



# YKHC Health Aides Graduate as Community Health Practitioners



The Community Health Aide Training Program is excited to announce the graduation of nine new Community Health Practitioners! The students earned their Certificate in Community Health from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and were honored at the Kuskokwim Campus graduation ceremony held at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center in Bethel on May 3.

Pictured above (left to right): Carla Suskuk, Kwethluk; Pauline Simon-Wilson, Scammon Bay; Esther Tobeluk, Scammon Bay; Marsha Frederick, Akiachak; Virginia Lozano, Kongiganak; Theresa Fairbanks, Chefornak; Rena Tony, Kipnuk; Danielle Beans, Pilot Station. Not pictured: Ross Nicholas, Napaskiak.

*Congratulations on this significant educational milestone! We look forward to the good work you will continue to do in your communities and for our region!*

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### Is your village in need of an Emergency Response Vehicle?

YKHC's Grant Development Department can help your community in applying for a grant.

**Questions to consider before contacting the Grant Development Department:**

- What are the needs and what type of vehicle (ATV, snow-machine, etc), if any, is being used now?
- Where will the services be provided?
- Why are the funds needed?
- Who will benefit from the services?

More information on the types of grants Rasmuson Foundation offers can be found at [www.rasmuson.org/grants](http://www.rasmuson.org/grants).

If interested, please contact Traci Maczynski with YKHC's Grant Development Department at **907-543-6041** or [Traci\\_Maczynski@ykhc.org](mailto:Traci_Maczynski@ykhc.org)

# RESOURCES

YKHC main switchboard ..... 543-6000  
 Toll Free ..... 1-800-478-3321

## APPOINTMENTS

Outpatient Clinics  
 (Yukon, Kusko, Delta) ..... 543-6442  
 Dental ..... 543-6229  
 Optometry ..... 543-6336  
 Audiology ..... 543-6466

## SUBREGIONAL CLINICS

Aniak ..... 675-4556  
 Emmonak ..... 949-3500  
 St. Mary's ..... 438-3500  
 Toksook Bay ..... 427-3500  
 Hooper Bay ..... 758-3500

## SERVICES

Inpatient (North Wing) ..... 543-6330  
 Pharmacy ..... 543-6382  
 Physical Therapy ..... 543-6342  
 Women's Health ..... 543-6296  
 Irvik Birthing Center ..... 543-6346  
 Behavioral Health Services ..... 543-6100  
     Substance Abuse Treatment ..... 543-6730  
     Sobering Center ..... 543-6830  
     Developmental Disabilities ..... 543-2762  
 Emergency Room ..... 543-6395  
 Office of Environmental Health &  
 Engineering, Injury Contro  
 & EMS ..... 543-6420

## ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

Administration ..... 543-6020  
 Human Resources ..... 543-6060  
 Public Relations ..... 543-6013  
 Travel Management ..... 543-6360

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**ATTENTION: If you speak Yup'ik, free translations services are available to you. Call 907-543-6603.**

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The Messenger is also available for download on our website at [www.ykhc.org/messenger](http://www.ykhc.org/messenger). Please ask permission to reprint articles or pictures.

