

Honorable Senator John Barrasso
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Washington D.C. 20510-6450

**Written Testimony of Gregory Peter Razo before the United States Senate Committee On
Indian Affairs, Oversight Hearing on “Strengthening Alaska Native Families:
Examining Recidivism, Reentry, and Tribal Courts In Alaska.”**

Introduction

My name is Gregory Peter Razo and I live in Anchorage, Alaska. My e-mail address is: grazo@ciri.com. I work as a Vice President at Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI), CIRI is the Alaska Native regional corporation created under the Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act of 1971 as the Regional Alaska Native Corporation for the geographic region of South-central Alaska. I am a descendant of my Yupik (Eskimo) mother and my Hispanic father. My Yupik grandmother who helped raise me in our home was Matriona Kozevnikoff . I grew up and was educated in the public school system here in Anchorage, Alaska. I graduated from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington in 1980, and I received my law degree in 1984 from the Willamette University – College of Law. I was admitted to the Alaska Bar in 1984 and the Washington State Bar in 1985. I have remained an Active attorney with the Alaska Bar for 30 years. My first job was as the law clerk to the Honorable Roy H. Madsen (the only Alaska Native to have ever served on the Alaska bench.) I was then an Assistant District Attorney in Kodiak, Alaska for 3-1/2 years and then started a general private practice of law in 1989 until I left to join CIRI in 2005. I have represented juvenile and adults in almost every conceivable situation.

Currently, I serve on the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission, which began in 2014. I am President of the Alaska Legal Services Corporation and Vice Chair of the Alaska Native Justice Center. I also serve on the Board of Directors of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) and Chair the AFN Executive Governance Committee and the Resolutions Committee as well as serving on the AFN Legislative and Litigation Committees. AFN is a state-wide membership organization founded in 1966 and active in promoting the interests of all Alaska Natives. Finally, (for these purposes) I am a member of the Alaska Department of Corrections (ADOC), Alaska Prisoner Reentry Statewide Council, co-chaired by the Governor and Lieutenant Governor charged with steering the Department of Correction’s new “Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative.” (Please see Attachment Two, of my written testimony which is an ADOC summary of the The Alaska Department of Corrections, Recidivism Reduction Plan, January 15, 2015 (Revised May 1, 2015) containing the ADOC Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative.)

Over the past two years, my employer CIRI has allowed me to focus on issues concerning justice for Alaska Natives. I began by working on the Board of the Alaska Native Justice Center (ANJC.) ANJC was established in 1993 by CIRI as a tribal non-profit to address Alaska Natives’ unmet needs regarding the Alaska civil and criminal justice system in response to the increasing disproportionate rates of victimization, incarceration and other justice-related issues impacting Alaska Natives throughout Alaska.

Under the Alaska Statute creating the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC or the Commission), ANJC was asked to appoint one commissioner which I lobbied my fellow ANJC Board members to be me. I began my service with the Commission by meeting first with its Chair (former Alaska Supreme Court Justice Alex Bryner) who wished to impress upon me and receive a commitment that I would understand, utilize, and maximize my role as the only Alaska Native member of the Commission whose recommendations might effect a population of Alaska Natives disproportionately represented in Alaska's prisons and substantially challenged by the Alaska Criminal Justice system, as a minority population. Since October of last year, the Commission has inundated each commissioner with information facts and figures to enable us to do our important work.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent my Alaska Native people, in my own, way by sharing my thoughts before the Honorable members of the Committee, their staff and the public on the important issue of "Strengthening Alaska Native Families." I hope to share some of what I know and have learned concerning "Recidivism, Reentry and Tribal Courts in our home of Alaska. I will also supplement my testimony with relevant attachments for the committee concerning actions currently underway here in Alaska.

