



# FCA NEWS



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www.fcaalaska.org



Grizzly Media



JIM MATHERLY  
DJ SERVICES



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FAIRBANKS  
COUNSELING AND  
ADOPTION  
912 BARNETTE  
STREET  
FAIRBANKS, AK  
99701

## MOSQUITO MEANDER

Fun 5-K Run/Walk  
June 13



Summer is here and as we look around it seems that at least half of Fairbanks is out running, biking, skating or walking while enjoying the warm weather. There is no place quite as wonderful as Fairbanks in the summer.

This year the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers at FCA are busy planning the **17th annual Mosquito Meander 5-K fun run/walk**. This festive event is a wonderful opportunity for families to spend time together in a healthy outdoor event. Participants can run, walk, skate or ride a bike. Bring your child in a stroller or your dog on a leash. Enjoy the race at your own pace while helping raise money to strengthen families in our community.

This year's Mosquito Meander will be held on Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, starting in the Pioneer Park parking lot. We expect over 900 entrants to participate in the fun run while sporting the always humorous, ever popular Mosquito Meander t-shirt. This year's t-shirt has been especially designed for us by **Darin Carpenter of Tundra Comics**, so don't miss your opportunity to own one.

The race course will be back to our old route as construction is finished in the area. The race will start and finish in the main parking lot.

Please remember to thank and support all of our generous sponsors. Without them we could not put on this fabulous fun family filled event. Also, all human participants who enters the race is eligible to win the grand door-prize drawing of a mountain bike and helmet. See you June 13<sup>th</sup>!!

**Additional Sponsors:** *Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, Beaver Sports, Equinox Physical Therapy, Fairbanks Central Labor Council, FCA Board of Directors, Gary Corrick, KATN, KTVF, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, K&K Recycling, Inc., Midnight Suns Lions Club, Order of Elks*

**Thanks also to:** *AFLAC, Allstate Insurance- Terri Wolters, Callahan Law Office, Fairbanks Urgent Care, Fred Meyer West, Heindl's Car & Truck Sales, Hoffer Glass Company, Huff's Auto Body, Jazzercise, Richards, Johnson & Gradbury, P.C, Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 375, Pioneer Park, Quota Club, Spirit of Alaska Credit Union, St. Marks University Parish, St. Raphaels Catholic Church, The Alaska Club, Wendy's*



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# Family Treatment Program

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## Equine Therapy



On Valentine's Day 2009, the Family Treatment Department was excited to re-start Equine Therapy, co-facilitated by Kathryn Dosch and Vanessa Will-Huckaby. We are very grateful to *Camp Li-Wa* for allowing us to contract to use their facilities and their Certified Horsemen.

During this cohort of Equine Therapy, we have limited the total group to six female clients so that each girl is able to benefit from the full time and attention of the facilitators and the horse trainers. We are using the *EPIC Training* curriculum, written by Kay Sudekum Trotter, Ph.D. Following this format, the girls are taught and discuss a lesson for thirty minutes. Lessons range from "Team Building" and "Handling the Unexpected" to "Exploring Inner Struggles" and "Gaining Insight About Self and Others," and each participant has an opportunity to lead a discussion, which strengthens their leadership skills. After this initial learning time, the girls enter the ring, tack up their horses, and work with the horse trainers for thirty minutes. Finally, after untacking and grooming their horses, the girls again gather as a group with the facilitators to verbally discuss the applications of the lessons to their daily lives. This particular cohort also will have the chance to experience the wonders of Mother Nature as one of the mares gave birth to her first foal in April.

Research has demonstrated that gender-specific groups for girls foster positive gender identity development during adolescence, enhance protective factors likely to build resiliency, curb negative behaviors, nurture girls' personal and social competence and enhance their self-esteem. We add horses to that because horses have the ability to observe and respond to non-verbal communication. This makes them much more effective at confronting behaviors and attitudes than people. Horses also respond to physical body language, which conveys more than half of what we mean. In other words, the horse acts as a mirror for the client. So while people might say things like "The horse is stubborn," or "The horse doesn't like me," riders soon discover that if they change themselves, the horse responds differently. This symbiotic relationship allows the riders to recognize, accept and cope with their fears and uncertainties in the moment. All of this is backed by research which shows that activities with horses are proven to (1) improve overall problem behaviors; (2) reduce hyperactivity, aggression and conduct problems; (3) decrease anxiety and depression; and (4) improve relationships, self-reliance, self-esteem, social skills and sense of empowerment [Source: Trotter, KS (2006). University of North Texas]. Beyond the psychological benefits, however, the physical nature of this group builds strength and increases balance and coordination, which aids the girls in developing a positive body image. We are excited to offer this group to our clients, and look forward to holding future Equine groups.



As always, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Anne Brainerd, LPC, Clinical Supervisor

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## 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.



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# May is Mental Health Awareness Month!

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May is National Mental Health Awareness Month, a time when mental health organizations across the nation, band together to promote awareness of the importance of maintaining good mental health.

Mental Health America, a nationwide organization founded 100 years ago to promote mental wellness, offers the 10 Tools to Live Your Life Well, based on decades of research. Not all of the tools are right for everyone, but you'll likely find at least a few to try. Happy Mental Health!

