



2021 Community Impact Report







A Message from Julia

Resiliency. It's a word that has always been important to VOA Alaska's mission and our approach to serving the youth and families in our care. But that word has taken on a more significant meaning in the second year of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

We have now experienced something unique: a shared trauma. While every individual's experience is different, our staff, the youth and families in our care, our organization, our partners, our community, our world, are all, at some level, coping with similar challenges.

How we leaned into experience them together helped cultivate spaces of meaningful connection each of us needed this past year.

Near the end of 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on the crisis we're facing, stating, "The future well-being of our country depends on how we support and invest in the next generation. Especially in this moment, as we work to protect the health of Americans in the face of a new variant, we also need to focus on how we can emerge stronger on the other side."

While it is disheartening to see the data and the advisory that warrants a call to action, it is affirming to read what we are doing at VOA Alaska is aligned with the Surgeon General's recommendations.

We did not wait for the data to tell us there was a crisis on the horizon. We could see it and feel it ourselves as we worked alongside the incredibly resilient youth and young people in our great state.

If 2020 was a time to learn the impacts of the pandemic and find the strength and courage to respond, 2021 was the time to lean into our renewed resiliency. A time to be more than a responder. A time to anticipate, lay the groundwork, and get out ahead of the challenges we know are coming.

A few highlights of VOA's work in 2021:

- Expanding access to mental health services and adding telehealth services to reach youth statewide.
- Expanding our School-Based Mental Health program by adding five additional schools to serve youth where they are—our schools!
- Implementing rapid access to care strategies, so those who call us are supported each step of the way-through consultations, same-day services, referral navigation, and immediate connection with our peer and family support staff.
- Expanding our Supportive Housing program and doubling our capacity to serve more vulnerable and at-risk houseless youth with evidence-based practices.

• Expanding our Integrated Services program to include a Day Treatment level of care, which combines academic and therapeutic services to increase interventions for youth struggling with substance misuse and cooccurring mental health challenges.

We will remain intentional, determined, and flexible as we explore and implement innovative strategies to improve our service offerings and continuum of care - on the front lines, behind the scenes, and online!

Thank you for standing with us and for your continued support of Alaska's youth and families.



Julia Luev Interim CEO & VP of Treatment Services





Who We Are

Since 1981, VOA Alaska has taken on the most difficult tasks to help the most underserved in our state.

When the first Volunteers of America (VOA) was founded in 1896, the concept of "volunteering" meant serving others as a vocation. While our understanding of the term has evolved, our dedication to serving others has not.

In 1981, VOA arrived in Alaska with the opening of ARCH, our youth residential treatment facility in Eagle River. Today, VOA Alaska is providing a range of mental, emotional, and behavioral healthcare and support services to youth and their families thoughout the state.

As a nonprofit, VOA Alaska's services are offered at low or no cost, and no one is turned away due to the inability to pay.

From prevention and early intervention, to mental health and substance misuse counseling, family support, and life skills development, to supportive housing and residential treatment, our team strives to meet the need of every child, teen, and young adult in our care.

How We Serve

VOA Alaska offers a range of services in person, in schools, in the community, and via telehealth to support a full continuum of care for youth and their families.

Education & Prevention

Promoting prevention through community education and awareness, while also providing early intervention through drug and alcohol information courses.

Screening & Assessment

Ensuring youth and families are connected with the right service at the right time.

Case Management

Guiding youth and their families through community resources and supports to improve quality of life.

Family Support

Helping families raising relative children and those with youth in treatment connect with resources.

Substance Misuse Counseling

Providing individual and group counseling to help youth develop positive lifestyle changes and coping skills.

Mental Health Counseling

Providing individualized care and family therapy with psychiatric support and medication management.

Life Skills Development

Building thriving futures with employment and career counseling, wellness education, and peer support.

Supportive Housing

Helping vulnerable young adults achieve self-sufficiency with affordable housing and wrap-around supports.

Residential Treatment

Providing individualized and structured care to youth diagnosed with a substance misuse disorder who may present with cooccurring mental health concerns.

Who We Serve



758 Alaska youth and families reached directly by VOA Alaska's array of services in Fiscal Year 2021



385 youth in mental health, substance misuse, & supportive housing services.