Recidivism and Reentry

In 2013, Alaska Native people comprise 15% of the total population of the entire State. Disproportionately, Alaska Native people comprise 36% of the Alaska prison population. Overall, racial minorities are disproportionately incarcerated in Alaska prisons. Consequently, in terms of the overall prison population, Alaska Native men and women reentering society from prison are a significant and disproportional population. We have great need.

Alaska Native people may come from a community in remote rural Alaska, or their communities may be the urban communities of Alaska such as Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau. No matter, returning Alaska Native people coming out of prison are in need of "community and family support" if they hope to succeed and not reoffend. Likewise, the families and communities (the homes) of Alaska Native prisoners need support while their family members are in custody in order to be ready to receive this population and assist them in their reintegration into productive society. To achieve support towards these goals sufficient funding dollars must be budgeted for these purposes, however, the prospect of Alaska's potential "Justice Reinvestment Initiative" gives hope for improvement.

According to the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) , "Over the past decade, Alaska's unified jail and prison population has grown by 27% -- nearly three times faster than the state's resident population. Alaska currently spends more than \$330 million annually on corrections, up 50 percent since 2005. Despite these expenditures, nearly two out of every three inmates who leave Alaska's prisons return within three years."

To deal with this reality, in June 2015, Alaska's state leaders, Governor Bill Walker, Speaker of the House of Representatives Mike Chenault, Senate President Kevin Meyer and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Dana Fabe, launched the Justice Reinvestment Initiative and enlisted the

assistance of the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Crime and Justice Institute in an effort to develop fiscally sound, data-driven and evidence-based sentencing and corrections policies. Alaska with the help of the PEW-CJI team, is beginning a “comprehensive review of the Alaska criminal justice system, helping the state to develop a set of data-driven reforms to better protect public safety while controlling corrections costs. The team will work with Alaska criminal justice administrators and political leaders and leaders from various organizations over the next eight months as they examine the drivers of the state’s prison population, the policies and practices that are affecting the population and criminal justice outcomes and develop policy reforms to reduce unnecessary prison growth and improve public safety.” (Attachment One, of my written testimony for the Committee’s review is a presentation given to the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission on “Prison Drivers” in Alaska.)

At this time in Alaska, due to the declining price of oil, our State is faced with a substantial fiscal problem based upon a lack of accustomed oil revenue. This resulting “budget crisis” for the State of Alaska is forcing all Alaskans to reevaluate how state government provides services. I believe that while it is the tendency of government to suffer from inertia when faced with the prospect of change, at this particular time in Alaska, the inertia is being overcome by many new efforts underway to change the way services are provided in both rural and urban Alaska to make them effective and affordable.

The State of Alaska is coming to the realization that we imprison too many people in Alaska and we cannot afford to build new prisons to deal with the consequences of our criminal justice system and racial, social and economic challenges. In my opinion, what needs to occur and what seems to be happening is a focus on “community based justice.” Community based justice allows for the use of community organizations and structures to supplement or replace the current justice system centralized organization management of the State of Alaska.

Community based healthcare and social service has been shown to work in Alaska. Alaska Natives have successfully used their ability to achieve self-determination supported by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, Public Law 638, to develop highly successful and functional systems of support and advancement for Alaska Native people around the State. Since the passage of PL-638, Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal Non-Profit Associations have shown that they can build, operate and maintain facilities to help meet the substantial health and social needs of Alaska Natives. The use of Federal Compacting and contracting, along with Federal grant opportunities have allowed development of competent systems across Alaska in both urban and rural communities. Why can’t this system be augmented to address the legal/justice needs of Alaska Natives? The answer is that it can.

For thousands of years, Alaska Tribal nations and communities have recognized that there are no lines that exist between health/wellness, social, legal and spiritual needs. All of these needs comprise the whole person’s needs and they all intersect in a myriad of ways. In July of this year, a conference on “Medical-Legal Partnerships” was held by Alaska Legal Services Corporation. The presentation made the case that legal intervention early on in the case of a person seeking medical treatment can serve to resolve many of the problems affecting their wellness. Early legal intervention can help resolve homelessness and unfair eviction, denial of social security benefits and food assistance, employment discrimination, and the list goes on.

