher/mentor coach position!



BBNA Head Start began moving into SWRSD buildings in 2009 when the Manokotak program was offered a classroom in that school. Later, we moved our 4 year old class in Togiak into the SWRSD building in that community. When sequestration hit, BBNA's cut was \$72,000, which made it impossible to continue on in the way we had done in the past. There were only 2 solutions that we could identify; to close down a classroom or to move all of our classrooms into district buildings and rent out our buildings for extra income.

A call was made to the Superintendent David Piazza who graciously agreed that it was in the best interests of the children and communities to move all the Head Start classrooms into the schools. BBNA worked closely with the local principals and the SWRSD maintenance department and managed to complete the move before the 2013-2014 school year started.

The New Stuyahok principal, Robin Jones and the Togiak principal, Sam Gosuk were supportive of the endeavor from day one. They helped identify space and provided staff to get it cleared out so the Head Start staff could get things moved over the summer. Togiak was even able to provide a second classroom so that the two classes didn't have to share space!

The Principals worked with kitchen staff to hammer out agreements about family style dining and Head Start dish washing; they worked with teaching staff to allow Head Start to have gym and library times; they invited Head Start students to be a part of music programs, graduation ceremonies and school wide celebrations. In short, they invited us with open arms to become a part of their school community.

The maintenance department has also been incredible. They installed permanent diaper changing tables in all of the elementary bathrooms; they drilled holes through their buildings to allow satellite cables to be installed for the internet connections; they've attached cubbies and paint drying racks in classrooms; and head maintenance coordinator, Rick Dallman even authorized the installation of small toilets in each of the bathrooms used by Head Start.

This collaboration has created a lot of extra work and headaches but we have not heard a single complaint from anyone in the SWRSD system. We have had nothing but kindness and support and every person in the organization has bent over backwards to make sure that this collaboration works.

We would like to thank every single SWRSD staff member for all their hard work and dedication to our program and for understanding that a solid early childhood education is a critical step in creating successful students.

## **Bristol Bay Native Association**

## **Crystal Bird**

### **Administrative Support Staff of the Year**

Crystal Bird is our Accounting Specialist and is an excellent example of how our career ladder works. Crystal started as a parent in 2005 when she enrolled her granddaughter she was raising. She volunteered in the classroom and when a job came open in the office at the Chugiak Center she was hired to fill that position. Then in 2007 she was promoted to the agency Accounting Specialist. Her success in this position was assured by the quality of her past work with us as well as her strong commitment and dedication and many fine qualities I want to tell you about.



Crystal demonstrated excellent organizational and technical skills in all of her positions with us. These were critical skills in the reorganization of the finance department that began shortly after she was hired. She and the Finance Director formed a plan to bring the A/P and Payroll back in-house. Crystal organized the A/P portion of the transition which involved becoming proficient in Quick Books and Excel. Once the system was in-house, Crystal spent a lot of time creating spreadsheets and QuickBooks reports necessary for our periodic grant reporting. Crystal has been committed to this project since its inception and has continually worked to improve and update systems, reports and procedures for obtaining data needed for federal reports.

If there is ever a problem with someone's paycheck, Crystal is the first to hear about it. And those calls don't always start out friendly but usually end with satisfaction. Crystal will listen to the story with patience and either fix the problem or bring it to my attention, usually with a solution to think about.

A couple years ago I was in North Carolina, sitting on the beach sipping an iced tea, when I received a call from our Executive Director that we had exactly two weeks to write and submit a grant for Expansion Funds. The finance portion of this was up to me. Once called to action, my first call was to Crystal and for the next two weeks she was sending me Quick Book reports, excel spreadsheets and whatever else I needed to work up the financial portion for the grant.

Because Crystal is so complete in the day to day operating of the finance department, I have been able to work closely with the regional office offering mentoring guidance to new finance directors in Region X. I have also had the time to do things that usually get saved for the future, such as rewrite policies and procedures, update forms and guidance memos and interact with financial directors throughout the state and region. My goal was to make CCS Finance Department the best in the state and for Regional Office to think of CCS when they thought of excellence. Crystal's attention to detail, knowledge of Head Start regulations and thorough knowledge of the systems, reports, due dates and requirements has been the foundation that has made everything else possible.

## **CCS Early Learning**



## Summer Reid Home Visitor

Summer Reid goes above and beyond in her efforts to provide paperwork to the Family Partnership Coordinator in a timely manner at CCS Early Learning – Early Head Start Program. She does an excellent job encouraging, providing feedback, and constructing creative activities to aid in a successful Home visits to run smoothly. For example, she put together several educational activities for families to work on over winter & summer break. She volunteers to assist at the Chugiak Center whenever needed. She plans ahead to notify the families and other staff of upcoming events. She started some of her work days at 7:30 am in order accommodate her home visits with a family to avoid cancellations. She works very hard to plan for Socializations, Kindergarten School Readiness projects, Home visits, and networking with Focus, Inc.



She goes above and beyond to provide referral and materials to the families on her case load. She upholds professional boundaries with Early Head Start staff members and the families on her case load. She is continuously getting information needed and required to comply with Head Start performance standards from local doctors, dentists, and other pertinent entities. She builds and maintains a professional relationship while communicating both on the telephone and face-to-face with staff and parents. Her attendance throughout the year has been phenomenal. It has been a pleasure working with Summer for the past year and I hope to have many more years to utilize her expertise.

A banner celebrating the 2014 Award Winners of the Early Head Start program. The banner features the CCS Early Learning logo, a large star listing the winners, the program name, a list of locations, a photo of two children, and a 50th anniversary commemorative message.

