

One Health Perspectives From a Youth Dog Mushing Program in Rural Alaska Reflected Through Photovoice And Digital Storytelling



Jacques Philip, Janessa Newman, Inna Rivkin, Cathy Brooks, and Joe Bifelt

A portrait of a young woman with dark hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a black top with a white floral pattern. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred green foliage. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

*In memory of
JesCynthia David*

*May 16, 1996
February 27, 2020*

Photo courtesy of Bev Kokrine

Outline

- The Frank Attla Youth & Sled Dog Care-Mushing Program (FAYSDP)
- Study Background and Methods
- Results (Youth digital story, photovoice and quotes, adult focus group findings)
- Relevance to One Health

The Frank Attla Youth & Sled Dog Care-Mushing Program (FAYSDP)



Alaska Care and
Husbandry Instruction
for Lifelong Living

Background

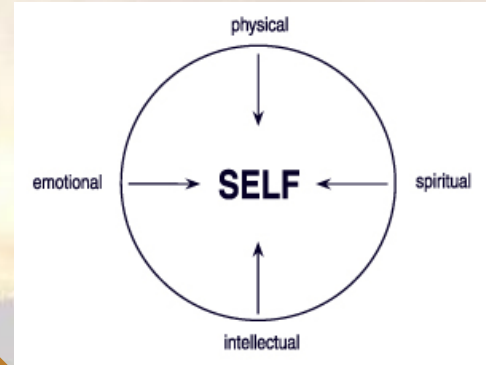
Events leading to health disparities

AN people lived in harmony with animals and nature for centuries.

Traditional Cultural Values reflect a lot of that balance

Western contact and colonization broke the balance

- Historical trauma
- Rapid social changes
- Social inequities
- **Health disparities**



Background

Events leading to health disparities

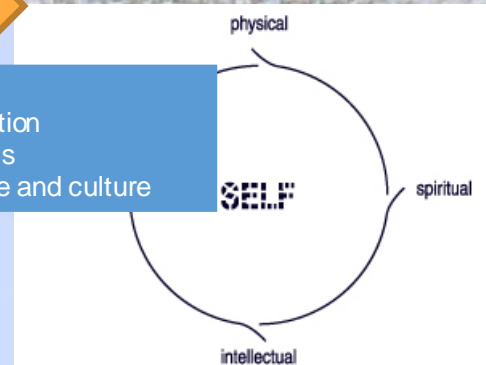
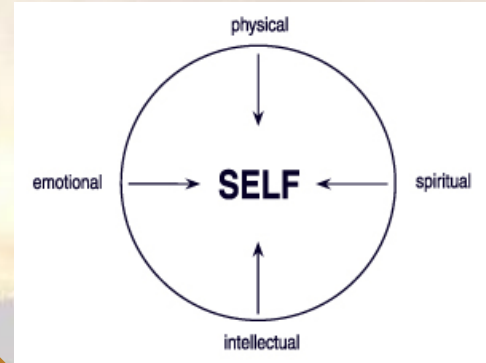
AN people lived in harmony with animals and nature for centuries.

Traditional Cultural Values reflect a lot of that balance

Western contact and colonization broke the balance

- Historical trauma
- Rapid social changes
- Social inequities
- **Health disparities**

Pandemics
Forced assimilation
Boarding schools
Loss of language and culture



Background

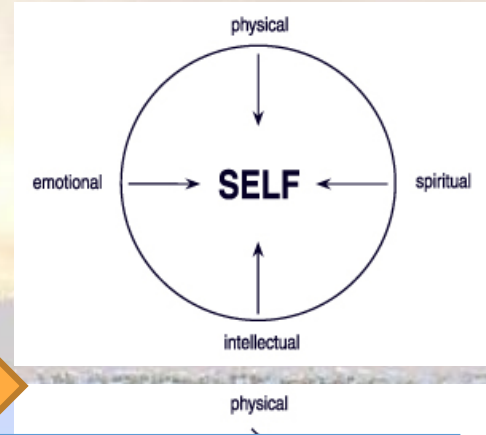
Events leading to health disparities

AN people lived in harmony with animals and nature for centuries.