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# YKHC Board of Directors

### Unit 1



Mary Ayunerak Alakanuk



Michael Hunt, Sr. Kotlik

### Unit 2



Geraldine Beans St. Mary's



Wassilie 'Wesley' Pitka Marshall

### Unit 3

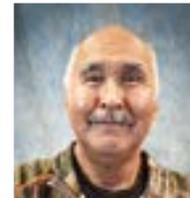


Bonnie Persson Upper Kalskag



Patricia Yaska Chuathbaluk

### Unit 4



Phillip K. Peter, Sr Akiachak



James Nicori Kwethluk

### Unit 5



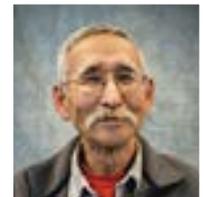
Stan Hoffman, Sr. Bethel



Gloria Simeon Bethel



Walter Jim Bethel



Chris Larson Napaskiak

### Unit 6



Esai Twitchell, Jr. Kasigluk



Adolph Lewis Kwigillingok

### Unit 8

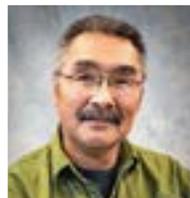


Abraham David Mekoryuk



James Sipary Toksook Bay

### Unit 9



Patrick Tall Chevak



John Uttereyuk Scammon Bay

### Unit 10



Joshua Cleveland Quinhagak

### Unit 11



Marvin Deacon Grayling

### Honorary Board Member



James Charlie, Sr. Toksook Bay

## Message from the President/CEO

### Priority: Customer Service

When I became CEO in 2014, I visited all of YKHC's member villages. After speaking with many customers and personally reviewing customer comments, it became apparent that YKHC needed to do a better job in how we communicate and interact with our customers.

It was not that we were not doing great work, but rather we needed to develop a process to ensure that we communicated and interacted with *all* customers in a consistent manner, each and every time, regardless of our 50 locations. The company's lack of any customer service standards became obvious.

After meeting with our Board of Directors, YKHC's journey to improve our customer service skills began in the summer of 2014 when we formed a team to create a solution to our customers' concerns. Over the course of about a year and half, several teams and employees worked towards understanding our customers' perspectives. By analyzing several years' worth of customer comments and exploring industry standards, YKHC developed our first ever corporate-wide customer service training program.

Our research into other hospitals, healthcare systems and highly rated customer service programs helped us to understand how to address common challenges we experience here in the YK Delta. While conducting this research, we also knew it would be incredibly important to develop a program that honors our rich cultures, elder knowledge and traditions.

In late 2016, a plan was developed. We set an aggressive goal to complete customer service training for all existing employees within a year. Central to this goal was ensuring this training was culturally relevant and customized for YKHC. To accomplish this, we collaborated with community partners and several members of YKHC's Callicaraq Behavioral Health program.

We then developed YKHC's first customer service standards that are behavioral expectations for every employee, regardless of position. Using examples from leading healthcare companies, we identified customer-centered behaviors and expectations relating to each of YKHC's seven company values. A few examples include, "Promote a culture where the customer comes first in everything we do," "Listen and communicate in a clear and respectful manner" and "Pursue an understanding of traditional learning, wisdom and values."



President and CEO  
Dan Winkelman

Early in 2017, my team was the first group to attend YKHC's new customer service training. Over the course of two days we reviewed customer complaints, discussed case scenarios, practiced customer service skills and conducted an in-depth evaluation of the training.

After revisions and improvements were made, we launched the customer service training program to our team of nearly 150 managers. Then, in October of 2017, we began training all YKHC employees. To accomplish our goal, 90 full-day trainings were conducted. Feeling strongly that in order for us to all improve and move forward together, my team committed to introducing each training class. At least two members of leadership attended all 90 classes to provide a very important introduction to its purpose and address employee concerns.

I am happy to report in its first six months we successfully trained 1,172 existing employees and as of January 2018 the customer service training was added to our new employee orientation. This change ensures each and every new employee receives customer service training from their first day of employment.

Whether it is this new customer service training, building a new hospital and related infrastructure, or improving how we will deliver healthcare in our new facility, YKHC is committed to developing a culture that is customer-centered.

Sincerely,

## Good Things Are Happening at YKHC Inpatient Unit

The inpatient unit at YKHC, commonly called North Wing, is striving to provide excellent patient care on a daily basis. This is being carried out by evidence-based practices and Lean Management. As part of the Lean Management initiative, a visual management board has been developed to guide the actions of our nurses every day.

YKHC is focused on four measurements of success, which include Quality, Finance, Time and Satisfaction. The inpatient staff have made great gains in each of these areas, all designed to give our patients the best care possible. The efforts are paying off, as shown by 100% customer satisfaction in three areas surveyed.

The most impactful change is bed-side reporting. Our nurses give reports involving the patient and family, helping the patient understand what is happening during their hospital stay and giving them the opportunity to ask questions.

In addition, the areas related to finance have improved from 20% to 100%, and in the area of quality, our medication scanning rates have gone from 85% to 94%. Meanwhile, North Wing staff continue to meet the goals set before them.

