



## MOVING FORWARD

As the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame and its programs steer through the challenges of the past couple years, our work has never felt so vital.

Initial studies on Covid-19 impact show obesity rates have spiked since the start of the pandemic. So have issues with emotional and mental health for children and adults.

A decrease in physical activity is a key factor behind the alarming health trends. Our Healthy Futures program has always promoted the message that an active kid is not only going to be physically healthier, but also more likely to be successful socially and in the classroom.

As the pandemic persists, so must our resolve. Innovation, compassion, and leadership are cornerstone values in our work.

The Healthy Futures Challenge activity logs have provided structure and a goal-setting tool to help kids navigate the uneven terrain of the past couple years. In normal times, Healthy Futures supports dozens of community events around the state. Lately, we've all had to get creative. Words like "virtual", "adapted", "streaming" and "staggered" have become part of the lexicon. Event directors across the state continue to inspire us with their can-do attitude and our support has never waned.

Studies also indicate Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted lower-income communities and families. Health equity is a program priority and we're excited to announce the launch of the Healthy Futures Game Changer as a vehicle to formally address the barriers some kids in Alaska face with access to sports and recreation opportunities (see page 2).



Alaska Sports Hall of Fame's Executive Director:  
Harlow Robinson

And we're changing things up with PLAAY, our Positive Leadership for Active Alaska Youth initiative. In response to the global pandemic, we decided to make our annual PLAAY Day — normally a 30-minute statewide exercise session — a global event! For a full 24 hours on Feb. 24, 2022, children and adults around the world are invited to join us via livestream for half an hour at noon in their time zone. We're calling it PLAAY24. (See page 5). We hope you'll join us as Alaskans set an example for the world!



Anchorage Run Fest Kids' 2K

The Alaska Sports Hall of Fame has not yet held a ceremony to honor the Class of 2020. We're targeting April 2022 and look forward to honoring our 15th group of inductees! In the meantime, thanks to streaming technology we reached thousands of viewers on Facebook Live for the presentation of our annual Directors' Awards. While we look forward to more live events in the future, we've found some tremendous new ways to connect with Alaskans around the state during the pandemic that we plan to continue.

The Alaska Sports Hall of Fame sports blog has grown up and left the nest. Under the leadership of Van Williams, the blog is now the Alaska Sports Report, a stand-alone media platform working to connect you with Alaska athletes doing great things around the world (see page 2).

Through it all we thank you for your generous support. Together we're doing good things!

Harlow Robinson

Executive Director, AK Sports Hall of Fame

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**PLAAY**  
Positive Leadership for Active Alaska Youth



# 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)

Alaska Sports Report

<https://alaskasportsreport.com>

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**Alaska Sports Report Editor:**

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- Matt Carle, Vice Chair
- Chris Myers, Secretary & Treasurer
- Chuck Homan
- Nina Kempel
- Eric Ohlson
- Bill Pearson

# THIS IS THE ALASKA SPORTS REPORT: VAN WILLIAMS

The Alaska Sports Hall of Fame is thrilled to have launched the Alaska Sports Report in October!

From preps to the pros, our award-winning staff will provide in-depth coverage of Alaska athletes that is second to none.

Formerly known as the Alaska Sports Blog, the Alaska Sports Report has expanded its staff to complement editor Van Williams, who single-handedly maintained a daily blog for 12 years.

Williams, a former Anchorage Daily News sports editor and Alaska Press Club award recipient, created a credible news source that applied a new facet to a decaying statewide sports media landscape.

Williams, of East High fame, wrote 4,900 of the 5,000 blog posts, covering more than 1,000 Alaskans at the high school, college and professional levels.

Joining Williams on staff will be a tremendous trio of former newspaper reporters in Doyle Woody, Matias Saari and Matt Nevala.

Woody covered Alaska sports for 34 years as a reporter/columnist for the Anchorage Daily News. The Bartlett High grad was the ADN's principal



hockey writer and won the ECHL's Most Outstanding Media Award four times.

Saari is a former sportswriter at the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner who now serves as a coordinator for Healthy Futures, the signature program of the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame. He authored a book about Fairbanks' Equinox Marathon and directs the Mount Marathon Race and Crow Pass Crossing.

Nevala worked at the Anchorage Daily News for more than a decade before moving on to Alaska Newspapers Inc. as assistant managing editor. There he handled duties ranging from prep page editor to Alaska Aces beat reporter to a fishing report. He also co-hosted 'The Sports Guys' radio show.