**CCS**  
EARLY LEARNING

**2014 Award Winners**

Debbie Adams  
Summer Reid  
Crystal Bird

**Early Head Start**  
**Head Start**

Play  
Laugh  
Learn  
Grow

**Chugiak,  
Wasilla,  
Meadow Lakes,  
Sutton/Palmer**

**HEAD START, 1965-2015: 50 YEARS of OPPORTUNITY**

50YearsOfOpportunity.org

## **Debbie Adams**

### **Teacher of the Year**

#### **Nomination 1**

I am pleased to nominate Debbie Adams for Teacher of the Year. As the Center Coordinator at Meadow Lakes, I have had the pleasure of learning from, training alongside and working closely with Debbie for the past four years. Debbie has a passion, especially for science and language, and creativity for learning that is beyond compare. She displays the highest level of commitment to teaching the children through exploration, discovery and play. Debbie is consistently willing to share a wealth of knowledge that can only come from her years and years of experience both in the classroom as a teacher, as a mentor coach, as a center coordinator and full circle back to the classroom last year. Not only does she contribute to the classroom, and to everyone in the building, but her husband Curt has spent numerous hours volunteering as our part time handy man. Together for 37 years they have raised two wonderful, successful adults and is just now beginning to enjoy the fruits of their labor vacationing annually in Hawaii.



On any given day entering Debbie's room is a true sensory experience. She has devoted numerous hours and gone to great lengths to prepare every corner of her classroom to include rich learning activities such as; books in each center to compliment the theme, samples of student work throughout the room, and naturally an intriguing science project to explore. Her passion for learning, creativity and originality spills into every project she prepares for the children. Over the years Debbie has created an extensive collection of hand-made items for the children in her classroom ranging from natural birch blocks to life-like dinosaur eggs. Recently she and her husband took a weekend camping trip down to Kenai and, as expected, she came back with bags full of nature's discoveries for the children such as; coral, shells, rocks, and seaweed.

Only Debbie can glance at an oil pan in Home Depot and envision a magnetic learning center for her classroom! She came to work one afternoon, with Curt in tow. I walked into the classroom to see him attaching a giant metal oil pan to the empty space on the back of a book shelf. Bringing out a tub of magnetic alphabet letters, and gluing some pom-poms to a few magnets and she created yet another science/literary experience for the children. Of course I loved it as did the rest of the teachers. In their spare time and with their generous spirit, Debbie and Curt stopped by Home Depot to pick up two more oil pans for the other classrooms.

Lessons are often extended and schedules are shifted to accommodate learning in Debbie's child centered classroom as she readily adapts to meet the learning requirements of her students. Last year there was great excitement over ramps and one simple weeklong lesson plan extended to an almost month long study on building and learning how ramps work. The children never seemed to tire of using marbles, balls, cars, blocks, tape, paper towel rolls or anything they could get their hands on to build. They were able to create a very detailed network of tubing with tape and paper towel rolls and they were absolutely enthralled to share with other staff each time we entered the room. We also became very



familiar with the speed at which these items traveled, rolled, stopped rolling, and at every height possible.

Debbie's years of experience and willingness to share her ideas make her a valuable team member. The word valuable seems inadequate when describing Debbie as she has supported each and every person at our center as a mentor when needed, offering advice when requested, sharing imaginative ideas or simply helping us to appreciate another's perspective in any situation. At times she has been called upon to take the lead and does so cheerfully. Debbie also openly shares her wisdom with her families helping them to reach their goals and enrich their child's education.

One single-parent family was truly struggling with their child's behaviors and had serious concerns about what he had been through over the past year. Debbie met with this parent on numerous occasions, asked me to sit in with her to assist, and also connected this young parent with our social emotional specialist. We both were so proud to be a part of this child's miraculous growth through the behavior modifications and patience he was shown in the classroom and through working with his family! He transformed from a child in a state of hyperactive, vigilant awareness to a relaxed, compassionate, learning classmate.

Thank you for considering Debbie Adams for Teacher of the year. I can't think of another individual that is more deserving or would be more honored to be selected. All of the staff at Meadow Lakes is proud to work with, learn from and be a part of her life. Once again it is my pleasure to nominate Debbie Adams for AHSA's Teacher of the Year!

## **Nomination 2**

I am writing this letter to nominate Debbie Adams for teacher of the year. Debbie has been with CCS Early Learning for some time. She started out as a Family Educator, then Mentor Coach, Site Coordinator, and finally to her present position as Family Educator once again.

I have known Debbie for about 10 years, and she has been awesome to work with. She is a very caring, compassionate person who is a team player. While Debbie has worked in different areas of CCS Early Learning, teaching is where her heart is. Debbie is very passionate about it and has wonderful ideas regarding the education of the children she teaches. Debbie has a way of keeping things interesting as well as fun for them, they can't wait to see what they will be learning about next.

Debbie is married and has two grown children. She has many hobbies and most recently became a "motorcycle momma" cruising alongside her husband Curt on her own motorcycle!

## **Nomination 3**

Debbie has been my daughter's teacher for two years now and she is great. She loves what she does and she loves her kids. Debbie takes her job to a new level and she will help kids out so much over and over again. She is a great teacher...#1.