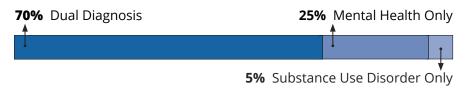


155 kinship caregivers and children.



218
community participants
in education and
prevention activities

Primary Diagnoses of Youth in Treatment

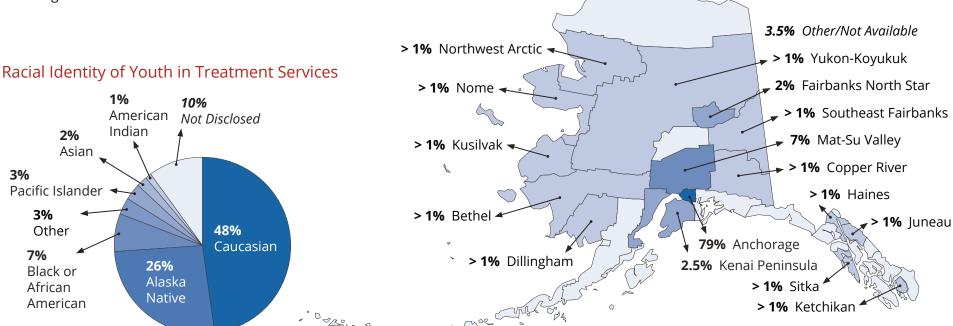




81% of youth in mental health, substance misuse, & supportive housing services were eligible for Medicaid.

Home Communities of Youth and Kinship Families

Grouped by Borough and Census Area



5 Most Prevalent Diagnoses of Youth in Treatment

Many youth have multiple diagnoses, therefore percentages do not total 100%

24% Substance Use

23% Trauma-Related Stress

19% Major Depression

10% Behavioral/Emotional Challenges

9% Anxiety

Top 5 Ways Youth are Referred to VOA Alaska

22% Family or Friend

18% School

11% Division of Juvenile Justice

9% Other Behavioral Health Provider

8% Shelter

Our Impact, By the Numbers



appointments



5,159 free meals provided to Kinship families through pantry visits and food boxes.



2,212 prevention kits and materials distributed to schools and community partners.



19 transitional-aged youth placed in permanent housing, including 6 with young children.



Anchorage schools with an embedded VOA Alaska mental health clinician.



6,000+ students with direct, onsite access to VOA's mental health and wellness resources and support.



93% of youth say their substance use has decreased since beginning treatment services with VOA Alaska.



91% of youth say they are able to use the skills they learned in treatment to stay productive.



89% of youth say they were able to increase their social and/ or emotional skills while receiving treatment services at VOA Alaska.

Stories of Impact:

School-Based Mental Health

Summer is a student at Bettye Davis East High School in Anchorage. She had been receiving therapy for anxiety and depression for a few years before beginning services with VOA Alaska.

She liked her therapist, but Summer's mom, Tiffany, says "they just didn't have all the services, and as a parent it gets overwhelming sometimes to try balancing medication and a psychiatrist and peer support and therapy" from different places.

"I think it's amazing that VOA Alaska can offer the whole package deal."

Tiffany says that trying to find the support her daughter needed in one place was "overwhelming." Then one day, she saw an ad for VOA Alaska on Facebook. She clicked on it, went to the website, "and I said, "This is like everything I've been looking for."

At VOA Alaska, Tiffany feels like "this is the one stop shop, you get everything that you need for the parent, and for your child." She adds that it's "breathing room" to know all these services are going to be offered to her family.

But, the cherry on top is that Summer's therapist is one of VOA Alaska's school-based mental health clinicians. It creates more opportunities for Summer to have the support she needs, when she needs it, because her therapist's office is where she's already spending most of her day—at school!

"Maybe something happens during the day that she is stressed about or needs the outlet to really communicate," Tiffany explains. "We don't always have a time where something bad happens during the day and say, 'Oh, it's going to happen at two o'clock.' You don't know. And I really enjoy that she gets that opportunity."

For Tiffany, Summer, and their family, the wrap-round support and in-school therapy they've found at VOA Alaska "has been literally lifesaving." Making decisions "between your finances or your kid is not easy." And at VOA Alaska, Tiffany says, "I don't think I have ever felt that I've had to make that choice between one or the other."

"I think it's amazing that VOA Alaska can offer the whole package deal, a little bit of everything in one," Tiffany says, adding that the VOA team is also "willing to help people" if the cost becomes a barrier.

