

# Aktive



Alaska Sports Hall of Fame /Healthy Futures Newsletter

VOL. 01 NO. 06 Spring 2018

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## ALASKA'S YOUTH & A HEALTHY FUTURE!

As Healthy Futures wraps up its 15th year of partnering with Alaska schools to provide the Healthy Futures Challenge, I'm pleased to reflect on the staying power of a grass roots project started by the late Bonny Sosa and her husband Sam Young.

Kids from Akutan to Anaktuvuk Pass fill out their monthly activity logs nowadays. But there is so much more going on as we continue looking for meaningful ways to promote a healthy youth population in our state.

The Alaska Sports Hall of Fame concluded its third PLAAY (Positive Leadership for Active Alaska Youth) Summit in February with speakers presenting on topics ranging from healthy sleep habits in children (see page 3) to addressing the opioid epidemic.

Thousands of children across Alaska joined us for PLAAY Day - half hour of synchronized and simultaneous physical activity – to get communities moving, and talking about the importance of being physically active. We even welcomed schools from Kentucky and Ohio to join us this year!

Healthy Futures currently supports over 100 youth physical activity events across the state by providing medals, bibs, DJ's, event equipment, promotion, and Healthy Hero role models to interact with the kids. We work to add the fun factor. And while there is nothing better than a fun run to get a family out moving, we've found other ways to partner around our state in engaging children from ski events in Point Hope, to ice fishing in Soldotna, to basketball block parties in Wasilla (see page 2)!

The Alaska Sports Hall of Fame Board of Directors will be recognizing our inaugural

class of Youth Directors' Awards recipients at our annual Alaska Sports Hall of Fame ceremony at the Anchorage Museum on April 24th. The objective with these awards is to bring back statewide sports-wide awards to recognize our outstanding high school-aged athletes (the Anchorage Daily News discontinued naming Alaska's best high school athlete in 2009), and also recognize the outstanding quality of character we see in so many of our young athletes, by naming a Youth Trajan Langdon Award winner each year.

We were overwhelmed by the volume of outstanding nominees. We received dozens in each category and had to make difficult decisions in naming the winners. Of the nearly 100 nominations we received, ALL were worthy of celebration and will receive formal recognition from the Hall. The winners in each category are profiled on page 4 as well as a list of finalists.

Administering our inaugural youth awards was a reaffirming process for our organization. While the athletic achievements we saw in our nominees was impressive, most remarkable was how many of these young men and women are outstanding leaders, scholars, citizens and role models in their communities. The young people in our state give us much to be proud of and reason to be optimistic for our future. At the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame along with our Healthy Futures program and PLAAY initiative, we are committed to giving our youth the best chance to be successful.

Harlow Robinson  
Executive Director

## CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2018!

- Holly Brooks \* Virgil Hooe
- Dolly Lefever \* Arctic Winter Games \* Andrew Kurka
- Kikkan Randall \* Roxy Wright \* Jim Mahaffey \* DaJonee Hale
- Alissa Pili \* Gus Schumacher \* Brenner Furlong
- 2018 Alaska Olympian Tribute



# About Us

Alaska Sports Hall of Fame  
[www.alaskasportshall.org](http://www.alaskasportshall.org)  
 Healthy Futures  
[www.healthyfuturesak.org](http://www.healthyfuturesak.org)  
 PLAAY  
[www.plaay.org](http://www.plaay.org)

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 Wally Wilson

**Alaska Sports Blog Editor**  
 Van Williams

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# HEALTHY FUTURES: EVENT SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Photos by MATIAS SAARI

Healthy Futures was busy this winter participating in a wide variety of events, including a winter trails day, a winter jamboree and the NANA Nordic program that teaches youth to ski in villages across Alaska.



Healthy Futures partnered with Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage and other groups for Ski for Kids in February.



Healthy Futures partnered with Skiku in April to teach youth cross country skiing in the North Slope village of Point Hope.



Healthy Futures staff and Healthy Heroes visited Point Hope in March as part of the ConocoPhillips Spring Break Camp along with Skiku volunteers.



PLAAY Leaders, along with MC Holly Brooks and PLAAY keynote speaker David Marsh, celebrate the end of PLAAY Day 2018 on February 22nd.