## **Nomination 4**

I am writing this letter to give notice of the wonderful support and advocacy given by the school through one of your instructors. For the past two years Mrs. Debbie Adams has over and over shown her love for educating children regardless of their economic status. Mrs. Adams has displayed on numerous occasions a very large heart and an imaginative mind while delivering some of the best educational technique I have seen used with children of these ages. Personally, we have been a part of the CCS family for two years. My children have loved attending school and have grown a bond with their instructor for many reasons. Mrs. Adams is able to relate to my children and comes down to their level to explain how and why things work. She has incredulous skill when it comes to problem solving which at the age of three or even four can be a task that is very difficult as they are just beginning to learn how to reason and begin logical processing. My children started at CCS in 2012 at the ages of three and four and prior to that never attended school or daycare, needless to say they needed to learn more social skills prior to entering kindergarten. Mrs. Debbie has introduced my children to those social skills while maintaining their trust and making them comfortable. Areas of concern when speaking of my children such as falling behind in any subject etc was always touched base on by Mrs. Debbie and always made sure that during our home visits that she make sure that we as a family were having our needs met and if not was able to give us resource information. My four year old started kindergarten this year and was passing other children on an educational level even during roll in. I firmly believe that Mrs. Debbie's devotion to her classroom and her desire to teach has made my child begin to grow and prosper in her learning and to always look at things in a different kind of light. My other child will begin kindergarten in the fall of 2014 and she too has become very independent and is learning that she is able to problem solve on her own. She often brings home the many songs and stories that Mrs. Debbie teaches in class and applies them to home for learning purposes. Watching her blossom into a beautiful young flower has been a wonderful experience and I could not be more happy with Mrs. Debbie's contribution to that. Despite my child's health issues, we found that CCS and especially Mrs. Debbie were able to accommodate her needs while seeing many doctors and specialist to correct the issue prior to starting Kindergarten. Some of the most important attributes that Mrs. Debbie has given to our family has been her caring and loving demeanor, her creative and imaginative mind, and her willingness to herself learn and grow with the children in her classroom. These traits combined have not only made the educational process fun for my kids, but fun for the family to enjoy. After all this is setting our children up to enjoy the educational process and to enjoy learning for years to come as well as allowing us as parents to feel like we are a part of our children's education and to make the process fun so that we continue our involvement in their academics for many years to come. I firmly believe that this instructor is well overdue for recognition in her talents and skills. My only hope is that in two years when my son is able to attend, she is able to instruct him. We have requested Debbie for my other children and will request her most definitely for him as well. Mrs. Debbie Adams is a wonderful person and makes a great addition to the CCS organization and Family. To state otherwise from me would be an understatement. Her contribution to the academics of these young children, especially my own, has been a profound one. Please understand that my family has been through a lot the last four years and continues to go through a lot and if not for Mrs. Debbie I know my children would have not handled the stressors as wonderfully as they have. We foster and have had four transitions with children as well as our own physical move from an apartment into our own home. To small children these are major things. Mrs. Debbie still through some tears and utter hard headedness (my eldest) was able to work with them and provide a safe, fun, loving, and happy environment geared towards learning.

## **CCS Early Learning**

## **Dayna Focht**

### **Assistant or Deputy Director of the Year**

I am nominating Dayna Focht in this category because although she is our Education Coordinator, she actually does a lot more than make sure our Education Component is in compliance with all of our Head Start performance standards. As the program Director I need to leave someone in charge when I am out on business travel or when I am out of the office for personal reasons and Dayna is the one I leave in charge. When I leave her in charge, I feel that the program is in good hands and that she always has the best interest of the children and families in mind when she makes her decisions regarding any of our services.



Over the last couple of years our program has had its share of challenges regarding how to provide the best possible services to our children and with sequestration and everything else that has made our jobs challenging, Dayna has been there for our program with a positive attitude. Whenever we on a call the first words from Dayna are, “hello, hello and she always has something good to say about our staff.

The biggest challenges we have had in the last couple of years is in our program options that have come about because of either pre-kindergarten funds from the state or from new partnerships with school districts. Although all of our staff does their part in how we go about setting up our program options, Dayna recently has been key in making sure that we are providing the best possible services in several of our communities. She helped us get through some interesting times in Juneau when we started our dual AM/PM sessions in Juneau and has helped make sure we are on the right track with our partnership with the Sitka Tribes of Alaska.

Ultimately, she is always thinking about what is best for our children and is committed to the philosophy that children learn best from play. She understands Early Childhood Education and is a true advocate and champion of best practices.

For those and many other reasons I nominate her for Assistant of the Year.

**Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes  
of Alaska Head Start**

## **SEARHC Dental Corporate Award**



I would like to nominate Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) Dental for the Corporate Award for the Alaska Head Start Awards of Excellence.

SEARHC Dental has partnered with us for the past five years to provide only the very best dental care for our children and families of Southeast Alaska. SEARHC, specifically the Juneau pediatric team of Dr. Kim Hort and her many Dental Health Assistants has done an amazing job of supporting our Tlingit and Haida Head Start communities. The SEARHC Dental team serves as an important liaison for our Health Advisory board and has helped us during our yearly child find event called Early Learning Fair to identify children who need our services. They also recruit and refer children to our Head Start program.

SEARHC Dental provides Dental Health Aides to visit all of our Head Start classrooms one or more times a year. They make the experience fun for the children while showing the importance of eating healthy foods and brushing daily. The dental team also provides our Head Start sites dental education and assist with dental fluoride treatment within the classroom environment. Not only are they a great resource to us, but they continue to provide ongoing communication and information to staff and parents about the specific needs of children who may need follow-up dental care outside of the classroom.

Without their support we would not have been able to report the completion of dentals for our children who have received complete dental exams and services. The fact that we were able to complete and provide documentation of so many dental exams is an amazing strength to our program. Finally, and most importantly, SEARHC Dental has provided us with our mutual goal of helping children and families form lifelong healthy teeth and habits.

**Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian  
Tribes of Alaska Head Start**

## **Eleanor Roehl**

### **Cultural Awareness**

Eleanor Roehl has served as the Traditional Cultural Mentor at Cook Inlet Native Head Start for a number of years. On a daily basis, she provides cultural instruction to our Early Head Start and Head Start children. This includes traditional Alaska Native activities that socialize children. She teaches using her home language of Yup'ik as the conduit. She works with the children on singing and dancing, counting, vocabulary, weather, etc. Eleanor has created lessons and activities that reflect traditional cultural values and activities in thematic areas including gathering, celebrations, caring for family, giving, feasts/festivals, Native ways of transportation, storytelling, Native games, and changes in self.

In addition, Ms. Roehl has organized the cultural components of each of our Family Nights. This includes coordinating dancers, storytellers, and teaching artists. She has been a tremendous asset to the Cook Inlet Native Head Start in so many ways, including the ability to help parents navigate the Head Start system and public schools. She has been especially helpful in assisting Yup'ik speaking parents to better understand systems in the urban area. She has also been extremely instrumental in building relationships and collaborating with the Southcentral Foundation's Elder Program. The positive results of engaging Native children and elders has been a tremendous asset for both groups. Ms. Roehl originally comes from New Stuyahok on the Nushagak River in Bristol Bay.



## **Cook Inlet Native Head Start**

## **Thomas Hoak**

### **Head Start Father of the Year**

#### **Nomination 1**

I would like to nominate Thomas "Tom" Hoak for the father of the year. Tom is one of grandparents helping to raise his grandson while the family has been dealing with medical challenges with the other children. Tom will tell you he needs no recognition for what he and his wife do. They are truly some of the most loving, humble accepting people I have ever met.

