

THE ALASKA FOOD COALITION



**2007 ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION CONFERENCE ROOM
JUNEAU, ALASKA
FEBRUARY 12 - 13, 2007**

MINUTES

Attendees

George Briggs (The Glory Hole)
Linda Coate (Alaska DEED, USDA Food Program)
Jim Crockett (Bean's Café)
Ruth Elvsaas (Food Bank of Alaska)
Janelle Gomez (Alaska DHSS, Office of Children's Services, Family Nutrition Unit)
Sophia Gomma (Catholic Social Services)
Katrina Grundhal (Salvation Army McKinnel Shelter)
Rosemary Hagevig (Catholic Community Service)
George Hieronymus (The Foraker Group)
Karen Johnson (Alaska Family Services)
Bruce Klein (Nome Community Center)
Susannah Morgan (Food Bank of Alaska)
Dana Paperman (Seward Senior Center)
Sammye Pokryfki (Rasmuson Foundation)
Michael Rochin (New Hope on the Last Frontier)
Ann Marie Sack (Rasmuson Foundation)
Chris Scott (New Hope on the Last Frontier)
AnnaBell Stevens (United Way of Anchorage)
Linda Swarner (Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Inc.)
Henryk Szadziewski (The Alaska Food Coalition)
Andrea Thistle (Valley Open Bible Fellowship)
Joe Thomas (Copper River Native Association)
Lois Thomas (Copper River Native Association)
Nick Timurphy (Bristol Bay Native Association Regional Food Bank)
Claudia Vecchiarelli (Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc.)
Donna Mae Williams (Naknek Native Village)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH

10:00 am - 12:30 pm State, Non-profit Agencies and the Farm Bill

1. *Shawn Powers (Food Bank of Alaska)*

[Advocating for Hungry Alaskans in the 2007 Farm Bill
How to Write to an Elected Official.doc](#)

2. *Linda Coate (AK DEED, Child Nutrition Services)*

[Highlights of the FY 2007 Farm Bill Proposals.doc](#)
<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/cns/sfsp/home.html>

3. *Janelle Gomez (AK DHSS, Family Nutrition Services)*

[Alaska CSFP](#)

4. *Joan Chase and Carolyn Spalding (AK DHSS, Division of Public Assistance)*

Joan and Carolyn updated members on the developments in the Food Stamps program in Alaska in the past year. Joan informed members on the high accuracy rates in Alaska meaning that more benefits are going to the eligible applicants. She added that the \$10 minimum benefit was not the case in the majority of food stamps recipients. Most cars are exempt from asset testing. Also combat pay exclusion for active military and their families is already happening in Alaska. Joan reminded members that Alaska still retains the option of denying benefits to drug felons who have served their sentences.

Carolyn reiterated that individual states have latitude from the 2002 Farm Bill to choose options for food stamp eligibility. Carolyn let the members know that more program manuals were now available online and that program staff have been working on nutrition education and eligibility issues with Cooperative Extension Services at the University of Fairbanks. Carolyn concluded that the Alaska DPA was in favor of the recent Farm Bill proposals. Although the proposals may not cover all of the issues in need of address, the latitude given by the options allow for states to shape the program positively.

Carolyn was asked by the members about Food Stamp outreach in Alaska. An outreach program is not currently in place.

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Alaska Food Coalition Business (Teleconferenced)

1. *Member updates*

Linda Swarner (Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Inc.)

Linda described the work of KPFB to the members. It is the largest charitable food distributor on the Kenai Peninsula and distributes donated food as well as government commodities. In addition to its distribution of food to agencies across the Peninsula, KPFB also runs a soup kitchen at its facility.

Bruce Klein (Nome Community Center)

Bruce introduced the members to the work of Nome Community Center, which runs a senior center, programs on family reunification & preservation, a teen center and Project Venture – an initiative designed to develop Alaska Native youth.

George Briggs (The Glory Hole)

The Glory Hole has recently secured a grant to remodel its kitchen. On April 29, the 'Empty Bowls' fundraiser will held.

Chris Scott (New Hope on the Last Frontier)

Chris introduced herself to the members. She has recently been appointed Executive Director of New Hope on the Last Frontier. Chris informed members about New Hope's children in foster care program.

Michael Rochin (New Hope on the Last Frontier)

Mike discussed New Hope's food and clothing program. New Hope has been operating for 6 years and initially made weekly distributions. These distributions served 300 families a week until May last year when funding ran out. New Hope is running distributions of Food Bank of Alaska's mobile food pantry and currently serving 85 families a week. As of March, New Hope will resume weekly distributions every Tuesday. They will be client choice distributions and anticipate that 200-250 families will be served.

Claudia Vecchiarelli (Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc.)

