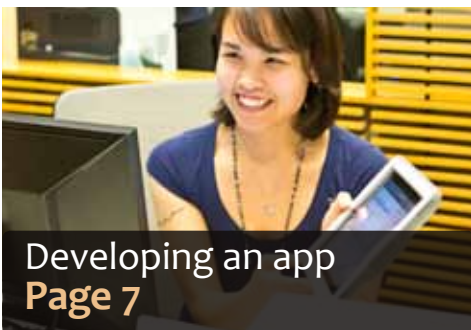




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# Anchorage Native News

Alaska Native People Shaping Health Care

Volume 15 Issue 1 January/February 2014

## Alaska Native people creating a safe umbrella for family wellness

By SCF Public Relations

For more than 15 years, Alaska Native people have been leading the charge to end domestic violence, child abuse and child neglect in Alaska through Southcentral Foundation's (SCF) Family Wellness Warriors Initiative.

Our strategies are based on Alaska Native cultural strengths and bringing back traditional values that are protective of family wellness. FWWI helps build the capacity of individuals, families and communities to reverse the trends of domestic violence and child maltreatment. Over a period of many years, we have been successful in providing the education, tools and skills needed to bring awareness to the issues; creating safe environments for sharing and healing; and initiating changes in attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs.

Domestic violence, abuse and neglect – especially when kept secret – have a devastating impact on long-term physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. This has been proven in study after study, including research that shows that trauma experienced as a child may surface later in life as mental health problems, addictions, physical health concerns, illness and disease.

The work of ending domestic violence, child abuse and child neglect is too important to keep it within the bounds of a few programs or services. For broader impact, FWWI is also built into the structure and design of SCF's Nuka System of Care. Every year, new improvements are made to the way that trauma and abuse are assessed and responded to throughout the health care system.



Every SCF employee, including behavioral health and primary care providers, receive training on SCF's Core Concepts, a three-day training course led by the SCF President/CEO which teaches the foundational principles of FWWI. Core Concepts helps emphasize the importance of sharing, listening to, and responding to story.

"Our employees use what they learn in Core Concepts to ensure that every contact and experience within our Nuka System of Care honors the relationship with the customer-owner and where he or she is at in the healing journey," said SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb.

Many SCF employees are also attending FWWI's Beauty for Ashes and other trainings and conferences to strengthen their skills in these areas. Beyond the trainings, all SCF programs and departments play a part in our effort to develop protective factors, build resiliency, and reduce risk factors associated with domestic violence, child abuse and child neglect.

Continued on Page 6 "Family wellness"

## Participate in SCF Gathering March 29

By SCF Public Relations

Save the date for Southcentral Foundation's (SCF) biggest event of the year! SCF's 17th Annual Gathering will be held Saturday, March 29, at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

About 3,000 people attend, visiting booths to learn more about wellness programs and services available to them, and enjoying entertainment and great door prizes.

If you have any questions, please contact SCF Public Relations Program Coordinator Faye Dotomain: (907) 729-4990 or [fdotomain@scf.cc](mailto:fdotomain@scf.cc).

connecting honor community journey  
learning health together sharing values  
generations raising wellness laughter  
gathering celebrating responsibility

*Save the date!*

Southcentral Foundation's 17th Annual  
**GATHERING**  
Saturday, March 29, 2014  
10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center

Southcentral Foundation

4501 Diplomacy Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99508

Southcentral Foundation

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Southcentral Foundation is an Alaska Native owned health care organization serving Alaska Native and American Indian people living in Anchorage, the Mat-Su Valley and 55 rural villages in the Anchorage Service Unit.

Incorporated in 1982 under the tribal authority of Cook Inlet Region Inc., Southcentral Foundation employs more than 1,500 people in over 65 programs.

**Southcentral Foundation Mission**

Working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.

**Southcentral Foundation Vision**

A Native Community that enjoys physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.

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Dr. Katherine Gottlieb



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# Award-winning, customer-owned Nuka System of Care

*By SCF Public Relations*

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) offers more than just a primary care center supported by specialty clinics. It is a system of care, driven by Alaska Native customer-owners, that strives to address the needs of the whole person. It is built on a foundation of long-term relationships, transfer of control to the customer-owner, integration of the mind, body and spirit, and a commitment to measurement and quality. This is SCF’s Nuka System of Care, and it has won national and international recognition for its sustained success over the course of three decades.