Joni Beckham, RN MSN RNC-OB, is the manager of inpatient services. She is an advocate for excellent patient care and is mentoring the staff through the Lean Management processes. She



**North Wing Lean Management Board. Left to Right: Miranda Kelly NA, Sandra Fox RN, Deanna Matthew NA, Valerie Johnson RN.**

has experience in working with different cultures and multigenerational populations.

—Cindy Christian, RN MHA/Chief Nurse Executive

### Boating: Always Be Prepared

You never know how your day is going to end on the water. Before you go, take time to:

- Check the weather.
- Gather together and take along the proper equipment.
- Make sure your boat is loaded properly.
- Put on your personal flotation device.
- Tell someone your float plan.

#### Have a Float Plan

Before you begin your trip, tell a *responsible person* what your plans are. If you end up missing, he/she can get help.

#### Make sure the person knows:

- Who is going
- Where you are going
- When you expect to arrive there and when you expect to return
- What you are carrying for survival gear
- A description of your boat
- And remember when you change your destination tell the responsible person.

### Prevent Drowning by Practicing Safe Boating

Did you know that drowning is the second leading cause of injury death in the YK Delta? Don't become a drowning statistic.

- Wear a personal flotation device that will keep you afloat and help you stay warm if you end up in the water.
- Alcohol is a risk factor for drowning. Don't drink and drive and don't ride with someone who has been drinking!
- Make sure the weather and water conditions are safe for boating. If they aren't, don't go. Or stop and wait until they improve.



June, 2018

# Dr. Paul John Calricaraq Project

For more information about PJCP, visit our website: [www.calricaraq.org](http://www.calricaraq.org)



**Guiding Principles:** Represent the Y-K region's Culture & Identity | Promote Customer Centered Care | Affordable Cost & Sustainable Operations

## PJCP Design

The architectural design team continues to provide construction administration services, support medical equipment design questions, and address contractor-issued questions.

Jones and Jones is working with YKHC to finalize the cultural wall graphics and photo panels to be used throughout the hospital and new clinic.

## PJCP Construction

ASKW-Davis is installing insulated metal wall panels on the clinic's exterior. On the first floor, work continues on taping and painting walls and door frames, installing data/comm wires, and installing duct and heat pipe insulation. Heat line terminations and testing were completed on the first floor. Drywall installation and electrical work continues on the third floor. GMI is hanging ductwork on the first and third floors. MCC plumbers are installing waste and vent piping, water lines and medical gas lines on the second floor. Plumbing in the central utility plant continues.

Special Inspections: YKHC is inspecting firestopping at walls and joints, fireproofing patches and providing observation for drilled-in embeds. YKHC inspections will continue throughout construction.



A construction tour was provided to Senator Dan Sullivan and the Senior Leadership Team on May 1. The gypsum wallboard signed by tribal delegates at the 2017 PJCP dedication ceremony was permanently installed in the building.

QA Services will provide periodic inspections for welding in the hospital interstitial space and structural framing of the roof top HVAC supports.

## Hospital Renovation

ASKW-Davis has started placement and welding of structural steel in the hospital's interstitial space. Plumbers continue installation of drilled-in embeds for pipe hangers on the bottom of the hospital floor. Daily construction activities are planned around operations to limit disruption of services. The hospital kitchen (inpatient meals) will be closed from mid-May to October 2018. The cafeteria (outpatient, ER and public) will be closed May 2018 to March 2019. A "Grab and Go" is being constructed to accommodate YKHC clients, staff and visiting public.

Temporary patient transport pathways, Mammography and Ultrasound are being constructed to maintain current patient care levels.

## YKHC Staff Housing

The staff housing project is scheduled for completion by mid-June 2018. Reconstruction and cleaning activities are in process. Furniture will arrive on the first barge in 2018.

### SAFETY IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY!

- Prior arrangement is required for all site visitation
- All visitors/deliveries must check in at the ASKW-Davis project office upon arrival to project site
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is ALWAYS required on site



Preparing east wall for insulated metal panel siding

### Spring/Summer 2018

**Kitchen Closes for 5 months**  
(Mid-May)

- Grab and Go provided

**Hospital renovation begins**

- Temporary Built Spaces

**No disruption of services**





**NATIONAL NURSES WEEK 2018**  
AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

## Ice Cream, Coffee and Chili! We Love Our Nurses!

The 2018 Nurses' Week celebration at YKHC was May 7–11. Every day the nurse managers ensured there was fun and festivities for registered nurses, license practical nurses, certified nurse aides, aides, unit clerks and nurse technicians.