Claudia updated members on Alpha Omega, which runs all sorts of social serves in Delta Junction, including being a fee agent for food stamps, and is known locally as 'the food place'. With a large Russian community in Delta Junction, Alpha Omega is working hard to meet the needs of English-as-a-second-language clients. Distributions are run two weekends a month.

Sophia Gomma (Catholic Social Services)

Catholic Social Services runs a client choice pantry, serving 1200 families a month. There has been a noticeable increase in clients in the past two months. With the transition to a full client choice pantry, CSS is finding that clients are only taking what they need and not hoarding food.

Karen Johnson (Alaska Family Services)

Karen described the work in crisis counseling at Alaska Family Services and added that Food Bank Alaska's Mat-Su Branch has been a of great benefit to Valley agencies.

Jim Crockett (Bean's Café)

Bean's has served 4.3 million meals since its founding in 1979. The new kitchen will be finished in October of this year. Bean's would like to become the 'White House' of

homelessness in Anchorage by extending its operations into employment services. A book 'Where the Light Lives' was recently published by Bean's. Written by the homeless in Anchorage it draws attention to the problems of living on the street.

Sammye Pokryfki (Rasmuson Foundation)

Sammye informed members of the Tier I and Tier II capital improvement grants available from the Rasmuson Foundation. Information can be found at these links:

<http://www.rasmuson.org/index.php?switch=viewpage&pageid=32>

<http://www.rasmuson.org/index.php?switch=viewpage&pageid=33>

In addition, Sammye reminded members of the Sabbatical Program for non-profit leaders. Details are available from:

<http://www.rasmuson.org/index.php?switch=viewpage&pageid=112>

Dana Paperman (Seward Senior Center)

Seward Senior Center offers meals Monday to Friday at its facility as well as a meals on wheels program. In addition, the center provides activities and health promotion services.

Andrea Thistle (Valley Open Bible Fellowship)

Community Café serves over 175 meals a week. 50 families a week access fresh, frozen and dairy products from the food pantry. At the last summer lunch program upto 50 children were served and the plan is to add 3 more sites next year.

Susannah Morgan (Food Bank of Alaska)

Food Bank of Alaska does not directly serve clients, but to the agencies who distribute the food to hungry people. In the past year FBA distributed over 6 million pounds of food. The last 12 months have also seen the opening of the Mat-Su Branch, the start up of the mobile food pantry, the distribution of co-op food, and online ordering - available for partner agencies at: <http://www.foodbankofalaska.org/PickList/index.php>

Ruth Elvsaas (Food Bank of Alaska)

In the program department at FBA changes have included the hiring of an Advocacy Program Manager. The sustainability project is nearing the completion of a report on the data produced by surveys sent to FBA agencies. FBA recently held a successful partner agency conference at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

Joe Thomas & Lois Thomas (Copper River Native Association)

Cooper River has been working on bringing more elders to the lunch program by picking and dropping off seniors in need of food assistance.

George Hieronymus (The Foraker Group)

George let members know of The Foraker Group's work to strengthen non-profits in Alaska. More information can be accessed from:

<http://www.forakergroup.org/>

AnnaBell Stevens (United Way of Anchorage)

AnnaBell congratulated the membership on the coalition's growing strength. Since the first meetings in the mid-1990s the organization has developed into a significant voice on hunger issues in Alaska.

Katrina Grundhal (Salvation Army McKinnell Shelter)

McKinnell Shelter will be housed in a new facility beginning July of 2007.

Nick Timurphy (Bristol Bay Native Association Regional Food Bank)

Nick informed members that he has been taking presentations on food assistance to communities around the Dillingham area, in hope of encouraging the establishment of food programs.

2. Treasurer's report for FY 2007 & proposed budget for FY 2008

FY 2007 Treasurer's Report

	Actual	Annual Budget	Remaining in Budget
Personnel Services	25083	45000	19917
Travel	2275	5000	2725
Supplies	617	1000	383
Other	11756	16000	4244
Total	39731	67000	27269

FY 2008 Proposed Budget

Personnel Services	45000
Travel	5000
Supplies	1000
Other	
Mini-grants	10000
Website updates	3000
Educational materials	3000
Total	67,000

The FY 2008 budget was passed by the members.

3. Review of goals for FY 2007 & proposed goals for FY 2008

FY 2007 Goals

- I. Complete capacity-building project, including developing and submitting a large grant for capital improvements. This process includes developing a 'model' food pantry, conducting the final analysis of community needs, identifying grant opportunities and submitting a grant proposal.
- II. Develop educational outreach program. In order to further the Alaska Food Coalition's mission 'to educate policy makers about Alaskan food needs', the AFC Coordinator will regularly contact legislators and opinion makers with information on

hunger and anti-hunger efforts. The AFC Coordinator will also continue to publicize the results of the Hunger in America 2006 Alaska report.