"It takes a team to help. We needed extra help, and that's okay."





Scan the QR code with your mobile camera to read more of Summer's story, including a

reflection from her clinician, and to learn more about VOA Alaska's school-based services. Or visit: **voaak.org/impact2021**



Scan the QR code with your mobile camera to read more of Tennyson's story, including

a reflection from his clinician, and to learn more about VOA Alaska's residential services. Or visit: voaak.org/impact2021

Stories of Impact:

Residential Treatment

When Tennyson graduates high school, he wants to become a mental health and substance use counselor. And the reason he wants to become one? Because of the support he found at VOA Alaska's Adolescent Residential Center for Help.

Shannon, Tennyson's mom, explains that he was bullied in junior high, and the "only way he knew to get out of it is to become friends with a different group of bullies."

They protected him, but also led him down a path where his grades started slipping, and he began drinking, smoking, and misusing substances. At the same time, he was battling depression and ADHD while trying to cope with past traumas.

When Shannon first brought Tennyson to ARCH, it was one of the scariest things she's ever done. But she "could see the compassion and the love just from meeting them," and knew they were committed and that it was a safe place for her son.

Soon, Tennyson was opening up to his counselors and finding that his peers could open up to him. "He has always struggled with trust," Shannon says. "Chelsie [the lead clinician at the time, and now ARCH program manager] was the first person I think he's really trusted with the deepest darkest places that he's been."

Learning about the experiences of the other residents helped Tennyson realize that he wasn't alone. Both in terms of what he was experiencing and the support he had back home. Tennyson came to have a lot of empathy for his peers that didn't have the same opportunities as he did outside of ARCH.

"Chelsie was the first person I think he's really trusted with the deepest darkest places that he's been."

"He's been a really good cheerleader and support person for his peers there. And I think that's just really helped build Tennyson's self-esteem and get through some of the experiences that he's gone through and is still continuing to work through."

Reflecting on her family's experience with ARCH, Shannon says she felt like the staff was "not just there for Tennyson, they're there for me and my family as well. And I really feel like they've saved his life and my life and my family's sanity and just the family unit as a whole."

Stories of Impact:

Youth Behavioral Health

Jordan likes to write, fix flat tires, and her favorite subject is Algebra.* She's an authentic teenager with ambitious goals. But only a few months ago, she would have used a different word to describe herself.

"I felt fake. I would go home after school and isolate. Or I would go out and use substances as a coping skill to deal with mental health issues."

To find the support she needed, Jordan joined VOA Alaska's Day Treatment Program. The program provides a safe, supportive, and structured environment to help youth overcome barriers in their continued recovery.

At VOA Alaska "there are other people who are going with you on this journey."

The program is combined in a school setting, allowing youth to continue their education with an on-site teacher at VOA Alaska. That means outside of individualized counseling, Jordan would be spending much of the day with her peers.

As Jordan settled in, she found herself enjoying the group environment. She says

she "saw other people who had struggled with mental health, and how they're now learning to cope with it. Hearing other client's stories really does motivate me. And it helps me regain my confidence. Because not only are you dealing with this type of stuff, but there are other people who are going with you on this journey."

What she really loved were the recreational therapy outings, like ice skating and going to the zoo. "The staff show us what life is like without using drugs and just feeling like a normal person in public."

After three weeks of sobriety, Jordan graduated from Day Treatment and is now "stepping down" to the intensive outpatient program. It still means weekly counseling sessions, but after the intensity of support and learning in Day Treatment she was ready to transition back to her home school.

She says it "will be a big change for me, but I'm looking forward to moving on and achieving my goals slowly." One of those goals, an important milestone for any teenager, was passing her driver's permit test.

"I feel proud of myself. I had low self-esteem and confidence, but I studied for two weeks, and all that hard work paid off."

* Name and some personal details have been changed to protect confidentiality.





Scan the QR code with your mobile camera to read more of Jordan's story, including a

reflection from her clinician, and to learn more about VOA Alaska's behavioral health services. Or visit: **voaak.org/ impact2021**





Scan the QR code with your mobile camera to read more of Topanga's story, including

a reflection from her clinician, and to learn more about VOA Alaska's supportive housing services. Or visit: voaak.org/ impact2021

Stories of Impact:

Supportive Housing

When am I going to eat? When can I take a shower? When can I get my clothes cleaned?