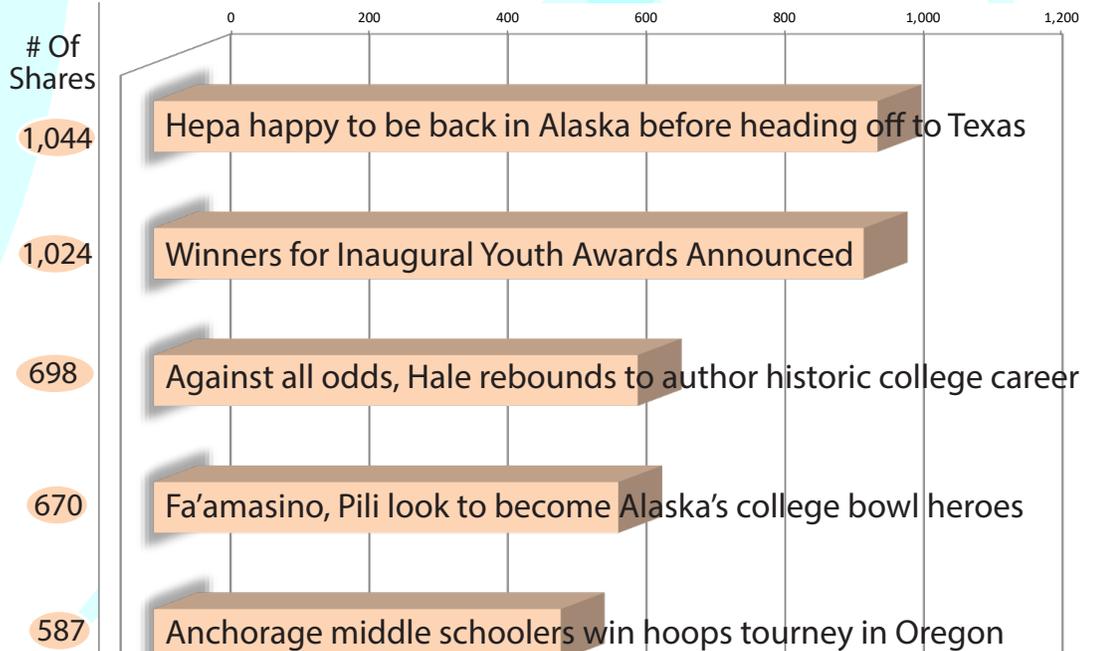
Students from six Anchorage Title 1 schools experienced winter sports at the Anchorage School District Winter Jamboree February 15th.



Jessie LeBeau shoots around at the Spring Into Activity: Block Party on March 31st, an event put on in Wasilla in conjunction with United Way Mat-Su.

## Trending On the Blog: The Biggest Stories of the Past 6 Months

Alaska Sports Hall of Fame blogger Van Williams is a former Anchorage Daily News Sports Editor and Alaska Press Club award winner. Williams has been with the blog since the beginning and has written more than 3,000 stories on over 500 Alaska athletes.



Check the full articles out at: <http://alaskasportshall.org/alaska-sports-blog/>

# FROM THE PLAAY BOOK: Excerpts from Experts on Youth Health

**HEALTHY SLEEP IN CHILDREN:** It is common knowledge that adequate, good-quality sleep is important in the development of children. And yet, insomnia is the most common complaint from parents with regards to sleep problems in this population. Although certain sleep disorders may be the cause of the insomnia, oftentimes the difficulty in initiating or maintaining sleep may be due to poor sleep hygiene or suboptimal sleep environment.

According to Centre for Clinical Interventions, sleep hygiene simply means sleep habits. These can include bedtimes, wake times, types of activities around bedtimes, sleep schedules, sleep environment, and diet. Good sleep hygiene is achieved by optimizing habits that promote sleep and avoiding those that sabotage it. Training the mind to recognize bedtime is one method of promoting sleep. For example, having the same bedtimes and wake times daily help our bodies synchronize our internal clocks (circadian rhythm) with the environmental clock (time) and prepares us to fall asleep as bedtime approaches. Similarly, having the same bedtime routine (e.g., bath, teeth brushing, changing into pajamas, and

reading bedtime stories) also signals our mind that bedtime is approaching.