- III. Distribute mini-grants to food programs throughout the state to improve their ability to distribute food to hungry Alaskans.
- IV. Maintain the Alaska Food Coalition network, through teleconferences and annual meetings.
- V. Strengthen the Coalition by adding more members from a broad spectrum of opinion-makers, politicians and representatives from the food retail industry.

FY 2007 Accomplishments

I. Capacity-building Project

- Data collected from the Community Survey and Facility & Equipment Survey entered into a customized database
- Report on raw data produced and presented to the membership on 9/21/06
- Visits made to 9 food pantries across the state to collect data on model food pantries
- Research on grant possibilities on-going
- Analysis of data expected to be completed by 4th Quarter

II. Educational Outreach Program

- Legislator/Opinion-maker updates mailed on 8/7/06 & 10/13/06
- A Report on the State of Alaska 's Boards and Commissions & A Report on Bills and Resolutions Relevant to the Hunger Issue published online 12/1/06
- Brochure produced on 17/8/06 and mailed to members, legislators and opinion-makers in August.

III. Mini-Grants

- 6 grants distributed
- 5/6 outside of Anchorage
- Total of \$10,549

IV. Alaska Food Coalition Meetings

- Teleconferences held on 9/21/06 and 1/16/07
- Executive Committee meetings held 5/16/06 and 11/21/06

V. Membership

- 61 members this year. 37 last year.
- 38 Non-profit, 22 government agencies, 1 individual
- 11 out of 12 Native Corporation Regions represented
- Membership pitches made in FY 2007 through: mail drive to all food programs in Alaska (8/7/06), e-mails, phone calls, site visits, online, flyers.

FY 2008 Proposed Goals

- I. Submit a large grant for capital improvements based on information collected by the capacity-building project. This involves completion of the final analysis of community needs and identifying grant opportunities.

- II. Develop the educational outreach program to further the Alaska Food Coalition's mission 'to educate policy makers about Alaskan food needs'. The AFC Coordinator will regularly contact legislators and opinion makers with information on hunger and anti-hunger efforts. The information will include results from informal surveys of clients.
- III. Distribute mini-grants to food programs throughout the state to improve their ability to distribute food to hungry Alaskans.
- IV. Maintain the Alaska Food Coalition network, through teleconferences and annual meetings.
- V. Strengthen the coalition by encouraging greater participation from current members.

The goals for FY 2008 were passed by the members.

4. Election of officers

The following candidates were presented to the membership:

President: Linda Swarner and Michael Rochin
Vice-President: Andrea Thistle and Nick Timurphy
Secretary: Sophia Gomma
Treasurer: Susannah Morgan

After a secret ballot, the following members were elected as the officers for FY 2008.

President: Linda Swarner
Vice-President: Nick Timurphy
Secretary: Sophia Gomma
Treasurer: Susannah Morgan

5. Results from non-profit food programs capacity-building research

[Capacity-building Project 2007 Results](#)

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm Empty Plates in the Great Land: Alaska Leaves Millions in Federal Nutrition Dollars Unclaimed (at The Glory Hole, 247 S. Franklin)

Susannah Morgan (Food Bank of Alaska) presented the findings of a new report on federal food programs. The report and presentation visuals can be accessed below.

[Empty Plates in the Great Land – Report](#)
[Empty Plates in the Great Land - Presentation Visuals](#)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH

1:00 pm – 1:30 pm Legislator Q & A

Guests:

- Representative Bryce Edgmon
- Representative Les Gara

Susannah introduced the coalition to the guests and members introduced themselves to Reps Edgmon and Gara. Susannah informed the legislators that over 83,000 Alaskans are hungry and that the problem is more acute in rural Alaska, where 35% of residents worry about food. Susannah added that members would like to hear suggestions for non-profit and state cooperation and policy changes helping to find a solution to the pressing issue of hunger. The Representatives introduced themselves to the members including their legislative experience and intersections with poverty issues.

Both Representatives indicated that educating legislators on the issue of hunger was of paramount importance. Elected officials still have much to learn.

Katrina asked about the establishment of a Hunger Commission. She wanted to know how much it would cost to set up, how the coalition would present it to legislators and if a commission would help. Rep. Edgmon thought that members should pursue the idea and added that the Governor's office and the Department of Health and Social Services would be the best agencies to bring it forward. Rep. Gara responded that the legislature is not good at solving something it has not done before. He continued by saying that a threshold point would be to join with people with similar objectives, perhaps homelessness coalitions. Susannah thought that this would make the focus of the hunger issue too narrow and that in fact 'hunger hides' in our communities and the hungry could be our neighbors.

