

AFS Locations

Main Offices

1825 S. Chugach St.
Palmer, AK 99645
746-4080
Toll Free 866-746-4080

Behavioral Health Treatment Center

5851 E. Mayflower Ct.
Wasilla, AK 99654
376-4000

Job Development, Families First Work Services, & Family Contact Center

165 E. Parks Hwy.
Wasilla, AK 99654
376-2003

WIC, Child Care Assistance (Valley), & Family Violence Intervention

899 Commercial Dr.
Wasilla, AK 99654
376-4080

Family First Treasures

403 S. Alaska St.
Palmer, AK 99645
746-6200

Child Care Assistance (Anchorage)

1251 Muldoon Rd.
Ste. 116
Anchorage, AK 99504
644-5000

WIC—Kenai

601 Frontage Rd. Ste. 102
Kenai, AK 99611
283-4172
Toll Free 800-283-4172

24-Hour Crisis Line

746-4080 or toll free
866-746-4080

A L A S K A



Navigator

Guiding you through our social service programs

FAMILY
SERVICES

September 2016

Outdoor Events Going Smoke-Free is a Big Deal

“Connecting with kids is one of the biggest reasons why I work at AFS”, says Noel. As the Tobacco Prevention and Control Coordinator the opportunity to connect with youth at outreach events is one of the biggest perks of her workday.

Most children being raised today are experiencing a different world regarding tobacco than what was the social norm just 15 years ago. By and large stores, restaurants, and in fact most public places children occupy or visit

with their parents are now smoke-free.

What began as a “take it outside campaign” has, publicly, been highly successful. More exciting is the move by public outdoor events to limit smoking to designated areas or, to ban it outright as was the reality at the 2016 JBER Air Show and will be at the 2016 Alaska State Fair.

Kids by nature are cu-



A young volunteer helps distribute Breathe Free Mat-Su items at an annual health fair.

rious and have no inhibition in approaching the tables at our outreach events to ask “what is this”? When they discover the information has to do with the dangers of smoking and the positive benefits to quitting comments

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Summer Camp at Behavioral Health Treatment Center Successful

It has been a whirlwind of a summer for many youth at the behavioral health treatment center beginning with the first 8-11 year old summer program and ending with the 12-15 year old program. While there were many struggles and challenges, there

were easily triple the number of successes and moments to cherish.

None of it would have been possible without the assistance of two fantastic new hires, Tabatha Peterson and Britney Jenkin. Without these ladies the ambitious ten week program

would not have been possible.

Summer camp for both age groups was a great success with clients reporting that they wanted to return for more, and more, and more fun! We completed both programs with the same

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Outdoor Events Going Smoke-Free *(continued from page 1)*

“It allows us to have serious conversations in a light-hearted manner with the most vulnerable of all; kids.”

such as, “Can I take these for my aunt? She smokes and I’m worried, I think she should quit” are very common.

At one health fair a young boy brought to the table a can of chewing tobacco he found outside. The boy was very serious; he wanted to make sure it was disposed of and brought it to the table so that we could “get rid of it properly”.

I know from the outside it seems like the Tobacco Program spends a lot of money on products. There is a purpose behind the purchase. It allows us to have serious conversations in a light-hearted manner with the most vulnerable of all; kids. The opportunity to connect educationally, seal it with a tangible product to continue

the fostering of a healthy identity choice and anchored with a positive interaction with tobacco personnel is a powerful tool. Research tells us rarely does a person over the age of 21 begin using tobacco products. Sadly, research also tells us that the average age at which tobacco begins is 15 with the reality that the earlier someone uses tobacco the harder it is for that individual to break the addiction.

So when children approach our table at these events and ask “How much does this cost?” I never get tired of saying “Nothing, on one condition: you don’t smoke or use tobacco do you?” And, when they say “no” I get to smile and say “I hope you never do, help yourself”.

Noel Crowley-Bell, TPC Coordinator

Did you know that every year in the United States more than 480,000 people die from tobacco use and second-hand smoke?

Thanks to Our Donors

- Valley Business Machines
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- Angella Long
- AFS Board of Directors
- Thank you to all of our individual members!

AFS Hires First Director of Marketing

Alaska Family Services (AFS) over the last eighteen months has been conducting a “Sustainability Campaign” to pro-actively address the fiscal issues all non-profits are facing due to the State of Alaska budget crisis. One phase of that campaign is to establish a marketing department.

AFS is happy announce the hiring of Traci Boyle

as the first Director of Marketing. Traci’s family roots date back to the days when Palmer was a tent town. Her grandfather, Jim Hermon, moved to Alaska from Wisconsin in 1935. He was only 7 years old when the family relocated from Wisconsin as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal to populate the area and get people working in response to

the Great Depression. Grandpa Jim was a big advocate for community, and as a partner of Hermon Brothers Construction built the Hermon Brothers Field in Palmer, along with many neighborhoods and schools in the Mat-Su Valley. Wanting to support and give back to the community like her grandfather,

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AFS Hires First Director of Marketing *(continued from page 2)*

Traci jumped at the chance to become the Director of Marketing for Alaska Family Services when the opportunity arose.

Her goal as AFS's Marketing Director is to continue to promote and advocate for an organization that supports families in the community by offering "family

solutions to individual problems" in the fastest growing community in the state, the Mat-Su.

As you can see Traci's roots are in the Valley and she plans to be out-and-about in the community. Be sure to say "hello" when you see her!

Donn A. Bennice Ph.D.
President/CEO



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2016 PFD

If you've already given to AFS, thank you.

If you haven't, please consider making a donation through Pick.Click.Give in 2017.

Thank you!

Summer Camp at Behavior Health a Success *(continued from page 1)*

number of youth we started with, except for one in the 12-15 year old program. Attendance was phenomenal with clients attending at least 75% of the days, and stating that they wished they could stay longer than the 5 weeks for their age group. Several activities kept the youth on the go, engaged, and working on their goals. Most notable was a half day Challenge Course experience at the Birchwood Camp where the kids were challenged to work as a team, problem solve, and communicate effectively. Surprisingly, most of

the kids identified the element that challenged them the most, a team based puzzle, as their favorite part of the day.

Other activities the kids enjoyed included a trip to the Trampoline Gym, The Anchorage Museum, bowling, ice skating, and rock climbing, just to name a few. Many of the youth surprised staff with the changes in behavior over a short period of time. The most improvement was seen in both the 8-11 year old program, with a young man who went from socially awkward and inappropriate to conversing easily with his peers

without staff intervention, and a young teenager that recently arrived home from residential treatment who transformed from an angry argumentative youth to a respectful and calmer young teen. All the clients have stated they are looking forward to the winter program in December and insist that Ms. Tabatha, Ms. Britney, and Ms. Nicole are involved, and the trampolines... can't forget the trampolines.

Nicole Brooks
School-Based Coordinator



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"Several activities kept the youth on the go, engaged, and working on their goals."

Help Strengthen & Support Families. Become an AFS Member Today.

RETURN TO:

Alaska Family Services
1825 S. Chugach Street
Palmer, AK 99645

Phone: 907-746-4080

Fax: 907-746-1177

Website: www.akafs.org

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tax deductible as
provided by law.

Alaska Family Services could not successfully pursue its core purpose of "Services for Families Through Intervention, Referral, Collaboration and Education" without the kind and generous support of individuals and businesses in the Mat-Su Valley. Your membership will be used for the direct care of families that enter our services.

To join, simply fill out this form and return it to the address posted on the side.

Thank you! Your support makes a difference.

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