

FALL 2008

TELLING OUR STORIES WITH ART IN ACTION



Tiaya Waggoner

The AYEA Art in Action training was put on to help us as youth speak out for

our communities and tell our stories. There were 19 participants from all across the state who came together to tell their stories.

The training was in Anchorage. It started on Wed., September 10th and ended with an exhilarating performance

by the participants on Sunday, Sept. 14th. Friends and family gathered in the seats at Out North Theater, to watch the participants perform their stories.

The trainers of the event came all the way up from Oakland, California. They are part of an organization called Art in Action that works with youth to build their leadership through art.

For this training, the participants split up into three groups to focus on one kind of art. Galen Peterson and Ashel Eldridge

helped out with the music and spoken word. They let kids prove that music can help people understand what is going on in their communities. They also helped some participants get the confidence to stand up and speak for themselves. Maryam Roberts and Xiomara Castro helped participants speak through digital story telling. They let the youth's stories be shown through voice and pictures. The last

of the trainers, Alli Chagi-Starr, showed the youth how physical movement can express feelings and be reflected on the audience.

Many youth took home more than they had expected with this training. Some opened their voices for others to listen; others learned that they can make a difference in their community

“If we don't do something about all of these issues -- global warming, endangered species, etc -- we won't have a place that we can call home.”
- Solo Malua, Anchorage

continued on page 2 ...



www.ayea.org

“I learned that I can work with people who are totally different than me.”

- Youth Employment in Parks Crew Member, Anchorage

AYEA is a program of the National Wildlife Federation
www.nwf.org



Check out the ART from Art in Action

SEE the Photos!

www.flickr.com/photos/ayea

LISTEN to the Music

www.MySpace.com/ayea4life

WATCH the Performance and the Digital Stories

www.ayea.org

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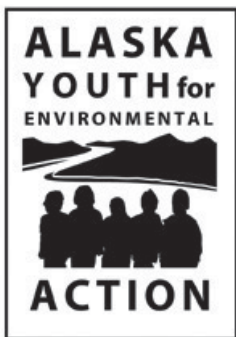
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ART IN ACTION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and that they could be the one to start the change.

Participant Solo Malua said that, "When I first got there at the camp/training, I thought it would be just like any other camp. But after the first night of introductions and ice breakers, we all found out that we all shared common ground on why we were there; we as youth actually have a voice in our future. Nobody can tell us we can't do something for the future because we are young."

For some of the participants, this was a life-changing experience. Solo said, "When I left, ...everything didn't feel the same after that. I felt like I'd been given a great knowledge and wisdom from the camp. I learned a lot: I learned that our generation is going to have future environmental issues, even worse than what we are experiencing

today if we don't put up a fight and say no to urbanization developments. That if we don't do something about all of these issues -- global warming, endangered species, dying lakes in Africa, etc -- we won't have a place that we can call home."

When it comes down to it, anyone can make a change. The training AYEА put on for us will start a chain reaction. The chain is to help change our future generation's environmental problems, by taking out past generations problems and cleaning up the world. So we the youth, are making a difference thanks to AYEА.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
ART IN ACTION
www.artinactioncamp.org

MEMBER IN ACTION

DARIA ISAAC



How did you get involved with AYEА?

The first thing I did with AYEА was the 2007 Summer Institute. I learned what AYEА was about, and I signed up after a local mentioned it and encouraged me to go.

Why did you want to be a peer leader?

I wanted to be a peer leader to improve leader skills, and gain the experience of being a peer leader. I enjoyed the experience very much.

“Anybody who wants to be a peer leader or involved with AYEА should do it! It was a very fun experience, and I've learned a lot.”

What is an issue that you care about?

An environmental issue that is important to me is Global Warming. It is affecting the world, and most of Alaska.

Daria lives on St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea. She attended the 2007 Summer Institute and volunteered as a Peer Leader at the 2008 Art in Action Training.

GREEN JOBS FOR TEENS

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS



By Nara McCray

Like many other teens, I had trouble finding a job last summer. I applied to a lot of places but never got any feedback. I went in for an interview with Youth Employment in Parks (YEP), and it ended up being one of the best decisions I ever made. A few weeks later I got the call that I was hired!

I worked on the Recreation side of the program. The Rec. Crew Members rotated through three segments throughout the span of the summer: Park and Play, Kincaid Adventure Camp, and the school summer camps.

The other half of the teens in YEP worked on the Parks side. They spent the summer working in local parks cleaning, planting trees, maintaining trails, and doing other things that help our community.

It was so cool getting to meet teens from other high schools beside my own. I made friends from all sorts of different backgrounds and cultures that I would have never met with out YEP.

As Crew Member Joanne Sakar says, "When you work for the YEP program, you meet all kinds of diverse, cool new friends that care about the environment and like to work with kids, which I think is pretty awesome."