The week started off with an ice cream social, with seven ice cream flavors to choose from and lots of great toppings. The next day was a Coffee Café, where lattes, mochas and special flavors made coffee a delicious treat.

The middle of nurses' week featured our Chili Cook-Off. With 14 entries, it was a tasty challenge to pick a winner. After all the tasting and votes, the number one chili was made by Greg Shultz, RN, from the Emergency Department. He won a round trip ticket to Anchorage.

Managers repeated the Coffee Café and Ice Cream Social at the end of the week, with lots of laughter and happy nurses! There was also a photo contest, where nurses voted on the best photograph submitted by fellow nurses. Justine Chamberlin, RN, from the Emergency Department won with her picture of "Lakes."

As your Chief Nurse Executive it is an absolute pleasure to serve fellow healthcare caregivers. You inspire, innovate and influence every day. I am proud to be on this journey with all of you!

—Cindy Christian, RN, MHA/Chief Nurse Executive



Lining up for the chili tasting.



Digging in! Eddie Poyner, LPN; Victoria Young, LPN; Brittney Boney, Tech I; Rochelle Forbes, Tech I.



Managers dish it out! Brenda Naliboff, RN, Emergency Dept.; Cindy Christian, RN, CNE; Joni Beckham, RN, North Wing; John Morris, RN, Clinical Educator.



Mary Clegg, RN, OB and Cindy Christian, RN, CNE.

*This month we continue our review of Behavioral Health Services with a closer look at Residential, Developmental Disabilities and Family Infant Toddler programs.*

## Behavioral Health Services

### Residential Services

We offer a continuum of services for those who need more intensive care.

At our **Ayagnirvik Healing Center**, we offer level III.5 residential treatment for individuals suffering from substance use disorders. This is a six-week intensive program. Residents are provided comprehensive treatment using Matrix Model curriculum, trauma informed care, introduction to 12-step, group and individual treatment and co-occurring treatment. Those seeking services can make a referral at 543-6101 or with any Behavioral Health service.

This is where we also offer an **opioid treatment program** using medication-assisted therapy. We offer long term treatment for those suffering from opioid use disorder, including heroin. Working with our medical team, patients are placed in appropriate treatment levels and progress through residential, intensive outpatient, outpatient and continuing care.

At this site we also offer outpatient treatment for individuals with substance use disorders. Weekly group sessions are given and program participants participate in individual sessions.

**Therapeutic Court** offers an 18-month program for those individuals accused of alcohol related crimes. This intensive program involves the court system, defense and prosecuting attorneys, and a clinical team. Those successfully completing treatment have their charges dismissed. Referrals are taken through the legal system.

We offer three **long-term group homes** for those needing significant long-term support. The residents live here and receive clinical and rehabilitation services they need to have a more meaningful life. **Bautista House** is the longest serving group home in the state of Alaska. It is home to 10 people with mental illness and/or intellectual disabilities. **Malone Home** is home to five people with intellectual disabilities. **Morgan House** is home to five adults with severe and persistent mental illness.

The **Sobering Center** offers intoxicated individuals who are temporarily unable to care for themselves a safe place to “sleep it off.” This is based on a harm reduction model. Vulnerable adults are kept safe. Upon waking, they are offered Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Services (SBIRT) to address drinking problems and offer some strategies for harm reduction. We also work closely with the Bethel Police Department to keep intoxicated individuals out of the emergency room if they don’t need to be there.

**McCann Treatment Center** is a 14-bed program for teenage and pre-teen youth with behavioral and emotional problems. This 12–18 month treatment program offers comprehensive clinical services, rehabilitation services, a year-round school, and a subsistence education program. We accept youth from all over the state. **For more information call 543-6800.**

### Developmental Disability Services

The Developmental Disabilities (DD) program helps people in our region find resources for people with disabilities. For recipients, DD manages the process of planning for services, developing a plan of care, on-going monitoring of services, and renewing the plan of care annually.