Law/Justice, Health/Wellness and Social Services exist in a continuum of care for Alaska Native people and everyone.

Examples of existing Alaska Native organizations partnering with Federal and State government on Reentry and Recidivism issues affecting Alaska Natives:

Southcentral Foundation (SCF)

SCF is an Alaska Native-owned, nonprofit health care organization, founded by CIRI, serving 65,000 Alaska Native and American Indian customer/owners in Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and the 55 rural villages that make up the Anchorage Service Unit. SCF's mission is: *Working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.*

Southcentral Foundation surveyed its community and identified three top needs; domestic violence, child abuse, and child neglect. SCF created the following corporate objective **to reduce the rate of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect.** This objective has been incorporated in work initiatives throughout SCF's 80 programs.

SCF's Family Wellness Warriors Initiative (FWWI) is one of the programs developed as a response to these serious threats to the health and wellness:

- the increasing prevalence of family violence threatening the essential core of Alaska Native cultures, and
- the usual way of responding by increasing law enforcement and child protection efforts ex post facto was aggravating, not helping, the problem by further disrupting families when parents were sent to prison and children to foster care – often with non-Native families.

The FWWI is addressing the statewide challenges of domestic violence, sexual violence, child maltreatment and trauma faced by Alaska Native people in communities throughout the state. It is founded on evidence-based and promising culturally appropriate practices and incorporates many aspects of cutting-edge, trauma-focused therapeutic practices. The approach used includes intensive education and training, leadership development, parent education, offender rehabilitation, and family and community support.

A Case for Reentry Support

According to the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Task Force's *The Five-year Prisoner Reentry Strategic Plan, 2011-2016*, Alaska experienced considerable growth in its prison populations during the last decade. In 2009, for the first time in 38 years, 26 states successfully reduced their prison populations. Alaska was not among them. In marked contrast, Alaska has the 11th fastest prison population growth rate in the United States. From 1982- 2007, Alaska experienced a 152 percent increase in its prison population. In 2009, 1 in 36 Alaskans were under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Department of Corrections, up from 1 in 90 Alaskans in 1982.

The disproportionate number of Alaska Native people incarcerated in Alaska's prisons is deeply disturbing. While Alaska Native people make up about 15 percent of the state's population, they constitute about 36 percent of all prisoners in custody. Moreover, Alaska Native people comprise 50.8 percent of all prisoners in custody for sex offenses.

In a 2007 Alaska Judicial Council Study, *Criminal Recidivism in Alaska* reported that **66 percent of released prisoners are back in custody within three years of release**. Most of them, according to the study, return in the first six months. The fact that the recidivism rate is as high as it is clearly demonstrates that additional efforts and approaches must be made to cause a reduction in this rate.

Given the disparate number of Alaska Native individuals in custody, it seems clear that a culturally appropriate model of reentry care using Alaska Native strengths and focusing on the family and community is needed. Data supports both the need for an increase in culturally appropriate interventions and the adoption of more effective reentry services. The Alaska Natives Commission 1992 Annual Report found, "There is a prevalent misunderstanding or misconception on the part of many non-Natives that only by administering "western justice" can there be justice, and this perspective is ultimately harmful to the pursuit of alternative dispute resolution strategies at the village level." One need only remember that Alaska Native people had systems in place for millennia before introduction of the western system.

Challenges. Alaska has a unified prison system in which all facilities are funded by the Alaska Department of Corrections (ADOC). Its Anchorage facility, the Anchorage Correctional Complex (ACC), combines a jail and pre-trial facility for the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) - a combined city - county government. Thus, there are three major constituencies with significant stakes in this project - the State of Alaska, MOA, and the Alaska Native community. Each has a unique perception and stake in this issue.

