



FCA NEWS



Volume 14, Issue 2, Fall 2009

www.fcaalaska.org

A Note from the Director...



The temperatures are getting cooler as winter rapidly descends upon us. As we all make preparations for the many winter months to come, I am excited to announce that I just received word that FCA has been awarded a three year federal grant to provide **Street Outreach Services for Runaway, Homeless and At-Risk Youth** and a three year state grant for **Youth Suicide Prevention!** What a blessing this is for FCA and our community. Also, FCA received grant funds from the United Way Substance Use Prevention fund and from the National Emergency Food and Shelter Program for our Street Outreach Program. FCA's Street Outreach Program has survived in a much reduced capacity for two years through individual and community donations and we are so thankful to all who supported the continuance of these services. More information will be coming about the services we will provide through this program and about the Candlelight Vigil, which will be held in November.

FCA is getting ready for '**A Taste of Art 2010**' our major annual fundraiser. The event will be held on **Saturday, February 20, 2010**, so set the date on your calendar. This year's theme is '**An Evening of Magic**' and will be held at the WestMark Goldroom. We hope to see you there.

FCA STAFF

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Thanks to everyone who participated in the Mosquito Meander in June. We had a great turn out, with **over 1000** registered for the race. We had hoped that our new website would enable participants to register online, however due to technical difficulties we were unable to offer that option this year. **Our sincere apologies** for the inconvenience and frustration experienced by everyone who tried unsuccessfully to register online. We continue to work on the website and hope to have this service available for **Mosquito Meander 2010**, which will be held on **Saturday, June 12, 2010**.

The Board and Staff of FCA would like to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to all of our sponsors, contributors and volunteers for their support and generosity. We couldn't provide the array of services available at FCA without you. Anyone wishing to contribute to any or all of the programs that FCA offers may do so on our website, www.fcaalaska.org, by phone at (907) 456-4729 or by using the enclosed contribution envelope.

- Camille Connelly-Terhune

New Board Members Needed

FCA is looking for energetic individuals who support our mission and are interested in volunteering. The commitment involves 3-4 hours per month for board and ad hoc committee meetings plus helping with our two major fundraisers during the year. If you are interested in working with a dynamic and caring team, please call Sabrina at 456-4729 for more information and to request a board packet.



New Employees

The FCA Pregnancy and Adoption Department warmly welcomes **Angie Hufford** as our newest Home Study writer. While Angie is new to the Pregnancy/Adoption Department, she is a familiar face around FCA. For the past three years, she has worked part-time as an assessment counselor with the Family Support Program, and has done some counseling in the Family Treatment Department. Angie's interest in adoption began almost twenty years ago, when her younger brother's family adopted a daughter. More recently, one of her best friends adopted a child from China. Angie walked through the adoption process with the family from start to finish.

Angie brings a writing background to the table as well, having been a part-time newspaper reporter for several years back in her home state of Indiana. She also currently leads a monthly writer's group at Door of Hope Church in Fairbanks. Angie has a passionate heart for kids, having previously been an elementary school teacher and an elementary school counselor. Currently, in addition to her duties at FCA, Angie works part-time at Door of Hope Church as the Jr. High Youth Director. Angie has a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Purdue University, and a Master's degree in Youth and Family Ministry from Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. We're excited to have her aboard!

FCA also welcomes **Alison Holleman**, our student intern. Alison has been living in Alaska since 1985. In 2002 she left Alaska with her husband and daughter and quickly realized how much she truly missed it and she and her family have called Alaska home ever since. Alison is currently a senior at UAF. She started attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 2006 pursuing her degree in Social Work with a minor in Psychology and will be graduating in May 2010. When she is not studying you can find her outdoors, regardless of the weather, curled up on the couch listening to a story read by her daughter or watching a movie with her family.

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Family Support Program



The Family Support program at FCA had their FSG grant renewed for another year, which is good news! This allows for continued services from our staff, including Parenting and Children's groups and in-home services and support.

Unfortunately, due to state budget constraints, the amount of the grant was substantially reduced compared to previous years. One category that was especially affected was "client supplies." Several of our families need practical assistance with items that they simply cannot afford to purchase, including smoke alarms, child safety items, car seats, and parenting literature.

FCA is working to find innovative ways to fill the financial gap. One way is to solicit donations from the community (see items listed below if you'd like to help). Another way is to involve our local schools in creative fundraisers that benefit our department. We also are looking for additional community resources for assistance. Hopefully, these collective efforts will be a winning combination for our families.

In the past few months, several individuals have contributed to our families by providing FCA with back-to-school supplies. For some families, those small gestures of kindness made HUGE difference for their children. Thank you to all who assisted in this yearly effort to provide for needy children in our community.

