

Alaska Youth Policy Group

A Family Voice Project of
the Alaska Mental Health Board and The Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse



The Alaska Youth Policy Summit 2012

The Alaska Youth Policy Summit took place in Juneau, Alaska February 13 – 15, 2012. The summit brought young adults ages 17 to 24 years of age from multiple places in Alaska to advocate for youth in the state's social services system (youth in foster care, OCS custody, substance abuse treatment, out-of-state residential care, etc). Our group consisted of 18 youth: 6 alumni, and 12 new youth. The summit was hosted by the Alaska Mental Health Board and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

-- with funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. Here in Juneau we learned how to speak to our legislators -- telling our own personal stories and advocating for bills and budget items that we support. The first day we did some team building activities which helped everyone feel comfortable and open with one another. We also got to know about each other, our personal stories, and what we felt passionate about.

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Stop Bullying

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StopBullying.gov is a new website that provides information from various federal government agencies (Dept. of Education, Dept. of Health and Social Services) teaching what bullying/cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how to prevent and respond to bullying. It includes easy-to-understand steps and many prevention activities and tools view bullying from all sides putting bullying to an end for good.

What is Bullying?

Definition: Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

**For more information, go to:
www.StopBullying.gov**

We met with the legislators on the second day. Each of us had visits with our personal Senator and Representative, but also with others who we felt we could connect with.



Overall the legislative visits went well. We all felt that we were making differences for young people that we could relate with. We held a Legislative Reception with an open mic where several of our participants and a gentleman from the crowd performed.

As follow-up, AYPS participants are working on local projects that we hope will inspire other youth to work together on issues affecting young people in Alaska. We are excited to help Alaska to become a better place, through the issues that we have faced and understand to be important.

The Alaska Youth Policy Summit was great this year and it's all due to the following people and organizations. Thank you to all of our AYPS youth participants: Brittany Arey and Karina Marchant of Juneau; Lilly Babino, Rusty Best, Brittany Pickens, Angel Gonzales, Fherron Hines, Jane Buckridge, Rebecca Shier, Stephanie Kopietz, Crystal Parrilla, Courtney Morrison, and Ilina Saucedo of Anchorage; Victoria Anderson of Dillingham; Slade Martin of Palmer; Alexandra Krauss of Fairbanks; Connor Eller and Emma Becherer of Kasilof.

Thank you to our adult planners/supporters: Teri Tibbett, Cori Stennett and Scott Ciambor of Juneau; and Amanda Metivier, Heather Harris, Will Fomai, Adam Hembree, and Robyn Priest of Anchorage. Thank you to the organizations who contributed to planning and carrying out the summit:

- **Facing Foster Care in Alaska**
 - **Covenant House Alaska**
 - **Alaska Youth and Family Network**
 - **Juneau Youth Services**
 - **ACCESS-Alaska**
 - **Ionia**
 - **Alaska Mental Health Board and Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse**
 - **Bring the Kids Home/DHSS**
 - **Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority**
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“Youth and FASD” workgroup invites interested youth to join!

New to the Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Partnership, the “Youth and FASD” workgroup focuses on addressing FASD issues related to youth in Alaska.

The co-chairs are Angel Gonzales, a youth advocate with the Alaska Youth and Family Network, and Brittany Arey, an

intern with the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. They organized the workgroup’s first meeting in July.

Participants in the workgroup discussed and brainstormed ideas that the workgroup should focus on.

Along with the other workgroups of the Alaska FASD

Partnership, the goal of the workgroup is to bring together people interested in issues regarding FASD, determining what goals need to be set, and acting upon them.

To join or learn more, contact:
akfasdpartnership@alaska.gov

FOR THE YEAR 2011 IN ALASKA WHAT IS AFFECTING YOUTH?

What percent of youth drank alcohol at least one time in their life?

65.0%

47.6%

9.7%

What percent of youth tried marijuana at least one time in their life?

41.2%

16.5%

65.3%

What percent of youth have tried a cigarette in their life?

44.3%

32.7%

15.9%

What percent of youth have been bullied on a school property within a year of the survey taken?

58.0%

3.9%

23.0%

This information comes from the Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey for 2011

Answers: 1) 65.0%, 2) 41.2%, 3) 44.3%, 4) 23.0%

"I have a dream" By Brittany Arey

I have a dream that one day I'll make true.
This is a dream that has been long past due.
Long ago we were all living sober and smart.
Changing this world pours out of my heart.
Keeping our pride, saving our race.
I'm not rushing you, go at your own pace.
Yes we are native, do not be embarrassed.
Because you see, it is something to be cherished.
Long ago we hunted and survived 50 below.
We survived so much, we are strong you know?
We were punished, hated, and segregated.
We should show pride, which needs to be stated.
Our race has survived thousands of years.
What's ruining us are those "several" beers.
Tell me why you drink. Is it you're sad?
Or is it to get away when you're mad?
But please trust me when I say...
We're better than that, please give it away.

We're losing our culture, my most prized possession.
So take my hand, together we'll walk out of depression.
Can you imagine the happiness in your soul when you
notice what we've done?
We will be happy sober, knowing we clearly have won.
So what do you think? Does it sound good to you?
If you don't like it, what can I do?
Do you know one native not affected by alcohol?
Every person has an alcoholic family or friend after all.
Can you feel the hurt of booze taking your family?
Or if you drink should your family be the fee?
So please put your bottle down. Then you can say...
"You don't control me anymore! I put you away!"
You can smile, and laugh. No fights over nothing.
God will change your life; don't think that I'm bluffing.
So let's change this world! Pour it out on the banks!
And when we are all happy and sober, I say thanks!



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