The State of Alaska is concerned about the budget aspects because it bears the costs of all people in the corrections system including those incarcerated for any reason. It also pays for the court system and the cost of prosecuting felonies in Anchorage. Since most of the state's revenues come from oil, the precipitous plunge in oil prices has created one of the worst budget deficits in the nation and the legislature is desperate to save any money it can. Since the ADOC budget and number of people incarcerated has been increasing faster than major crime and the population, the legislature created a commissioner level task force to examine the issues and make recommendations. The fact that the number of people incarcerated was predicted to continue growing by 3%/year and, in spite of just opening a new \$250 million correctional center, ADOC was at 101% of its capacity. Among the findings and recommendations of that group were

- Finding - recidivism at 63.54% was highest among youthful offenders, Alaska Natives, and misdemeanants
- Finding - unsentenced individuals account for ~40% of ADOC's population at any time
- Finding - felony convictions for non-violent crimes and parole violations were among the top 4 factors driving prison population growth
- Recommendation - **partner with Alaska Native entities**
- Recommendation - improve and expand collaborations among stakeholders

For its part, MOA's motivation is focused on public safety. A slew of headline making news about recent violence and homicides has created public perception that the city is not safe. This has become a major issue in the upcoming election and a public forum was held recently. As a result, every candidate pledged to address it. While perception does not equate to fact, the widespread perception and revelations that the Anchorage Police Department had a huge number of vacancies has made the topic one the public is demanding be addressed. In a tight budget as well, MOA is motivated because it pays for prosecution of all non-felony crimes within the jurisdiction including DUI and domestic violence.

Finally, SCF is motivated because it, as a major Native organization, wants to eliminate the disparate impact crime and incarceration is having on wellness in the Native community. It recognizes that the high proportion of Alaska Natives at ACC is 2.43 times higher compared to the general population – a disparity even worse than the 1.89 times higher for all ADOC prisons. Given that incarceration appears to have no positive and lots of negative impacts the Native community, SCF is willing to assume a leadership role, as it did against family violence, to find better ways to address these issues.

A Model for Reentry

Through FWWI, a more culturally resonant reentry support is being provided to the inmates of the Transformational Living Community (TLC) at both the Palmer Correctional Facility and the Hiland Mountain Correctional Facility. Although FWWI's target population is Alaska Native/American Indian inmates, all TLC program participants are encouraged to take part, regardless of ethnicity.

This model was developed over decades of working through Alaska Native people. The primary focus of this approach is to provide a safe place for offenders, regardless of their crime, to heal from their own past trauma and enable them to explore strategies in order to change their thinking patterns and future behavior. Its aim is to reduce recidivism rates among participants in the reentry program, thus making our communities safer.

The reentry component of FWWI addresses the mental, emotional and spiritual health needs of high-risk offenders in the process of reentry with the goal to provide them with tools for developing safe, healthy relationships and reducing recidivism. Reentry support services are designed for those who are exhibiting mental health problems, most associated with trauma, that include depression or other mood disorders, relationship problems, PTSD, anxiety disorders and substance-use disorders.

Components of the model include:

- An SCF employee working full time in the prison with TLC inmates, providing monthly reports.
- SCF employees attending TLC graduations and tracking TLC graduates whereabouts and contact activity.

- Pre-release meetings (and a flyer) to go over post-release support options and to prepare for reentry orientation.
- Same-day release orientation providing information and resource opportunities including services and support materials. During the orientation, TLC graduates meet with FWWI's clinical team to discuss learning circle support services (more than 65 weekly groups available) as part of their relapse prevention plan. Graduates who attend the orientation within two weeks post-release receive a generous care package.

