

# 2017 Alaska Field Report

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## InterAct Board Meeting July 2017

**Submitted by:** Steve Horsman, Assistant Field Director, as requested by acting Field Director and Executive Director, Dale Smith

### **Executive Summary**

InterAct Ministries' Alaska desires to see reproducing disciples impacting communities throughout the state. Working in agreement with InterAct Ministries' core values, our field developed a strategic plan (ministry map) in 2016. Since that time the Map Advancement Team (MAT) has met regularly to implement this plan. The information presented in this report represents progress made, and challenges faced, over the past year of Map implementation, the current state of the field and projections for the upcoming year.

### **State of the Field- Focus Spheres**

At the 2016 Field Conference, the ministry Map was drafted. At this time the field selected four areas of priority, or spheres of ministry action. These included:

- Recruitment
- Village Ministry
- Urban Ministry
- Equipping Ministry

These spheres became the focus for field planning, development, prayer, and growth.

### **State of the Field- MAT (Map Advancement Team)**

Following the 2016 Alaska Conference and Strategic Planning Sessions, at which time our ministry/strategic map was drafted, Dale gathered a small team to begin implementation of our Map. The team became known as the "MAT." (Map Advancement Team.) Selected members were given an area of responsibility or oversight and a commitment to the team for two years. The MAT consists of: David Joseph, tasked with recruitment; John Tramm, tasked with village ministry; George and Judy Richardson, tasked with urban ministry; and Jill and I, tasked with equipping ministries. Dale (Carol) provided the leadership to this team, and in the fall the MAT selected an Executive Team (Dale, Carol, Jill, and myself) to accelerate the action items for the MAT.

The MAT began meeting twice a month for the first few months, and then on a monthly basis until January. The team generally met through technology, although we had a two-day retreat in October, met face-to-face in January, prior to the Staff Retreat and again in May, prior to the field conference. At each meeting the MAT members reported on progress in their area of responsibility, reviewed the overall goals for the ministry MAP, and developed Action Items for members, or the Executive Team, to accomplish prior to the next meeting. A Strategic Project Plan was drafted, along with SMART Goals. The Executive Team has continued to provide the infrastructure for the MAT, and has worked to develop tools as needed to meet our objectives.

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## **The Recruitment Sphere**

Recruitment has been a major thrust of our activities and represents our largest area of need and challenge on the Alaska Field. At this time, one of the foundational goals was to raise the profile of Alaska by people that know Alaska well. Prior to David's first round of recruitment trips, updated ministry profiles were drafted. Thomas has worked with several on the Alaska field to create additional presentation materials, specifically suited for the ministry in Alaska. David presented InterAct in a number of places outside of Alaska, including: Cedarville University, Moody Bible Institute, Frontier School of the Bible, Toccoa Falls, Rocky Mountain Bible School and Denver Seminary. David will also represent InterAct at Montana Bible College in late July. David had the opportunity to speak at Moody and has been intentional about developing and maintaining relationships with interested individuals. George and Judy Richardson, on their SpA, carried out additional recruitment efforts this year as they visited churches and colleges on the west coast. They represented InterAct at: Shasta Bible College and Frontier School of the Bible. At several points the MAT responded to requests and recruitment opportunities from Frontier, working to accommodate their desires and fit within our ministry objectives but eventually they postponed the Trek program to another year.

Recruitment is all about relationships, something InterAct values and practices. As individuals were presented as potential future missionaries, multiple members of the MAT connected with these people and began to build relationships. The fruit of some of these relationships resulted in three family "units" joining the Alaska Field for the 2017 Winter Retreat. The MAT reported progress on the Ministry Map (via shared PowerPoint presentation), and the recruits were able to join that session and get a sense of what InterAct Alaska is all about and where we are headed. The various points of contact with each of these recruitment possibilities has resulted in the following recruiting fruit:

Chad and Andrea Peterson (baby Matthew, new baby on the way) currently of WA State. The Petersons have purchased property in Copper Center and are tracking for a discipling ministry in that region (Village Ministry). They look forward to working collaboratively with local fellowships and to develop a ministry to young men, and to work with children. They will be working closely with emerging Alaska Native leader, Dennis Charlie (who is eager to work with them). Their application has been presented and they are in the process of scheduling interviews.