You will not find more dedicated grandparents and or parents than Tom and his wife Sandra. The Hoak family's journey began in EHS and now this past year in our HS portion of our program. Tom spent time every day in our classroom whether beginning or end. Tom attended every field trip, special classroom activity or anything extra. The other children in the class know him as "Mr. Tom or Mr. Hoak." Tom is his families and grandson biggest advocate for what is best for his family.

Tom spoke daily with the teachers about behaviors, issues that would arise. Tom, as a grandfather/father, came to the table with ideas searching out resources on his own in the world of early childhood i.e. Best practice, child development. Tom and Sandra came to us ready to help their grandson have the best school experience possible. They said on a home visit "We don't care what it is we have to do , what we have to sacrifice as long as he ( the grandson) has what he needs to succeed than we are happy and will figure everything else out. "

Tom has inspired other parents to get involved in our program and their child's education. A fellow classmate parent said, "Watching him (Tom) talk with the teachers daily, made me want to the same. I also realized than that it was up to me to advocate and fight for what was best for my child." Just as Tom did for his grandson.

As the Hoak family advocate I truly believe that Tom exemplifies Father of the year. He is what every child, grandchild would want in a father or grandfather and that is someone to love them unconditionally and to fight for them and what's best for them.

#### **Nomination 2**

Thomas Hoak is a very involved grandfather. He is always informative when it comes to family changes, always called in when his grandson couldn't make it to school, he spent several days in his grandson's classroom, attended several family activity nights, he drove to Anchorage every other weekend so his grandson could visit with his family no matter what the weather. In my opinion, Thomas Hoak, is the Father of the Year/Grandfather of the Year.

## **Fairbanks Native Association Head Start**



## **Deyone Shults**

### **EHS Teacher of the Year**

As a parent I would like to nominate Deyone Shults for EHS teacher of the year. My boys LOVE Deyone. Every morning it's "let's go see Deyone." Let's go play with Mrs. D"

I have know Deyone in multiply ways over the last 10 years first as a teacher and advocate for her family; having her boys as a teacher and family advocate and now the roles are reversed with her being my boys teacher.

My boys love to go to school see what adventure or treasure they are going to do with Deyone. Deyone's love, compassion and support for each of her families are amazing. She loves each family as her own checking on them weekly and getting to know them. Deyone remembers little things that my boys do each day and tells me. Deyone comes up with fun and interesting games and brings in the boys interest.



Deyone works hard on supporting the relationship we have, when the boys have had surgeries or been super sick, she has called to check on us and to see if we need anything. Even on our day in which we adopted our first children this past may "I was greeted with a quick message from her!" As foster parents we get new little ones and Deyone is always the first to ask what we need and how she can help.

Deyone knows the importance of the little things and how they matter to not only me as a parent but to all parents.

Deyone may not think these things are big but they are to parents. Deyone, thank you for making my boys Early Head start memories amazing and thank you for supporting our family in so many ways. Without your support we would not be where we are today as parents.

As my three old Steven says "We wuv (love) our Deyone.



## **Lori Allen**

### **Maintenance Staff of the Year**

I would like to nominate Lori Allen for the Maintenance Staff of the Year. Lori does a great job at keeping all of our sites clean and ready for the children. Lori goes the extra mile to attend events for our program that happen during the day (she works nights) helping to recruit families for our program. Lori always has a smile on her face and is ready to work. In her work she is detailed and does a great job in making sure our classrooms and offices are ready to greet our families and staff each day. When issues do arise Lori is quick to find a solution or notify those who need to know. She looks for the safest way possible.



Without Lori our program would not be the clean, safe environment that we want our children and families in every day.

Thank you Lori for all of your ""behind the scenes"" work you do. Our families and the staff greatly appreciate it.

# **Amanda Fieldhouse**

## **Assistant Teacher of the Year**

### **Nomination 1**

It is with great pleasure to write this letter of endorsement for Amanda Fieldhouse as the Head Start Awards of Excellence Assistant Teacher of the Year.

Amanda has been working for Head Start in Anchorage for over the past ten years and I am fortunate that she has been back working for Kids' Corps Head Start for the last three years. When an opening occurred in our ASD/KCI collaborative classroom 2 & ½ years ago I, without hesitation, assigned Amanda to be the assistant teacher. This was due to her positive energy, her ability to work with a multitude of staff, and her outstanding developmentally appropriate approaches with children. This is one of the best decisions I have made as I constantly receive positive feedback from the school principal, the classroom teacher, KCI mental health consultant, CLASS scores, ECERS reviews by a community partner, and most importantly, parents of the children she serves.



Amanda brings enthusiasm to all activities and makes the children feel comfortable. She demonstrates an ability to actively engage the children and the intuition to transition to a new activity as children's interests change. She is always ready with a song or a dance to redirect any situations and guides the children with developmentally appropriate activities. Her energy transcends not only to the children but to the parents and any volunteers in the classroom.

I can, without hesitation, highly recommend Amanda Fieldhouse as the Alaska Head Start Association Assistant Teacher of the Year!

### **Nomination 2**

I am writing to support the nomination of Amanda Fieldhouse for Outstanding Teacher Assistant of the year. It is my great honor and privilege to do so.

Amanda is clearly an outstanding professional, mentor and teacher, she should be viewed also as an outstanding leader. Not only does Amanda make extraordinary contributions daily as her role as teacher assistant she is and has been a leader to the children and parents of the KCI Head Start program. She has led by being among the finest examples of a true professional in early childhood education. I have had the pleasure of knowing her in that role. Her continuous work, dedication to the children and willingness to give it all she has day in and day out has changed the lives of many students in a positive way.

Finally, I must comment on Amanda as a parent. There are dozens of parents like me who would say Amanda is a wise educator, a bearer of integrity and civility and is as highly respected as anyone in this field. Parents are always welcomed with a warm smile and cheerful hello, that one cannot help looking forward to the next day of school.

Amanda has demonstrated these qualities throughout the time she has been at Willow Crest Elementary/KCI Head Start. I know of no one more deserving of this award.