Key Concepts of the Reentry Model

Key concepts of this Reentry Model focus on connecting Alaska Native people to their culture and using methods they can relate to through the following trainings:

- 1) Providing a five-day Arrigah House (AH), pre-release, intensive rehabilitation experience to address the effects of trauma both in harm caused and harm received;
- 2) Providing transitional services that will follow inmates pre-release and post-release;
- 3) Providing a five-day intensive Beauty for Ashes (BFA) training for reentry participants and family, as appropriate;
- 4) Providing advanced leadership opportunities through a five-day intensive Advanced Leader Education and Training (ALET) for reentry participants who desire to continue their positive growth pattern through opportunities to give back to their community and become part of the solution; and
- 5) Providing follow-up learning circles skill building groups to reentry participants and their families.

Arrigah House (AH): This 40-hour training has been offered at the Palmer Correctional TLC program since 2004 and the Hiland Mountain's TLC program since 2012. This five-day intensive cultural model of care addresses cross generational trauma due to domestic violence, sexual abuse and child neglect. AH will offer training and healing opportunities to TLC inmates, ideally within six months prior to their release. Providing this training addresses environmental issues that may have been instrumental in the development of maladaptive behaviors. In essence, this will aim to improve the level of support and ultimately minimize the chance of relapse or a return to unhealthy coping techniques.

Beauty for Ashes (BFA): This five-day, 50-hour intensive cultural model of care addresses cross generational trauma stemming from family violence, sexual abuse and child maltreatment. BFA will offer post-release training for TLC graduates who have been identified as being at-risk for reoffending. The goal of this training is to reduce the rate of recurring incidents, to equip participants with the skills and tools they need to successfully address and reverse unhealthy coping, thinking and behavior, restore their families, reunite with their children, and to end the cycle of harm. This training opportunity will be open to family members of program participants who qualify through the screening process.

Advanced Leader Education and Training (ALET): FWWI adheres to a service versus responsibility model in its reentry efforts. There is an expectation that those who have successfully completed the reentry process must be part of helping others who may have similar

struggles or may be at-risk for causing harm. This effort is vital and encourages both accountability and sustainability. ALET is a five-day, 40-hour workshop for those who wish to become a group facilitator and presenter. This workshop provides the necessary tools and techniques to facilitate small groups in alignment with FWWI's established practices. It also provides an introduction to public speaking strategies designed to break the silence of violence and abuse through teaching topics and sharing personal stories.

Additional SCF resources and provisions

Other support from SCF includes a full range of behavioral and primary care services to include Health Education classes. Key highlights of those services include:

Learning circle follow-ups: Learning circles offer a variety of weekly educational and supportive small groups through the SCF Behavioral Services Division, Medical Services Health Education Department as well as FWWI that address a range of issues including anger, anxiety, healthy boundaries, marital dynamics in healthy relationships, parenting issues, conflict resolution, role playing, modeling, reentry support, veteran support, family wellness principles and other identified and relatable needs.

The ***Four Directions*** outpatient program provides substance abuse and dual diagnosis assessments, substance abuse and mental health counseling, group counseling for men, women and children. The program addresses a range of topics including: parenting, domestic violence, anger, relationships, symptom management, anxiety and depression, relapse prevention, community recovery skills, life skills and health and wellness. Additional services offered at Four Directions include: early recovery skills, relapse prevention, family education, seeking safety, healthy relationships, social support/aftercare, urinalysis testing and 12-step traditional values.

Quyana Clubhouse is a safe, welcoming place for Alaska Native adults with severe and persistent mental illness. The day program blends medical services with Alaska Native tradition and structure in a nurturing environment. The Quyana Clubhouse program offers case management, medication management, primary care services, tobacco cessation programs and more.

Outcome measures and program evaluation

SCF conducts regular extensive evaluations of all inmates at the Palmer Correctional and Hiland Mountain Transitional Living Community (TLC) program who attend an Arrigah House while in the prison system as well as any former inmate who attends one of FWWI's trainings. TLC has a 28% recidivism rate. Without TLC inmates show 63.5% recidivism.

