

GATHERING OF ALASKA NATIVES

MT. SANFORD TRIBAL CONSORTIUM

Chistochina, Alaska

January 18-20, 2024

Tribal Tech Team: Gary Neumann & Valerie Pingayak
Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium Team: Trinity Boston, Renee David, Michael Hatch, Sierra Northway, Kirstie Willean
Behavioral Health Support: Cathy King, Healing Rock Counseling Services
MSTC Leadership Support: Evelyn Beeter, George Drinkwater, Susan Green, Danielle Boston
Community Support Crew: Jim Beeter, Jordan Boston, Bessie Henry, Mark Dummler, Loretta Sanford
Frostline Studios Team: Richard Cooper, Hannah Pratt

CONDENSED TIMELINE:

- Early 2023: Gary began conversations about a GOAN in Chistochina
- May 2023: MSTC team participated in week-long GOAN training in Anchorage.
- June 2023: Community Readiness Surveys
- June 2023 – December 2023: Planning underway; Twice planned & rescheduled
- January 2024: Third time's the charm! MSTC GOAN held in Chistochina

SUMMARY OF PLANNING & COORDINATION:

- GOAN Training of Facilitators was key to understanding process and planning forward
- Community Readiness Survey was conducted & assessed
- Team met at least once each week to discuss which activities and tools from the training would work best with community GOAN; Native Connections planning tools guided the process
- Theme was changed from Substance Misuse to Grief and Healing to better support community needs
- MSTC GOAN Agenda included:
 - Schedule of public announcements and invitations
 - Daily outline (from set-up, through GOAN, to debrief) of scheduled activities...with plenty of room/planning for last-minute changes
 - Copies of each activity's instructions
- Behavior health support was available throughout
- Digital recording of the event to create both a digital story and stills for future use & sharing
- A graphic recording was also done to capture the story of this GOAN
- Send hand-written thank you notes to everyone who helped to make the GOAN happen

TIME	ACTIVITY	NOTES
8:00-9:00am	Sign-in & BREAKFAST	Renee and team
9:00am – 1:00pm	Blessing & Open in a Good Way: Land Acknowledgement	George or Community Member
	Raffle Tickets	Cathy
	Participant Photos	Renee (place photos on construction paper & onto Appreciation Wall); Gary has printer, photo paper, ink, etc.
	GOAN History Group Agreements/"Norms"	Sierra & Trinity with Gary & Val
	BELONGING: "Ribbon Ceremony"	Gary & Val
	GENEROSITY TABLE	Sierra, Trinity, & Cathy
	Graphic Recording	Kirstie will do the graphic recording for all 3 days
	BELONGING: conversation	Based on Creation Story
	BREAK	
	Icebreaker: "That's Me"	Michael & Renee
1:00pm	Complete morning activities OR begin work on "Clan Shields"	Clan Shields: Create groups, identify superpower, Create cheer & Clan name
	LUNCH	
	Blessing Photos for Appreciation Wall	George or Community Member
	Raffles	Renee & team
	"Sweeping Your Lodge"	Cathy or Community Member
	Readiness Survey review & Logic Model	Michael & Renee
	Strategic Plan conversation	Gary & Val: What is breaking apart our world?
		Gary & Val -Logic Model -Community Share & Strategizing
	"Clan Shields"/Banners	Clan Shields: Continuation of morning activity
	BREAK	
2:30pm	BREAK	
	Raffles	Cathy or Community Member
	Introduce MASTERY	Gary & Val
4:30pm	"Pluses and Wishes"	Sierra, Trinity, & Cathy
	Raffles and Closing	Community Member
	Dinner with Blessing	Community Member
5:00pm	Dinner with Blessing	Community Member

Chistochina Gathering of Alaska Natives

JANUARY 18-20, 2024

A GOAN is a culture-based planning process where community members gather to address community-identified issues. It uses an interactive approach that empowers and supports AI/AN tribes. The GOAN approach reflects AI/AN cultural values, traditions, and spiritual practices. The GOAN focuses on the following four themes:

- **BELONGING** - the GOAN ensures that everyone feels welcomed in an inclusive, open, safe, and trusting environment
- **MASTERY** - the GOAN allows participants to take stock of how historical trauma impacts their communities and what fosters their resilience and holds them together
- **INTERDEPENDENCE** - the GOAN initiates the planning process to assess resources and relationships, and to experience and strengthen interconnectedness
- **GENEROSITY** - the GOAN exercise of creating gifts to share with other participants symbolizes each participant's larger gift to their families and communities in helping to address and prevent mental and substance use disorders, prevent suicide, and promote mental health

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND VOICES WERE CAPTURED THROUGHOUT THE GOAN ON SCRIBED POSTERS. THAT INFORMATION FOLLOWS...

BELONGING: Expectations

- Door prizes & food
- Overtime
- Community process
- Work
- Learn
- Help
- Leadership
- Connections
- Healing
- Good times together
- Community gathering
- Have fun
- Feel lighter
- Reframed
- Laughter
- Meet people
- Break out of shells
- Learning to listen
- Positivity
- Give & accept compliments
- Creative spelling acceptable
- Connection
- Interacting
- Honesty



BELONGING: Norms

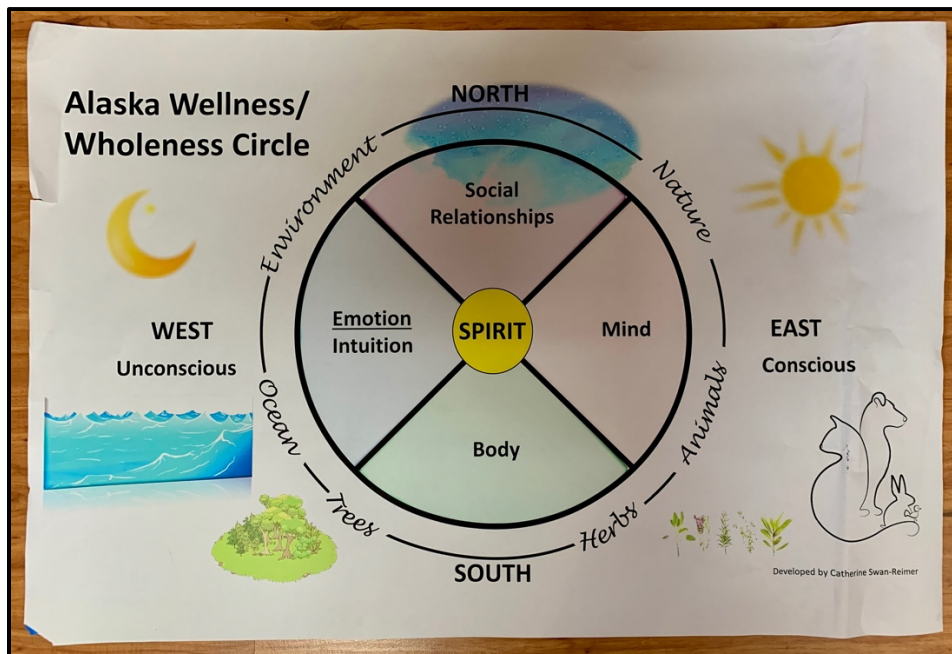
- What's said here stays here
- Show respect to others
- Be quiet when others are speaking
- Silence phones. Take calls outside
- Trust the process
- Agree to disagree
- Start on time
- Take healthy risks
- Don't slam kitchen door
- If you bring someone = extra raffle ticket
- Be helpful
- Police your area



