

Alaska Field Report– August 2023
Steve Horsman, Alaska Field Director
State of the Field & Forward movement:

Staffing news

- Since the March Board report, I have had several opportunities to share ministry needs with interested families and singles.
- I continue following up with Send North staff who previously expressed interest in transferring to InterAct.
- Petersons have settled into life and ministry in Palmer. Their children are all receiving the necessary educational and specialized services with a local school.
- Marcus (our long-term volunteer in maintenance) has moved to Ruby with the goal of experiencing village ministry, and teamwork, to determine the viability of this for his future ministry. Chad Peterson is currently filling Marcus' responsibilities with properties.
- Jon and Maryanna Casey have been offered a lot so they can build a home in Nulato. The Tribal Council want them to be closer to the village so they can be more involved with the community. To date they have rented a house, located more than a mile from the community. This house also has significant issues. This is a significant offer from the community and opens the door for more intentional opportunities in ministry.
- Dennis Richardson is looking for a person to eventually take over the pastoral duties at Son Rise Community Church.
- Ron Paull is looking for a person to eventually take over the pastoral duties at Copper Center Community Church.
- Tim and Larissa Zook (Fairbanks Native Church) have inquired about finding a couple to team with them and assist with their youth ministry in Fairbanks.
- There are 7 villages/urban areas that have requested InterAct to support their communities with missionaries; all have had InterAct missionaries in the past and are currently without leadership in the local churches. (see below)
- I am looking to fill the position of Alaska Assistant Field Director, as per the 5 Year Strategic Plan that I shared at our 2022 conference.

Staff Training

- George Walker, Mike Matthews and Josh Beutler had a very successful ANA consultation with Aaron and Tisha Dalton in Grayling this summer. Despite their other ministry demands, the Daltons have made significant progress with the culture acquisition.
- We continue development and implementation of both A Novel Approach and Biblical Counseling, as contextualized and applied in our various contexts.
- We are exploring the feasibility of a new training program that would be more targeted to those called to missions. This rigorous and strategic training time, with mentoring and village internship, may move us closer to meeting village requests with teams already trained and prepared to apply for membership with InterAct.

Annual Conference

- Due to the size of our staff and families, the May 30-June 3 Conference was held at Victory Bible Camp.
- Our keynote speaker was Daryl Kroeker, for which we were so thankful. Staff reported that they had been encouraged and challenged by the messages Daryl provided and the personal time that he had spent with them. Thank you, Daryl.
- Staff conference evaluations were positive.
- The 2024 Conference venue (Victory) has been reserved and planning will begin early this fall. Yet to be finalized is the spreadsheet of all expenditures related to the 2023 Conference.

Field Director Staff supervision and mentoring

- I meet weekly with Toby to review his supervision of campus maintenance and hospitality.
- I continue to provide leadership for the Copper Center team as they work through the Peterson's interim assignment to Palmer.
- I meet regularly with the DeVries as they continue growing as a family and to help further develop their missionary support ministry.

Weekly meeting teams:

- Campus Staff, led by Toby (I join occasionally)
- Campus Maintenance Team, led by Toby (Toby reports to me and I join occasionally)

Monthly meeting teams-

- Alaska Field Advisory Team
- A Team, led by Jonathan (I join occasionally)

Staff:

- Scheduling face-to-face fall meetings
- Regularly try to connect with each of our missionaries by phone
- Daltons continue with ANA consultations
- Casey's are interested in the ANA process and Biblical Counseling

Campus Services

- I have released the Campus supervision to Toby (advising as needed)
- Continuing to work with Toby and Cherie to improve Hospitality services
- Continuing to work with Toby to improve Maintenance for Campus
- Working to mentor Toby into more field ministry through administrative support. We are collaborating as we define and shape the possibilities of such a position.