### **Nomination 3**

I'd like to nominate Amanda Fieldhouse for Head Start Assistant Teacher of the Year. Amanda has been working with young children for over 10 years. In her time here at KCI, Amanda has completed her CDA and continues to take classes at Central Texas College to earn her 2 year degree in Early Childhood; she only has 3 more to go. I know Amanda is committed to her work with young children and to KCI Head Start. She is flexible with her schedule to accommodate the needs of KCI; such as willing to work extra hours to provide support by providing childcare at agency events or by working during the summer at full day centers.

I have personally worked with Amanda for the past two summers in our full day centers and now have had the privilege of supervising her for the 2013-14 school year. Amanda currently works in one of our Anchorage School District collaborative classrooms. Amanda consistently has an upbeat, friendly, and positive attitude every day when she comes to work. She greets and talks with families at drop off and pick up times. She takes the time to personally get to know each of the families; learning their names, about their families, and personal interest. Amanda and her teacher make families feel welcome and comfortable in the classroom and I believe this contributes to her great monthly parent volunteer hours.

In the classroom Amanda is active and engaged with the children, always singing songs, doing activities, and getting down on their level. I believe Amanda knows so many songs she could certainly write a book! Amanda and her teacher are a great team; they consistently score very well in Mental Health, ECERS, and CLASS observations. During their CLASS observation the Thread consultant noted that: Amanda is very aware of the children's needs, energy is positive, teachers follow children's lead during individual and group activities, and Chelsea and Amanda are a dynamic team.

### **Nomination 4**

I am writing this letter to tell you about a wonderful member of the Willow Crest Elementary staff, Amanda Fieldhouse. Amanda arrives each morning not too long after I do, bouncing in the door with a smile on her face and ready to tackle the day. She has a love of working with children that shows not only first thing each day, but is also apparent after the kids have gone. My favorite time of the day to visit the preschool classroom is during their breakfast time. Amanda prepares their meals, gets their eating area ready and then makes the most of every second with the students by engaging them in a thoughtful, appropriate and lesson filled conversation. They discuss everything from the shapes of the food items to how to use their manners with one another. None of this is scripted or prepared-Amanda runs with every opportunity to provide a lesson that will support the students not only in school, but also in everyday life.

As one watches the classroom, I can honestly say that you'd be hard pressed to determine which adult is the teacher and which is the Assistant. Amanda and Chelsea, the classroom teacher, work as a dynamic partnership, often able to finish one another's sentences and to work together as needed. The data is there to show that the two of them are an incredible team that is preparing our preschool students for the elementary years to come.

Amanda is an excellent candidate for the Head Start Assistant Teacher of the year award. I know that there is not a moment where Amanda is not positive, thoughtful, observant, and doing her very best to meet the needs of the classroom. As a principal, I could not ask for more.

## **Bobby Blueford**

### **Beating the Odds**

Bobby Blueford is a father in our Head Start program who has overcome many obstacles in his life. As a young man he made a few poor choices that led him down a tough road. Bobby did not let his mistakes define who he would become; he knew he had a responsibility to his son to be a good father. Over the past year I have seen him set and meet so many goals that show his determination to make a better life for himself and his son. For these reasons I nominate him for the Beating the Odds award.



When I first enrolled them into our program Bobby was living with friends while his son, Donovan, was living with his Grandpa. Bobby was unemployed and had no means of transportation. He had a plan and knew he wanted to provide a home for Donovan where they could be together.

He first had to get a job which proved difficult due to his past struggles. It was very challenging for him to get his son to school each day without his own vehicle, yet still managed this task with a smile on his face every morning. Bobby was able to find a job and soon had the funds to obtain a reliable vehicle which helped him get Donovan to and from school, medical appointments, and secure his position at work. Bobby watched his spending, saved his money and soon found them a safe and affordable home where they could be together.

Bobby was over the moon to have his little boy under the same roof. I remember Bobby's excitement when telling me how he loved being able to comb Donovan's hair every morning and how they would brush their teeth together at night. This was very important for their relationship, being able to spend quiet evenings alone together doing what other families take for granted.

Bobby always had an open line of communication with the Teacher and his Family Advocate. He always made it to all the Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences. Bobby also attended many Parent Committee meetings, Parent Volunteer Day's, as well as Man to Man nights, Family Nights, and really any events held in the evenings he could come to. When it was possible he would take time off work and volunteer on Field Trips and in the classroom.

I think Bobby Blueford deserves this award due to how much adversity he has overcome and where he is today. The steps he has taken show his dedication to give his son a good example of how to persevere through life's ups and downs. Bobby never gives up; he continues to fight for those he loves. I am honored to know him and share his story. Without reservation I nominate Bobby Blueford for the Alaska Head Start Association Beating the Odds Award.

**Kids' Corps, Inc.**

## **Fa'amafu Kimoto**

### **Head Start Mother of the Year**

Fa'amafu Kimoto is a mother in our Head Start program who is very involved and brings a lot of wonderful qualities to our center. She comes in each day with a smile on her face wishing all a good morning. She is very involved in all the centers happenings, in her child's classroom, and comes to most the trainings we offer to the families. For these reasons I nominate her for the Mother of the Year award.

When she was first enrolled in our program she was homeless, living with family, and struggling to keep her large family together under one roof. She is independent and takes pride in her ability to be extremely resourceful. Within two months, after enrolling, she had solved that issue on her own by finding a home for her whole family.



Fa'amafu always had an open line of communication with the Teacher and her Family Advocate. She always made it to all the Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences. She also attended many Parent Committee meetings, Parent Volunteer Day's, as well as Just for Mom's, Family Nights, and really any events held in the evenings she could come to. She volunteered in the classroom constantly, for special reasons such as reading a book to the class, and even taught a cultural dance during our Around the World day during Cultural Awareness month.

Fa'amafu attended the entire Ready for Kindergarten trainings. When she heard about positive parenting and personal growth trainings, she was one of the first to sign up and show up early. She would make healthy snacks for the entire class and always made the Teachers very thoughtful homemade gifts throughout the year. She stays after class even and assists the teachers with sweeping floors and cleaning up. She is always more than willing to lend a helping hand in any way she can.