Items currently needed for FSG families: baby gates; child safety plugs and locks; car seats; first aid kits; smoke detectors; laundry supplies; household cleaners; backpacks; new or gently used winter gear for infants, toddlers, and children. FCA also accepts gift cards (Wal-Mart, Fred Meyer, Sam's Club, Barnes and Noble) which our FSG staff will use to purchase client specific items as needed.

~ Linda, Angie & Vanessa

National Survivors of Suicide Day



Anne M. Brainerd, LPC, NCC

The British historian Arnold Toynbee once wrote, "There are always two parties to a death; the person who dies and the survivors who are bereaved...and in the apportionment of suffering, the survivor takes the brunt."

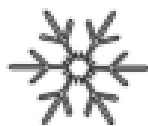
In the United States, a person dies by suicide approximately every 16 minutes. Suicide attempts occur once every minute. According to the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics (last updated 6/3/2009), the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) experienced 82 deaths by suicide during the years 2004-2008, a rate of 19.9%, which exceeds by .3% the State of Alaska suicide rate posted by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority in their Alaska Scorecard of December 2008. Part of the reason for the startling statistics in Fairbanks is the high-risk populations we have:

- Homeless Youth: An estimated 500 youth are considered runaway or homeless in the FNSB. According to Westat, Inc., 32% of runaway and homeless youth have attempted suicide at some point in their lives.
- Alaska Native Youth: Alaska Natives account for only 16% of the state's population but account for 34% of the suicides in Alaska. Alaska Native males commit suicide at rates of 68.5/100,000, more than six times the national average.
- College Students: According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide has become the second leading cause of death in college students, after car accidents. At the 2008 American Psychology Association's Annual Convention, David J. Drum, Ph.D. and co-authors from the University of Texas at Austin presented the results of a survey they had completed across 70 colleges and universities with 26,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Of those surveyed, 6% of undergraduates and 4% of graduate students reported having seriously considered suicide within the 12 months prior to answering the survey. The survey also found that among those who had thought about killing themselves within the past year, just under half *had told no one*.
- Active & Reserve Military: The Suicide Prevention Resource Manual for the United States Army states that suicide is the third leading cause of death among active-duty personnel in peacetime U.S. armed forces, after accidents and homicides. In 2007, 2,100 active-duty and activated reserve soldiers attempted suicide; 115 were successful. In 2008, there were 20 suicides for every 100,000 Army (just Army) soldiers – a rate that exceeds the age-adjusted civilian population for the first time in decades.

The word "suicide" comes from two Latin roots, "sui" (of oneself) and "cidium" (a killing or slaying). It implies that one wants to kill the body but omits the role of pain in that decision. In essence, it gives the idea that one wants to end their life, when what most suicide attempters are after is to kill the pain. Tony Salvatore posited that a better word to use would be "penacide" – "pena", being from the Latin word "poena" (punishment or torment), the root of the word "pain." He stated that using the word "penacide" instead of "suicide," "eliminates the notion that 'wanting to die' has anything to do with killing oneself. Penacide is not a kind of suicide. It is what causes the deaths recorded as suicides."

Regardless of the terminology, it is those left behind who must deal with the agony, the trauma of the loss. This year, for the first time, Fairbanks will be hosting a "Survivors of Suicide" service. The event will be done in conjunction with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's *11th Annual National Survivors of Suicide Day*. On Saturday, November 21, 2009, all survivors of suicide – whether you lost a child, a parent, a sibling, a spouse, a friend, or another family member – are invited to meet at the Fairbanks Public Health Center, located at 1025 W. Barnette Street (one block from our office), at 8:30 a.m. At that time, we, in conjunction with hundreds of conference sites across the United States, will simultaneously watch a 90-minute broadcast produced by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. On the broadcast, a diverse panel of survivors and mental health professionals will address the questions so many survivors face: "Why did this happen? How can I cope? Where can I find support?" After this broadcast, there will be a guest speaker. This will be followed by a story of hope, "Reading of the Names", recitation of an uplifting quote or poem and, finally, a Candlelight Ceremony of Remembrance. Everyone will be invited to stay for refreshments.

We invite anyone who has been touched by suicide to join us on November 21st to connect with others and realize that you are not alone. Should you have any questions about the Fairbanks Survivors Day events, please feel free to call us at 456-4729.



Adoption Department



The Adoption Department is working with many families who are interested in adopting through an in-state, inter-state or international process. Since April of 2009 children from Kazakhstan, Thailand and Ethiopia have joined their adoptive families. All were boys between one and two years of age. Also, in July, we cooperated with Catholic Social Services/Anchorage in the placement of an infant boy with a Fairbanks family.