1. *Connect with others* – join a book group or hiking club, enroll in a class, or commit to a certain amount of time with your loved ones each week without pagers, iPods, cell phones, etc. Research shows that people who feel connected are happier and healthier – and may even live longer.
2. *Stay positive* – don't assume the worst; keep a gratitude journal of anything that makes you smile; remember your achievements. People who regularly focus on the positives in their lives are less upset by painful memories.
3. *Get physically active* – schedule exercise as you would any important appointment; work out with a friend. Exercise can help prevent heart disease, relieve insomnia and reduce anxiety and depression.
4. *Help others* – volunteer with a community organization; smile at someone who looks down; tell someone what you admire about them. Research suggests that those who consistently help other people experience less depression, greater calm and fewer pains.
5. *Get enough rest* – stop drinking caffeine 6-7 hours before bed. People who don't get enough sleep face a number of possible risks, including weight gain, decreased memory, impaired driving and heart problems.

6. *Create joy and satisfaction* – listen to a humor CD; do something you loved as a kid, like play on the playground or mess with finger paints. Positive emotions can boost your ability to bounce back from stress.
7. *Eat well* – skipping meals can make your blood sugar drop, which may leave you nervous or irritable. Eating healthy food can boost your energy, lower the risk of developing certain diseases and influence your mood.
8. *Take care of your spirit* – connect to whatever you consider meaningful and holy, whether that's God, nature, art or something deep within yourself. People who have strong spiritual lives may be healthier and live longer. Spirituality seems to cut the stress that can contribute to disease.
9. *Deal better with hard times* – instead of just worrying, make a list of possible solutions, pick one, and break that into manageable steps; write about an upsetting event – it organizes your thoughts and helps you file the problem away. People coping with stress feel less depressed after problem-solving.
10. *Get professional help if you need it* – if the problems in your life are stopping you from functioning well or feeling good, we are always here to help!

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## FCA 's New Website Under Construction

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[www.fcaalaska.org](http://www.fcaalaska.org)

In the next few weeks, the look and features of our website are going to be changing. We are adding the ability to register for Mosquito Meander, buy Taste of Art tickets and, thanks to our new secure checkout, donate to any of our programs online.



So check back often to see the great things happening at Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption.

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If you are interested in receiving this newsletter and other correspondence from us via email, please let us know by emailing [fca@fcaalaska.org](mailto:fca@fcaalaska.org) or calling us at 456-4729.

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# Welcome

Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption is pleased to welcome Sean O'Neil, Makayla Mitzel and Linda Sheridan to our Family Treatment Department. We are very excited to have them as an integral part of our FCA team!

**Sean O'Neil** joined our staff as a full-time clinician on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. Sean obtained his Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks and a Master of Social Work degree, with a mental health emphasis, from Eastern Washington University. He is currently pursuing licensure in Alaska as a Clinical Social Worker. Sean brings almost twenty years of experience in the mental health and counseling fields working with children, adolescents and adults. He sees clients on a daily basis, Monday through Friday.

**Makayla Mitzel** recently relocated to Fairbanks from Rapid City, South Dakota. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science, with a Sociology emphasis, from the University of Wyoming. Makayla is working part-time as our Evaluation Coordinator under the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Prevention and Early Intervention Services grant. In that position, she is gathering, scoring and inputting data to show outcome and satisfaction scores. Makayla is also training part-time with the Adoption/Pregnancy Department to write homestudies.

**Linda Sheridan** recently relocated to Alaska from New Jersey, where she was a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Licensed Substance Abuse Therapist. She holds a Master of Science degree in Counseling, with an emphasis on children and families, from Pace University. She has experience counseling individuals, couples, families and groups. She is in the process of applying for Alaska Licensure as a Professional Counselor. Linda began contracting as a clinician with FCA on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> and sees clients Tuesday evenings and all day Saturdays.

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## Street Outreach Program



Much has changed for the Street Outreach Program at FCA in the past few months. We started renting space in the old Domestic Violence 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 about 15 of our clients who came up with an extensive list of rules which we all agreed to follow. They also came up with a new name for the program: SOAP, which stands for the Street Outreach and Advocacy Program, and brings to mind images of freshness and cleanliness. We even are toying with the idea of making soap to raise funds for our new space (if we want to keep the space, we will need to raise \$10,000 for one year of use, so please donate if you can!). Ten to twenty-five youth show up to the program on any given day, and we are working hard to provide them with a warm meal, connections to services, and positive adult role models. We have high hopes for this new center including a computer lab for working on resumes, job-hunting, completing applications and homework, etc. We're also inviting other agencies to present information on their services or to provide group lessons on things like domestic violence, interviewing/job skills, CPR/First Aid trainings, cooking classes and art workshops. We currently are working on publishing another Zine filled with poetry and art by these talented young people and gearing are up for another summer in the garden and working on bikes.

We are very excited to introduce our Vista Volunteer, Cassidy Phillips, who started work in April. Cassidy's main job will be to find creative ways to expand our program's capacity to serve at-risk and homeless youth. In June, look for our booth at the Midnight Sun Festival, where we will be selling crafts and painting faces in the hopes of raising funds for this important program.