These services provide opportunities for the recipient to engage in community life to the same degree of access as individuals who do not receive services, and may be rendered in a recipient’s home or settings that are integrated in, and support access to the community.

DD Services can also help people with funding for medical supplies and equipment that assist people with disabilities. **Our program can be reached at 543-1768.**

### Family Infant Toddler Program

Family Infant Toddler Program (FIT) serves families with children from birth to three years of age with developmental delays. The program goal is to work with families to help their children reach their developmental milestones. There is a screening and evaluation process to determine eligibility at no cost to families. Children who meet one of the following criteria, are eligible:

- Developmental delay of 50% or greater in one or more areas of development
- Disabling condition with a high probability of resulting in a 50% or greater developmental delay
- Child’s development appears atypical and a multi-disciplinary team determines that the child is likely to have a severe developmental delay.

FIT helps facilitate transition into early Headstart programs with local school districts to set a program for the family and child. FIT is a completely voluntary program that can be opted out of at any time. **Please contact us at 543-3690.**

# HEALTHY LIVING

Finding fresh vegetables in the YK delta can be a challenge. One way to overcome this challenge is to plant your own garden! Follow these tips below to get a wonderful summer garden, full of fresh vegetables right outside your home.

## Pick a location

Gardens can be created just about anywhere! If you have a small space in the yard outside your home or even just a few pots lying around, you can create your very own vegetable garden. Some communities also have a community garden where you can rent a space to plant your vegetables.\* The trick is to find a place that gets a lot of sunlight during the summer, as the light from the long Alaska days will help your vegetables to grow.

## Pick what you want to grow

Some vegetables grow better in the cool Alaska summer than others. Some popular vegetables that grow well in Alaska are: broccoli, cabbage, kale, lettuce, radish, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, beets, potatoes, and more! Pick vegetables that you and your family enjoy eating to avoid having excess vegetables at the end of a harvest.

Once you decide which vegetables you would like to grow, you can check out your local store to see if they have any seeds available or you can order seeds online that will be sent to you through the mail. Once they arrive, follow the instructions on the seed packages for proper planting techniques. Some seeds do best when started indoors and then transplanted outside once they begin to mature while others can be planted directly into the ground.

## Water, water, water!

Make sure you give your vegetables plenty of water while they are growing. The amount of water needed varies by plant type, but instructions for watering can typically be found on the seed package. Be sure to follow the instructions closely to ensure your crops develop appropriately!

## Harvest

Once the vegetables reach maturation, you can harvest the vegetables and incorporate them into your favorite snacks or meals!

For more information about gardening in Alaska we recommend reaching out to your local Cooperative Extension Office through the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The representative for Western Alaska is Leif Albertson. If you have any questions or would like more information on growing vegetables you can contact Leif at 543-4553, or by email at [leibertson@alaska.edu](mailto:leibertson@alaska.edu).



## \*List of known community gardens:

- Bethel – UAF Cooperative Extension, 543-4553
- Chuloonawick – Patrick Tan, 949-6378
- Napakiak – City of Napakiak, 589-2611

If your community does not currently have a community garden but is interested in creating one, please contact the Diabetes Prevention & Control department for information on how to get started!

## Walkin' and Wheelin' for Wellness

The Diabetes Prevention and Control department would like to give a huge thank you to the Aniak Sub-Regional Clinic for their participation and assistance with this summer's wellness walks! The Aniak SRC came up with the name of "Walkin' and Wheelin'" as a way to make sure participants knew they were welcome to participate in any way they wished – walking or wheeling! The Aniak SRC has also started up their own weekly walks as a way to help keep their community healthy!

Thanks to the Aniak SRC for being awesome!

**For Bethel participants**, meet at the entrance of CHSB every Monday at noon.

**For village participants**, create a 30-minute route of your choice, send a picture of your event and be entered into the drawing as well!

All participants are eligible to enter into a drawing for a prize. To enter, send a picture of your Wellness Walk event (along with your name, a good contact number, and a mailing address) to Amber\_Jones2@ykhc.org by 5:00 p.m. every Monday. There will be one winner picked each week. Additionally, all entries will be saved throughout the summer to be entered into our grand prize drawing!