Brad and Lindsey Sturm (seven children) currently in Maryland. Brad joined the Winter Retreat and then explored potential ministry opportunities in Alaska. He spent time in Ruby, Fairbanks, Anchorage, on the Lazy Mountain Campus, and talked with Grant Funk about a partnership in McGrath. Brad has returned to Alaska on several ministry exploration trips out to McGrath, and has met with me on several occasions. He is aiming his ministry to McGrath and nearby villages and continues to express interest in joining InterAct and is heavily focused on a ministry of discipleship. (Village Ministry.)

Leroy and Sarah Miller (six children) reside in the Mat-Su Valley in Alaska. The family joined our Winter Retreat as they explored InterAct for future membership. The Millers were trained with New Tribe Missions and came to Alaska, leaving NTM, when they sensed God's call but New Tribes was no longer sending missionaries to Alaska. They are working independently with various ministries (Radio station, providing multiple village opportunities, working with Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship, the Native Musicale, and currently on a year commitment to work with North Star Bible

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Camp.) They have taught a module with the LEaD Alaska program and are keenly interested in pursuing this type of ministry. We continue to meet regularly with them, are encouraging greater involvement this year with LEaD Alaska, and anticipate them choosing to join InterAct formally when their commitment to North Star comes to a close.

We have several other upcoming possibilities for full-time service on the Alaska Field. Jamie and Beth Roderick (Davis, Faith) are still in North Carolina. Roderick's are appointees and are currently building a support team. They will be serving on the Lazy Mountain Campus, scheduled to assist with infrastructure and supporting roles (maintenance, administration, oversight of Campus.) Pray for God to raise up their team. In addition to the Rodericks, we have been pleased to host Greg and Linda Snell (MT) since the first part of June. Greg and Linda were planning to join the Canadian Field, but came to Alaska to explore ministry opportunities. At this point they are tracking for an Urban Ministry, with a focus on Anchorage and attendance at SonRise Church (Dennis & Celesta Richardson) in their future. In addition to this, we had a good conversation on July 10 with former appointees, Bryan and Brandy Watts. After leaving Alaska and returning to South Carolina, they are feeling God's pull back to a full-time ministry focus and are rethinking InterAct as their destination. They will be in dialogue with Jerry Crosby, and we will work with them to determine the best ministry fit.

This past year Rebecca Bell (former InterAct missionary in Alaska) resided on campus and provided clinical counseling assistance to the LEaD Alaska program. We had hoped that Rebecca would be interested in returning to InterAct full-time, but God has called her to a crisis ministry with Samaritan's Purse. In addition, we have maintained contact with Mike and Katie Verlee, a family of five residing in Indiana. They visited the 2013 Field Conference and express continued interest in a future ministry with InterAct, likely focused around Equipping ministries with families and children/youth. Finally, we regularly present InterAct Ministries' to the students of Alaska Bible College, where we share several formal partnerships.

### **The Village and Urban Spheres:**

Members of the MAT have held ongoing consultations with other ministry leaders as we work toward the identification of ministry needs in both contexts. Networking has been done with ChangePoint Church, particularly in the context of participation on a panel of ministry leaders gathering for three weekends over the past year. During these sessions each leader has described their particular ministry assignment, the existing ministry, the needs, and the future plans in an effort to provide ChangePoint a better grasp of the existing ministry landscape and where they can best apply their resources. These sessions have also provided InterAct Alaska a better grasp of what is being done, and what ministry opportunities exist, for us to better plan future placement of missionaries.

We have also networked with SEND North to expand our abilities to work collaboratively, as well as identify good ministry locations for InterAct to place new staff. George Richardson and I joined one of their leadership meetings and Dale invited their leadership to join some of the MAT meetings. Dale has continued connecting and networking with Director Jim Stamberg and the MAT also continues to build

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relationships with SEND North staff. Jim joined a LEaD Alaska session one day in March and interviewed Jill and I. He then produced and sent information to the SEND North staff as a way of raising awareness of LEaD Alaska and promoting it as a ministry option for their missionaries to utilize. There has also been intentional networking with Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship and Denali Native New Life Fellowship, which serves to strengthen our relationships in the urban areas of Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley, forming relational connections that will be helpful when placing missionary staff in urban ministry assignments.

