

# ALASKA FELLOWS PROGRAM WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the Alaska Fellows! Our days up here are slowly but surely growing longer as we emerge from the depths of winter and look forward to warmer, brighter days ahead.



As a refresher, the Alaska Fellows Program (AFP) is a fall-to-spring residential fellowship that pairs young professionals with non-profit or public sector organizations in Anchorage, Juneau, and Sitka. Fellows live in community and work closely with professional mentors in their host organizations.

This winter, fellows have kept busy at work, in our communities, and within our homes. From participating in a community spelling bee to watching the Northern Lights, fellows have been making the most of their time.



# ANCHORAGE AT WORK



**Meet Lev Greenstein!** A new addition to the Anchorage cohort, Lev is a recent graduate from Haverford College with a major in anthropology, minors in Spanish and psychology, and a concentration in Peace, Justice, and Human Rights. A newcomer to Alaska, he hails from Philadelphia and has expressed excessive enthusiasm for the lagoon ice skating accessible in his new backyard. His work with Alaska Humanities Forum has offered space to practice facilitation, conversation design, and outreach. He is thrilled to be in the position to learn, support, and grow in the company of like-hearted fellows.



**Mackenzie's fellowship at the Anchorage Mayor's office** has largely consisted of helping with Anchorage's COVID-19 response. She responds to inquiries from the public and directs people to resources that can help them. It has been a pretty turbulent year in the Mayor's office, but Mac has still gotten to connect well with the mayoral staff and carve out a significant role in the important work they're doing. She's excited to get to know the new mayor better and to keep learning more about the city of Anchorage.



**Maleah's fellowship at the Alaska Children's Trust** affords Maleah the opportunity to apply her major in Psychology with a focus in Childhood Trauma as she works to ensure that Alaska's children and families receive the support they deserve. As the Community Resilience Fellow, Maleah advocates for Alaska's children by connecting with organizations who are also dedicated to ACT's mission, lobbying for better educational policies, writing grants, and working on the Alaska Resilience Initiative. As part of the Alaska Resilience Initiative, Maleah supports the state of Alaska in ending childhood maltreatment and advocating for people affected by intergenerational and systemic trauma. Maleah also manages projects like History and Hope and provides tools and resources regarding childhood resilience to Alaska's communities.



# JUNEAU AT WORK

**As Sealaska Heritage Institute's Education Fellow, Keira** focuses on projects dedicated to teaching students and preserving the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures in Southeast Alaska. One of Keira's main projects is creating science-based subscription boxes for students that present important topics in culturally relevant ways. The boxes are a part of Sealaska's STEAM curriculum, a hands-on way of learning based in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. Their first box was a mask-making kit that focused on the Tlingit values of balance and reciprocity. Keira helped fill boxes with materials for making masks, traditional Tlingit stories, and a science kit that allowed students to test the effectiveness of their masks.

Keira also helps facilitate events for the Native Youth Olympics, which teaches students time-honored Arctic sports that can be traced back to ancient hunting practices. With events ranging from the Alaskan High Kick to the Seal Hop to the Scissor Broad Jump, Keira has enjoyed working with students and collaborating on projects that uplift Southeast Alaskan cultures.



Keira packing boxes for Sealaska Heritage Institute.



Spruce Root's Master Class facilitators and participants pose for a group screenshot. Isabelle can be seen in the top middle.

## **As the Community Economic Development Fellow for Spruce Root, Isabelle**

assisted with Spruce Root's Master Class for the New Economy workshop this winter. Business owners from across Southeast Alaska gathered virtually for a three-day workshop focused on recovery, resilience, and innovation. Entrepreneurs worked to plan for the coming year, while supported by over 25 knowledgeable mentors and the Spruce Root team. Isabelle provided tech support, facilitated discussions in breakout rooms, and recorded insightful quotes from the workshop. She relished this time to connect with small business owners across the region and hear the stories of support from each entrepreneur's local community during a challenging economic year.