Throughout the year she has been overheard in the hallways encouraging other families to volunteer or attend upcoming events. She always has wonderful things to say about our program and our staff. During our events she can always be found talking to families and building relationships and opportunities to connect with others, she has made many friends with other families and plans family outings with them.

Fa'amafu is a very selfless and thoughtful person, during her son's classroom graduation ceremony, a child was crying because she was the only little girl without a pretty dress on for the ceremony. Leave it to Fa'amafu to go above and beyond; she left the ceremony and bought that little girl a beautiful dress. That little girl was over the moon with delight when Fa'amafu presented her with the gift.

I think Fa'amafu Kimoto deserves this award due to how much she cares about her child's education, and how willing she is to step in and lend a helping hand. She has such big heart and I am honored to know her. Without reservation I nominate Fa'amafu Kimoto for the Alaska Head Start Association Mother of the Year Award.

**Kids' Corps, Inc.**

Kids' Corps, Inc. congratulates the  
2014 Alaska Head Start Association Award  
nominees and winners.

You are an inspiration to us all.

ALASKA HEAD START ASSOCIATION WINNERS (FROM KCI)



Beating the Odds– Bobby Blueford



Mother of the Year – Fa'amafu Kimoto



Assistant Teacher of the Year Amanda Fieldhouse



## **Jessel Duncan**

### **Bus Driver of the Year**

#### **Nomination 1**

I would like to nominate Mr. Jessel Duncan for AHSA's Bus Driver of the Year award.

Jessel has been the Head Start bus driver for the past 25 years, and has not missed a single day of work for the past 5 year! He checks his bus daily to assure that he transports the students safely from their home to the school. Jessel makes the most efficient route possible every year and makes adjustments accordingly, his weekly bus inspection reports are never late, and is available to the staff to schedule last minute field trips.



He has been a corner stone of Head Start for the past quarter century, being one of the first faces the students see daily. When parents and older siblings describe going to Head Start to their younger child/sibling, I have been told they build up the excitement by telling them that Jessel will be able to FINALLY pick them up. It goes to say that parents and children tied riding the bus with Jessel a high point of attending Head Start, and Jessel does not let them down. He always greets each student with a big smile, and the all so great question, ""are you ready to go to school?"" It has been a tradition for Jessel to ask the children are we ready to go, and their response, ""Rock and Roll Jessel."" We here at the Metlakatla Head Start will truly miss his dedication, work ethic and love for all our children and wish him the best in his retirement. ROCK AND ROLL JESSEL, you have earned it!!!"

#### **Nomination 2**

As a past director of the Metlakatla Indian Community, a past parent of my tribal Head Start program, and a tribal member of the Metlakatla Indian Community it gives me great pleasure to nominate Jessel B. Duncan as the Bus Driver of the Year. His dedicated contribution for 25 years of service to his community and head start as a CDL Bus Driver. Jessel always put the children first when it came to safety on his bus routes throughout the community. The families met him with their children with a good morning Jessel. The many children he brought to and from Head Start have presently graduated High school and onto colleges, but they still remember him as "their" bus driver. He would be the first at the building in the mornings, checking messages on the phone and reading messages which pertained to his daily pick up of children. When it came to wellness within his community, as a past Director, I remember Jessel wanted to take part in our monthly Wellness Sessions. His contribution to the Metlakatla staff wellness team was accepted to become the best employee as the bus driver could be. His love of children, his community, and his family has shown that after 25 dedicated years as a Head Start bus driver, and now retiring ending his 2013-14 school year with Metlakatla that he is and will always be to his Community "The Bus Driver of the Year".

## **Metlakatla**



## **RurAL CAP Child Development Policy Council Policy Council of the Year**

I would like to nominate the 13-14 RurAL CAP Child Development Policy Council (CDPC), Lindsey Hannevold Chair, as Policy Council of the Year. Due to size and geographic distance between communities, an intricate system of governance has been developed to involve parents as full partners in the ongoing oversight to support quality services and maintain accountability, efficiency and leadership within the program. To be on CDPC a parent is voted in as a Regional Parent Committee (RPC) Representative from their local Parent Committee. Their duties are to attend RPC meetings, provide community reports, share community challenges and successes, review, analyze and give input into regional program data and concerns. After RPC meetings, the representatives report back to their local Parent Committee. Each RPC then votes on one person to represent their region at the Child Development Policy Council, and responsibilities increase as the CDPC reps are the conduit for communication back and forth to their Regional Parent Committee and local Parent Committee.



Being a Policy Council member, takes a large amount of time and is a great commitment. There are monthly CDPC meetings, quarterly RPC meetings, and monthly Parent Committee meetings. With the exception of two face-to-face CDPC meetings and local Parent Committee meetings, the meetings are all teleconferences.

The 13-14 Policy Council was faced with many tough decisions and issues. The CDPC was incredibly committed to ensuring that they were fiscally responsive, and representing the parents of their region. The 13-14 RurAL CAP CDPC addressed and guided us through the government shutdown (we are a 10/1 grantee), the local impacts of sequestration, FY14 Restoration, and helped develop the Five Year grant – all with only meeting face-to-face two times! Additionally, the CDPC took the initiative to place communities under Plans of Improvement for attendance for the next program year, working together with the Board of Directors and the Head Start Management Team, to set the direction of the program as full partners in the ongoing oversight to support quality services and maintain accountability, efficiency and leadership within RurAL CAP Head Start.

It is because of this dedication of Head Start parents and Community Representatives, that I nominate the 13-14 RurAL CAP Child Development Policy Council, Lindsey Hannevold, Chair, for the AHSA Policy Council of the Year.

## **Terri Mach**

### **Content Area Specialist of the Year**

I am nominating our Education Coordinator, Terri Mach, for the Content Area Specialist of the Year award. She consistently goes above and beyond the responsibilities of her job description. Terri has a Masters in Early Childhood Special Education and 14 years of experience working with Head Start. She obtained her Masters while working full time as the Teacher Director for Homer Head Start. She supports all the staff in our Southcentral Region and the Bering Strait/Toksook Bay Region through phone calls, email, site visits and resources that she mails out on a regular basis.