The Alaska Sports Report team also includes executive director Harlow Robinson, development director Shelley Romer, web developer Natalie Osborne, and calendar/events manager Arielle Himelbloom.

We are Alaskans covering Alaskans.

The Alaska Sports Report's mission is to tell stories about Alaska athletes achieving great things around the world through an innovative, interactive platform.

## HEALTHY FUTURES GAME CHANGER A Health Equity Project

Through a partnership between Healthy Futures and Alaska's News Source with the integration of The Basics organization, young Alaskans from economically challenged backgrounds can be awarded scholarships to help get them in the game! Healthy Futures Game Changer is designed to support children in need across the state to enable safe and active lifestyles. Youth groups (teams, clubs, etc) and individuals between the ages of 5-18 years old can apply.

Examples of needs covered by Healthy Futures Game Changer include, 1) participation fees, 2) sports equipment, 3) transportation, 4) skill-building lessons, 5) basic clothing items that allow youth to participate in sports or recreational activities and 6) other.

For more info on how to apply for help or donate to the fund as a sponsor, visit our Game Changer page at <https://healthyfuturesak.org/community-support/game-changer-fund-kicks-for-kids/>.

Twitter:  
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[Alaska\\_Sports-Report](https://www.instagram.com/Alaska_Sports-Report/)



Facebook:  
[healthyfuturesak](https://www.facebook.com/healthyfuturesak/)  
Alaska Sports Hall of Fame  
Alaska Sports Report



# HEALTHY HEROES QUOTED:

To help promote the Healthy Futures Challenge we created a poster this fall that features a diverse group of Alaskan role model athletes. We asked them why being physically active is important. Here are their responses:

**Jeremy Swayman** — NHL Goalie, Anchorage

"Being physically active keeps a positive mindset for mental and physical health throughout your life."

**Amelia 'Uhila** — High School Basketball Player of the Year, Anchorage

"Being physically active will help you become a better student and person."

**Hailey Williams** — State champion sprinter, Delta Junction

"Being physically active allows you to challenge yourself and reach new goals."

**Lydia Jacoby** — Olympic Gold medal swimmer, Seward

"Mental health and physical health go hand in hand. Promoting one is to promote the other."

**Hunter Sulte** — Pro soccer player, Anchorage

"Being physically active boosts mental health and self esteem!"

**Gus Schumacher** — World Junior Champion Nordic skier, Anchorage

"Being physically active is what gets me

to my goals."

**Elaina Mack** — UAA Basketball Player, King Cove

"Being physically active gives my body the strength and energy that it needs to do everything that I am capable of doing today!"

**Nick Hanson** — American Ninja Warrior and AK Native Games star, Unalakleet

"Respect your health. Respect yourself."

**David Norris** — Mount Marathon winner, World Championships skier, Fairbanks

"Being physically active makes me feel good and it is something fun I can do with friends."

**Tobin Karlberg** — UAA Basketball Player, Anchorage

"Being physically active keeps you healthy and feeling your best!"

**Ruthy Hebard** — WNBA Basketball Player, Fairbanks

"Being physically active keeps me strong and able to run up and down the basketball court."

**Kikkan Randall** — Olympic Gold Medal Skier, Anchorage

"Being physically active makes my body and my mind strong, giving me the confidence to tackle anything!"

**Hayden Lieb** — 4-time state champion wrestler, Bethel

"Being physically active keeps me busy and is a great way to be a part of something with my friends!"

**Dallas Seavey** — 5-time Iditarod Champion, Talkeetna

"Being physically active allows me to see more, do more, LIVE more!"

**Sydney Kimber** — National Champion college wrestler, Sitka

"Being physically active sets me up for a healthy future."

**Jace Henry** — High School Football Player of the Year, Fairbanks

"Being physically active is very important for mental health as well as maintaining a healthy body."

Take the **HEALTHY FUTURES CHALLENGE**

- ① Be Active
- ② Fill out your Activity Log
- ③ Earn Prizes

HEALTHY FUTURE ALASKA SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Get out and Play 60 Minutes a Day  
Talk to your teacher or visit [www.healthyfuturesak.org](http://www.healthyfuturesak.org)

ALASKA KIDNEY FOUNDATION      ConocoPhillips      MAT-SU HEALTH FOUNDATION      PLAY EVERY DAY      PROVIDENCE Health & Services Alaska      FAIRBANKS MUSKIE CENTER

# HEALTHY FUTURES EVENTS 2021 RECAP

BY MATIAS SAARI

With most large events canceled due to the pandemic, there have been fewer opportunities for Healthy Futures to provide its usual support.