Traditional Cultural Values reflect a lot of that balance

Western contact and colonization broke the balance

- Historical trauma
- Rapid social changes
- Social inequities
- **Health disparities**



Sedentarization
Housing
Modes of transportation

"From the adult to youth generations, the transition from dog teams to snowgos as the primary means of winter travel on the land potentially had the greatest impact overall on the indigenous emotional economy in Yookkene"

Kawagley, A. O. An Alaska Native's Theory on Events Leading To Loss of Spiritual Life. P. <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/Articles/OscarKawagley/AlaskaNativeTheory.html>

Rasmus, S. (2008). *Indigenous emotional economies in Alaska: Surviving youth in the village*, P. 100. University of Alaska Fairbanks, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Background

Events leading to health disparities

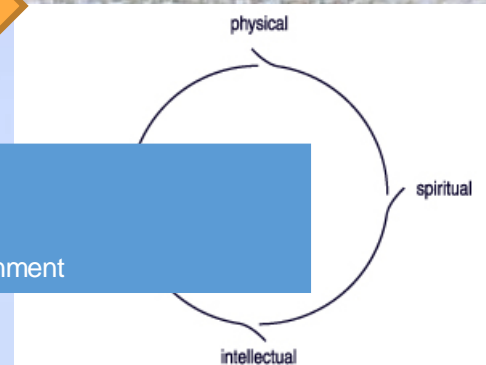
AN people lived in harmony with animals and nature for centuries.

Traditional Cultural Values reflect a lot of that balance

Western contact and colonization broke the balance

- Historical trauma
- Rapid social changes
- Social inequities
- **Health disparities**

Racism
Discrimination
Low income
Low school attainment



Background

Events leading to health disparities

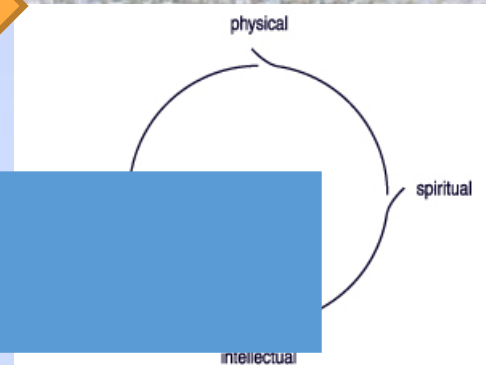
AN people lived in harmony with animals and nature for centuries.

Traditional Cultural Values reflect a lot of that balance

Western contact and colonization broke the balance

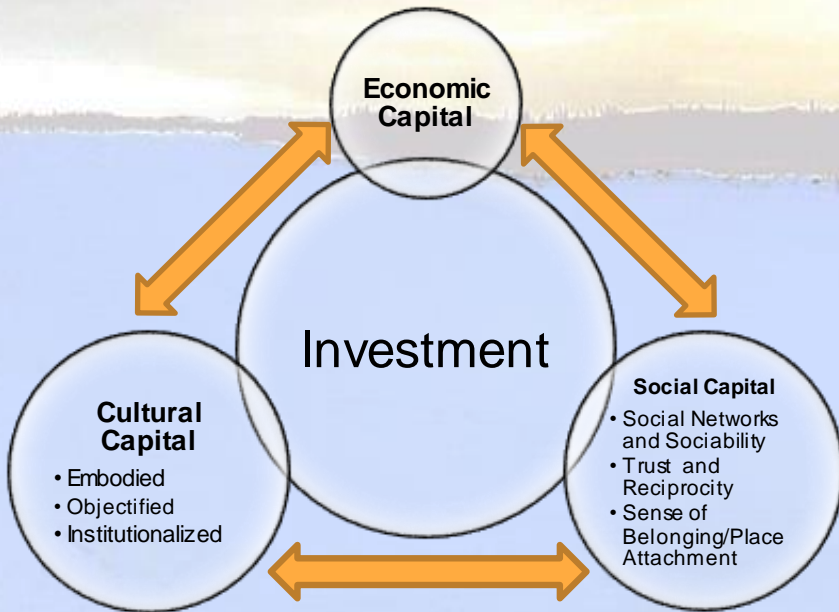
- Historical trauma
- Rapid social changes
- Social inequities
- **Health disparities**

Alcohol misuse
Suicide
Obesity
Cancers
CVD



Background

Social Theories Used in our Project



→ Bourdieu, P. (1990). The forms of capital, 1986. R. Nice (trans.). In *Cultural theory: An anthology* (pp. 81–93). John Wiley & Sons.