BELONGING, MASTERY, INTERDEPENDENCE: Activities

- Sweep Your Lodge
- Look Over Your Moose
- Outhouse
- Rez Car
- Canoe

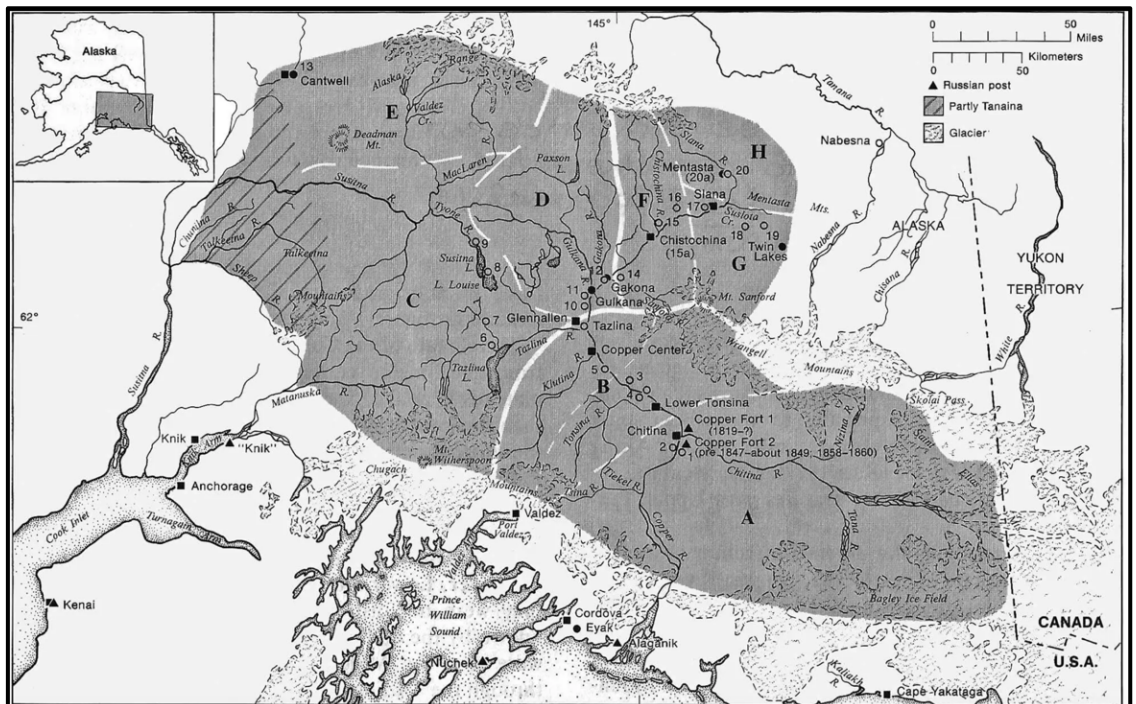
BELONGING: The Round



BELONGING: What tore our World apart?

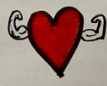
AHTNA Region

- Climate change ✓✓
- Fishing rights taken away ✓
- Village politics ✓✓
- People moving away from community ✓
- Flu pandemics ✓
- Highway system ✓✓
- Gold rush ✓
- U.S. military ✓✓
- Missionaries ✓
- Land Claims Act ✓
- Booze introduction ✓✓✓
- State not recognizing tribes ✓
- Language loss ✓
- Boarding schools ✓✓
- Copper ✓✓
- Subsistence issues ✓✓
- Not conforming to Western society ✓
- Loss of traditional education ✓✓
- Sexual abuse ✓
- Economic change ✓
- Change of modes of transportation
- Oil money / corporations ✓
- Loss of Elders ✓
- Sugar foods & drinks
- MMIW ✓
- Isolation
- Domestic violence
- Loss of fishing rights
- Infected blankets



BELONGING: Form Clans: Agree upon a NAME, A SYMBOL, A CHEER, A SUPER POWER

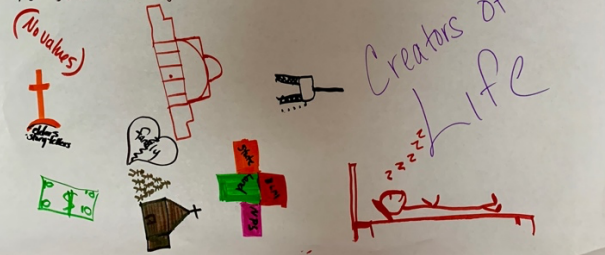
Big Mom Energy

M  M

We are big mom energy
 We clean up the messes & spill the tea
 We are strong, resilient, we nurture
 To build a stronger future