Attend five or more wellness walks throughout the summer and receive a free t-shirt! In order to ensure we are tracking how many walks you attend please make sure to enter into our drawing every week you join a wellness walk!

**We look forward to seeing you! To learn more about Wellness Walks, contact Diabetes Prevention and Control at ext. 6133.**



Aniak residents Sabrina Peterson, Kimberly Kelila, Mary Turner, Eva Passamika, Kimberly Madden, and Evelyn Yazzie braved the weather last month for a weekly Wellness Walk.

## Recipe of the Month

### Roasted Brussels Sprouts

#### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. Brussels sprouts, ends trimmed and halved lengthwise
- 1 ½ teaspoons olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ tsp. black pepper



#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees
2. In a large bowl, toss Brussels sprouts with oil, salt, and pepper.
3. Arrange Brussels sprouts in a single layer in a baking pan. Roast Brussel sprouts in the oven for 10 minutes and then flip the Brussels sprouts over once. Continue cooking an additional 5-10 minutes or until Brussels sprouts are brown and crispy.

*Photography Credit: Elise Bauer, Simply Recipes*

## YKHC PHARMACY

### 90-Day Medication Refills Now Available

**Refill Line: 543-6988 or toll free 1-877-543-6988**

#### Benefits of filling a 90-day prescription

##### ALWAYS ON HAND

*A good way to help you stay on track.*

Fewer refills mean fewer chances to run out of your medication. Having your medications on hand may help you stay healthier because typically means you are less likely to miss a dose.

##### CONVENIENCE

*Have your medications sent to you by mail.*

A great convenience for medications you take on an ongoing basis.

##### FEWER CALLS TO YOUR PHARMACY

With these 90-day refills, you only have to remember to make four calls a year instead of 12.

#### A few medications we CANNOT fill 90-Day

- Narcotics
- Compounds
- Refrigerated medications

**Refill Line: 543-6988 or toll free 1-877-543-6988**

## March Health Aide of the Month

# Gwendolyn Heckman, CHA III from Pilot Station

Gwendolyn Heckman has not complained once about being the only health aide in Pilot Station. From October 2017 to March 2018, Gwen has been on-call for 2,009 hours and worked overtime for 142 hours. Not only do the numbers show that she's dedicated but that she cares for the work she does for her community.

Gwen has made herself available to floats when needed for any emergencies. With all the hours logged for on-call and overtime with many emergencies during that time, Gwen has always come out on top with a positive attitude and asks nicely if she can assist with getting a float out to her village.

Gwen's work ethic shows how vital she is for her community by making sure that she's on task with her well child goals and patient encounters.

We at CHAP would like to commend her for exemplifying YKHC's Mission and Goals.

—Richard Lincoln III, Pilot Station Clinic Supervisor



Gwendolyn Heckman with Alyssa Johnson.

## Vitamin D — The Sunshine Vitamin

Not only does this warmer weather mean boating, camping, and fishing, it also means increased sun exposure and therefore more vitamin D synthesis!

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient needed for mineral regulation and bone growth. When there's not enough vitamin D your bones can actually weaken or not develop properly. This causes rickets in children and osteomalacia, osteopenia, and osteoporosis in adults. Research is also exploring the relationship between vitamin D and depression, blood sugar control, cognition, and chronic diseases.

Vitamin D—the sunshine vitamin—is made in the body when the skin is exposed to sunlight. This makes vitamin D a very important nutrient in our region, as sunlight is often hard to come by. Roll up those sleeves and pant legs in the high noon sun for 20–60 minutes to start synthesizing. But be careful—overexposure to sunlight may increase risk for skin cancer.

Luckily, there are ways to get vitamin D when there isn't enough sunlight or if you're concerned with overexposure. These include taking supplements and eating enough of the right foods. Talk with your healthcare provider today about your vitamin D needs!

### Examples of Foods with Vitamin D

Food, serving size	IUs per serving
Cod liver oil, 1 T	1,360
Red salmon, cooked, 3 ounces	447
Red salmon, with bone, canned, 3 ounces	649
Silver salmon, with bone, canned, 3 ounces	369
King salmon, with skin, kippered, 3 ounces	39
Orange juice fortified with vitamin D, 1 cup (read label)	154
Milk, nonfat, reduced fat, and whole, vitamin D fortified, 1 cup	115-124
Sardines	46
Liver meat, 3 ounces	42
Egg, 1 large including yolk	41
Fortified cereals (read label)	40

# A Home For Our Elders

by Cindy Christian, Chief Nurse Executive

The weather indicates it is almost summer in the YK Delta. Residents are looking out their windows and a few have ventured onto the deck.