→ Schaefer-McDaniel, N. J. (2004). Conceptualizing social capital among young People: Towards a new theory. *Children Youth and Environments*, 14(1), 153–172.

→ Stewart-Withers, R. R., & O'Brien, A. P. (2006). Suicide prevention and social capital: A Samoan perspective. *Health Sociology Review*, 15(2), 209–220.
<https://doi.org/10.5172/hesr.2006.15.2.209>

One Health

- Holistic view of health
- Congruent with indigenous worldviews
- Multi disciplinary approach
- Originally developed by veterinarians
- Zoonotic diseases
- Environmental health
- Subsistence
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Research Master's program at UAF

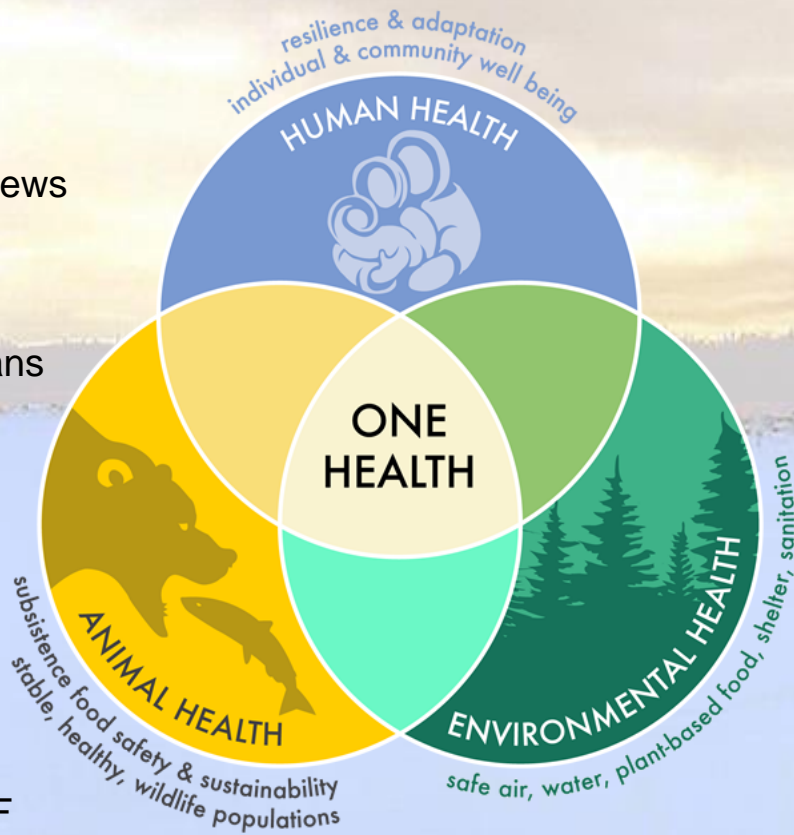


Image courtesy of
UAF Center for One health

Design



Research Principles

- Strength based
- Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Research Questions

Q1: How do the youth perceptions of the FAYSDP fit with the dimensions of social capital?

Q2: How do the youth perceptions of the FAYSDP align with Athabaskan cultural values?

Q3: What are additional community perspectives on the FAYSDP from adults?

Methods

→ Photovoice

Youth take pictures during their activities and discuss them in groups

→ Digital Storytelling

Illustrated the effects of the FAYSDP from the participants' perspectives.

