

THE ALASKA FOOD COALITION



QUARTERLY TELECONFERENCE ROOM 890, FRONTIER BUILDING, ANCHORAGE 9 AM – 10 AM, MAY 30, 2007

MINUTES

Participants

George Briggs (The Glory Hole)
Mariko Churchill (Food Bank of Alaska)
Michael Curran (Alaska Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives)
Jo Dawson (Alaska DEED, USDA Food Program)
Ken Farrow (Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc.)
Janelle Gomez (Alaska DHSS, Office of Children's Services, Family Nutrition Unit)
Sophia Gomma (Catholic Social Services)
Susannah Morgan (Food Bank of Alaska)
Aaron Osterback (Southcentral Foundation/Elder Program)
Shawn Powers (Food Bank of Alaska)
Ruth Riley-Elvsaa (Food Bank of Alaska)
Michael Rochin (New Hope on the Last Frontier)
Chris Scott (New Hope on the Last Frontier)
AnnaBell Stevens (United Way of Anchorage)
Linda Swarner (Kenai Peninsula Food Bank)
Henryk Szadziewski (The Alaska Food Coalition)
Debra Templeton (Armed Services YMCA)
Andrea Thistle (Valley Open Bible Fellowship)
Nick Timurphy (Bristol Bay Native Association Regional Food Bank)

1. Member introductions and updates

Sophia Gomma (Catholic Social Services)

The food pantry at St. Francis House has been busy in recent weeks despite low food stocks. Sophia will be leaving CSS to take up a new post in mid-July.

Susannah Morgan (Food Bank of Alaska)

There's mixed news from FBA. 13 sites for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) will be up and running soon in Rural Alaska in addition to 6 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites in the Anchorage area. The requested appropriation from the Alaska State Legislature for the Mat-Su Branch was not approved.

AnnaBell Stevens (United Way of Anchorage)

United Way Anchorage recently worked on the National Association of Letter Carriers food drive, which brought in approximately 76,000 lbs of food in Anchorage and over 165,000 in Alaska. Planning for Thanksgiving Blessing and Day of Caring is under way.

Aaron Osterback (Southcentral Foundation/Elder Program)

Farmers' Market Program coupons have arrived and Southcentral Foundation are arranging trips for elders to buy vegetables.

Linda Swarner (Kenai Peninsula Food Bank)

Linda added that KPFB had also received their coupons and that the organization was looking to fill board positions. Two fundraisers are happening soon; the Soup, Supper and Auction event on August 25th and a golf tournament in July.

Jo Dawson (Alaska DEED, USDA Food Program)

The number of SFSP sites has increased by a third from 25 to 35 programs this year. Jo has also taken over from Linda Coate as USDA Commodities Project Coordinator

George Briggs (The Glory Hole)

The kitchen is going to be remodeled soon and The Glory Hole received over 5,000 lbs of food from the damaged cruise ship, the Empress of the North.

Michael Curran (Alaska Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives)

A Request for Proposals for the Compassion Capital Fund will soon be issued. More information is available from:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccf/existing_grantees/io_grantees/alaska.html

Andrea Thistle (Valley Open Bible Fellowship)

The SFSP is set to begin on 5/30. The plan is to provide food three days a week.

Nick Timurphy (Bristol Bay Native Association Regional Food Bank)

BBNA are busy making preparations for the visit of the governor.

Ken Farrow (Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc.)

The food programs are functioning as normal. In addition to commodities distribution, Alpha Omega maintains a donated food pantry with the aid of a FEMA grant.

Janelle Gomez (Alaska DHSS, Office of Children's Services, Family Nutrition Unit)

The Senior Farmers' Market Program is set to start on June 1st and end on October 31st. This year the idea is to reach more seniors by offering \$25 to each senior instead of \$30 and setting eligibility at 185% of poverty.

Michael Rochin (New Hope on the Last Frontier)

New Hope is seeing between 120-130 families at its distributions and is continuing as a mobile food pantry site. Mike's wife is also about to have a baby!

2. Henryk Szadziewski: coalition research and state legislation

Henry updated members on two reports emerging from Coalition research. The first is an update on legislation emerging from the 25th Alaska State Legislature, which includes the increased eligibility for Denali Kid Care and the axing of the Senior Care Program. The second is an analysis of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. Indications show that Rural Alaska, children and poor Alaskans are the most food insecure in the state. Henry added that the analysis will be available to members shortly.

3. Shawn Powers: the Farm Bill

Shawn kept members posted on developments at the federal level. He said that a completed farm bill should be ready by July. Advocates have seen some interesting awareness raising events recently, especially the Governor of Oregon's recent difficult experience of living on a Food Stamp budget for a week. Shawn also discussed HR2129 – the 'Feed America's Families Act'. He stressed the importance of contacting Representative Don Young to encourage his support for the act.

4. Andrea Thistle: Policy Committee

Andrea let the members know that the committee met on April 27th and that its purpose was to determine a strong legislative agenda for members to take to lawmakers in Juneau. The committee decided to recommend two policy items to members. These are:

- State legislation in support of school breakfast
- Funds for capital improvements to the charitable anti-hunger network

Members present endorsed the recommendations and the manager will work on refining the 'ask' over the coming weeks.

5. Session ideas for the FY 2008 Annual Member Meeting

Ideas were solicited from members on what they would like to see at future Annual Member Meetings of The Alaska Food Coalition. They included:

- More time on the hill (AnnaBell)
- Rolling out a research project – such as school breakfast (Shawn)
- Tying in school breakfast research with BRFSS data (Janelle)
- Starting off with in-depth member introductions – including presentations by two or three members on their agency's work. (Sophia)
- Grant opportunities (Chris)

Members also discussed the idea of clearly identifying ourselves to the Juneau community by wearing brightly colored pins during the Annual Member Meeting. Also discussed was developing a slogan which could be used on pins; Aaron suggested "Unity in the Community". Linda added that serving a school breakfast to legislators was a useful way of educating Juneau lawmakers on school nutrition issues.

Linda also invited members with further suggestions to e-mail Henry.

6. Staff and Executive Committee changes at the coalition

Henry informed the members that his last day at The Alaska Food Coalition will be June 21st. Ruth and Henry are actively seeking a replacement and will be interviewing candidates in the week beginning June 11th. Sophia's departure from CSS potentially vacates the position of secretary on the Executive Committee. Members who are interested in the position should contact Henry.

7. Other business, concerns or issues

Hunger Awareness Day is June 5th. Events are planned on the Kenai and in Anchorage. Proclamations will be read in both locations. The program in Anchorage begins at 5 pm in Town Square Park.

The meeting was adjourned by President Linda Swarner at 11:10 am.