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ANJC is able to accomplish much of its work thanks to the support of our many generous donors. At this time, we would like to highlight and thank the businesses, organizations and individuals who helped make our 12th annual fundraiser a success. We are deeply grateful for your support.

If you would like to join the ANJC family of supporters, please call 907.793.3550 or email dwing@anjc.net or jmeier@anjc.net.

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A Message from the President



Denise Morris

Dear Friends,

When I think back on all that has happened since our last newsletter, I am filled with a sense of excitement and accomplishment. Let me share just a few of our exciting updates with you.

Last October, we held our 12th annual fundraiser at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. Approximately 65 guests joined us in helping to raise more than \$65,000 in donations for ANJC! We would like to thank our generous corporate and individual donors who make it

possible for ANJC to achieve its mission to promote justice through culturally based advocacy, prevention and intervention initiatives to restore dignity, respect and humanity to all Alaska Natives.

Although our annual fundraiser is over, we welcome donations throughout the year. If you would like to support the mission of ANJC, please contact us at 907.793.3550 or mail your donation to 3600 San Jeronimo Drive, Suite 264, Anchorage, AK 99508. We accept checks and all major credit cards.

It is through the generosity of our donors that we are able to provide the programs and services that make such a profound difference in the lives of the people we serve. Of course, we must also be able to adapt and expand our services to meet the needs in our community. This spring, we are proud to announce the addition of a new ANJC program – the Bridge to Success, a female prisoner re-entry program.

Bridge to Success evolved from a one-day transition conference held at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center last fall. It was clear to everyone involved that the conference addressed a real need in our community, and that the one-day conference truly needed to become a full re-entry program to help female prisoners successfully transition back into the community, thereby ultimately reducing the rate of recidivism for female offenders.

Through partnerships and with the support of state agencies and

community partners, ANJC is proud to add Bridge to Success to our family of programs and services. We are also pleased to welcome Janice Weiss, the previous education coordinator at Hiland and the new Bridge to Success program coordinator at ANJC. You can read more about the new program in this issue of our newsletter.

April marks Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and ANJC is participating in several events, including the 8th annual Celebrating the Safety and Wellness of Alaska Native Women. The event, which is hosted by ANJC and the Alaska Native Women's Sexual Assault Committee, will be held April 27th from 3 – 5 p.m. in our building at 3600 San Jeronimo Drive in Anchorage. We invite you to join us for this special event.

In closing, let me say thank you for your interest in and your support of ANJC. We could not accomplish all that we do without you.



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New ANJC Program Helps Women Transition from Prison

Imagine for a moment you are a woman who has just been released from prison. You have no clothes of your own. No job. No transportation. No place to sleep. Perhaps you are trying to re-unite with children or a partner. What would you do? Where would you turn?

ANJC's new Bridge to Success program aims to answer those questions and, ultimately, reduce the rate of recidivism in the female offender population.

"It provides women leaving prison a helping hand in coming back into the community. With this kind of support, women have a

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April Calendar of Events

Here are just a few of the events that will be taking place during Sexual Assault Awareness Month and National Crime Victims' Rights Week. A complete event calendar is available at ANJC, as well as other participating organizations, including Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), Standing Together Against Rape (STAR) and Victims for Justice.

April 2: National Sexual Assault Awareness Month Opening Ceremonies, Assembly Chambers at the Loussac Library, 1 – 2 p.m.

April 7: H2Oasis Riverwalk for Justice, a benefit to support Victims for Justice, H2Oasis Indoor Waterpark, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

April 11: Alaska CARES Pinwheel for Change, Loussac Library, All day

April 12-14 and 19-21: Meet and Greet, 4th Avenue, 11 p.m. – 1 a.m.

April 14: STAR Spring Auction, Anchorage Marriott Downtown, doors open at 6:30 p.m.

April 21: Victims for Justice Annual Awards Banquet, Hotel Captain Cook, 7:30 p.m.

April 22: Candle Light Vigil, St. Mary's on the corner of Tudor and Lake Otis, 1:30 p.m.

April 23: Victims for Justice Annual Tree Ceremony, Park Strip at 9th Avenue and G Street, Noon

April 26: Take Back the Night, Federal Courthouse, 6 p.m.