(No values)

Creators of Life



Susitna Rangers

TRUMP Isolated

Drugs

Binding Humor in the Energy Bar

Domestic Violence

Not Being Heard

MMIWA

Grief

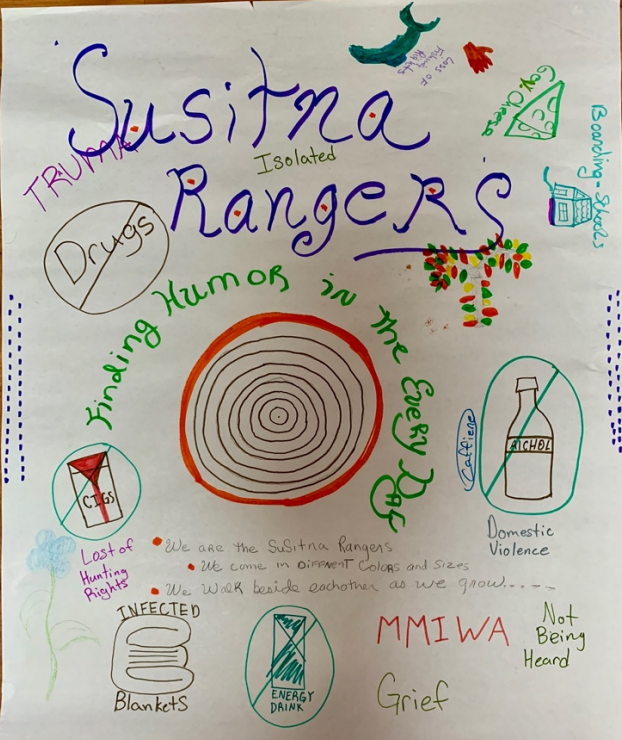
Blankets

ENERGY DRINK

Infected

Last of Hunting Rights

We are the Susitna Rangers
 • We come in different colors and sizes
 • We work beside each other as we grow...



Group 2

The Ravens

Power of Creating & Knowing!

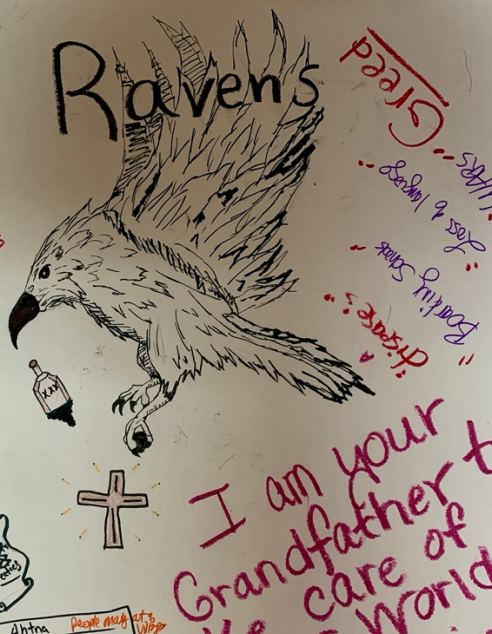
I am your Grandfather to take care of your world and relatives

Adapting to land
 Western Society
 Loss of land
 Competing

WARS
 Loss of language
 Loss of history
 Borderline states
 Disease

Alutna *People meet at the village*

- Film/Academics - Loss of language
- Highway system - Banning School
- Cash/Bus - Copper wire high
- US Military - Climate change
- Missionaries - Substance abuse
- Land claims - What's going on
- 1950s Baste in education education
- Still not recognizing Tribes



The Snow People



Here we come,
Here we go,
Were the snow people -

Super Power: That's no joke!