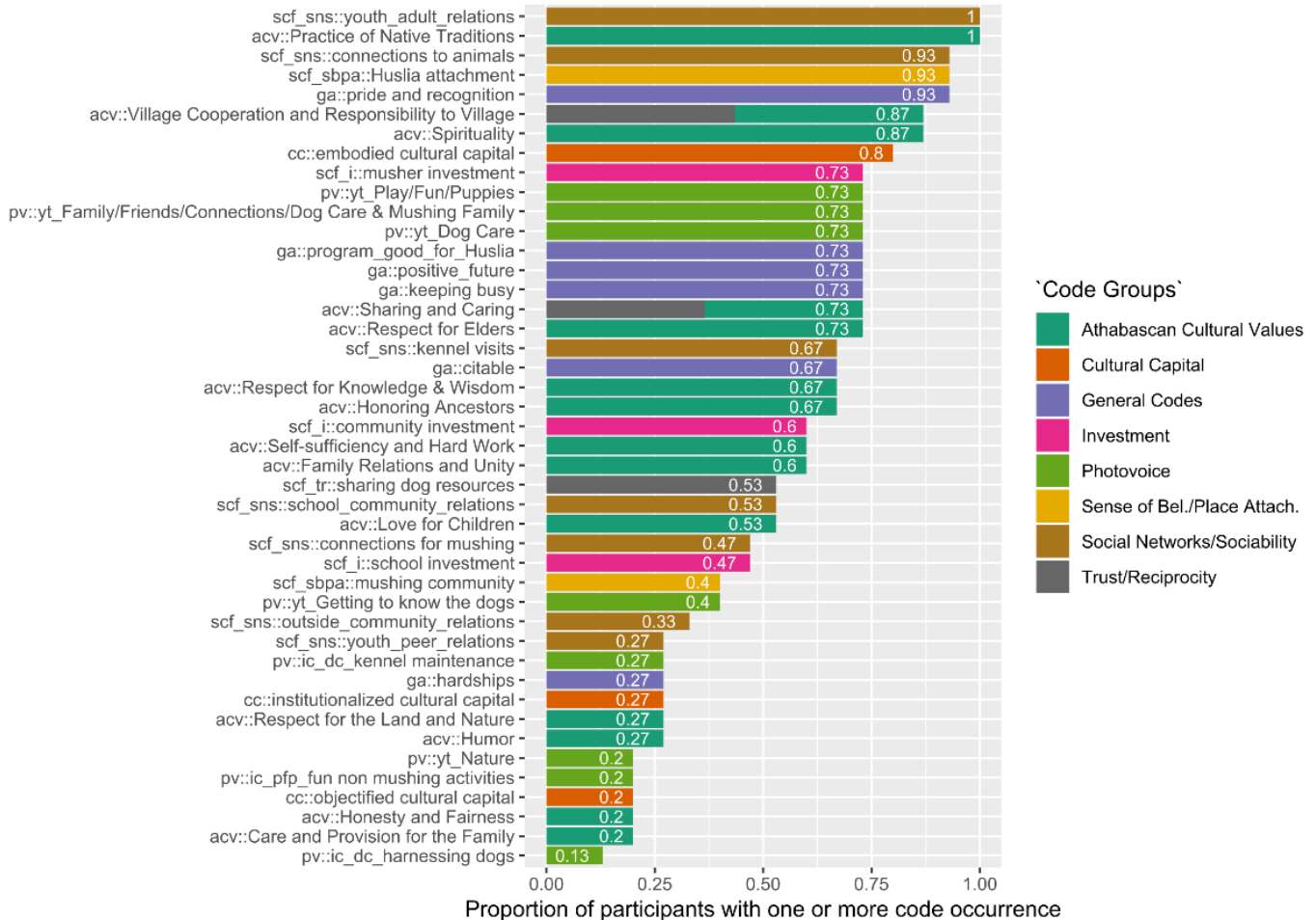
→ Focus groups with community members

→ Analysis

- Development of codes by use of common themes and use of Athabaskan Cultural Values (ACV) established by the Denakkanaaga Elders Conference - 1985.

is mushing because it's exciting. So my late grandpa Cue Bifelt won the open North American championship sled dog race which is one of the biggest sprint dog races in the world. The Frank Attla program taught me how to work with dogs and learned some history from where I come from.

ations	4:31 So my...	acv::Respect for Knowledge &...
tions		acv::Spirituality
		cc::embodied cultural capital
		ga_recognition



Photovoice Themes

"Family, culture, pride. I see our history, our Elders and teachers. I see family and friends, and teamwork."

Getting to know the dogs



The Regal Dog
Dogs showing their love of mushing.