However, the good news is that events, while not yet back to their pre-pandemic levels, are returning slowly but surely!

To help fill the gap, our 100 Miles in May program was immensely popular in 2021, with about 3,000 participants. In their quest to log 100 miles of activity, they completed 384,000 miles collectively while supporting The Alaska Sports Hall of Fame and Healthy Futures programs.

After a one-year hiatus, the Healthy Futures Kids Mile returned at a new location: Kincaid Park. We value our partnership with UAA and the Anchorage Parks & Recreation for this popular event.

In July, Healthy Futures successfully directed the Crow Pass Crossing, a 22-mile footrace from Girdwood to the Eagle River Nature Center that serves as an important fundraiser.

Although the Anchorage School District Cross Country Jamborees were again canceled this September, a handful of schools organized running clubs and held their own running events to keep kids active.

Meanwhile, four jamborees in the Fairbanks area continued as scheduled and a large middle school meet called the Knight Invite was held successfully in Palmer and supported by Healthy Futures.

Fall wrapped up with the Anchorage Muni's Tuesday Night Races in-person after being virtual in 2020. Youth participants in the "Munchkin" Division received Healthy Futures medals at the season finale, a Halloween costume run on Oct. 26.



Knight Invite in Palmer



## WELCOME KAYLA WILLIAMSON TO THE HEALTHY FUTURES TEAM!

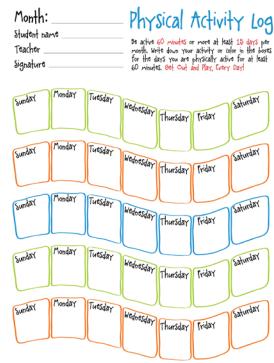
Kayla, our new program coordinator, will manage the Healthy Futures Challenge and Game Changer programs among other duties. Kayla is inspired by innovative and responsible solutions to tackle resource inequity. She is excited to raise awareness around social determinants of health and their effects on youth participation in sports and outdoor recreation. As a lifelong Alaskan, she is eager to continue utilizing and developing her skill-set with the Healthy Futures team in a meaningful and impactful way for communities across the state. When not in the office you can find her exploring the backcountry of Turnagain Pass or tidepooling the coastal shores of Homer, her hometown.

## HEALTHY FUTURES ELEMENTARY CHALLENGE UPDATE

By Kayla Williamson

The Fall 2021 Healthy Futures Elementary Challenge is off to a strong start with 117 schools across the state signed up and 89 logging their activity. With most returning to in-person from remote learning, we saw a significant spike in enrollment numbers compared to last year. We crossed the 5,000 threshold in our first month, which will increase through the rest of the fall session. Our goal through the pandemic has been to provide a resource that works for ALL students, whether they are learning at home or in school — and to be flexible in accommodating each school's needs. It is exciting to see how schools have taken on the challenge with enthusiasm and creativity!

Thirty-nine schools across the state have been involved with the Healthy Futures Elementary Challenge since its inception. Their consistent presence has been of tremendous support to the growth and success of this program. Staying active and healthy is a team effort!



With gratitude, we would like to spotlight:

Aquarian Charter School, Arctic Light Elementary, Bear Valley Elementary, Campbell Elementary, Cantwell School, Chinook Elementary, Denali Elementary, Eagle Community School, Girdwood School, Glacier View, Homestead Elementary, Huffman Elementary, Inlet View Elementary, Innoko River School, John Shaw Elementary, Juneau Raven Correspondence School, Kalifornsky Beach Elementary, Kasun Elementary, Knik Elementary, Machetanz Elementary, Mat-Su Central School, Muldoon Elementary, Nordale Elementary, Northwood Elementary, O'Malley Elementary, Orion Elementary, Pioneer Peak Elementary, Point Higgins School, Rabbit Creek Elementary, Rilke Schule, Rogers Park Elementary, Seward Elementary, Sterling Elementary, Taku Elementary, Talkeetna Elementary, Tri-Valley Elementary, Turnagain Elementary, Upstream Learning, Woodriver Elementary

# FROM THE PLAAY BOOK: PLAAY DAY 2022

by Wally Wilson, Director of PLAAY

We are thrilled to announce that we are planning the world's first PLAAY Day on February 24, 2022!