Finally, we are continuing to gather much-needed data to inform choices of future missionary placement. This data collection was begun years ago and as additional information was compiled it became difficult to identify the validity of the data. An excel spreadsheet was created and is being utilized to gather all data in one location that also identifies the source of information. This spreadsheet is still in progress, but as it is completed toward the end of July, it will become the document utilized during ongoing discussions between our ministry partners to ensure accuracy, ensure best fits for future ministries of InterAct, and build more effective networking and missionary support in the future.

### **Equipping Sphere:**

We have identified four areas in which equipping is/must be taking place. These include:

- Equipping/discipling Alaska Native believers
- Equipping volunteers and short-term missionaries
- Equipping new missionary staff
- Better equipping existing missionaries

LEaD Alaska, LEadership And Discipleship, continues to be a ministry partnership with Alaska Bible College, Alaska Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church, Alaska Freedom Journey, Hearts Going Toward Wellness and InterAct. The Governance Council for LEaD Alaska meets four times annually, and has decided to try a different approach this coming year. During the fall session, LEaD Alaska staff will be facilitating several shorter modules with several goals. One goal is to allow previous alumni of the program the opportunity to co-lead some of the sessions, another goal is to raise the awareness and interest in the program, and the final goal is to build the scholarship fund. One ten-day module is currently being planned in the village of Golivin, with Elim and White Mountain leaders being selected to attend. Another module will be planned for a location in either Anchorage or on the Campus, and a third is being planned in another village on the road system. The regular program will run January through the first week of May, and programming will be abbreviated accordingly.

We are also in the discussion stages of several other discipling ministries that will utilize the Lazy Mountain Campus and extend the discipling ministries of those in the villages. We are looking forward to some Family Retreats, ministering to the whole family and addressing parenting, marriage, emotional health, and ministering to the children and youth of the families that come. We are in discussion, also, about ways we can minister to the high school youth, or young adults, by providing small retreats to equip them for

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leadership and grow them in maturity. These will all be opportunities for us to work collaboratively with local missionaries and leaders and craft meaningful events that will enhance and extend the discipling work they are already doing.

A number of initiatives are prepared or in draft form to encourage short-term missionaries or volunteers. One of these is EnGage! Alaska. Although this program has been ready for implementation, to date there have been no applicants that have come to the Alaskan Field. Additional work is being completed this summer to produce the Alaskan materials and share these with the Field to increase familiarity with how this will run in 2018. Similarly, the MAT is exploring ways to revitalize other short-term ministries that may increase recruitment opportunities. There is ongoing dialogue as we explore something like Summer Impact, in partnership with Kokrine Hills Bible Camp.

Another equipping/recruitment ministry will be launched shortly. We are in a formal partnership with Alaska Bible College for students declaring the Intercultural Ministry Stream. Currently students entering this major will have the opportunity to be mentored by InterAct staff throughout their years at Alaska Bible College and complete their weekly ministry hours in a cross-cultural environment. During the third year of their program they will intern in a cross-cultural location, and their internship will be supervised by InterAct as we mentor them through the experience. Serving the dual purpose of equipping future missionaries and having a ministry impact in locations where we have/will have missionaries serving. In May we held our first meeting with Alaska Bible College staff and students to present this in “draft” form. Although we have more adjustments to make so that this works well for everyone, we anticipate this being a valuable experience and opportunity for InterAct.

When it comes to short-termers and volunteers, we want to be intentional in equipping and maximizing opportunities with ministry work teams and volunteers. We have tested some PowerPoint presentations this summer and continue to adjust these, and will look forward to have additional material that can be utilized by all missionaries as they host summer volunteers and work teams.

One of our most urgent tasks has been to fully prepare for new missionary staff. The MAT has worked together, with Dale, to clarify the equipping expectations for new staff. Currently we expect new staff to participate the following:

- View (in Boring)
- CIT
- EnGage! Alaska experience
- Northern Ministry Training (a shared ministry opportunity in Alaska, held one week each summer for four summers to complete the training)
- Field Orientation
- Mentor Support
- Team-based approach

We are currently working to complete the Field Orientation equipping materials, as well as mentoring materials, with a plan to have these in draft by the end of August.