A Good Dog
A dog from Wesley's Yard. I think this picture shows how great dogs are.

"I love that we are working together and having a great time. I think working with dogs, really brings us together."

"This program has really taught me many things, with Wilson's stories and Uncle Floyd and Wilson's guidance can really teach us great lessons on right and wrong."

Family, friends, connections, & mushing family



Warner Vent Sr.
A poster about my Grandpa Warner Vent. He ran the Iditarod in the 1970's. This picture is special to me because it reminds me of who my grandpa is.



Bergman Sam
A poster about Bergman Sam, a legend racer. It's important so we can remember his accomplishments.



My First Iditarod
A student in the middle of Iditarod mushers. I like it because I see 11-year-old me at the baseball field.

Photovoice Themes

"Happy that we're all keeping our culture alive."

N
a
t
u
r
e



Another Cold Day in the Dog Yard
We see how cold it can be in Husia and Wesley's dog yard.



Hello, Sunset!
A fish rack is holding a beautiful sunset.

Play, fun, puppies!



Snoopy Dog
A snoopy dog is sniffing my camera. I like this dog because he was snoopy like me and looks like he's ready for picture day.



Company for Dogs
Student petting the dog I thought it would be a good picture because it shows that we have to give every dog company or they will give up on most things.



Sunshine
The dogs posing on a sunny day.

"We learned to put on harnesses, and what's a gang line, a tug line, a neckline, and a whole lot more."

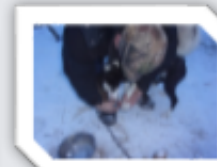
Dog Care



Grabbing Hay
Students putting hay in empty dog houses. I chose this picture to show how our classroom helps the dog's health.



Putting Grass in Houses
We learned to put hay in puppies' house to keep them warm and prevent them from getting cold or sick.



Cutting Nails
Middle schoolers watching my dad cut dog nails so they don't catch and break while they run.

*JesCynthia's
Digital Story*




Photo courtesy of Bev Kohrinc

“ I love running dogs and racing in competitions. During competitions there is often a ton on your mind and it is easy to feel anxious. Even with all these feelings, I love how dogs have almost a magical power to give you a calming peace. While running dogs I find clarity, it’s a period of time without noise and voices.”

