

Hello AYEA friends!

At first glance, three Alaskan Native teens might seem out of place in Memphis, Tennessee at a conference filled with hundreds of inner-city, African American community leaders organizing around issues of violence, poverty and joblessness. That's the great thing about the Green Jobs movement – it brings people together.

I'm writing to report back on the recent adventures of Cheryl Ishnook (Newhalen), Brian John (Arctic Village), and Joe Okitkun (Kotlik/ Mt. Edgecumbe) at the *Dream Reborn* Green Jobs conference. In addition to traveling across the country and stepping outside their comfort zones (and time zones!), these AYEA teens had the opportunity to learn about connections between issues of global warming, clean energy economic development, and the movement to “build an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty.”

Here are some highlights:

Meeting Environmental Celebrities Cheryl, Joe, and Brian had the opportunity to meet some environmental Super Heroes, like [Van Jones](#), [Winona LaDuke](#), [Kandi Mossett](#), and [Evon Peter](#), former Chief of the Neetsaii Gwich'in from Arctic Village, and advocate for Indigenous People's rights, youth, and Environmental Justice.

Interviews

Cheryl, Joe, and Brian spent the weekend interviewing lots of people about their expectations for the conference and their connection to the Green Jobs movement. They will be compiling these interviews into an audio media piece. *Stay Tuned!*

Cultural Organizing through Art

We all learned about the power of using art and music to connect to people and as an organizing tool to reach people through cultural connections. The conference was jam-packed full of music, dancing, poetry, and other performances.

What's Next for AYEA?

At AYEA's Strategic Planning Retreat last fall, our Statewide Advisory Group of youth and adults identified Green Jobs as a priority focus area that AYEA wants to get more involved with in the future. This summer we will be organizing a “lite-green” job fair as part of the [Youth Employment in Parks](#) program for youth in Anchorage, connecting youth with job opportunities and “green” career fields. In the future, we will continue to serve as a resource for connecting youth and young adults with jobs in green fields.

Find out more about the [Dream Reborn Conference](#) and the group that put it on, [Green for All](#). They have compiled a [video](#) on the conference and [media stories](#) as well.

Best,
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