



FOUR A's

ALASKAN AIDS ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION

IT'S ALL ABOUT LIFE



THE COMMON THREAD

It's All About Life

Summer 2016

Your Eyes on the Capital

Alaska Legislature gives legal protection to first responders, pharmacists

You may have noticed an amazing case of bipartisanship in Juneau earlier this spring – the legislature unanimously passed legal protection for first responders and pharmacists to distribute an overdose-reversing drug called naloxone. This ‘miracle drug’ immediately reverses the effects of overdose from opiates, saving a life in a matter of minutes.

The new law provides immunity to anyone prescribing, providing, or administering this life-saving drug, giving those who are overdosing a second chance at life. You know, just as we do at the Four A's, that there is life after addiction. Having better access to naloxone means longer lives for Alaskans in need of help.

Your support helps us educate injection drug users about how to keep themselves safe, how to access for treatment, and how to save the life of someone who is overdosing.

*Life-saving
miracle drug
now available in
Alaska to
reverse overdose.*



Naloxone is available in an intranasal spray and injectable fluid.

Donor Spotlight: Sharon Gaipman

Juneau Community Activist prioritizes HIV care and prevention

Sharon Gaipman is not only a famous personality and program director in the world of Juneau public radio; she's also a passionate community activist. Just like you, Sharon applauds the work that the Four A's does.

“It makes me sick that people get sick and nobody cares,” she said. “I had many friends die early on in the epidemic, and it was a very scary time. The good news is that it doesn't have to be that scary anymore – but only if you keep doing that good work.”

Like you, Sharon sees the positive changes the Four A's facilitates for individuals and communities all over Alaska. These changes are made possible because you and Sharon continue to financially give. Thank you for choosing to act, because *it's all about life*.



Thank you to KMPG for sponsoring this issue of The Common Thread! To learn about sponsorship opportunities, please contact lherman@alaskan aids.org

Because of You, She didn't die Alone

WALKING THE ROAD TOGETHER

You helped us mourn the loss of Edith this spring. Edith was a long-term client who livened our community with her own Southern feistiness. She was a strong woman and a fiery self-advocate who often took part in various Four A's activities. Edith began to lean heavily on us for support when her health and mental functioning began to deteriorate a few months ago. You made sure we had the resources to be there for her.

As Edith's dementia became a barrier to her quality of life, Four A's case manager Angela Dunn worked relentlessly to ensure that Edith's needs were met through daily check-ins, as well as medical and housing advocacy. Angela was there every step of the way, including the day Edith was hospitalized at Providence Hospital, and each day of her stay after that. Your gifts meant Angela could be there to hold Edith's hand, sit by her side, and comfort her as she took her last breaths.

Thanks to your support, Edith died with dignity knowing that she was loved.

New team members at the Four A's!



In the past six months, we have welcomed two new employees to the Four A's team!

The first is our new Director of Development, Laura Herman. She comes to us with over a decade of work with young people, and advocacy in the community including work at Alaska Youth Advocates

and for the Berkowitz administration.

We also have a new smiling face at the front desk! Our newest staff member, Matt Allen, joins us as our new Administrative Assistant.

Come by our Anchorage office, and say "Hello!" to either of them. We are so excited to have them on our team.

Welcome Laura & Matt!



How Your Gifts were Used in 2015:

- ◆ **91,039 pounds** of food distributed – meaning nutrition for the immune systems of our clients
- ◆ **98% of syringes distributed returned for safe disposal** – meaning fewer contaminants in our communities
- ◆ **477,787 syringes** out, **469,360 syringes** recovered

From the Executive Director, Heather Davis

I'm sure you've heard of the heroin epidemic ravaging the country and local news coverage of its effects right here in Alaska. The Four A's has been involved in many discussions statewide on how to deal with this ever-growing issue as funding resources are extremely limited.

Through your support, the Four A's has run a syringe exchange since 2007. Syringe exchange programs swap out used syringes for clean ones while providing wrap-around services such as HIV/Hepatitis C testing and referrals to drug treatment for people struggling with addiction. For decades now, evidence has overwhelmingly concluded that syringe exchange programs are effective at reducing the transmission of these infections among injection drug users (IDUs). They also lower needle-stick injuries to community members and connect IDUs to social services and treatment options.

The Four A's is extremely lucky to receive funding to support our syringe access program in Anchorage and Juneau. However, we can't keep up with the growing pace of this problem, often having to limit the number of syringes we can provide. Recently, the federal ban on funding for syringe exchange programs was lifted, but with several caveats – they will not fund syringes, but will fund program elements such as staff, facilities, and wrap-around services. While not the full answer to the problem, this is a major step for harm reduction and hopefully elimination of the stigma attached to this epidemic.

Thank you for your support of the Four A's Syringe Access Program and understanding the vital role it plays in the health of our communities and neighbors.

Heather Davis

THANK YOU, DONORS!

December 2015—March 2016

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VISIONARIES (\$100-\$499)

2 friends gallery
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About Face
Alaska Advanced Dentistry
Alaska Tattoo
Allison Brandt & Fred Dunlap
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Yolo Community Foundation-Stallard Family
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UAA Charitable Giving Campaign
United Way of SE Alaska

SUSTAINERS (up to \$99)

Alaska Starfish
Amber Leach
Anita & Clair Dalton
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Aron & Pat Wolf
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BP Exploration
Carolyn Heyman-Layne & James Layne
Chance Wayne Atwood
Colleen & Diane Heaney-Mead
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Phyllis Rhodes & Pam Richter
Rebecca Davenport
Rebecca Siegel
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Ruth Sheridan
Sevigny Studio
Sonya Harris & Andrew Johnson
Susan Moeller
Susan Williams
Tandy Leather
The Men's Wearhouse
Tricia Cushman

IN MEMORY OF

Frank Foust
Mark Sanders
Mike Bergsrud
Steven Petrivelli

IN HONOR OF

Laura Herman
Susan Orlansky & Jim Bouchard
Ted Ryberg & Bob Williams

JOIN OUR TEAM—HIRING IN SOUTHEAST

Because of the growing need for services, Four A's is adding another part-time staff person to help out James Hoagland, Coordinator of Southeast Services.

You have witnessed the amazing impact James is having, and we want to double the impact of the Four A's in the Southeast.

Do you know someone who is **reliable, compassionate, and non-judgmental** in Southeast? We'd love for them to apply! Contact Heather Davis for more info at hdavis@alaskan aids.org or go to our website under "About Us" – Career Opportunities.



DINE OUT. FIGHT AIDS. APRIL 28th

Anchorage area residents! Gather a group of your friends or family and **make your meal meaningful** by *Dining Out For Life!* The Four A's has partnered with six restaurants to support Alaskans living with HIV/AIDS, and expand HIV prevention efforts.

On Thursday, April 28th, have **lunch** at Bear Tooth Grill or dine out for **lunch or dinner** at

Table 6, Haute Quarter Grill, Torchon Bistro, Chair 5 in



Girdwood, or Pizza Man in Eagle River,

and enjoy knowing that 25-40% of all sales from these restaurants will be donated to the Four A's. Last year, many of you went out of your way to dine out, sharing time with family and friends while making an impact in Alaska. Mark your calendars, and make a reservation!



Our Mission: To be a key collaborator within the state of Alaska in the provision of supportive services to persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families and in the elimination of the transmission of HIV infection and its stigma.

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To make a secure online donation, visit:
www.AlaskanAIDS.org

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M, T, R 1:30pm - 4pm;
F 11:00am - 12:30pm



Proud to be an Agency Member of
the United Way of Anchorage