- Respect for Land and Nature
- Spirituality
- Connections to animals

High School Girl



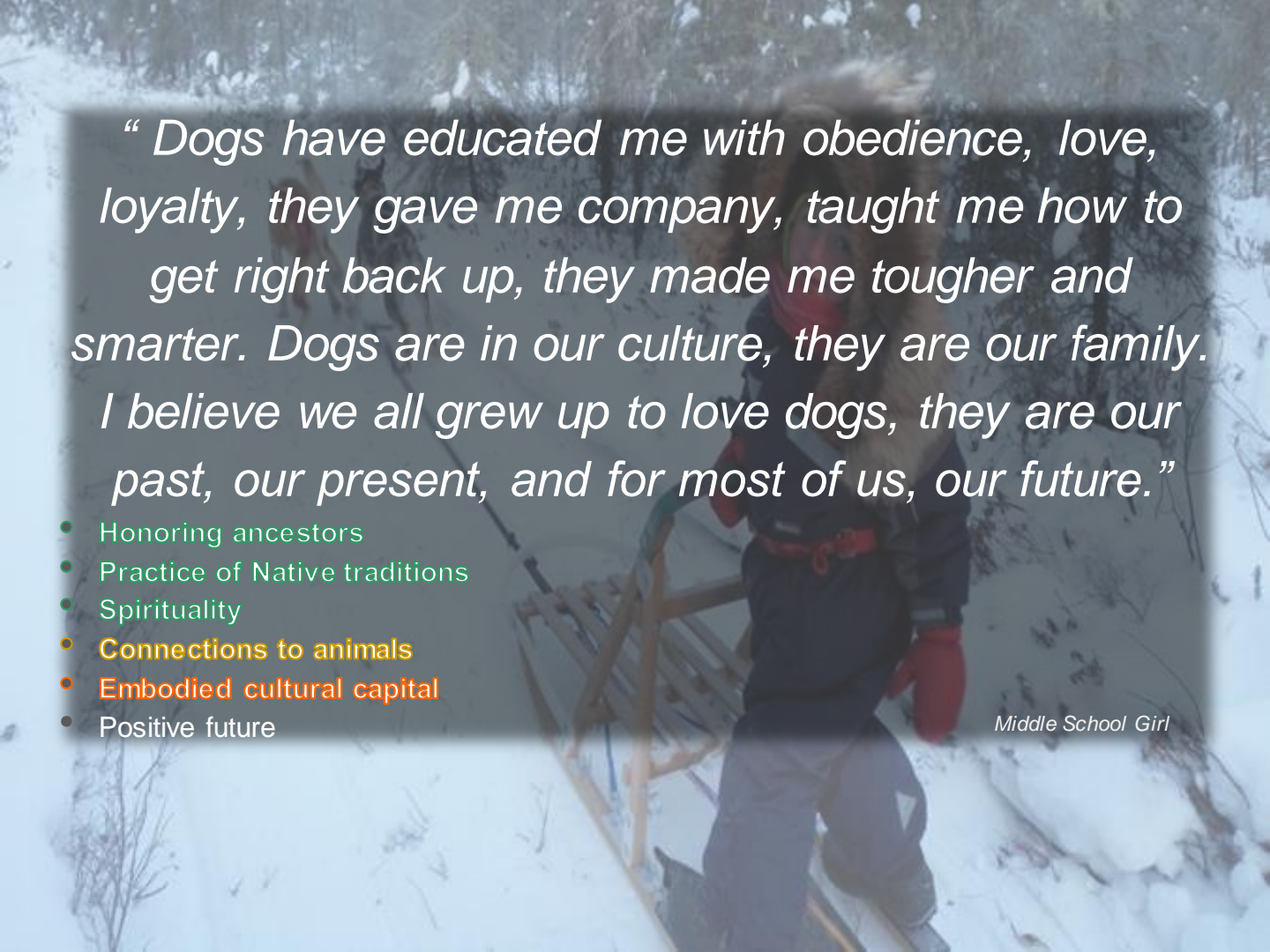
A person is mushing a sled through a snowy forest. The sled is in the foreground, and the musher is visible in the distance. The forest is composed of tall evergreen trees, and the ground is covered in deep snow. The sky is bright with some clouds.

“Overall it’s a great thing having a dog yard. It will help my future in many different ways, it teaches me what determination is, it will help me have a better attitude towards work, and have a good work ethic.”

- Honoring ancestors
- Self-sufficiency and hard work
- Embodied cultural capital
- Positive future
- Pride and recognition

Middle School Boy

Photo provided by A-CHILL

A person wearing a black jacket, red gloves, and a red hat is skiing down a snowy slope. The skier is in the center-right of the frame, leaning forward. The background is a snowy, wooded area with bare trees. The overall scene is bright and wintry.

“ Dogs have educated me with obedience, love, loyalty, they gave me company, taught me how to get right back up, they made me tougher and smarter. Dogs are in our culture, they are our family. I believe we all grew up to love dogs, they are our past, our present, and for most of us, our future.”