Rep. Edgmon thought that another way forward is to research previous efforts to see if addressing the hunger issue had been tried before. Rep. Gara offered his assistance in putting out a research request. Rep. Gara also said that strong policy proposals are crucial in leveraging funds and that government is not willing to move unless forced to. Rep. Gara liked the idea of calling out people to force government to answer difficult questions.

Katrina stated that the facts are that children who are hungry under-perform in school and that hungry seniors contribute to the cost of Medicare. Rep. Gara reiterated his point that the members should educate legislators on these points and that public action is one method.

Susannah asked about the possible funding of agency operating costs. The work of non-profit agencies saves the state money in providing social services. Rep. Gara talked about the cuts in the Human Services Matching Grant and how members should advocate for its restoration to previous levels. Rep. Edgmon concluded that it would be ideal if groups could be self-sufficient and not tied to public funds.

Susannah thanked the Representatives for their honest and practical advice.

1:30 pm - 3:45 pm Legislative Debrief - Future Directions

A spirited debrief on recent legislative work and the Annual Member meeting was held by the members. The main points to emerge from the discussion were:

Annual Member Meeting

- Ruth wanted to bring to the members' attention the work of Nick Timurphy in the success of the Annual Member Meeting. His ability to forge friendships across the state has been of great benefit to the anti-hunger community in Alaska.
- Members felt the Farm Bill session with some exceptions was similar to the information presented last year. Susannah asked members for suggestions on future topics and speakers. She offered the possibility of inviting prominent advocates to come speak in the future and having an agency spotlight presentation. Members also felt more outreach to non-participating members is needed.
- Kris and Mike suggested that the coalition produce a booklet or video on the work of members. It would serve as a tool for legislators. Bruce offered advice on this project if required.
- Sophia discussed the possibility of holding the meeting in Anchorage to encourage greater participation. She also suggested that a core group could then continue onto Juneau to conduct legislative work. Sophia liked the updates on agencies and would like to see more on agency needs. Susannah added that Anchorage meetings had not achieved high participation rates and that in fact the present Juneau meeting has seen the highest member participation in recent memory.
- AnnaBell stressed the importance of name tags for members next year.
- Susannah thought that a future meeting should be nearer the capitol building. Rosemary kindly offered her facility for future meetings.
- Claudia asked how we could encourage more participation at the events held at The Glory Hole. Susannah discussed the possibility of holding them in the capitol under the sponsorship of a legislator.
- Linda opened the floor to other ideas for the coalition. Some members expressed an interest in fundraising ideas and publicizing food drives. Linda thought that faculty members from UAS could help with facilitating a seminar on the subject. Kris though this was a good topic for a mid-year teleconference. Claudia asked for better teleconferencing facilities for the quarterly teleconferences – she is unable to hear proceedings.
- The accommodations received mixed reviews with some expressing a preference for this year's hotel choice, while others were unequivocal in their disappointment at the hotel.

Legislative work

- AnnaBell wanted to emphasize the importance of dealing with the legislative aides. She felt that informing them on the issue was as important as informing legislators. Linda added that with the recent elections new legislators in Juneau needed to be educated about the hunger issue. Inviting legislators to your facility was an effective tool in this educational process.
- Linda let members know that as a follow up to the 'Empty Plates' report, Senator Ellis will be making a speech on the floor about the matter.
- AnnaBell brought up how much more of an impact discussing child hunger has with legislators.

- Sophia questioned the value of all the members coming to Juneau. She wondered if we had been effective this year and that if the Hunger Commission was an issue the coalition should pursue. Sophia felt there had not been enough concrete information on the Hunger Commission and as a consequence members went into meetings unprepared.
- Susannah wanted the membership to consider future directions on legislative issues. She felt that the coalition had reached a point where the membership should be thinking about an 'ask' from legislators. What are the policy priorities?
- AnnaBell felt that members had been more sophisticated in legislative work this year. It was a better time in the year to come to Juneau and that some momentum had been picked up – we need to keep it going. She suggested that future legislator leave behinds be color coded.
- Rosemary added that AgeNet had recently put together a leave behind which had attached a dollar amount to their requests.
- Katrina suggested a teleconference before the Annual Member Meeting to flesh out the 'ask'.
- Linda proposed a later start for next year, perhaps 12 noon. She also thought that 30 minutes discussion about the talking points before visiting legislators should be held at the Annual Member Meeting.
- Mike felt that awareness on the hunger issue among legislators had been raised by the trip.
- Chris suggested a policy committee to establish priorities to recommend to the members. Sophia added that requests to serve on the committee should be extended to all members.

Linda thanked the members for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 3:45 pm. Minutes submitted by Henryk Szadziewski, Alaska Food Coalition Coordinator.