These are the questions Topanga once asked herself every day for two years.

"You never really have a stable home," Topanga, age 24, says of her time experiencing houselessness. "You'll either get too many people in your camp and it gets too crowded, or the police come and say, 'you got to move."

After transitioning between camps, cars, and couches, Topanga is celebrating more than a vear now in her own one-bedroom apartment. She lives with her cat Izzy, works in a maildistribution warehouse (she loves organizing stuff!), and enjoys cross-stitching with her mom. Today, she wakes up wondering what traffic will be like on her way to work.

It's a big win after a long, difficult road. "It's hard to ask for help," Topanga says, "especially when you're super independent." But then she realized, "I can't do this on my own."

VOA Alaska's Supportive Housing Program was there for her when she was ready, connecting with her during their community outreach.

The support network that the team provided became even more critical during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. "I mean everybody remembers when they're in their early 20s and how hard everything was," Topanga says, but "it's ten times harder now in a pandemic."

Having the support of VOA's team there for her every day reminds Topanga of "the good days" when her and her mom used to run around town on errands.

Topanga explains she went through a "few spots where I was super tight on cash" and the VOA team helped her pay rent. When she contracted COVID-19 and couldn't go to work, the VOA team helped her get groceries and cat food and pay her phone bill.

Having that support there for her every day reminds Topanga of "the good days" when her and her mom used to run around town on errands.

She wants to be independent, but she now recognizes she needs the help, "because there was a lot of things I didn't know. It helps to know someone's gonna be there to steer me in the right direction."

Stories of Impact:

Prevention and Public Health

"I don't know how we can really thrive as a community without being healthy first," says Sara Clark, VP of Public Health and Prevention at VOA Alaska.

"It should always be a priority for resources and decision-making, because without healthy community members, it'll be a challenge for us to meet any other priority."

Community-led advocacy is essential for implementing policies and system changes to build healthy communities. The Anchorage Adolescent Substance Misuse Prevention Coalition, led by VOA Alaska, engages organizations, businesses, and community members to distribute resources, increase awareness, and advocate for policies to enhance prevention education and awareness for young Alaskans.

"Without healthy community members, it'll be a challenge for us to meet any other priority."

The Coalition also offers volunteer opportunities for youth. One young Alaskan had volunteered, as they say, just to make their parents happy.

During their time, they helped build overdose kits and learned about substance misuse and prevention practices.

Only days after volunteering, they contacted the prevention team to ask about more volunteer opportunities—except this time, it was because they wanted to! They've volunteered three additional times and have requested to be contacted whenever any opportunities arise.

Our Prevention team also offers an evidencebased prevention and intervention program called PRIME for Life. The caring and approachable nature of our staff means the class also provides additional opportunities for empowering young Alaskans through building relationships with trusted adults.

One student disclosed to the instructor that they were living in an unstable home environment. VOA staff collaborated, enrolled them in our Outpatient program, and helped them move into a more stable living environment. All of this happened within ten days of the student reaching out for help.

VOA Alaska helps build healthy communities by creating these opportunities for young Alaskans to learn, grow, and be empowered.



Lonnie Ridgeway, Coalition Director, speaking to a youth basketball camp.



Scan the QR code with your mobile camera to see more from our Public Health and Prevention team about their

advocacy, education, and community outreach. Or visit: **voaak.org/impact2021**



Abagail Owens, Kinship Network Facilitator, organizes a table at a free bookfair for Kinship families.



Scan the QR code with your mobile camera to read more of Ashley's story, including a reflection from the Kinship

team, and learn more about the program's services. Or visit: voaak.org/impact2021

Stories of Impact:

Kinship Family Program

For Ashley, caring for her cousin's children, in addition to two of her own, is a chance to break the perpetual generational trauma in her family. It's also an opportunity to keep the children integrated in their own extended family.

For the kids, Ashley says it's important that they can understand that "this is my family, and these are my aunts, and these are my uncles, and these are my cousins." She explains that when she was in foster care, she would think. "Well, they're like my sister, but they're not my sister." So being with family "removes the confusing part" for the kids and reduces additional trauma.

But even with their hearts and minds prepared to support additional children, Ashley and her husband's finances strained with the resources required to feed, clothe, and entertain a family of eight.

