

ALASKA FELLOWS PROGRAM SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

A final hello from the 2020-2021 cohort of Alaska Fellows!

Across sites, work projects have been finalized, bucket list adventures have been checked off, and fellows are looking ahead to new experiences on the horizon.



Whether we're staying in Alaska or moving away, we are all grateful for the opportunities we've had to live, explore, and work in our Alaska communities. Thank you to all the people and places who have touched our fellowship experiences over the past year.

ANCHORAGE SPOTLIGHTS

Maleah Wenzel - Child Abuse Prevention Month efforts were in full swing in April at the Alaska Children's Trust (ACT). As the Community Resilience Fellow, Maleah has led ACT Prevention Month efforts, including creating a series of parent-focused webinars, assisting with ACT's outreach and social media campaign, completing a cross-Alaska promotional material mail-out, and obtaining an official declaration from Governor Dunleavy on Child Abuse Prevention Month. Leading Prevention Month has taught Maleah many valuable lessons, including how to reach out for help, prioritize, and accept the limits of her own capacity. Ending child abuse is too big of an endeavor to take on alone, but Child Abuse Prevention Month helps inspire individuals and organizations around the state to do their part.

Julia Ver Voort - Julia's biggest focus throughout the fellowship has been recruiting teams for Launch Alaska's Tech Deployment Track accelerator program. She has spent the past seven months researching, contacting, and recruiting startups who are ready to dive into the Alaskan clean technology market. More recently, Julia has been helping the Launch Alaska team evaluate applicants and choose the next cohort of companies decarbonizing and mitigating the impacts of climate change in Alaska! She has been humbled to play a role in Alaska's energy transition as a part of the Launch Alaska team.



4 glaciers visited
3 Northern Lights sightings
3,000 miles on the program cars
21 logs remaining in the Virginia Court garage
24 delicious Sunday dinners (and brunches)

JUNEAU SPOTLIGHTS

Ruby Steedle - Ruby grew up in Juneau, but from the first time she met her roommates at the airport, the fellowship taught her to see her community and home state through new eyes. Ruby had spent plenty of time looking at Mt. Juneau from her childhood bedroom, but Kat's exclamation of "Mountains!" helped her appreciate them in a new light. Ruby's position at the Alaska Council of School Administrators helped her understand and appreciate Alaska in ways she couldn't before. The core of her job is to facilitate participation via members — Alaska's K-12 superintendents and principals — in advocacy for public education in the Legislature. Ruby learned what Alaskan schools and communities look like in places across the state, from Chevak to Arctic Village. Post-fellowship, Ruby will be staying on board at ACSA to wrap up their advocacy during the legislative session, but it is bittersweet saying goodbye to Kate, Isabelle, Keira, Sasha, and Kat and the bright new view of Juneau they've given her.

Sasha Keenan - As the Communications Specialist Fellow at Sealaska, some of Sasha's most exciting projects have unfolded on social media — from a Women's Week series featuring inspiring female shareholders, to a 'Shop Native-owned' campaign to highlight businesses and artists, to a month-long wellness challenge to promote physical, mental, traditional, and community wellness. She looks forward to continuing at Sealaska as a Marketing Coordinator post-fellowship.



6 specialty birthday cakes consumed (made with love by Ruby)

32 trails hiked

119 games of Illimat played

11 dogs dogsat

SITKA SPOTLIGHTS

Maddie Tebbe - Over the past few months, Maddie has been focused on designing and producing a digital Meetings & Conventions Guide for event planners looking to host events in Sitka. Her work days have been spent drafting page layouts, writing, editing, and re-writing articles, and planning photo shoots around town. Maddie has thoroughly enjoyed seeing her project come together piece by piece with the help of her team and the Sitka community.



186 songs to clean to on Sunday
60 cold-water dips
20 Campfire Kitchen pizzas
15 times stalling our new truck
(from 1990)
3 Northern Lights sightings!

Madison Kennedy: As the Internship and Work Experience Fellow, Madison spent this year coordinating internships for the students at Mt. Edgecumbe High School. Now that students are finishing their internships, her biggest project has been developing a system for students to receive credit for their internships. Using a combination of student reflections and supervisor evaluations, Madison created a plan for students to receive elective credit to help them progress toward graduation. She is excited to see how the future fellow will expand the MEHS Internship Program for its amazing students!

Grace Lavelle - This spring, Grace has supported MEHS seniors as they solidify postsecondary plans while also preparing for graduation. Getting to know MEHS students has been the best part of her year, and seeing students take steps to plan their futures is enthralling. Her fellowship has reaffirmed her desire to work in the K-12 space while promoting access to higher education and will begin working as a member of the K-12 Outreach and Admissions team at the University of Colorado Denver post-fellowship.

FELLOWSHIP REFLECTIONS

We asked fellows to share reflections on their Alaska Fellows Program experience. Here are a few of their poems, images, and thoughts.

Shenanigan: silly or high-spirited behavior; mischief.

Shenanigang: Alaska Fellows obsessed with silly or high-spirited behavior and mischief.