To obtain quantitative data, a multi-dimensional evaluation survey is utilized which aligns with identified program goals and objectives. The instrument incorporates standardized scales and subscales which specifically evaluate identified domains of personal effect, protective factors and participant skills development. Statistically significant positive change has been evidenced among participants with reductions in substance abuse, difficulty controlling anger and the risk of purposeful harm or threat to harm. Men report a stronger degree of positive change in

depression, substance abuse, anger control and self-esteem, maintained over time. Of program participants, 74.98 percent report positive change in trauma symptomology. Gender comparisons indicate that positive change is significant among both men and women ($p < 0.01$ and $p = 0.01$, respectively).

Summary

Alaska's statistics continue to reflect the extent to which additional culturally appropriate reentry services are needed. A supportive and cooperative network that offers rehabilitation and reentry services pre-, mid- and post-release is critical to the success of each program participant and ultimately the reduction of recidivism rates for those who participate. Southcentral Foundation's 80 programs are part of the solution.

Contact Information

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Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)

Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) stands for people, partnership and potential. CITIC is a tribal nonprofit organization established by CIRI in 1983 designed for helping Alaska Native and American Indian people residing in the Cook Inlet Region of south-central Alaska reach their full potential. CITC believes that when we work together, we can help each other develop our strengths and talents, and become successful and self-sufficient individuals, families and communities.

Since its inception in 1983, CITC has grown from a fledgling, grass-roots operation with only three employees, to one of the nation's preeminent culturally responsive social-service organizations serving more than 12,000 people annually, and employing nearly 250 passionate and caring individuals.

CITC offers its Participants an array of support services includes education, employment and training services, workforce development, family preservation, and support for individuals recovering from addiction and substance abuse.

Chanlyut

Administered by Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Chanlyut is a two-year residential rehabilitation program that offers a new beginning for men who want to become productive members of society and turn around self-destructive patterns in their lives. Chanlyut provides a structured, yet self-governed path for participants to overcome addiction, homelessness, and/or reentering society after incarceration.

Chanlyut residents pay no fees to enter the program, and receive food, clothing, education and all other services at no cost. Chanlyut operates several resident-run small businesses that serve as

vocational training schools and provide participants with marketable skills upon graduation from the program. Chanlyut residents receive no pay for their work, and all revenues go directly back into Chanlyut's programs and services, with more than 43% of Chanlyut operating costs generated through Chanlyut enterprises.

Chanlyut was founded in Anchorage in 2007, and is replication of the successful Delancey Street Foundation in San Francisco. Chanlyut is the only program of its kind in the State of Alaska, and provides an important alternative to more conventional services that have not been successful for a certain segment of the population.

In a community with insufficient options for men returning from incarceration, substance abuse treatment, or the streets, Chanlyut fills a critical gap in job-skills development that lead to self-sufficiency.

Chanlyut's Core Values

Chanlyut, is a program of Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC) , it is a two-year residential rehabilitation program where the residents live, work and learn together with the ultimate goal of returning to society as productive citizens. CITC offers its services to Chanlyut participants at no cost to them, their families or the state. All revenue generated through the program's business-training ventures is used to support the program and help keep its doors open to serve others in the future.

Chanlyut is a replica of the Delancey Street Foundation, and has no professional staff of psychologists, psychiatrists or counselors, as therapy depends upon a rigorous peer-to-peer mentoring structure. Chanlyut has an **"each one, teach one"** philosophy similar to what happens in families, where the members are dependent upon one another as they grow to develop an identity and independence. In turn, this allows participants to ease into society on their own, while still maintaining a sense of continuity and connection with the family.

Chanlyut's self-empowerment process of growth, change and interdependence teaches residents to rely on their own strengths, and help one another develop. The program stresses that: Individuals must take responsibility for their own actions to create viable options for their future. Chanlyut prepares its residents to live and work effectively as leaders, while having a positive influence in the community.