It's called 24 Hours of PLAAY (PLAAY24) and we will be broadcasting live from the Special Olympics Center in Anchorage's Mountain View neighborhood beginning at 12 p.m. on Thursday, February 24 and finishing at 12 p.m. on February 25. Participating groups from around the world will join in at 12 p.m. in their time zone, regardless of location. Our theme this year is "The World Needs PLAAY" and our timing is perfect! More details to follow on PLAAY.org

Leading up to PLAAY24, we have weekly PLAAY



Sessions each Thursday at 12 p.m. and broadcast from varied locations in Anchorage. UAA's Department of Kinesiology students lead these sessions that are broadcast

on Facebook Live through the Healthy Futures page. Weekly PLAAY Sessions are the perfect way to keep active in the home or school setting. Archives PLAAY Sessions can also be found here:

<https://plaay.org/plaay-sessions/plaay-sessions-2020-2021-archive/>

We are happy to have another outstanding PLAAY Intern from UAA's Department of Kinesiology: Eduardo "Walo" Orozco. Walo has been a great addition to the team and will be instrumental in our success for PLAAY24.

## Healthy Futures: FEATURED TEACHER & LONGEVITY SPOTLIGHT

Healthy Futures would like to recognize a coordinator who has been involved with the Elementary Schools Challenge since the beginning! Innoko River School in McGrath has participated for 17 years under the guidance of Joyanne Hamilton. We're grateful for her hard work and for everything she does for her students. Go Raiders!

**Name:** Joyanne Hamilton

**School:** Innoko River School

**Position:** Teacher

**Years as a Teacher:** 30 Years

**Years participating in the Healthy Futures Challenge:** Whenever the first year Healthy Futures began is when I began! I can't even remember! I love the program, the contests, and the incentives. I'd also love to honor a fellow teacher who also loved Healthy Futures and I know was fully involved: Susan A. Smith who taught in Takotna. She passed away August 2021 and I miss her tremendously as I know her students do, too.

**My hero is . . .** My heroes are . . . many.

How can a person have just one hero when our lives are vibrantly colorized by the families we are born into, or the exceptional people we meet with their own life stories and personalities? My heroes are those who show resilience despite adverse situations they have experienced in life.

**When I'm not in the classroom you will find me . . .** You will find me taking photos of the beauty in nature.



**The craziest place I have ever been is . . .** In my classroom on science investigation field trip day.

**My favorite recreation/fitness activity is . . .** Walking up the road with my camera.

**The most inspirational thing a student has ever said to me is . . .** "I learned to walk even though the doctors told my family I would never walk." (Another one of my heroes)

**My favorite strategy for motivating kids to live a healthy lifestyle is . . .** To participate with them in the games that are being played, and the exercises that they are doing. Role model good health. (I have my students remind me to do 5-10 squats in place when I get up from my desk).

**Other information about yourself you'd like to share . . .**

When a child is talking to you, pocket your cell phone, look away from your computer and pay attention. Look the child in the eye and smile when they are telling you something. Doing this will make that child feel like they are totally loved and important. It doesn't matter how old they are. Pay attention when they are talking.

# OUR SUPPORTERS: THANK YOU!



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Alaska  
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# WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

All of us at the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame and Healthy Futures are so thankful for our supporters! We couldn't do any of the wonderful work we do without people like YOU!

Thanks to your energy, donations, and vested interest in the health and well-being of Alaska's youth and our community, we are able to serve thousands of children through the Healthy Futures Challenge and event support. We are also able to reward, celebrate, utilize and honor our local athletes to teach, honor and inspire. Your assistance is vital to our success and we are grateful for your support!

**Want to help?** There are a number of ways you can support our organization throughout the year:

- Choose Healthy Futures through **Pick.Click Give** & your PFD.
- Donate directly, online at <https://give.classy.org/hf-donation-page>.
- Become a sponsor by contacting [info@healthyfuturesak.org](mailto:info@healthyfuturesak.org)

- Have your business participate in the 100 Miles in May program: <https://healthyfuturesak.org/get-involved/100milesmay/>

However you support us, we appreciate your interest and are forever grateful for partners like you! A gift from you is a gift to the community!



**Pick.  
Click.  
Give.**

Alaska Sports Hall of Fame/Healthy Futures

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