We do not melt

fear

Drugs

Village
Politics

Relocating
families

Adoption to
non-natives

Elders
passing

Religion

fishing Rights
taken away

Climate
Change

SMOK'N SALMON

Apsáalooke
(Crow)

Aht na

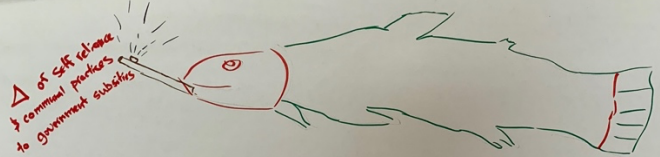
Dayon

Economic &
Banking
systems

Tension
of Native vs Non-Native
value system

Lack of accountability
within families

Speed of technological
changes, falling behind
& entertainment time wasting



Δ of self reliance
& communal practices
to Government subsidies



Wisdom from our Elders



Racism leading
to self reliance
issues & opportunity
losses

Neglect

Education
deficits

sexual abuses

lack of leadership
& accountability

Three Tribes, Three People, One Team

SMOK'N SALMON

Abductions

Broken promises
from Governments

Family

Displacement

Non-traditional
Diets

Denial of
subsistence
rights

internal feuds
taking of lands
(Reservations)
and impact food
security, identity
& economic
opportunity

BELONGING: Plusses & Wishes

+	*
<p>Good laughter Feelings Good comments & input Processing emotions/thoughts Sense of awareness Presence Beading/crafting Discussion on grief Good food Good learning activities Visitor from another community</p>	<p>Solid plan to extend this process A safe day Everyone have safe travels Return tomorrow Healthy participation Clean your spaces</p>



MASTERY: Belmont Process

What did you see?

- Team building
- Smiles
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Learn/lead by example
- Ice breakers
- People getting to know each other
- Connection
- Culture & traditions
- Sharing
- Humor
- Good times
- Community support for kids
- Population decrease
- Growth in community & organizations

What did you hear?

- Laughter
- Sharing

What did you feel?

- Joy
- Happy
- Flashbacks
- Gratitude
- Thankful
- Belonging
- Change through COVID
- Longing for broader sense of community
- Mourning over less community activities & support
- Connection to Mentasta Lake
- Sense of pride

INTERDEPENDENCE: Rituals & Ceremonies

- Bake pie before turkey
- One bad thing that happened today; One good thing; One thing you're looking forward to
- Potlatch
- Prayer before food
- Sit together for dinner, with candles, & talk about the day
- Take time away from our phones in the morning
- Lion's mane & mushroom coffee in the morning instead of coffee
- Getting up, feeding dogs, & taking them outside
- Snow baths
- Potlatch for first kill; give it away
- First haircut
- Take time gathering myself & setting intentions for the day
- Sing to my kids at night before bed
- Turning over a log when you come across it; send a prayer with it
- A small church; large-scale Bible-study group; taking a moment of prayer for someone in need
- Burial traditions: Western & Indigenous
- Hoo Pono Pond Song (Hawaiian)
- A saying for finding lost items

INTERDEPENDENCE: Belmont Process (again)

- Laughter
- Competition
- Bad jokes
- Discussions
- Participation
- Relaxation



INTERDEPENDENCE: Suggestions for Community Supports for Grieving

- Safe people in the community to go to
- A sponsor to go to
- A grief support group
- A grief counselor
- A grief group through Zoom with Cathy King; flier at Posty's and ad on FaceBook
- Talking circles with youth
- Rotate the support group through the different villages
- BHA cabin for small adult community group meetings
- Walking group for Elders, Teens, & Youth @ school gym
- Dumb bells and benches for community members (x8) to work out

MASTERY/INTERDEPENDENCE: Plusses & Wishes

+	*
Warmth of the group Participation Food People showed-up GOAN happened Raffle prizes Time away from the office Snacks Kids having fun Appreciation for people traveling	More participants Monitor your space Talk about trauma/grief Open windows (heat) Remind people about opportunity about work group Have fun



INTERDEPENDENCE: What heals our World?