Chanlyut focuses on traditional values, including:

1. integrity, self-esteem, and a purpose and direction in life
2. work ethic, the importance of self-reliance, and the dignity of earning one's own
3. helping others as a central means to improve self-esteem

Participants gain vocational, educational and social skills through a consistent training and education, which begins as soon as a participant enters the program. Chanlyut's current

vocational/training-enterprises include a neighborhood diner, wholesale foods and janitorial services.

Participants who faced previous challenges of gaining or keeping steady employment, are now individuals who have successfully launched and managed these business ventures that have become an important source of working revenue for the program.

Chanlyut's educational training begins on a participant's first day as they become involved in a variety of daily workgroups that are designed to improve their work habits, reading skills, vocabulary, comprehension and public speaking abilities. During these sessions, each resident speaks for a few minutes on a specific subject being discussed by the group. This way, participants are exposed to the subject matter being discussed, as well as the experience of group speaking, and connecting an idea or theory to a personal experience.

If not already a high school graduate, each resident is expected to have earned a GED before graduating from the program.

Chanlyut Program Phases

Chanlyut's vocational training is accomplished in three phases:

The first is in-house training, where residents are assigned duties within the residential facility, with the focus being learning basic skills, developing good work habits and establishing self-discipline. When residents have mastered this first level, they begin testing these skills in a variety of jobs with Chanlyut businesses.

Depending on program progress, residents are eligible for Academy at 14 months, during which they may engage in vocational training outside of Chanlyut social enterprises. After a participant has achieved a desired level of competence, and has at least 20 months in the program, they are eligible to move on to the third vocational phase of getting a job with a commercial business in the community, where they must work successfully during the last four months prior to graduation. Learning how to manage one's own personal finances is a key component of this phase, as residents begin to earn their first pay since entering the program.

Chanlyut residents are taught to work for everything they get, so they appreciate what they have even more. Every incentive—from moving from a crowded bunk-bed style dorm into a semi-private room; or earning a promotion in one's job; or accepting responsibility one's decisions—must be earned through self-discipline, hard work and caring for others as well as one's self. Experience shows the more privileges residents earn, the more responsibilities they are willing to receive, and the harder they work.

The final area of education in Chanlyut is social training where residents are taught to give something back through community service. Chanlyut residents volunteer for Boys & Girls Club, shoveling snow, setting up for events, caring for a city park they have adopted, helping with fundraisers and helping with neighborhood cleanup.

Participants are encouraged to vote if they are so eligible.

One of the central areas of education in program is interpersonal relationships, as the majority of residents have a very difficult time interacting with others. This learning happens constantly through communal living and formal program structure. Because residents live and work together, they must learn diplomacy skills, and how to accept authority and dispense it to others.

Through a group dynamic called "Groups and Games," emphasis is not on an individual's problems, but on his style of relating to others. During these group sessions, residents explore their feelings for one another, and their actions and behaviors toward one another in two-hour sessions twice a week. They learn how the impact of what they say can be brought into greater harmony with what they hope to communicate to others.

These groups also allow residents the opportunity to vent their tensions productively and in a supportive environment. The games also help to instill a sense of humor about one's self, one's life, and one's problems.

While Chanlyut residents make a minimum two-year commitment to the program, Chanlyut does encourage some residents to stay longer to serve as role models for other participants, thereby strengthening each resident's resolve to succeed.

Residents are taught to demand of themselves that they make restitution to society. As a result, society may offer them another chance to be productive citizens in the community, enabling them to foster their own self-sufficiency, while living the values Chanlyut teaches and that hold our society together.

Alaska Native Justice Center (ANJC)

ANJC's Mission is to promote justice through culturally based advocacy, prevention and intervention initiatives to restore dignity, respect and humanity to all Alaska Natives. ANJC work to integrate Alaskan Native culturally based advocacy programs and intervention initiatives necessary to assist in the resolution of legal circumstances such as divorce, child custody, domestic violence/sexual assault, minor in consuming violations and adult prisoner reentry.