"YEP has made me so much more aware of global issues, environmental issues, and even problems going on in our very own neighborhoods. It showed me what I can do for my environment and community to make a positive change!"

-Vance Woodruff, YEP Crew Member

Although the Rec. side wasn't as focused on environmental projects as much as the Parks side, I still got an environmental and political connection through our civic engagement days. I was surprised by how much I learned about politics through this job. I learned what assembly district I live in, and we got a firsthand



view into local politics when we all got to speak at an assembly meeting.

Every Friday we learned about the environment through hands-on experiences like visiting an organic farm through APU, doing canvassing on watersheds, and by just enjoying the outdoors on hiking and biking trips.

Even though this is only a summer job, it definitely prepares you for your future. During the final week we had a very cool job-shadowing opportunity that really motivated me to want a

job in environmental science. There was also a career fair where we got to learn about mentorship opportunities and jobs that we may want to pursue now or in the future.

This green job is a great job opportunity for teens who have never had a job before or just want to have fun over the summer. I definitely recommend it.

YEP 2009:
Applications for YEP 2009 will be available in December @ www.ayea.org/yep.html
Or contact Megan mcbriem@nwf.org

Youth Employment in Parks is a summer job program for teens in Anchorage. This year, 50 teens were employed by YEP. They spent their summer working outdoors in Anchorage parks doing needed park improvement projects or working with kids through summer rec. programs. YEP is a partnership between Anchorage Parks & Recreation and AYEА.

THANK YOU to all of the generous volunteers who made possible the job shadow day, the career fair, and all of the work projects throughout the summer! You make it happen!



PARTING WORDS FROM POLLY

AYEA'S FOUNDING STAFF

The last ten years of my life, working with AYEА, have been some of the most transformative, challenging, and rewarding. In November 1998, I was lucky to be in the room when Katie McKay-Bryson, Angela Peters, Jamie Bourgeois, Athena Swinford, Paula Jackson, and Mekaela Mahoney decided to create Alaska Youth for Environmental Action. As an emerging leader myself, I was awed by their passion to create something for youth, by youth. Their wisdom in creating a program that would cater to the unique issues facing Alaskan youth and their communities still amazes me.

For me, the most exciting part of working for this program was being able to connect with so many incredible new leaders in Alaska. I loved working with youth as they discovered their voices, took a step forward to make a difference, and felt the results of their efforts -- knowing that this experience would often be life-changing. Too often we get caught up in environmental 'victories' and forget about the basic human experience that is paramount to action -- that of being inspired, empowered, and feeling like we are part of something bigger. AYEА taught me all of this and for that I am grateful.

The joys of working with AYEА were not without their challenges: getting funders to understand that young people really can make a difference; working with youth that are not always in control of their schedules (or lives); having to explain to the outside world that 'we don't know what issue we are working on yet, because the teens have not determined that'; and dancing between the worlds of environmental advocacy, youth development, and community organizing. The challenges are also AYEА's strengths and I would not trade them for anything.

Through AYEА, I learned the importance of the human story: our experience is the

most powerful tool any of us has, and we should cultivate these stories (and the leaders behind them) as often as we can. AYEА has also taught me the importance of diversity -- among age, gender, socioeconomic status, culture, and race

-- in growing or strengthening any movement. AYEА taught me more about Alaska's diverse cultures than any other experience. In recent years, AYEА opened my eyes to the power of art and media to effect social and environmental change.

Most importantly, though, AYEА has taught me the importance of supporting and facilitating youth voice -- stepping aside to allow youth to grow and stumble, make

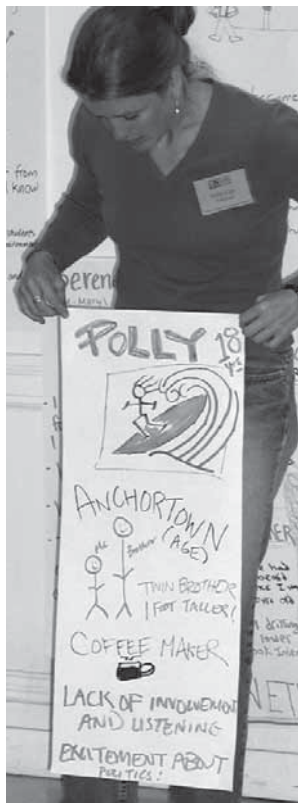
their own choices, and become empowered to act. For me, this was my greatest challenge and most incredible reward. Thanks to all the AYEА teens and grads for teaching this important lesson!