At the beginning of the FY2010 Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption was again awarded the Office of Children's Services/Permanent Families Grant. This three year grant will allow us to continue completing adoption and guardianship home studies for children in the custody of the Office of Children's Services. The goal of doing these home studies is to assist in achieving permanency for children in foster care. In FY2009 we received sixty-four Permanent Family referrals, fifty of which became active cases. Our staff and contractors have continued to travel throughout Alaska to do home studies for prospective adoptive/guardianship families referred through this grant. Two locations new to our program were Atkasuk, south of Barrow, and Noatak, north of Kotzebue; both are villages where our home study writers traveled for the first time.

In June, Kelly Shanklin agreed to contract with FCA to do Permanent Families Grant home studies. She has worked for OCS and is experienced in foster care and adoption issues. Kelly's first home study was in Noatak. Welcome Kelly!



November is National Adoption Month and FCA will be sponsoring our
18th Annual Adoption Information Session,
on Tuesday, November 10, 2009, from 6:30 P.M to 8:30 P.M.,
at the Noel Wien Library Auditorium.



General information about adoption will be available ,and a panel of families and individuals will share their adoption experiences. A question and answer session will follow the panel presentation.

Refreshments will be served.

Alex had a few ideas about how to make it go away. This wouldn't be the first time. But maybe it would be the last. Everyone would be better off without her. She would be better off without herself.

Wouldn't she?

"You're so awesome!"

She could hear the words of her friend, Raz, in her head.

Excerpt from 'The Call that Changed Alex's Life,' This article, about FCA's Street Outreach Program and advocate Sarah 'Raz' Finnell appeared in Catholic Digest July/August issue. To read the complete article go to: <http://www.catholicdigest.com/article/print/the-call-that-changed-alexs-life>.

Pick, Click & Give

Remember when filling out your PFD next year to Pick, Click & Give. You can choose to donate part of your PFD to FCA. Monies donated through the Click, Pick & Give program will go to support the wonderful programs that FCA offers to the local community.

All you need to remember is that we are located in the 4th Judicial District.

FCA Street Outreach Program



Much has changed for the Street Outreach Program at FCA! For the past nine months, we have been renting space in the old Women's Shelter next door and have been able to offer drop-in services for youth four days a week. The first day in the space, we sat down with approximately 15 of our clients and had them come up with an extensive list of rules which all agreed to follow. Since that initial meeting, 10-25 youth per day have shown up to the program, and we have worked hard to provide them with a warm meal, connections to services, and positive adult role models. Unfortunately, as of September 30th we had to move out of that space. However, upon receiving the AMAZING news that we were again awarded the federal Street Outreach Grant, as well as a three year state grant for Youth Suicide Prevention, we immediately began searching for another space. We also will be searching for an additional staff member.

With the funds from the new grant, we hope to move quickly into a new and better space where we will be able to have a computer lab (for working on resumes, completing job applications, and doing homework), a kitchen (to teach cooking and meal preparation) as well as a large group room where we will be able to provide presentations. We intend to invite and work with other agencies that can present information on their services as well as on issues such as domestic violence awareness, interviewing/job skills, housing and community resources, self-care and self-defense, and money management.

We are very excited to introduce our Vista Volunteer, Cassidy Phillips, who began working in this program in April. Cassidy's main responsibilities include writing grants and finding creative ways to expand our program's capacity to serve at-risk and homeless youth. We already have received two grants. The first one, from United Way, is allowing us to maintain our bike repair shop and expand our garden. Indeed, despite the smoke and rain we were able to conduct a full makeover of half of FCA's lawn! This included sod-ripping, rototilling, soil and manure spreading, and greenhouse-building. It took the entire summer, but finally created some beautiful beds that are now just waiting to be filled with flowers and seeds from which we will have food that we hope to be able to sell next year. The second grant allowed our youth to bake and sell muffins and cookies at a downtown farm stand. While we did not bring in as much money as we had hoped, the entire free-enterprise project was an enjoyable learning experience for all involved.

On another positive note, our program was featured in the July/August issue of *Catholic Digest*, which we hope will bring greater awareness to our Street Outreach Program and to the homeless youth situation in Fairbanks. An excerpt from this article is featured on the previous page in this newsletter, and the full article can be accessed on the internet by going to <http://www.catholicdigest.com/article/print/the-call-that-changed-alex-s-life>.

As always, we'd like to say a huge THANKS to everyone who has donated time, money and energy to sustain this program throughout the past two years. Without the ongoing help from volunteers and support from our community through donations we would never have made it this far.

~ Sarah & Cassidy

Yes! I will support "A Taste of Art" 2010

Please return this form to Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption
 912 Barnette Street, Fairbanks, AK 99701
 or Fax to: 456-4623
www.fcaalaska.org
 Tax ID#: 92-0064069

Donor #	Donor Name to be Listed	Business Name (if different)	
Mailing Address:		City:	Zip:
Contact Person:	Phone:	Fax :	E-Mail Address:

Log #	Items Donated & Description	VALUE of Donation \$\$
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2		
3		
4		
5		
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