The Adult Reentry Program involves the use of services targeted at promoting the effective reintegration of offenders back to communities upon release. Reentry programming, which involves a comprehensive case management approach, is intended to assist offenders in acquiring positive life skills necessary to succeed in the community. The Alaska Native Justice Center offers both pre- and post-release services for participants enrolled in six-month program.

Pre-Release Services Include: Participant Orientation, Individualized Case Management, Individualized Transition Planning, Employment and Workforce Assistance, Housing Assistance, and Transportation Vouchers.

The Adult Re-entry Program currently works in the Palmer Correctional Center & Hiland Mountain Correctional Center providing pre-release services.

Post-Release Services Include: Participant Orientation, Individualized Case Management, Moral Recognition Therapy®, Transitional Mentor & Peer-to-Peer Support Group(s), Resources for alcohol and other drug rehabilitation, Vocational Training and Work Program Assistance, Housing Assistance, Transportation & Bus Vouchers, and Community Service Participation.

The Adult Reentry Program assists participants in developing greater self-esteem, responsible attitudes, positive new habits and conditioning to successfully transition into the community and reduce the rate of re-offending. This program is intended for individuals who are 180 days pre- and post-release in the Municipality of Anchorage service area.

The ANJC's Adult Reentry Program funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Second Chance Act (SCA) grant works in collaboration with the State of Alaska Department of Corrections (SOA DOC) to guide participants in proactively addressing the barriers they may face during the transition from prison back into the community.

Partners for Progress (PFP)

PFP operates a Walk In Reentry Center in downtown Anchorage. PFP sees 40-60 people per day and provides Employment and Job Readiness assistance, housing and other support services PFP also refers to ANJC and other providers for more specialized treatment and support services. PFP sees a high number of Alaska Natives who are stuck in Anchorage because they cannot go home due to probation/parole treatment requirements. Many of these Alaska Natives are from rural Alaska and they have never lived in an urban setting or held an urban job. They are used to fishing and subsisting, but due to legal requirements, they are now forced to 'Reenter', in Anchorage. PFP has responded to some of these needs by developing a Native Men's Group that meets weekly at the Reentry Center. A successful Native Elder leads this group. His job is to help other Native men get around Anchorage, apply for social security and other assistance and use our computer lab.

PFP wants to see Telemedicine used to provide Treatment for those on Parole and Probation so people can go home to their villages. The infrastructure is in place for Telemedicine/telehealth, why not use it for Mental Health and treatment services such as support meetings and sex offender treatment? Let's utilize currently existing services and structures to meet the complementary needs of the justice system.

Partners For Progress continues to collaborate with many other organizations in Anchorage and around the state to improve reentry services, reduce recidivism and increase restorative justice programs for our most disadvantaged.

For more information about Partners For Progress Adult Reentry Program, please contact:

Doreen Schenkenberger
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Partners For Progress

Conclusion:

Investment and Justice reinvestment in community based justice will result in a more successful outcome for Alaska Natives and their communities as incarcerated Alaska Natives reenter their communities, be they urban and commercial, or rural and traditional communities. The use of partnership with Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal non-profit associations can achieve self-determination and success in meeting Alaska Native Justice need. Justice needs are part of a continuum that also includes health/wellness and social services.

After a career of 21 years of practicing law in Kodiak, Alaska, both prosecuting and defending every manner of human difficulty, I testify that each person the justice system brought to court had more than just a "legal" need. A team of services was always necessary to address any given situation and the problem presented to the Alaska Justice system was never addressed solely by incarceration.

Alaska Natives have used Federal statutory authority to increase their self-determination, improve the provision of health and wellness services and begun to address the social needs of our people. Reentry and recidivism programs, Justice programs and Tribal courts require sustainable funding and they work best when compacted or contracted for by government to allow self determination by the Alaska Native People.

Community based justice in Alaska can succeed.



Gregory P. Razo