I am excited to watch AYEА move into the next chapter of its life. I see green jobs, more art and media tools and training, more youth leaders in rural communities, and AYEА graduates running the program! I cannot wait to see how AYEА evolves in the future, and I hope to meet emerging AYEА leaders every time I visit an Alaskan community. I am so happy that AYEА has Maeve and Megan to help guide it into the future. Best of luck and thanks again to NWF staff and all of the wonderful adult allies and youth leaders -- it's been a fun ride.

- Polly



“Too often we get caught up in environmental ‘victories’ and forget about the basic human experience that is paramount to action -- that of being inspired, empowered, and feeling like we are part of something bigger.”



STAY IN TOUCH WITH POLLY!
 (907) 952-7827 or
 pollycarr.ak@gmail.com

MEET MAEVE TAYLOR

AYEA'S NEW PROGRAM MANAGER

As the new AYEА Program Manager I am so excited to work with this amazing network of youth and adult volunteers! I grew up in Alaska (in Sitka and Eagle River) but spent ten years after high school on the East Coast. Through that time, and my international journeys, I learned how unique Alaska is and grew to treasure our environment even more.

I spent the last four years working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service here in Alaska as the Volunteers, Grants, and Partnerships Coordinator for Alaska's 16



national wildlife refuges. Before that I worked as an education specialist for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Massachusetts and upstate New York. I found that I loved having conversations with people about nature, teaching school groups, and mentoring youth interested in environmental careers.

When Polly told me that her job was available, I realized that it was the perfect meld of my interests: a way to mentor and inspire youth

while helping Alaska's environment.

I am immensely thankful to Polly for getting me off to a stable and informed start with AYEА. Before my first full day on September 2, Polly spent six weeks orienting me to the AYEА program. As you all know, she has given so much to AYEА and where we are today is due to her energy, detailed planning, and the inspiration she has shared with Alaska's teens.

I look forward to working with youth leaders from around the state this winter at our annual retreat and getting to know our partners and sponsors throughout the winter. I plan to continue bringing new teens from around the state to our trainings and to offer trainings that allow teens to develop the skills they need to help change the world. I also hope to build new partnerships to allow AYEА youth even more opportunities. I am extremely happy to have the help of our new AYEА Program Coordinator, Megan McBride. Megan is an AYEА grad, a graduate of Lewis and Clark College, and has worked with AYEА over the past year as our Communications and Outreach Intern. Megan and I are ready to take AYEА into a new year and accomplish great things!

Please feel free to call or email me with questions, ideas, or just to chat!

Sincerely,
Maeve Taylor

**CONTACT
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2008 GET OUTDOORS SUMMIT

AYEA TEENS INVITED TO JOIN ANCHORAGE LEADERS

One of the largest threats to conservation is that people are disconnected from nature because of rapid changes to technology and lifestyles.

In December, leaders will convene at the new Dena'ina Center in downtown Anchorage for the "Get Outdoors Anchorage! Summit" with the goal of creating an Anchorage community that values time spent in



the outdoors and facilitates outdoor activity for children and families.

AYEA is looking for teens who would like to join in the conversation of how to reconnect youth to the outdoors. This is a great chance for your voice to be heard in this community effort! Teens that attend the Outdoors Summit will have a chance to meet leaders, shape future programs, and possibly even introduce State legislation! If you would like to be part of this important effort, contact Maeve.

Get Outdoors Anchorage!
December 10 & 11
Teens from outside
Anchorage welcome too!



MENTOR IN ACTION: **DONNA MEARS**

Wheredoesyour connection to the environment come from? Looking back, my parents raised me in an environment

where we were conscientious about resources. It really hit home for me when my family moved to India for 2 years when I was in high school. Air pollution, water pollution, and the effects of deforestation were so much more present than where I grew up in central New Jersey.

You're a Recycling Coordinator for Anchorage: what's cool about your job? Every day, several times a day we all make choices about the waste we produce: how many paper towels do I need to dry my hands? can I reuse this container?

“The connections that [AYEA] youth have with each other across our state is so powerful and I feel really lucky to be a part of this”

which packaging can I recycle? In my job now I get to work on the whole process – from public outreach to make people aware of their choices to the development of infrastructure so that waste can go to the most appropriate place.

Any other words of wisdom? Awareness of what you are consuming is applicable to so many resources: water, energy, materials. So turn off the water when you're brushing your teeth, turn off the lights when you leave the room, and recycle that can when you're done with it!

Donna lives in Anchorage, where she works for the Municipality as a Recycling Coordinator. She has served as an Adult Mentor for AYEAs Anchorage Chapter and in 2003 she volunteered with AYEAs Recycling Summit.



WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

VERNER WILSON

How have you been involved with AYEAs?