Living on the porch
Working with the best students
Trying all the 'za

Out hiking again
Noticing the smaller things
That I used to miss

I do not know how
I used to wear any shoes
Besides Xtratufs

Transformative year
Dogs — didn't like 'em one bit
Now, they're kinda nice

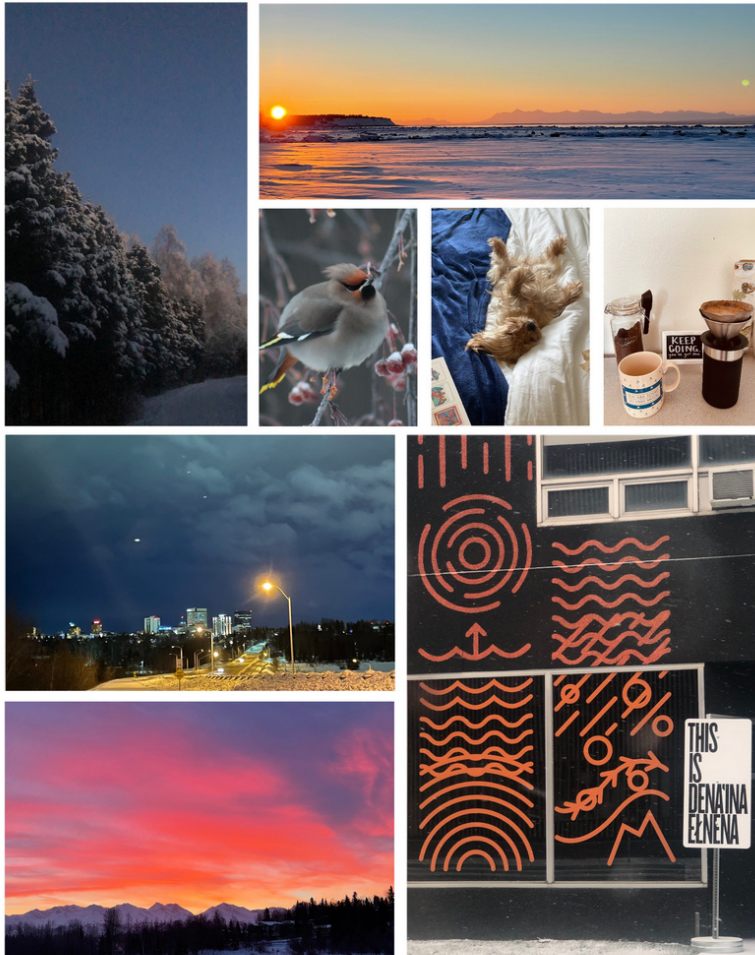


Housesitting for a weekend in Sitka with Madison, Amy, Maddie, Tasha, and Grace.



The docks right outside of program housing in downtown Juneau where you can find us most days after work, especially as days get longer and the sun lingers before dipping below the line of mountains on Douglas Island.

Winter Wonderland



Eight months of being cooped up in my sacred little space; Commuting from bed to desk & back to bed again; Too little daylight & too much coffee to make up for it; Hours turned into days spent on Zoom calls; Minutes spent glancing over at my dog sprawled out on my bed, wishing we could switch lives even just for a day. A ritual walk on the coastal trail to breathe in the beauty of Mt. Susitna & be grounded by her; Regular drives to nowhere & songs sung along the way; Many moose sightings & bowls of moose soup; Thousands of Bohemian Waxwings singing & feeding on every last crabapple in our backyard; A winter that won't leave and a spring that gets a kick out of teasing us. Eight months to slow down & reflect; listen & learn; breathe & grow into my role within Just Transition.

-Alex Redford



POST-FELLOWSHIP PLANS

After gaining hands-on experience with a key element of Alaska's infrastructure during her fellowship, **Kate (JNU)** will head to the Chugach National Forest to work as a Trails Resource Assistant with the US Forest Service. In her role, she will envision the future of the Historic Iditarod Trail in Southcentral Alaska. Trail Mix has provided Kate with a solid foundation for imagining a land manager's role in creating inclusive and accessible outdoor spaces. She is excited to take on a new challenge on the beautiful Kenai Peninsula in her home state.

Madison Kennedy (SIT) plans to attend graduate school in Philadelphia, PA. Inspired by her time at Mt. Edgecumbe High School, she is pursuing an M.S.Ed in Interdisciplinary Studies in Human Development to continue exploring the intersections of psychology and education. She hopes to pursue a career in Educational & Developmental Psychology and can't thank MEHS enough for showing her that her future lies in education.

Kate Silber (ANC) has loved learning about Anchorage's unique urban planning context from working at Cook Inlet Housing Authority. She will continue growing her career as a Land Use Planner at DOWL, a firm working in engineering, planning, and surveying at their Anchorage office! She is excited for many outdoor adventures during her first summer in Alaska.

Tasha (SIT) will be moving back to her hometown of Chugiak. She'll be a research professional at the University of Alaska Center for Human Development. Her research will pertain to the National Core Indicators Project and the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association Alzheimer's Disease Program Initiative. Reach out to her if you'll be in the Anchorage bowl!

After her fellowship, **Amy (SIT)** is excited to go up to mainland Alaska to work as a natural resources technician conducting remote ecology fieldwork across the Interior and Western Alaska. She's looking forward to seeing more of Alaska, mosquitoes, and midnight sun.

Julia and Maleah (ANC) will road trip from Anchorage to Seattle, WA! They've been prepping their respective vehicles (a Subaru Outback equipped with a sturdy cargo box and a solar-outfitted Ford camper van) and are planning logistics and activities for the road. Upon arrival down south, Julia is excited to use the skills she learned at Launch Alaska to continue working in entrepreneurship and hopes to one day find herself back in Anchorage. Maleah is certain she'll be back in her beloved home state soon, too. For now, they are both beyond grateful for the fellowship experience and looking forward to the bittersweet moment of hitting the road.

Lev Greenstein's (ANC) post-fellowship plans are more fellowship! Since he arrived in Alaska at the end of December, he'll continue at Alaska Humanities Forum through the summer and hopefully stay beyond his last day with the organization. The city, opportunity, and community in Anchorage has really affected where Lev hopes to find himself come next fall. If not at AKHF, the non-profit sector in Alaska is a pretty connective space!