Raising Awareness of Sexual Assault and Victims of Crime

The month of April offers many opportunities to raise awareness of two important issues in our community – sexual assault and violent crime. The entire month of April has been deemed National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and National Crime Victims' Rights Week will also be held April 22 – 28.

One of the marquee events is the 8th annual Celebrating the Safety and Wellness of Alaska Native Women, which will be held April 27th from 3 – 5 p.m. at the Nat'uh Building at 3600 San Jeronimo Drive in Anchorage.

The event, which is hosted by ANJC and the Alaska Native Women's Sexual Assault Committee (ANWSAC), honors and celebrates the special role and contributions of Alaska Native women and to offer support to those we hold so dear in our hearts.

Raising awareness and assisting victims of sexual assault is something ANJC is dedicated to throughout the year. As part of its efforts, ANJC provides advocacy to survivors of sexual assault throughout Alaska. Services include identifying the victim's immediate needs, providing referrals to community resources, explaining and tracking the judicial process, assisting with victim impact statements, and providing accompaniment to court proceedings.

ANJC is also involved with Alaska CARES, an Anchorage-based clinic that provides sexual abuse evaluations for children and 24-hour, on-call services for emergent cases. Through Alaska CARES, an ANJC legal advocate provides legal advocacy, support and follow-up services to Alaska Native families experiencing physical or sexual child abuse. The legal advocate also helps the families better understand the investigative and justice processes, and works to promote cultural understanding among service providers.

ANJC also tracks unsolved homicides of Alaska Native women in Anchorage, and offers a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible.

For more information about Sexual Assault Awareness Month events or ANJC's work in the area of sexual assault awareness and advocacy, contact Cheryl Facine, ANJC legal advocate, at 907.793.3550 or cfacine@anjc.net.

New ANJC Program Helps Women Transition from Prison

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better chance of becoming successful members of our community," said Janice Weiss, former education coordinator at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center and the new Bridge to Success program coordinator at ANJC.

Once the program officially launches this spring, it will work toward this goal by offering classes, consultations, mentorships, support and referrals to women who are being released from Hiland, Alaska's only all-female correctional facility. The program will help the women make plans while they are still in the facility, then continue to offer support after their release.

"The process has to start when they are still in prison. When they are in, they need to start planning for when they will be out. Then, they need continued support as they transition back into the community," Weiss said.

The program will address areas of need including housing, transportation, food, clothing, child custody, childcare, parenting education, stress management, exercise and nutrition, adult basic education and GED, vocational and other post-secondary education, job skills training, job searches, job interviewing skills, staying employed, substance abuse counseling, mental health, budgeting and finance management, and any other needs identified.

"It's a holistic approach. You can't just help them get a GED or treatment and expect them to succeed. It has to be a combination of many things for a person to be healthy and successful in society," Weiss said.

The program draws on the many resources that are already available in the community, and acts as a single point-of-contact for women to learn about and access the services.

"There are many resources within the community, but women don't always know what resources are available or how to access them. They just need help making use of the services available," Weiss said.

Another important part of the program is tracking its success. The recidivism rate of the women participating in the program will be tracked and compared to the Department of Correction's overall rate for female offenders. Weiss said the program will also research why program participants re-offend and return to Hiland.

"If we find out why, we have a better chance to fix it," she said.

The program evolved from a one-day prison to community re-entry conference held at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center last fall.

"We wanted it to evolve into a full re-entry program, so we looked for ways to make that happen. Ultimately, ANJC was looking to help in this area, and we were looking for a home," Weiss said.

The program fits well with the other programs and services offered by ANJC.

"The program was adopted by ANJC partly because of the high number of Natives who are incarcerated. However, the program is not

limited to Alaska Native women," Weiss said.

The program offers clear benefits for the women being released, but also offers significant benefits to the community.

"Through this new program, ANJC is helping these women become successful, contributing members of society. They have jobs, they are taking care of their children, and they have a much better chance of breaking the cycle for themselves and their children," said Denise Morris, ANJC president.

For more information on the Bridge to Success program, please contact Janice Weiss at 907.793.3565 or jweiss@anjc.net.



(Above) Participants listen intently during the one-day prison to community re-entry conference sponsored by the National Association of Women Judges and held at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center last fall. This conference planted the seed for ANJC's new Bridge to Success program.

(Background photo) Participants gathered for a session with Dr. Ellen Cole, professor of psychology at APU, during the prison to community re-entry conference.