Ashley says they were making it work, but their credit card debt was growing. "I'm very intentional about not treating them like other," Ashley says. "They're going to grow up with what my kids are used to."

When Ashley saw a post about VOA Alaska on Facebook, she noticed it was different, "because you don't have to be at the end of your rope to be asking for help. And it was unconditional."

From financial assistance, to support groups, to workshops, to outings, Ashley says the Kinship Family Program "helps me create a more loving, family-like environment."

When she goes to a support group, she can "word vomit all of my issues" and then not have to carry that home to her kids.

The staff are "just so sweet, so non-judgmental, so welcoming. It's such a breath of fresh air when you're in this whole situation."

Education opportunities, like the Strengthening Families workshop, teaches caregivers parenting skills and vouth life skills. The Kinship team delivers food boxes throughout the year and special gifts from community donors during the holidays.

The staff are "just so sweet, so nonjudgmental, so welcoming," Ashley says. "It's such a breath of fresh air when you're in this whole situation."

*Names and some personal details have been changed to protect confidentiality.



Our Supporters

As a nonprofit organization, VOA Alaska sincerely appreciates the organizations and individuals in the community who supported Alaskan youth and families through their contributions of cash, time, and other resources in Fiscal Year 2021. Working with the Champions of VOA Alaska, we provide hope and help to youth and families in need across Alaska and take steps toward eliminating suffering.

Wellness Champions: \$100,000+

- iHeart Media, Inc. *
- Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield
- · Rasmuson Foundation

 Richard L. and Diane M. Block Foundation

Connection Champions: \$25,000–49,999

- GCI
- Humana Foundation

- Powers Brothers Inc.
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Innovation Champions: \$10,000–24,999

- Alaska Airlines Foundation
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Courage Champions: \$5,000-9,999

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- Hyatt Place Anchorage-Midtown *
- Sleeping Lady Mountain Lions Club *
- Wells Fargo Foundation

Responsibility Champions: \$2,500-4,999

- Denali Daniels & Associates
- · Linda Bowers
- Matson Navigation
- Northwest Strategies

- Providence Health & Services Alaska
- SecureTrans, Inc.
- Voice of Denali KRFF *

^{*} Indicates inclusion of in-kind donations

Joy Champions: Up to \$2,500

- Afognak Commercial Group, LLC*
- Alaska Peace Officers Association, Anchorage Chapter
- Alaska Railroad Corporation *
- Alaska Women's Health
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- Renee Rafferty
- Richard Ladner
- Riikka Mohorn
- Riverside Community Church *

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- Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
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- Tim Stallard
- Tish Mokrzycki Tonia Burrough
- Tonya Caylor
- · Trend Alaska Fashion Show
- Trevor Storrs
- T'Shalla Baker
- UGG *
- · Wendy Woolf
- · Yael Kaufman
- · Zachary Greenough



Statement of Activities

REVENUES	FY 2021*	FY 2020**
Public Support		
Contributions	701,943	303,958
SBA PPP Loan forgiveness contribution	599,701	-
Contributed Services, at fair value	268,606	570,428
Special events, net of direct benefit costs	48,874	56,188
Contributions, in-kind	11,502	18,854
United Way	77,744	82,064
Combined Federal Campaign Volunteers of America	-	48
	-	61,181
Total Public Support	1,708,370	1,092,711
Revenues & Support from	6,321,058	4,531,593
Governmental Agencies		
Other Revenues		
Program Services Fees	724,613	273,642
Other Operating Income	45,669	23,933
Total Other Revenues	770,282	297,575
TOTAL REVENUES	\$8,799,710	\$5,921,879
EXPENSES		
Program Services		
Encouraging Positive Development	411,233	583,047
(Prevention Services) Fostering Independence	1,511,068	581,773
(Kinship Family Program)	1,511,006	561,//5
Promoting Self-Sufficiency	4,908,042	4,162,738
(Mental Health/Substance Use/Housing)	1,200,012	1,102,700
Total Program Services	6,830,343	5,327,558
Support Services		
Management & General	808,817	688,743
Fundraising	111,591	150,152
Total Support Services	920,408	838,895
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$7,750,751	\$6,166,453

^{*} Fiscal year 2021 includes dates July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 ** Fiscal year 2020 includes dates July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020

Our Leadership

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