Terri is based in Homer and is able to guide and assist the teaching staff in Homer as needed. She helps in the classroom when needed and supports the staff in whatever they need at the time. She is also geographically close to our Sterling Head Start and has stopped there to complete CLASS observations on more than one occasion in route to Anchorage.

Terri has worked with staff to help them streamline their Teaching Strategies GOLD observation documentation and the completion of their parent teacher conferences and home visits. When Terri is on site I have observed her sharing observations she has made on individual children with the teaching staff and then offering to input them into GOLD noting that the teachers have so much to do she would love to help out if she could!

Traveling to sites as requested she always pitches in and works alongside staff role modeling best practices. She tracks all the training required for teachers each year and individualizes training for teaching staff to fit their needs. Terri is always ready and willing to adjust her schedule to meet the needs of the sites and regions she supports. As a CDA Professional Development Specialist, this spring she traveled to one of our sites to administer the test (no official testing center in the community) and complete the interview and portfolio review for one of our teaching staff's CDA.

Terri is always looking for ways to work more efficiently and be more fiscally responsible in these times of tightening the budget. She is very resourceful and is always looking for donations and opportunities for Head Start children. Terri was instrumental in securing a small grant to provide artistic enhancement in the Homer Head Start classroom. Local artists and musicians come into the classroom on a regular basis and provide meaningful experiences for the children.

Her dedication, professional experience and education make her an asset to the Regions she serves!

## **RurAL CAP**

## **Elena Sallison**

### **Cook of the Year**

Please accept this submission of Elena Sallison of Nunapitchuk Head Start as Cook of the Year.

Elena has worked 7 years for RurAL CAP Head Start as the cook in Nunapitchuk. She is very quiet and shy but a very industrious person. She has her kitchen well sanitized, organized, and meeting all requirements of Head Start, DEC, and CACFP. This year she maintained a 100% reimbursement with a new baby and many situations which kept her away from her job. Even her subs were able to maintain her high standards in her absences. She balances cooking for Head Start and Early Head Start with her growing family without complaint. Truly I do not know how she does everything. That is why I think Elena deserves this Head Start Award of Excellence for 2014.



## **Wendy Barrett—Stone Soup Group Anchorage**

### **Community Advocate**

I would like to nominate Ms. Wendy Barrett, and Stone Soup Group in general, for her/their tireless and very helpful support, education and advocacy for two of our Head Start children with special learning needs.

She has gone above and beyond to provide training to staff and parents, via teleconference, on “Positive Solutions for Families”, as well as specific advocacy for the family and classroom. In addition, she recently visited Stebbins to provide additional support and advocacy for this family and our classroom, as well as the community. She was able to meet with our teachers, the family, the school, including the special education teachers, providing a parent/staff training, and observing children in the classroom. She has completed in-depth behavioral analysis and recommendations that I think are very insightful and helpful. She provided on-site recommendations to our Head Start classroom that were appreciated and hopefully will be helpful in meeting the needs of this child, and other children who might experience similar challenges. She was well-received in the community, and in my opinion, provides a positive and informed advocacy that brings together families, schools, and the community. She was able to bring together several entities in the community to encourage and facilitate focused problem solving and solution oriented meetings.



She has also started to work with me (along with a coworker) in assisting with another child with special needs who has an IEP, to advocate for specific services and supports for his family and our Head Start classroom.

Lastly, and certainly not least, she has been the driving force in facilitating a referral to a statewide resource for this child to be evaluated, and has worked hard to pull together paperwork for and with the family and other agencies.

For all the reasons above, and because Wendy and Stone Soup Group (SSG) have been such a wonderful advocate for children and families, I would like to nominate her and SSG for the Community Advocate Award.

**RurAL CAP**

## **Judy Goenett**

### **Humanitarian Award**

I am nominating Judy Goenett, RurAL CAP Regional Manager (soon to be retired!) for her 37 years of commitment to improving the lives of young children and families in Alaska. Judy has dedicated her professional career and life to Head Start. Judy began her career with RurAL CAP in September of 1977. She came to us, a former Head Start parent, with two years of experience working in Head Start as a Cook in Bremerton, WA (1971-1972).



Judy has worn many hats in her Head Start career. She began as a Teacher's Assistant and was soon promoted to Teacher Director of the Haines Head Start program. From there she became an Education Specialist, a Training Specialist and is finishing her career as a Regional Manager, a position that she has helped define in our agency.

Head Start runs in Judy's veins – as she has dedicated her life to serving the children, families and staff of Head Start– not just in Haines, but across the state. Judy, as Regional Manager, has worked with too many communities to list: from Savoonga and Stebbins in the northwest, to Haines, Hydaburg, Kake and Ketchikan in the Southeast; and so many places in between (Kluti Kaah, Kodiak, Seward, to name a few). Judy has left a legacy of encouraging parents, staff and community members to embrace Head Start, empowering them to advocate for their children and themselves.

Judy has always been a staunch advocate for sites, site staff and parents. She has worked to make sure that administrative decisions balance needs of families with the needs of the program. She has been a role-model and mentor to children, parents and staff. Leading the way in cheering and supporting staff through college degrees, families in reaching goals and setting the bar high for the children.

It is hard to picture Head Start without Judy Goenett. I sure hope that I am not going to have to. I am crossing my fingers that as Head Start Director I approve Judy as a volunteer, or Elder Mentor, in our classroom and see her side-by-side with our children, parents and staff. After all, you can take the girl out of Head Start, but you can't take Head Start out of the girl.

Due to her 37 years of service to children, reaching families and involving communities in Head Start programs, I am nominating Judy Goenett as Humanitarian of the Year.

## **Drew Hansen**

### **Leadership**



I would like to nominate Drew Hansen, RurAL CAP Regional Manager for his extraordinary leadership of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region (Akiak Early Head Start and Head Start, Kwethluk Early Head Start and Head Start, Napaskiak Head Start and Nunapitchuk Early Head Start and Head Start) the past three years. Drew, as Regional Manager, is directly responsible for the management, and success, of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs in his region. He is the direct supervisor of four Teacher-Directors. He oversees the site budgets, works with communities to secure and support facilities, and monitors overall compliance in all four communities.