As always, we'd like to say a huge thanks to everyone who has donated time, money, supplies or energy to sustain this program throughout the past year and a half. It wouldn't be possible without your help.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads 'Thank you'.

Sarah "Raz" Finnell  
Street Outreach Coordinator

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# Adoption & Pregnancy

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In the past year the Adoption Department has grown in number of clients served and staff. Recently Makayla Mitzel, whom we share with the Family Treatment Department, has begun working with families served by the Permanent Families Grant and doing homestudies for other adoptive families. Also, Amber Buxton has joined our department on a part-time schedule. Since beginning to work with us in October 2008, she has traveled to Golovin, Kotzebue, Kiana and Barrow to do homestudies for families referred through the Permanent Families grant.

In addition to our regular staff home study writers we have continued to contract with Ted Sponsel, for both local and "Bush" homestudies, and we really appreciate all of his hard work.

At this time the part of our department that works with in-state, inter-state and international adoptive families is providing services to 40 adoptive families. In FY 2009 The Permanent Families Grant has received 50 referrals. 39 of those referrals have become active cases, which are completed or in process. Since summer of 2008 FCA has made 3 adoption placements directly through our agency and facilitated 11 international/inter-agency placements.

Happy Spring from the FCA Adoption Staff!



Melody Jamieson, Adoption Coordinator  
Lisa Carr, Home Study Writer/Pregnancy Counselor  
Riana Barry, Home Study Writer/ Pregnancy Counselor  
Amber Buxton, Home Study Writer  
Makayla Mitzel, Home Study Writer

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## Family Support Program

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"Changing Fairbanks Families One Family at a Time"

Family Support provides a wide array of services for many diverse families in the Greater Fairbanks/North Star Borough area. Many of our families are single parent units, families where the grandparents are raising their grandchildren or families with a spouse deployed to the Middle East. These provide unique challenges as we seek to serve our families with the best resources available. One way FCA does this is by collaborating with other Fairbanks agencies (including schools), which enables our program to provide more holistic care for families. Our scope of services extends far beyond parenting skills. It is not uncommon to find our family support counselors assisting families with legal, educational, housing, transportation and medical issues by utilizing many local community resources to make things happen.

Another way Family Support assists families is to provide interactive groups. Currently our Family Support counselors are involved with three different support groups at FCA. Linda Huffaker is teaching a Nurtur-

ing Parenting Class. Angie Hufford is leading a Nurturing Kids Group that coincides with the parenting class and Vanessa Huckaby is assisting with a kid's therapeutic equine group. All three groups involve families who are current clients of the Family Support Program.

With many households facing tough economic times, FCA's Family Support Program is committed more than ever to helping families facing hardships find the services and assistance they need. While we serve many families at once (over 30 households per quarter), individualized care allows us to work on changing Fairbanks families one family at a time.

~ Linda, Vanessa and Angie





# Mosquito Meander June 13, 2009 Registration

**USE ONE FORM FOR EACH PARTICIPANT (PRINT clearly)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check all that apply:**

Female     wheelchair     rollerblades (not timed)

Male     bike (not timed)     scooter (not timed)



**Late registration:** add \$5 to entry fee after Wednesday, June 10, 2009.

**REMEMBER:** Rollerbladers and cyclists proceed with caution. Dogs must be on a leash.

**Entry fee before the day of the race:**

\_\_\_ **Adult (12 and over)**    \$15.00

\_\_\_ **Family (includes 2 t-shirts)**    \$30.00

\_\_\_ **Child (11 and under)**    \$ 10.00

Additional t-shirts: \$12.00 for family entrants or \$15 for non-entrants. Specify # \_\_\_\_\_ and size:

T-shirt size    T-shirt size

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_



*I can't attend, please accept \$ \_\_\_\_\_ donation.*

☎ Telephone 456-4729 for credit card registration (will still have to provide signed release form for each entrant)

### RELEASE

I, the undersigned, attest that I am physically fit and have sufficiently trained for the event. Furthermore, I intend to be legally bound hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators, waive and release any and all rights and claims against the persons and organizations affiliated with Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption, including the race organizers, sponsors, and property owners. This release is intended to constitute a release and waiver of claims, whether asserted by me, by heirs or assigns, of unknown or unexpected consequences of harms to me or my child, as the case may be, arising out of the risks, conditions and hazards of this event.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (*all participants must sign.*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent or Guardian's Signature*  
(for entrants under age 18)



Make checks payable to:  
**Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption**

912 Barnette Street  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
456-4729 fax 456-4623

www.fcaalaska.org  
fca@fcaalaska.org

#### For office use only

Signed form

Paid

Receipt # \_\_\_\_\_

Bib # \_\_\_\_\_

Has T-shirt

Entered drawing

For Door Prize Drawing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bib # \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- FCA Board Members**
- Doug Bishop, President
  - Shanna Karella, Vice-President
  - Gary Corrick, Treasurer
  - Richelle Talvi, Secretary
  - Jason GazeWood
  - Sue Smith
  - Jasmine Plelnikoff

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