My first AYEAs experience was seven years ago at the Civics and Conservation Summit in Juneau, where AYEAs taught me that I can make a difference in government and important environmental issues. During my time with AYEAs, I am proud to say that I have met many of my peers that are now lifelong friends, met with many important leaders such as our U.S. Senators,

“I gained an inspiration and dedication to help solve environmental issues and help educate others as my life purpose.”

and help spearhead AYEAs Climate Change campaign that made a huge impact reducing greenhouse gases nationwide. I even had the chance to meet and be trained by former Vice President Al Gore at his ranch in Tennessee through AYEAs.

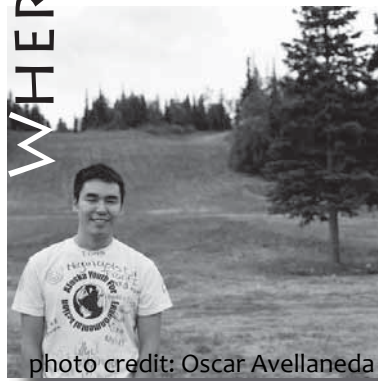


photo credit: Oscar Avellaneda

What are you up to currently? I work for the Alaska office of the World Wildlife Fund. I am glad to be part of the World Wildlife Fund, as it is a world-renowned, internationally respected science-based environmental organization who works to protect the world's wildlife and the people who depend on them.

What is your top Alaskan issue right now? Protecting Bristol Bay and its rich fisheries from short-term toxic polluting proposals like Pebble Mine and offshore drilling, as I am from the region. Our fisheries are worth \$2 billion a year and provide food and commercial income for us. It is the mainstay of our culture in the region and has ensured our people's survival for thousands of years. This rich renewable resource should be protected, as it is the last great salmon fishery in the world. I have been fishing the bay my entire life, and it has brought many good memories that should always be there for future generations and youth.

AYEAs Graduate Verner Wilson grew up in Dillingham. He graduated from Brown University with a degree in Environmental Studies, emphasizing in Environmental Justice issues.

AYEAs MISSION: TO INSPIRE, EDUCATE AND TAKE ACTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FACING OUR COMMUNITIES.

WWW.AYEAs.ORG

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING AYEA!

All the trainings, programs, and youth support that AYEA offers are funded through generous donations and grants. You can contribute to AYEA with donations of your time, money, or Alaska Airline miles!

Thank you to all of the individuals, organizations, and foundations who recently donated to AYEA



AYEA cook local organic dinner for fundraiser auction item winner Doug North and friends

Thank you to everyone who recently supported AYEA as volunteers and peer leaders!

Individual Donors

Caroline Plant, Cliff Eames, Dorene C. Schiro, Eric Myers, Erin Borowski, Francis Adams, Howard and Dorothy Lazar, Ian and Karla Dutton, Karen McBride, Kate Troll, Kellen MacFadyen, Kevin and Kacey Painter, Kevin Harun, Luke and Kris Simpson, Nina Faust, Penny Bauder and Jeff Heys, Representative Sharon Cissna

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Alaska Alpine Adventures, Alaska Cruise Association, Alaska Metal Recycling (Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc.), Alaska Sausage, Alaskan Center for the Environment, Arctic Organics, Cafe Del Mundo, Central Bering Sea Fisherman's Association, Cold Foot Environmental, Ginger Restaurant, Institute of the North, Johnson Controls, Inc., Municipality of Anchorage, Ocean Bluff Bed and Breakfast, Oriental School of Healing Arts, Rare Earth, LLC, Sacks Cafe, Sierra Club, Specialty Imports, Thai Kitchen, Yak 'N Yeti

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Go online to
www.ayea.org/donate.html
or call Maeve Taylor at
(907) 339-3907
to find out how you can help



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UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

LEADERSHIP RETREAT & CIVICS SUMMIT

AYEA's annual leadership & campaign planning retreat is happening in January 2009. **Apply NOW!**

AYEA's annual spring political training is coming up in March 2009. **Don't miss out!**

- **Network** with other teen leaders from around Alaska
- **Exercise** your leadership skills
- **Develop** the plan for AYEAs statewide campaign

- **Learn** about the political process in Alaska
- **Discover your power** to influence positive change
- **Take action** on issues facing Alaskan communities

Who? Teens from rural and urban Alaskan communities are welcome to apply. Preference is given to people who have attended past AYEAs trainings or are in AYEAs chapters.

Who? Teens from rural and urban Alaskan communities are welcome to apply. We will accept up to 20 youth in grades 8-12.

Where? Mat-Su Valley (outside Anchorage)

When? January 2009

How much? \$50 + travel

Scholarships & Fundraising help are available -- apply NOW!

Deadline to apply is November 24

Where? Juneau - the state capital!

When? For 5 days in March 2009

How much? \$50 + travel to Juneau

Scholarships & Fundraising help are available -- apply early!

Deadline to apply is February 1

Apply Today!
WWW.AYEA.ORG
Contact Megan with questions
mcbridem@nwf.org (907) 339-3908

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