Other factors that can influence the ability to fall asleep are the environment and the activities throughout the day. Ideally, the room should be quiet and dark. A room temperature on the cooler side (between 65-70oF) with blankets to stay warm is optimal. If possible, avoid using the bedroom and bed for any other activity aside from sleeping. The use of any electronic device with a screen (television, tablets, smart phones) within 2 hours of bedtime exposes the eyes to excessive amount of light (which simulates daytime) and should be avoided. Exercise during the day can promote better sleep at night, but it may disrupt the ability to fall asleep if done within 4 hours of bedtime. Caffeine is a wake-promoting stimulant that can exert its effect up to 6 hours after ingestion; therefore, one should be mindful of the time when eating or drinking anything with caffeine (e.g., chocolate, coffee).

Lastly, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has stated that adequate sleep in children leads to improved behavior, better learning, and higher quality of life. Therefore, they have endorsed the recommendation from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) regarding sleep hours for different age groups.

The listed hours include naps:

Infants 4 months to 12 months: 12 – 16 hours per 24 hours

Children 1 to 2 years of age: 11 – 14 hours per 24 hours

Children 3 to 5 years of age: 10 – 13 hours per 24 hours

Children 6 to 12 years of age: 9 – 12 hours per 24 hours

Teenagers 13 – 18 years of age: 8 – 10 hours per 24 hours

Children with inadequate sleep are at increased risk for obesity, depression, and hypertension.

For more information on healthy sleep in children, visit

[www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/docs/Info-sleep%20hygiene.pdf](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/docs/Info-sleep%20hygiene.pdf)

[www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Supports-Childhood-Sleep-Guidelines.aspx](http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Supports-Childhood-Sleep-Guidelines.aspx)

**Harry Yuan, DO, MPH, FCCP, FAASM**

Pediatric Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine

The Children's Hospital at Providence

## HEALTHY FUTURES ELEMENTARY CHALLENGE UPDATE

By ALYSE LORAN

The Fall Healthy Futures Challenge wrapped up with over 14,000 participants from 165 schools across the state participating; and the Spring Challenge, running February through April, is off to a strong start with students from 150 schools completing activity logs through March.

The third annual Marathon March Challenge saw over 200 kids completing at least 26.2 miles of running in the month of March. Sponsored by Skinny Raven Sports, kids who completed the marathon were given a Marathon March sticker to display their accomplishment. Skinny Raven also provided three pairs of running shoes for a random drawing from

among the finishers. Congratulations to all the finishers, and thanks to Skinny Raven!

We'd also like to recognize all of the schools that earned a longevity award by completing the fall challenge. Five challenge longevity award winners include Tok Elementary,

Craig Elementary, Johnny Oldman School, Kaleidoscope School of Arts and Sciences, Kiana School, Port Graham, Raven Correspondence School Anchorage, Raven Correspondence School Wasilla, Salcha

Elementary, Shungnak School, Tanaina Elementary, University Park Elementary, White Mountain School, Moose Pass School, and Nome Elementary. Ten challenge longevity award winners include

Alakanuk School, Aurora Elementary, Baxter Elementary, Barnette Magnet School, Birchwood ABC School, Campbell Elementary, Cantwell School, Eagle Community School, Houghtaling Elementary, Mikelnguut Elitnaurviat, Pt. Higgins School, Rae C. Stedman Elementary, Rogers Park Elementary, Delta Junction Elementary, Cottonwood Creek Elementary, College Gate Elementary, and North Pole.

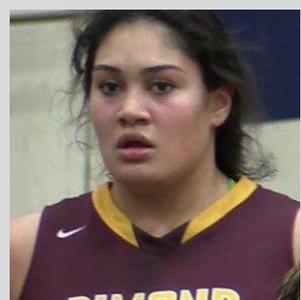


# MEET OUR INAUGURAL YOUTH AWARDS WINNERS

BY VAN WILLIAMS

## PRIDE OF ALASKA AWARD:

### GIRLS: ALISSA PILI



Alissa Pili

No doubt Dimond High sports star Alissa Pili cares about winning, but she might care more about being a good teammate and a good sport

with opponents. Character and championships are not mutually exclusive in her book. The 6-footer is in large supply of both as she continues to carve out a prestigious prep career by winning her eighth state title in her fourth sport. Now she's an inaugural winner of the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame's Pride of Alaska Award.