In January, Isabelle followed up with a Master Class participant to write a story about her experience in the workshop. She was delighted to learn that this participant felt "empowered and proactive" to develop her recovery plan and implement the advice she received from mentors. Conversations like these remind Isabelle of the impact of her work and why she loves working with Spruce Root.

# SITKA AT WORK



**As the Council on Technology & Society Fellow, Peter** has worked on Covid Act Now, a project that helped leaders in Alaska determine the best policies to reduce COVID-19 transmission and improve hospital bed capacity. Additionally, he had the chance to connect with his community through the #walkthevote project, where the Council led a walk that encouraged citizens to gather together and drop off their ballots, as pictured above (Peter is on the right in orange). The project helped ensure community members dropped off their ballots in a timely, safe, and enjoyable manner.

Peter is currently working on a project that aims to procure better technology for wildfire management, an idea that could positively impact forestry management in Alaska. Peter is excited about the technological expertise the Council can provide to considerably impact this field.

**As the Internship and Work Experience Fellow at Mt. Edgecumbe High School, Madison** has a big task: to help Mt. Edgecumbe juniors decide what they want to do after high school. Helping students to dream big is not an easy feat during times like these, but Madison says that she and her students have been resilient in the face of new obstacles. Between virtual college tours, cold-calling, and lots of research, her work has helped Mt. Edgecumbe students build excitement about their futures. "I'm simply here to shine a light on their bright futures," she said.



**Maddie's fellowship with Visit Sitka** focuses on expanding Sitka's convention capabilities and organizing community events. In the fall, she helped coordinate a 3-month virtual program showcasing speakers from Alaska. She was also involved with the writing, editing, and photo-sourcing for Visit Sitka's annual visitor's magazine. In the coming months, Maddie will focus on creating a meeting and conventions guide and toolkit for those looking to host events in Sitka.

Maddie also serves as a point of contact for tourists looking to explore Sitka. Her favorite call so far was a caller who asked if it was possible to see Russia from Sitka. After telling him, "No, unfortunately you can't," the caller insisted that he had definitely seen Russia during his last visit to Sitka. Maddie is grateful for the opportunities to meet new people and explore the Sitka community through her fellowship.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Trail Mix's Hike for a Pint challenge:** This winter, work and play have merged in the best of ways as the Juneau Fellows participate in Trail Mix's Hike for a Pint challenge. Participants of this fundraising event have three months to hike five trails to win a pint of ice cream or beer from local Juneau businesses Coppa and Forbidden Peak Brewery. Each trail offers an opportunity to learn about Juneau's history or nature. At the Auke Lake Trail, we spotted an eagle's nest. At the Historical Treadwell Mine trail, we explored the ruins of what was once the largest stamp mine in the world. On the Airport Dike trail, we wandered through beautiful wetlands and watched Canadian geese take flight. In rain, snow, or (occasional) sun, the Juneau Fellows' trail adventures remind me why I love working at Trail Mix! - Kate M.

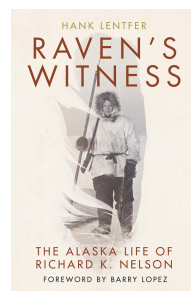
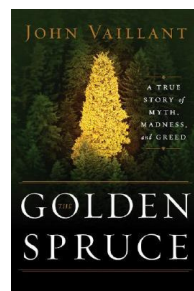
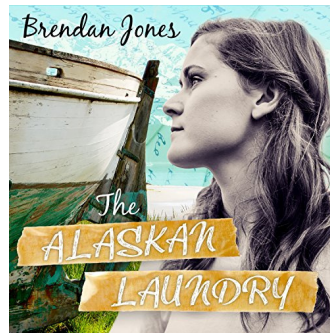
**Ocean and Tsunami Bowls:** Ruby, Amy, and I virtually connected across sites when we volunteered as referees for Ocean Bowl, an ocean trivia event where high school students in Southeast Alaska flex their marine biology and oceanography knowledge. I was impressed by the students' knowledge of ocean science, and their excitement for the event was extremely contagious. As a result, I've volunteered to referee the Tsunami Bowl this March. Tsunami Bowl is similar to Ocean Bowl, but state-wide; the winning team gets to compete nationally against other teams. I'm looking forward to picking up more unique ocean facts this spring, and I'm grateful to help with events that encourage participants to be better environmental stewards. - Mackenzie



Juneau fellows hike the Auke Lake trail for Trail Mix's Hike for a Pint fundraising event.