Member Care

- Mark and Rose Mowery (Desert Streams Ministry) are our member care staff
- I continue working with the Mowery's to develop a plan for mentoring the DeVries
- The Mowery's helped several of our missionaries catch, process/wrap, and freeze their subsistence fish, securing their winter fish
- The Mowery's have kept in contact with most of our staff and are working on connecting with the rest

Villages/Urban Centers requesting missionaries

- Chignik Bay
 - Chignik Lagoon
 - Chignik Lake
- Shageluk (1 couple to partner with Dalton's in Grayling)
- Anvik
- Pedro Bay
- Nulato (1 couple to partner with Casey's)
- Anchorage (Son Rise church)
- Fairbanks (1 couple to assist Zooks with youth ministries through the Fairbanks Native Church)
- Copper Center (Copper Center Community Church)

Potential Villages to be developed

- Holy Cross
- Hughes
- Galena

Property-related exploration or needs

- Tanana property
 - We need to be careful how we move on this issue. There are expectations from both Tanana and Ruby communities that could cause unnecessary problems with any decisions we make regarding the property.
 - It appears we may have two pieces of property in Tanana, 1 on 1st street and Hill and 1 on 2nd and Garden street
- Grayling
 - Continued repair of Grayling house (to be completed summer 2024). Radon problem has been identified and we are researching possible solutions
- Chignik
 - Many of the property repairs have been completed.
 - The house and church have both been winterized.

LEaD Alaska

- 2022-2023 included a pilot project with two female students. They set personal goals that included full-time employment, drivers' license, counseling, and continuing discipleship. Both women did receive Learner's Permits, although not their license. They were happy that they had achieved all of their other goals for the year. We considered it a successful pilot project.
- At the April Governance Council meeting Jill proposed holding off on accepting applications for the upcoming year so that we can search for new staff to assume primary leadership of the ministry.
- We plan on several Area Bible Schools this year, Fall and Spring, through LEaD Alumni

EnGage! Alaska

- We accepted one intern this year. He was placed in Ruby, although it proved to be too difficult for him to adjust to the village context. We brought him back early and he experienced more ministry by joining me, including a trip to Pedro Bay.
- I am exploring the possibility of other staff assuming leadership of EnGage! Alaska. If we are unable to secure that staff then we will postpone the program for the coming year.
- Jill and I will be focusing our energy on the finalization and implementation of other ministry programs, which may include the in-depth training program.

Miscellaneous

- I continue to work on the 5-year field strategic plan. 81% of the plan for 2022 is complete and 31% so far for 2023.
- Jill and I continue mentoring the Petersons during this interim time in ministry and family life.
- Jill continues instructing at Alaska Bible College in their Elementary Education Teacher Education Program. She will be developing, and leading, an Advisory Network comprised of educators throughout the state.

Forward Movement

- Professional Learning (monthly sessions) will resume implementation this fall, beginning with a session on suicide intervention/response
- Counseling Center
- Development continues and we hope can be officially announced yet this year.
- Jill and I are both counseling from the "unofficial" counseling center.
- The counseling office is in use three days a week and the library is being utilized.
- Jill is nearing the conclusion of her MABC. She has an oral exam late in August, and is beginning to work on her thesis.
- Toby and Cherie continue with ACBC certification process, having completed the required reading in Phase 1.
- Jill is meeting with a staff member from Wasilla Bible Church to discuss their emerging biblical counseling ministry

Alaska Christian Educators Network (ACE Network)

- Jill announced the launch of this ministry at the Alaska Bible College mission conference in April.
- Jill is building a team of experienced educators to serve on a steering committee.
- Jill will be building a Facebook page and a web page in August and plans the first Zoom network session early in September.
- Former Alaska State Commissioner of Education, Dr. Michael Johnson, has agreed to share at the first network meeting.
- Components will include regular network meeting addressing relevant educational topic and missionary-skill to better impact the community, building networking among educators, summer educator's conference, potential to become InterAct members with fee and greater participation in our mission or as team members

Field Direction

- The Alaska Field is moving in a healthy direction. The two-fold process of ministering at the worldview level and using scripture as the means to deal with the differences between the host community's worldview and the biblical worldview is gaining more interest.
- My desire is to have a well thought out, well developed, and implemented strategy set and developing before my successor is installed so he can develop the strategy and move the plan of developing Biblically authentic churches, on the Alaska field, to the next level.

Encouragement through God's Work in Alaska

- The number of staff that are continuing to develop healthy, vibrant, and growing youth programs continues to encourage me. The future of the church is in the children of today, we must disciple them well.

Setbacks, Challenges and Discouragement

- Since we have moved our location, for Conference, from the Lazy Mountain Campus to Victory Bible Camps we need to work to raise the funds necessary to pay the extra cost. The current financial crises makes this even more important
- Getting regular visits, to staff, scheduled and completed is difficult until the hunting season is over as many of the staff use the hunting season to develop deeper relationships with community members.
- LEaD.... the search for where to go from here is a concern