"I appreciate this award very much and am thankful for receiving it, but honestly I don't let all these individual awards get to my head," Pili told me. "I want to be remembered as not just a great player, but a great person. I want to be remembered as someone who plays with heart and passion and stays humble."

The two-time Gatorade Alaska Player of the Year led the undefeated and nationally ranked Lynx girls basketball team to a state title with a 22-point, 20-rebound performance in the championship game. She also owns state titles in track and field, wrestling and volleyball.

"Finally winning a state title in basketball was the best feeling ever and I'm glad I got to experience it with such an amazing group of people," she said. The NCAA D1 prospect has been offered a college scholarship from Saint Mary's, BYU, Hawaii and Butler. Pili is the kind of role model younger players can look up to. "I am very proud to be in that kind of position and to motivate and inspire other kids to do what they love."

## PRIDE OF ALASKA

### GIRLS FINALISTS:

Sydnee Kimber, Mount Edgecumbe  
Kendall Kramer, Fairbanks

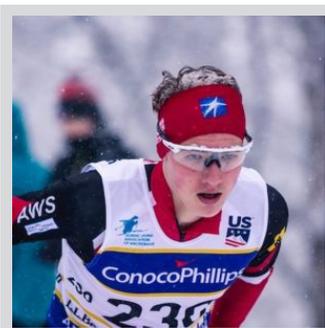
### BOYS FINALISTS:

Thomas Dymel, Bethel  
Arctic Ivanoff, Unalakleet  
Jacob Moos, Galena  
Derryk Snell, Eagle River

## PRIDE OF ALASKA AWARD

### BOYS: GUS SCHUMACHER

To say that Service's Gus Schumacher excels in skiing is a vast understatement. He was the highest-ranking junior at the 2018 Nordic national championships and anchored the historic, silver-medal winning U.S. relay team at the World Junior Championships. He was Skimeister at the Alaska state championships for the second time and helped the Cougars to the team title, and he earned two podiums at the 2018 Junior Nationals.



Gus Schumacher

"I try to represent it well and make it seem like a cool thing," he said. "I like it a lot. It's hard to be a good skier without liking it a lot because there is so much hard,

monotonous work."

There's nothing dull about Schumacher. The 17-year-old was picked as an inaugural winner of the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame's Pride of Alaska Award.

"That made me feel great, especially to be among the inaugural winners and with so many great candidates," he said. "When I see the list of candidates it makes me feel so good to be in that pool among some really great Alaska athletes."

A senior at Service who also competes for the Alaska Winter Stars, Schumacher is a 4.0 student who has competed on both the cross-country running and cross-country ski teams. As a runner, Schumacher won the state championship in his junior year before sitting out his senior year to focus on skiing. Now that his prep career is finished, he will focus on the next level. Not in college, but the national circuit. "I absolutely advocate for skiing. I like it a lot," he said. "It's hard to be a good skier without liking it a lot because there is so much hard, monotonous work."

## TRAJAN LANGDON AWARD FINALISTS:

Tatum Bayne, Sitka  
Simeon Beardon, Anchorage  
Brandon Gall, Anchorage  
Tobin Karlberg, Anchorage

## TRAJAN LANGDON AWARD

### BRENNER FURLONG

A senior at Soldotna, Furlong serves his community, school and family with exemplarity dedication and rigor. He's prouder of his selfless service than his athletic achievements. And although most people know him for his play under the bright lights, you could say his best work comes when nobody is looking. His combined class and competitiveness helped Furlong win the inaugural Alaska Sports Hall of Fame Trajan Langdon Award for his leadership, sportsmanship and inspiration. "For someone else to recognize that is a huge honor and I'd like to say thank you," he said. He was Gatorade Alaska Football Player of the Year in 2016-17 and a two-time Offensive Player of the Year on the gridiron, 400-meter state champion in track and pays special attention to kids who need extra help, either due to a physical disability or in need of additional support with rides or help studying. Furlong can usually



Brenner Furlong

be found hanging out with a fellow student who is in a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy, and he consistently mentors