## BOOK RECS

***The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness, and Greed* by John Valliant** tells a compelling story about a logger-turned-environmental-activist and features a rare ecological specimen. If you want to learn about the history of logging in Southeast Alaska, I highly recommend you check it out. - Kate M.



I found ***The Alaskan Laundry* by Brendan Jones** tucked away in our bookshelf at 700 Etolin. The story focuses on a girl who uproots her life and moves to Alaska to work her way up the commercial fishing ladder. Starting out as a hatchery assistant in Southeast Alaska, she goes on to work as a king crabber in the Bering Sea. A good read if you're interested in a coming-of-age novel set in the wilderness, or if you'd like to learn more about the ins and outs of commercial fishing in Alaska. - Maddie T.

I was gifted ***Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K. Nelson* by Hank Lentfer** during a house-wide book swap. It paints a beautiful picture of the incredible life of anthropologist and naturalist "Nels," who was a longtime resident of Sitka and board member of one of my host organizations, Sitka Conservation Society. Highly recommend if you're interested in delightful prose or learning about the inspirational life led by Richard Nelson. - Amy



# HOBBIES



Keira and Kat practice their violin and banjo skills.



Lev practices photography during a sunset hike.



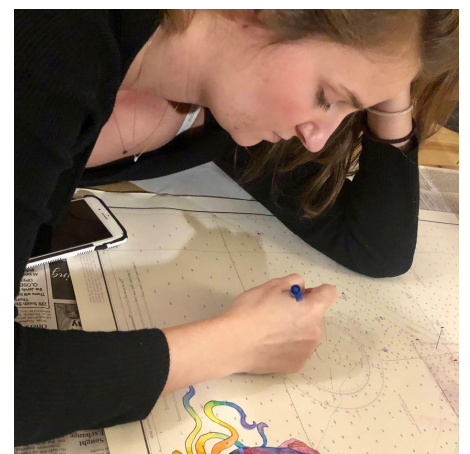
Amy and Peter took first place at a community spelling bee fundraiser for the Sitka Public Library.



The result of Ruby's hard work on a birthday cake: yellow cake + cranberry curd + ginger caramel + orange cardamom frosting.



Tasha (left) and Julia have both been embroidering.



Maddie works on watercolors.



# AROUND THE HOUSE



Sitka fellows on Thanksgiving.



Juneau fellows on Thanksgiving.



Anchorage fellows wearing hats gifted from Meredith, the program director.



Sitka fellows, post-dip!



Sitka celebrates a "white elephant" gift exchange with items from White Elephant.



Bernie dropped by Juneau to enjoy the fellows' favorite late night food spot: Pelmeni.



# OUTDOOR ADVENTURES



The Juneau fellows explore the Mendenhall Glacier ice caves.



Amy, Grace, Madison, and Maddie take a walk down Green Lake Road.



Kate and Keira skate on Twin Lakes in Juneau.



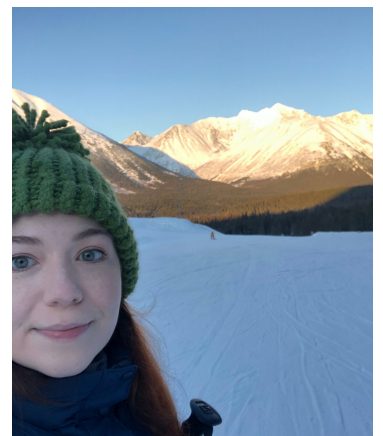
Amy and Rachel hike up to Picnic Rock in Sitka.



Juneau fellows hike to Ruby's favorite snowshoeing spot.



Sitka fellows on Gavan Hill, with the landlord's dog Keiko in tow.



Micaela pauses for a skiing selfie at Alyeska.