Our Elders dream of seasons past, filled with the promise of spring, beginning gardens, gathering berries, preparing and feasting on summer's banquet. Fishing on the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers is part of that dream, a deep knowledge of the earth and a belonging to place. The Kuskokwim is the ninth largest river in the United States, at 702 miles in length. The Yukon River is the longest river in Alaska. Our Elders know this place not by its statistics, but by sense and a deep place of belonging.

We watch the Elders and look for the signs that remind us of the spirit and the vitality that still resides in them. We respect and serve the Elders and strive to make their home the place we occupy as guests—serving them.

On Mother's Day, we held a special luncheon for the mothers (we have six) and their families gathered to be part of the festivities. Chef Kit made a beautiful cake and, in addition to the usual yummy food the residents enjoy, the staff and families also brought smoked salmon, akutaq and fry bread. After that feast, several residents enjoyed a game of bingo. And did you know that "bingo" isn't just a game for nursing homes, but one which is used to help older persons keep their brains more nimble by the use of numbers, identification and sequencing?

Planned for later is the planting of seedlings for residents who would like to participate in gardening. In May, the Administrator organized a grounds clean-up. Winter weather brought bits of trash, which has remained safely under the snow. We want our grounds to be clean and neat.



The YK Elders Home in Bethel, Alaska.

The YK Elders Home has an interim administrator, Barbara Bigelow, and an Interim Director of Nurses, Tamara Littman. Together as a team, Tamara and Barbara are looking for creative ways to continue to work with the caregivers and employee teams.

There is much work to be done and nursing homes are closely regulated and watched by the federal government through its programs in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Part of the job that Tamara and Barbara have is to ensure the Elders Home is meeting all the regulations.

We thank the communities all over the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers for their trust in the Elder Home and their generosity in bringing Native foods. We have a list of those items we can accept and are grateful to the persons who have donated. If you have donations to offer, please call the Elders Home at 543-6781.

*We look forward to having volunteers and visitors at our home soon!*

## Meet our new Capital Projects Director

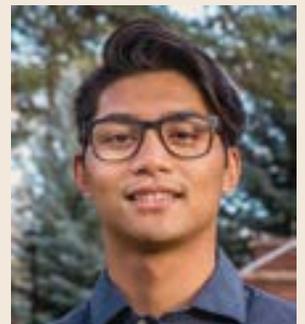
I would like to welcome our new Capital Projects Director, Ernes Distajo to YKHC. Ernes has a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in Mathematics from Northern Arizona University. He is originally from the Philippines but grew up in California. He also was an intern at a company that specialized in energy projects related to oil and gas.

After visiting Bethel in November he said he met many interesting people and felt a sense of community. He said, "This intrigued me to experience more of what Bethel has to offer. I am grateful for the opportunity to pursue a new career here at

YKHC and I can't wait to learn more about the cultures and villages in Alaska."

Please join me in welcoming Ernes to the corporation and Bethel community!

—Deanna Latham, Vice President of Support Services



Ernes Distajo, Capital Projects Director.

## YKHC has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval®

*The Joint Commission, an independent and not-for-profit national body, has been accrediting health care organizations for over 50 years. Accreditation and certification by The Joint Commission is recognized nationwide as a symbol of excellence and commitment to meeting performance standards.*



YKHC's Hospital, Behavioral Health and Long Term Care programs must be accredited every three years. Because The Joint Commission reviews are unannounced, we must be prepared at all times. YKHC would like to **thank all of our employees** for their tireless efforts in helping to maintain accreditation and in ***Working Together To Achieve Excellent Health.***



### Family, Infant, Toddler Program (FIT)

*Does your child sit, walk, talk or play like other children?*

If you have concerns or want to have your newborn to 3-year-old child assessed, call the YKHC FIT Program at **543-3690**



Photo by Dendra Chavez Photography