



**Native Village of Napaimute
Youth Spirit Camp 2017
*Report***



The week of Spirit Camp has become one of my favorite weeks out of the summer, and the long hours of preparation—I think for all staff involved—instills a sense of anxiousness leading up to the first day of camp kick off. Although I coordinate the camp, it is important to recognize all participants who help make this camp possible. From the cook to the boat drivers, mentors, guests, elders and youth, the success of this camp is built upon the foundation of all those who dedicate their time to attend and help.

In comparison to last year, youth began arriving on Saturday (a day before Spirit Camp began) and camped in a tent in my yard. Sunday brought heavy rain, however, excitement was still found on the faces of youth and camp guests arriving at the boats. Together, two boats—loaded in gear and people—traveled to Napaimute with one quick stop in Chuathbaluk. We arrived on the beach of our village drenched in fresh rainwater, and ran up to the Community Building to prepare for the opening celebration!



Samuel Johns, an Ahtna Athabascan from Copper Center, attended Spirit Camp to hold the opening ceremony. After going over the rules, introductions, and handing out camp goodies (backpacks, sweaters, tooth brushes, tooth paste, water bottles, flashlights, and beanies), Samuel held a speech on decolonization and ended it with a song sang in Athabascan. Samuel remained at the camp for two more nights, and acted as a mentor to the youth. He was awesome to have at Napaimute, and very eager to be a part of everything.



With the incorporation of team building games, hearing from our elders, learning about travel safety, a hike to Little Mountain Village, learning to cut fish, make Athabascan birch bark baskets, dream catchers and Yuraq drums, two of the most monumental take away's that occurred at this years Spirit Camp embodied yuraq and a hike to the historical Stone Woman.



Amira Byrd of Kalskag learns to cut a Red Salmon.



Youth sitting quietly as they listen to the elders.



*Visiting Little Mountain Village. **Left:** Mark Leary speaks to the youth about respect. **Right:** Scott Sakar of Aniak and Crooked Creek pays his respect to one of the graves at rest at Little Mountain Village.*





Making dream catchers with The Kuskokwim Corporation employee, Megan Leary!

For the first time in roughly 100 years, Napaimute's first Eskimo song was made. Byron Nicholai was a returning attendee this year, and guided the youth in creating a song entirely in yugten about moose hunting with their dad in Holokuk River (Alugak).

Thanks to the knowledge and skills of Mark Leary, we now have our first piece needed to make a dance group: the drums! The boys of camp each made a drum entirely from start to finish, bent their own wood, tied on their own material, and even wood burned animals onto the handles. This is--hopefully--the start of something awesome, and I'm so excited for the different hands these drums will touch. The Yup'ik drums will go towards the Anyaraq Youth Dance Group, which has its first practice on August 31st, and the song created at Spirit Camp will be one of the leading songs for the dance group.



After spending 3 days in Napaimute, the youth and all camp staff loaded into three boats and traveled up the Holokuk River to our designated Spirit Camp site. We spent one night at camp, and ended the trip with a hike that very few people get to experience in their lifetime.

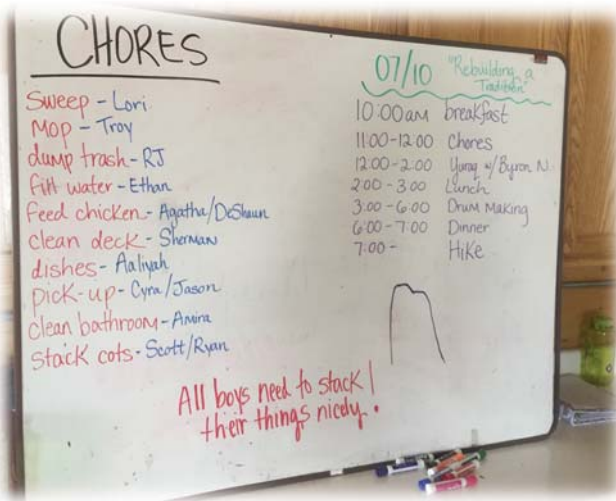


Camp cook, Shelly Leary, busy in her kitchen at camp!



Together we hiked to the Stone Woman—one of the toughest hikes on one of the hottest days! All camp members made it to the Stone Woman, even the babies!

At Spirit Camp, we work hard and play harder!



*Chores continue, even when camping!
(Pictured: Jayce Rohde and Sherman Kelila doing the dishes)*



Team Building Games! Fire making competition, and bubble gum blowing contest.



**Quyana Cakneq
to everyone who gave time and donated to Napaimute's Youth Spirit Camp!**

Youth:

Troy Morgan, Aniak

Agatha Sakar, Crooked Creek; Lori Evan, Kalskag; Aaliyah Williams, Chuathbaluk; Scott Sakar, Aniak; Jason Steeves, Aniak; Ethan Morgan, Aniak; Amira Byrd, Kalskag; DeShaun Sakar, Chuathbaluk; Ryan Steeves, Aniak; Jayce Rohde, Napaimute; RJ Murphy, George Town; Sherman Kelila, Aniak; Cyra Phillips, Aniak

Camp Helpers/Boat drivers:

Jacob Wise

RJ Morgan

Mark Leary

Camp Cook:

Shelly Leary

Guests:

Samuel Johns; cultural performer, hip-hop rapper and motivational speaker.

Byron Nicholai; I Sing. You Dance.

Megan Leary: The Kuskokwim Corporation

Elders:

John Browski, Napaimute

Erich & Lucy Morgan, Chuathbaluk

Camp Mentor/Advisor:

Brianna Sherer

Camp Coordinator: Audrey Leary

Native Village of Napaimute Tribal Council

Lisa Feyereisen, NVN Administrative Support

Calista Corporation, Donlin Gold, Aniak AC, AVCP Workforce Development, TANF and EET&CC Departments, Crowley, YKHC Dental, & The Kuskokwim Corporation for your generous donations to our camp!