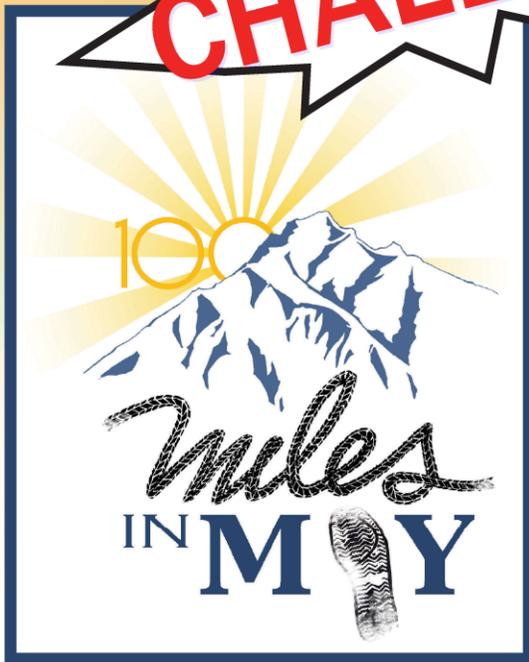
younger players, carrying on a tradition in the Stars football program that did not lose a game in his career. He learned how to be a winner on and off the field from legendary Soldotna coach Galen Brantley. "He taught us how to respect other people and grow up to be good men," Furlong said. "He would tell us, 'If I taught you just how to win football games but you're a horrible guy, then I failed as a coach.'" Furlong wants to dedicate this award to Brantley. "That's why I'm super, super thankful to win this award," he said. "Not in my honor, but in his honor. Thank you, coach, for teaching me the right way."

*Van Williams is a staff writer for the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame and the editor of the Alaska Sports Blog.*

Grace Miller, Palmer  
Duncan Okitkun, Kotlik

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Healthy Futures: FEATURED TEACHER MEGHAN REDMOND



Name: Meghan Redmond

School: Chief Ivan Blunka School (New Stuyahok, Alaska)

Position: Vice Principal

Years as a Teacher: 11 years as a teacher/administrator, 8 of those years in Alaska

Years participating in the Healthy Futures Challenge: 1st year

My hero is . . . Debra Buckingham, my high school choir director, because . . . she is the one who inspired me to become a teacher when I was in high school. She had an incredible work ethic, an amazing sense of humor, and a caring heart for each and every student.

When I'm not in the classroom you will find me . . . playing with my kids (Liberty and Wilder), and my dogs, (Fern and Piper), or making quilts.

The craziest place I have ever been is . . . with my husband on our boat stuck in the mud at low tide in Togiak Bay, waiting

for the tide to come in so that the water would be high enough for us to get back to the village!

My favorite recreation/fitness activity is . . . going for long hikes in the tundra with my dogs and family. Any time we travel to a new place, we always find a place to hike to find a beautiful view!

The most inspirational thing a student has ever said to me is . . .when a former student asked me to be his high school graduation speaker, because I was his favorite teacher he had ever had.

My favorite strategy for motivating kids to live a healthy lifestyle is . . . playing right along with them, whether that is in Phy. Ed. Class, on the playground, or out on a hike in the tundra!

Other thoughts: At Chief Ivan Blunka School, staying healthy and active is a team effort! Every teacher and student that participate in Healthy Futures are working together to build a better future! I want to give a special thank you to the elementary teachers who have helped facilitate Healthy Futures this year. . . Kylie Shuneson, Leah Sizemore, Danielle Dooley, Hannah Therrell, and Hannah Barr! At Chief Ivan Blunka School, we are proud to follow #TheEagleWay!

# OUR SUPPORTERS: THANK YOU!



## Sponsor Highlight



Thanks to our featured sponsor,  
The Bristol Bay Native Corporation!!  
We appreciate your wonderful support!

## IN APPRECIATION OF JIM BALAMACI:

By HARLOW ROBINSON

Alaska Sports Hall of Fame Board President Jim Balamaci passed away Feb 1st. Jim was an extraordinary leader as President and CEO of Special Olympics Alaska for over 20 years. As a founding director of the Hall, Jim was instrumental in helping establish the organization around its mission to Teach, Honor and Inspire, always a steady mentor and innovative thinker. Moreover, Jim gave a voice to athletes with disabilities. It was his wish that these athletes should have every opportunity on the same stages as the able-bodied. The Alaska Sports Hall of Fame will strive to honor Jim's wish and his legacy. He will be missed.