Drew is based in Anchorage, so with the exception of two site visits to each community (one in fall, and one in spring), all of his leadership and support to sites is distance-delivered. Drew has made it a priority to learn about the Yup'ik culture, in general, and specifically in each of his communities. All four communities have strong ties to their culture and language.

During work hours on site visits to his communities, in between classroom observations, home visit observations, staff meetings, parent meetings, supervisions, etc., Drew prioritizes meeting with the tribal and/or traditional council, the City, the clinic and the “big school” advocating for Head Start, sharing our challenges and successes, and thanking community organizations for their continued support of our programs. Before and after work hours on trips, Drew can be seen out in the community – interacting with all from elders to babies, and adults to school aged kids. Drew attends public/community functions from native dancing and drumming to basketball tournaments to potlatches. On these site visits Drew is also out on the tundra or river exploring – led by a group of kids or elders – picking berries, checking fish traps, helping work on snow machines and boats. None of this is expected or required of his position, but all of this has helped Drew become a trusted and respected leader – not only by his staff, but by community members.

Drew has taken care to “walk softly, but strongly” as one staff member described. This is a statement of utmost respect for a “gussuk” and demonstrates Drew’s leadership ability – to be knowledgeable and respectful of local and traditional customs, but hold communities and sites accountable to the Head Start Performance Standards. And this is where Drew has made amazing progress this past school year.

Regional Managers are not only leaders of their sites, but are responsible for leading their team of content-area coordinators, to provide support for their sites. Drew is data-driven and goal-oriented. After analyzing data from the 12-13 program year, Drew set one goal for his entire regional team (sites and coordinators) to improve each site’s overall attendance rate by 5%. At monthly regional team meetings, Drew really pushed his coordinators to relate success in their content-area back to attendance with site staff. The team analyzed the weekly and monthly attendance, and celebrated successes and

problem-solved challenges with site staff, parents and community members. Drew set up monthly meetings between all coordinators and site staff to foster teamwork and improve efficiency.

Drew led by example and was innovative in his approach to improving attendance. Drew held site staff and parents accountable for children's attendance. He encouraged creativity in recognizing children and families with improved, great and perfect attendance. Drew individualized his team's approach to improving attendance for each community, realizing that the path/steps to reaching the goal would look different.

So, the result? Every site improved their overall attendance rate by at least 5%. The regional attendance rate increased by 11.95%. The sites individual annual attendance rates improved by 5.8%, 7.25%, 16.58% and 19.67% respectively. At the same time, child outcomes and school readiness rates improved. All sites had gains of 20% or more in two or four school readiness indicators for 4 year olds, each site increased their number of formal observations and documentation in GOLD and increased their CLASS scores – demonstrating for sites and coordinators the power of focused teamwork between content areas and Central Office and site staff.

But that is not all that Drew did to showcase his leadership. Drew used technology to aid in efficiency, piloting and promoting Sharepoint as a system to keep sites and Central Office on the same page, improving sites scanning capabilities, setting expectations for the use of technology and volunteering to have Napaskiak the first classroom connected to Central Office via Skype with installed cameras and a wireless microphone pack for long-distance CLASS observations.

Drew took the lead locally to have our Kwethluk Head Start Center hooked up to city water and sewer for the first time EVER! It took persistence, patience and a willingness to work with two separate entities (City of Kwethluk and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium) but it paid off this May. For next year, the children and staff will have running water. Drew led Kwethluk Head Start's collaboration with the City and Tribe of Kwethluk supporting their new community garden. Starter plants were housed in our center where our children and staff cared for the plants the months of April and May. We hope to serve some of these vegetables in our center this fall!

Additionally Drew spent many hours partnering to develop Scopes of Work with two school districts through Moore Settlement monies: Lower Kuskokwim School District (Kwethluk) and Yupiit School District (Akiak) that will provide support to our classrooms and four year-olds in these two communities.

Drew's ability to build partnerships, innovation, willingness to understand the cultures of the communities and families he works with, set expectations and respectfully hold staff, parents and communities accountable to Head Start regulations, along with the remarkable achievements in attendance and school readiness outcomes, is why I have nominated him for the Alaska Head Start Association Leadership award.

## **Marcy McGraw**

### **Family Advocate of the Year**

I would like to nominate Marcy McGraw for Family Advocate of the Year. I believe that Marcy deserves this award because she is dedicated, caring, thoughtful, helpful, and reliable to the families that she serves and to her coworkers. Marcy goes above and beyond her normal job duties to ensure that children and their families are given the opportunity to access the resources that they need and to participate in program and community events.



Marcy is the Family Advocate for our North Pole site which is 15 miles from the main center in Fairbanks. Marcy drives back and forth to Fairbanks, often in extreme weather conditions for meetings, trainings and Family Fun Nights. Marcy frequently volunteers to come in to Fairbanks to assist with childcare during parent trainings or to help out in other areas in the program as needed. She goes to "Once Upon a Child" biweekly to pick up donated clothing for both sites in order to keep our clothing resource tables well stocked for our Head Start families. In addition Marcy and the Assistant Education/Disabilities Coordinator have collaborated with a church in North Pole to use their facility to host monthly giveaways of food, clothing and household items. This is done on their own time. They distribute flyers for families in North Pole and Fairbanks. Marcy volunteered to publish our Family Advocate Newsletter to ensure that families were knowledgeable of the latest resources and family services events.

Marcy has worked for Head Start for three years and she has also been the caregiver of a Head Start child. Therefore, she can see things from the parent's perspective and is quick to share her insight with coworkers. Marcy has many wonderful ideas that she shares with staff. She is also willing to try others ideas and suggestions.

Marcy encourages me in my position as the Recruitment Family Advocate. She understands that recruitment is everyone's job and she is constantly working to enlist eligible families. Working with Marcy is enriching. She is a wonderful teammate and an exceptional Family Advocate.





**Congratulations**  
**To the award winners**  
**and nominees**  
**from the**  
**Alaska Head Start Association**

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*Disclaimer:*

*All Nominations are printed  
exactly as submitted*

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Aleutian Pribilof  
ISLANDS ASSOCIATION



METLAKATLA  
Indian Community