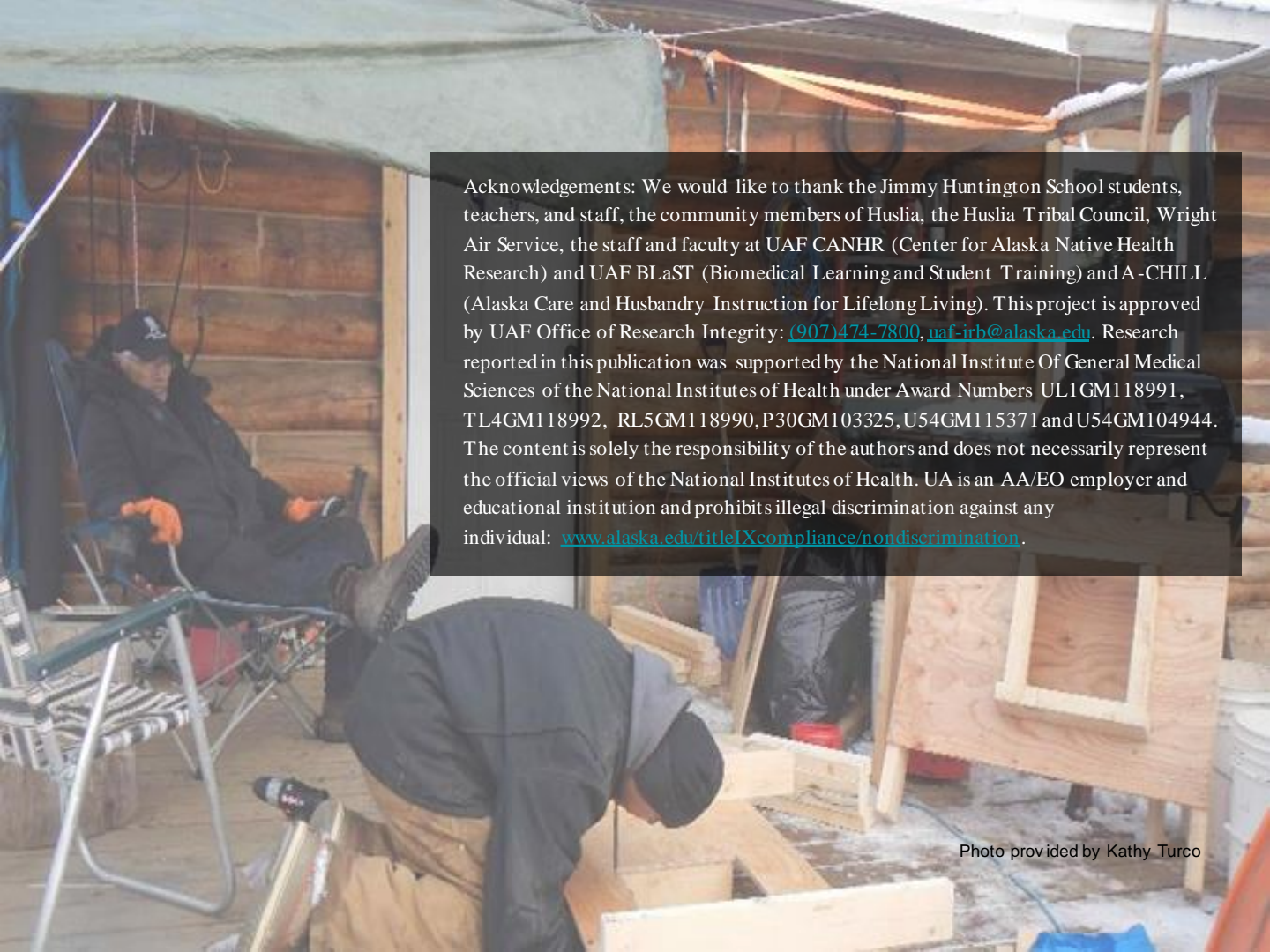
- Honoring ancestors
- Practice of Native traditions
- Spirituality
- Connections to animals
- Embodied cultural capital
- Positive future

Middle School Girl

Adult Focus Group Findings

→ Positive effects of FAYSDP on:

- Pride, self-esteem, sense of belonging and identity**
- Discipline, hard work, resilience**
- Positive future, academic and life skills**
- Relationships with adults, Elders and peers, community unity**
- Awareness of animals and nature, love and respect**



Acknowledgements: We would like to thank the Jimmy Huntington School students, teachers, and staff, the community members of Huslia, the Huslia Tribal Council, Wright Air Service, the staff and faculty at UAF CANHR (Center for Alaska Native Health Research) and UAF BLaST (Biomedical Learning and Student Training) and A-CHILL (Alaska Care and Husbandry Instruction for Lifelong Living). This project is approved by UAF Office of Research Integrity: [\(907\)474-7800](tel:9074747800), uaf-irb@alaska.edu. Research reported in this publication was supported by the National Institute Of General Medical Sciences of the National Institutes of Health under Award Numbers UL1GM118991, TL4GM118992, RL5GM118990, P30GM103325, U54GM115371 and U54GM104944. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health. UA is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/titleIXcompliance/nondiscrimination.

Photo provided by Kathy Turco



Ana Basee'

(Thank you)