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Finally, we are working to increase the culture of learning among our existing missionary staff. Immediately after our Annual Conference in May the Alaska Field hosted a Training Day with Josh Yates, Son Life Ministries. The day was exceptional as we learned the discipling template from the book *4 Chair Discipling*. It was also a good networking day as we opened this up to several other ministry partners. The MAT and Executive Team are working on ways to best implement a model of ongoing professional growth among our staff and plan to begin something in the fall.

### **State of the Field-PROPERTIES**

InterAct properties in Alaska presents both challenges and incredible ministry opportunities. God has provided us with a beautiful Campus here on Lazy Mountain. We frequently hear Alaska Natives describe their love and appreciation for this location and for the way they feel welcome in this place. In addition to our Campus in Palmer, we hold properties throughout the state of Alaska. Part of the current challenge has been to clarify the status of all properties and utilize the information as we develop existing and new missionary efforts.

We have done extensive upgrading on the Lazy Mountain Campus this year. An updated system for guests has been implemented, as well as purchasing new comforters and freshening up the look of the retreat units. In addition to this we have purchased a commercial-grade dishwasher utilizing some of the funds raised by Diane Schoming and the InterAct Anchorage banquet several years ago. We continue to maintain and improve things on the Campus as funding and staffing provide the necessary resources. This past year we have utilized the services of Robert and Kay Kibbe, volunteers that have provided some part-time support in maintenance and hospitality. This summer we have hosted four work teams and completed numerous improvements and repairs on the Campus.

Properties have also been addressed in other locations. I have secured the ongoing help of Greg Joyce, SEND North, who leases the “Stump House” in Anchorage. Greg is completing minor repairs of the Anchorage duplex and the house in which he resides, when I am unavailable to do the repairs myself. I have also travelled along with a team to Grayling and met with a local elder to assess the damage to our house in the village. This is a situation still undecided but in progress. Similarly, I will be travelling to Ruby the first part of August and will be meeting with John Tramm and church leaders to discuss a collaborative approach to repair the Ruby Church.

We have created a system to better track property status, repairs, upgrades and future projects. We are working to develop a 5-year usage/upgrades for the Campus, as well as other properties in the state.

Finally, we are working to ensure that all properties are leased whenever staff or ministry programs are not utilizing them. All three properties in Anchorage are leased (InterAct staff, SEND North staff). The homes on our Campus are leased to Alaska Bible College students or staff, the Director of the YAK (Youth of Alaska ministry in Palmer,) and one unit to our volunteers and another to a single mom related to one of our

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ministry partners. The Hospitality ministry continues tracking the usage and we are increasing usage of the Campus for short-term guests and also ministry retreats.

Another exciting development in Properties has been our networking with Maranatha Bible Camp and we are now receiving significant donations from Home Depot in Anchorage. These donations range from batteries and cables, flooring, lighting, carpeting, lumber, and the most recent donation included a new door and a complete kit for a shed! This has been an incredible blessing and allowed us to remove the soiled carpet in the main kitchen and replace it with floor tiles. Although it creates an extra chore to go and pick up the supplies, we are thankful for these items that are donated. While we cannot sell any of these items, we are free to share them with anyone. Several items have been supplied to some of our missionaries for their homes. It is an unexpected blessing.

Finally, we are continuing our work on the water system at the Campus. This includes a plan to utilize the water ponds on the Campus for gardening water and to maintain usage of our water rights. Plans include an increase in our water testing and certification to better accommodate our expanding usage of the Campus. Finally, we are moving ahead slowly to determine the best approach to the water system, although the progress has been hindered by regular staff changes within the government agency with whom we must work. Hopefully, we will have some firm progress in this area over the next year.

### **State of the Field- Challenges and Opportunities:**

Our most urgent need is for new missionary staff. We are in need of both new staff and some seasoned missionary staff. This is one of our highest matters for prayer. A significant challenge is the changing environment within churches and the time frame for raising personal ministry support is becoming increasingly difficult, which extends the time for them to be cleared for placement on the field. It has been challenging to find us at another summer without an EnGage! Alaska student, despite the intentional recruiting efforts for Alaska. It has been challenging to change the culture of InterAct missionaries to enthusiastically embrace opportunities to learn together on a regular basis. It has been challenging for the MAT to take on additional ministry assignments when they are already heavily involved in ministry tasks.