- Community dinners
- Community health programs
- Community activities
- Be more inviting
- Life skills workshops (ex. cooking)
- Modeling healthy behaviors & your healing journey

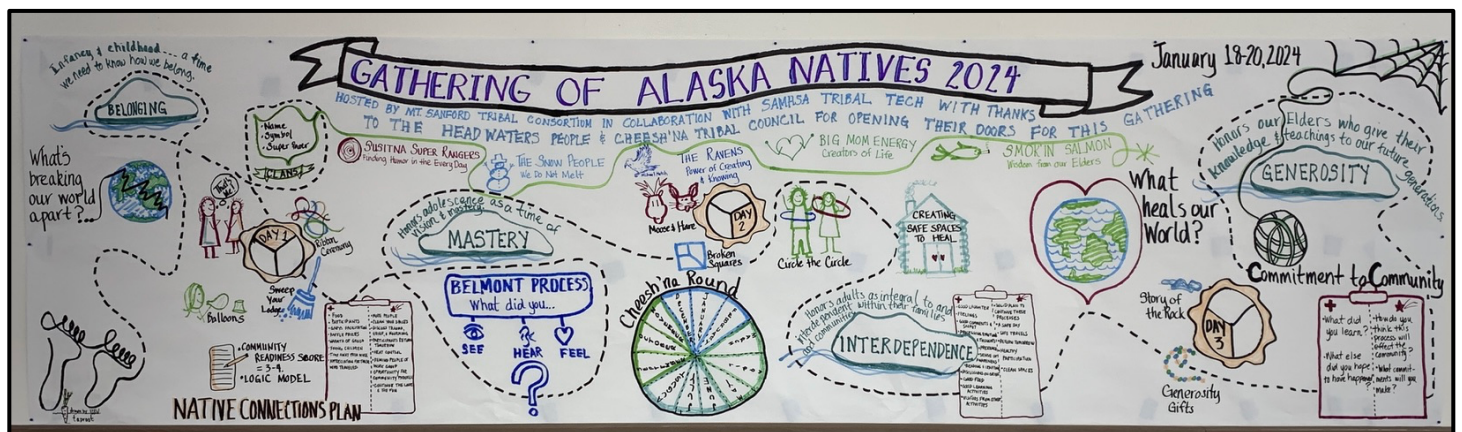
GENEROSITY: How do you know when you've been heard?

- Body language
- Undivided attention
- Accountability & acknowledgement
- Ask them
- See different outcomes ✓
- Discipline
- When you get a response ✓
- When they ask for more insight



THE NUMBERS:

- THOSE WHO MADE IT HAPPEN: 19
- PARTICIPANTS (2 ½ days): 39
- ESTIMATED TOTAL COST: Check-in with Jeanie once all the numbers are calculated.



Some summary comments from MSTC TEAM MEMBERS:



LEADERSHIP:

- Appreciated gathering in a circle and taking time to hear everyone; Team building.
- Appreciates when a plan is acknowledged and when changes are requested in a positive way.
- Really wants to continue forward with community plan for more wellness activities.
- Sharing stories in the circle using the cards that had prompts on them was a good activity.



NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCES:

- The importance of recognizing that “you are worthy”
- Ice-breakers & fun games
- The use of smoking sweetgrass to help calm & cleanse
- The sight of everyone actively listening
- Generational trauma activity made everyone feel a lot
- Value of lots of laughter & bonding



NEXT STEPS:

- Will incorporate the talking circle with youth so that everyone’s voice is heard.
- One of my biggest takeaways was the value of team building and working together in the conference room
- Commitment to getting to work on time and trying to do my best

NEXT STEPS FOR TEAM:

- We will process all that we have learned from this Gathering of Alaska Natives and use our learnings to address the needs of the Elders & Youth through future programs and projects.
- Information will be used to support the development of “Holding Our Ground”
- A digital story will be produced by Frostline Studios to share the GOAN story.
- Regular team building activities, at least twice yearly.

CHISTOCHINA GOAN 2024 Video:

<https://vimeo.com/932289063/dcfe8650e2?share=copy>