

September 15, 2011

AFC September Teleconference

Participants:

Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition
Lisa Sadleir-Hart, Sitka Local Food Network/SEARHC
Diane Owen, He Will Provide, Seward
Annabel Stevens, Anchorage United Way
Randy Efird, POWER, Anchorage
Heather Harris, Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation
Susannah Morgan, Food Bank of Alaska
Monica Dahlberg, Chugiak Eagle River Senior Center
Lacy, Chugiak Eagle River Senior Center
Julia Sargent, Cooperative Extension Services
Robin Stilwell, Food Bank of Alaska
Lisa, Copper River Native Association
Debbie, Copper River Native Association
Susan Wilsrud; Calypso Farms

Member Highlight: Susan Wilsrud, Calypso Farms co-founder and Farm Director

Calypso Educational Farms has existed in Fairbanks since 2000. It is a working farm; they try to market their produce available to all, including low income shoppers. This year they worked with Fairbanks Community Food Bank who had a grant which gave matching funds for food stamp and WIC purchases at Calypso's school garden food stands in Fairbanks. This enabled users to double their purchasing power, up to \$20. They experienced an increase in WIC participation this year; food stamp participation remained minimal. Calypso is looking for ways to increase food stamp participation in the future. They were the first farm to accept the EBT/food stamp debit cards in Tanana Valley. It is a core value of Calypso Farms that everything they offer to the community is accessible to all members of the community. They offer sliding scale, and have board members from all sectors of the community. One board member participates in the food stamp program. Calypso has made getting locally grown food to low income residents a priority. For more info on Calypso Farms: www.calysfarm.org

Lisa asked if Calypso Farms has considered running focus groups in Fairbanks to increase food stamp participation. Susan noted UAF students have an interest in doing this. Vista volunteer support has helped with outreach. Vanessa mentioned AFC has just started food stamp outreach in Fairbanks, and had a very successful meeting with over 2 dozen pastors, military representatives, non-profit agencies and native corporations in August. As outreach increases in Fairbanks, AFC will keep Calypso Farms in the loop to help promote their food stamp program.

Guest Speaker: Randy Efird, Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation POWER

Randy is a Peer Outreach Workers with POWER. POWER is a program of the Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation, offering training to teens to do street outreach and conduct prevention-

based presentations to their peers and staff at the teen center located in the Anchorage downtown transit station. The center has a small emergency food pantry, mostly snacks. Teens who visit the center have an opportunity to pick up informational flyers on a variety of issues, from health education to domestic violence and healthy relationships. They are encouraged to become active in outreach to other teens. Sometimes it takes 3-4 visits for a youth to become active. After each outreach event, the center offers space for debriefing; teens get a chance to share experiences. Light snacks are usually served. This is a very positive experience for participants, and a very important part of the success of outreach. Another important aspect is allowing space for youth to make suggestions for volunteer events; they are more likely to volunteer at events that they have suggested, places they want to go. Teens have suggested museum events, community events and random happenings they have an interest in. Recent suggestions included outreach at Alaska Pride (Moa Tosi Youth Club) and an event this weekend at St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

Heather Harris, Executive Director for the Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation noted that building a community of youth volunteers must be structured and relational. Youth will come back and volunteer a second or third time because they want to be a part of the community. The target population for POWER volunteers are homeless and at-risk kids. She said kids get excited about volunteering, and often the kids who were recipients of services are the ones who want to give back by volunteering. It is helpful for the participating teens to think of outreach as an experience rather than a job. The debriefing time is very important; it increases their desire to do more outreach. At debriefing sessions teens will often ask for additional volunteer opportunities. POWER volunteers have given presentations at local agencies, youth detention centers, and Native Councils. They are available to give a presentation to your agency board or staff. You can find more information on the POWER program on their website: <http://www.aypfalaska.org/> AFC agencies are encouraged to connect with youth centers in their communities to expand the agency's volunteer base.

Member Updates:

Annabel with Anchorage United Way offered to post any statewide events AFC members would like to promote in a distribution list she send out, information can be sent to astevens@ak.org Anchorage United Way's Day of Caring is September 16.

Chugiak Eagle River Senior Center sponsored a Hunger Action Month event September 8. Alaska Food Coalition, Food Bank of Alaska and Lutheran Social Services set up a food trivia game during lunchtime, giving away door prizes and information about hunger in Alaska. A senior center group, the Red Hats, committed to organizing a food drive at the center Oct 3 – Dec 16. Food and toilet items can be dropped off at the mail desk or gift shop. Call 688-2683 for additional information. All donations will benefit Chugiak Eagle River Food Pantry.

Kenai Peninsula Food Bank hosted Conoco Phillips for United Way Day of Caring. Volunteers dug potatoes from the food bank's garden, and picked peas. They also helped repair shelving in the food bank.

Julia with Cooperative Extension Services reminded us that this Saturday, 9/17/11 at the Spenard Farmers Market food stamp dollars will be matched up to \$20 for purchases of fruits,

vegetables, bread, honey and seafood. You must pre-register to participate, contact UAF Cooperative Extension Service at (907) 786-6313 or lashallcross@alaska.edu

Johnson's Car Service in Anchorage is offering a free car wash coupon for anyone who drops off 10 cans of food through 9/17.

Other Business:

Vanessa mentioned mini grant applications are due September 30. Current AFC members can apply. If you received an AFC mini-grant last year, you have to wait a year to re-apply. Grants are for freezers, shelving or anything that helps build capacity in your agencies.