But it has also been a year in which we have seen some incredible opportunities. LEaD Alaska has approximately ten monthly donors, and has been the recipient of several memorial donations. We have increased our strategic partnerships in Alaska, and look forward to increasing collaboration and networking with SEND North. The Lazy Mountain Campus is increasing in usage, and it has served the purpose of raising InterAct's profile in Alaska. We are enthusiastic about the growing partnerships with Alaska Native organizations such as Alaska Freedom Journey, and value the deep friendships that exist between these leaders and so many InterAct missionaries. Many (most) of the MAT's SMART Goals have been accomplished, or seen significant progress toward the realization of these goals.

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Finally, this has been a good year under Dale's collaborative leadership. The Field has felt supported and valued, knowing that our collective input is what is determining most courses of action. The MAT has appreciated the opportunity to serve together under Dale's leadership, knowing that we are empowered to move forward in our steps of action. Although we all share concern about where the field will be in five years, there is hope based on accomplishments over the past year.

## **State of the Field- STAFF**

- January 2017 Winter Retreat and MAP Update
- May 2017 Annual Conference

### **Staff:**

#### ***Barney Furman – Pioneer Homes, Palmer***

February 2017 submitted completed manuscript of InterAct History

#### ***Dave & Kay Henry-Fairbanks***

Discipling ministry in Fairbanks (region)

Fairbanks Native Church support

Preparing for retirement, October 1, 2017

#### ***Dave Hill-Long-term leave***

Continuing recovery from loss of wife Sally, and serious health issues

#### ***Steve & Jill Horsman-Lazy Mountain Campus, Palmer***

Assistant to Field Director, Properties, MAT, Executive to MAT

Direction of existing programs and new program development

Lazy Mountain Campus

EnGaage!

LEaD Alaska

Alaska Bible College Intercultural Ministry Stream

Networking and developing strategic partnerships

Mentoring of new staff, connecting with future staff

#### ***David & Marci Joseph-Fairbanks***

MAT

Recruitment ministry- extensive travel and networking outside of Alaska

EnGage! Alaska oversight

Fairbanks Native Church support

Discipling in Fairbanks region

Selected to be EnGage! Mentor

#### ***Virginia Maillele-Anchorage***

Limited discipling ministries

#### ***James & Shannon Miller-Fairbanks***

Support to Alaska Freedom Journey with Leadership Training Modules

Monthly/bi-monthly itinerant ministry to Grayling

Exploration ministry trips to Shageluk

Support and ministry in Fairbanks and region

#### ***Ted & Kate Mole-Soldotna***



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Seconded (Ted) to New Hope Counseling, providing services to Alaska Christian  
College students, Kenai and Soldotna communities

Involvement with Hearts Going Toward Wellness

Counseling support to LEaD Alaska

Russia itinerant ministry

### ***Shirley Morgan-Anchorage***

Discipling women in the Anchorage area

Bible studies

### ***Dennis & Celesta Richardson-Anchorage***

Pastoring SonRise Community Church (multi-ethnic)

Discipling, primarily through church

Selected to be EnGage! Mentor

### ***George & Judy Richardson-Wasilla***

Member Care for Alaska

MAT

Urban ministry strategic planning with Executive Team

Discipling ministries with long-standing relationships from multiple regions

Collaboration, insight, and leadership in all areas, as needed

### ***Alan & Linda Ross-Kenai***

Hearts Going Toward Wellness- Directors

Board of Alaska Freedom Journey

Discipling ministries in Kenai

Ongoing connections with people from Kodiak

### ***Win & Gracia Stiefel-Copper Center***

Discipling in Copper Center region

Teaching material development

Community involvement

Selected to be EnGage! Mentor

### ***John & Jen Tramm-Ruby***

Village missionaries

MAT

Church leadership with goal of side-by-side leadership with local church leaders

Community involvement

### ***Tim & Larissa Zook-Fairbanks***

Volunteer missionaries

Youth focus in Fairbanks

Fairbanks Native Church involvement and leadership

Youth outreach, retreats, mission trips