SCF’s Nuka Institute was launched in 2010 to address the increasing number of requests from health care leaders and agencies around the world who want to learn more about the Nuka System of Care. The Nuka Institute conducts trainings and presentations and hosts site visits. In 2011, SCF welcomed more than 200 people to its Anchorage campus for its inaugural Nuka System of Care Conference. Feedback from participants indicated they connected with SCF’s improvement story and were eager to tailor SCF’s best practices to their own unique settings.

When people contact the Nuka Institute, SCF’s outcomes measurement is often a topic of great interest. SCF’s journey with measurement started in its infancy. SCF was able to track and measure, but not able to identify best practices on a large scale. Once SCF started to empanel customers to primary care teams, the clinics were able to identify who was responsible and accountable for each customer-owner’s screenings and care. This was a step forward, but it wasn’t until data professionals joined the team that SCF was able to pull reports and analyze actionable data. Among the Nuka System of Care’s great successes was the establishment of the SCF Data Mall in 2003.

The Data Mall has enabled SCF employees to learn from each other in

the pursuit of the best outcomes for all customer-owners. Performance data is segmented, so that employees can ask the top performers in providing excellent health care what they did to be successful and then integrate this into their own work. Provider teams are able to not only evaluate their current performance against their peers, but also against past performance and nationally accepted benchmarks. This data-driven approach, coupled with the right training, support and methodologies, has helped SCF achieve tremendous gains in performance, and therefore health outcomes.

SCF’s leadership has created a culture where ideas for improvement – at least, those in alignment with SCF’s operational principles – are fully supported. Employees are empowered to listen to the voice of the customer-owner and find systems and process improvements that can best meet their needs. Improvement teams in each division help the effort by coaching employees through small tests of change and learning, using SCF’s improvement tools, before broad implementation.

These practices, and many more, were highlighted in SCF’s application to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, and resulted in the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recognition in 2011.



Southcentral Foundation Vice Chair of the Board and CIRI President Emeritus Charles Anderson speaks at the inaugural Nuka System of Care Conference.



“ Our Nuka System of Care is owned by our customers and based on relationships, so we’ve been very good at having conversations with each other about what’s working and not working. However, we were growing so fast, we needed to focus on our infrastructure and find tools that would help us make our changes in a systematic way. We started using the Baldrige tools and performance criteria in 2004. The Baldrige process provides us with questions to ask ourselves about what we do, how we do it, and how we know it’s making a difference. Baldrige fits SCF’s philosophy, and has helped us carry out our corporate goals of Shared Responsibility, Commitment to Quality, Family Wellness and Operational Excellence. When we received the Baldrige National Quality Award, it validated more than just the power of our great planning and improvement tools and measurements. It also proved that knowing who your customers are and having every customer and employee take a role in improvement produces great health outcomes!

The Baldrige Award recognizes 30 years of health care transformation led by our Alaska Native customer-owners. The Native Community, our leadership and our workforce are full of brave, courageous out-of-the-box thinkers that move forward in relationship and make things happen. ”

- Michelle Tierney, SCF Vice President of Organizational Development and Innovation

## Highlights from Southcentral Foundation’s recent years

### 2011

- SCF breaks ground for the *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center in Wasilla, Alaska.
- SCF launches a comprehensive public awareness campaign on youth suicide prevention.
- SCF hosts its inaugural Nuka System of Care Conference, with 150 participants from all over the world.

- SCF is one of four recipients of the 2011 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

### 2012

- SCF celebrates its 30th anniversary.
- A journalist visits during the second annual Nuka System of Care Conference and features SCF’s Nuka System of Care in his editorial in *The New York Times*.

### 2013

- SCF serves 60,000 customer-owners and maintains a workforce of 1,600 employees.
- Health care leaders from a dozen states and three countries take part in SCF’s third annual Nuka System of Care Conference.



# March of Dimes bestows annual nurse of the year awards

By ANTHC and SCF Public Relations



Southcentral Foundation Case Manager Tracie Wright, of the Outpatient Pediatrics Clinic, was one of three Alaska Native Medical Center nurses to take home a March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award in November.

Every year, the March of Dimes Alaska Chapter honors Alaskans whose leadership and contributions have made a significant impact in their community and in the nursing profession.

“Nurses of the Year” are selected in several practice areas. Three nurses from the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) earned the 2013 honors, including one Southcentral Foundation (SCF) nurse.

“These exceptional nurses exemplify what we appreciate about all of our nurses,” said SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb, a past recipient of the March of Dimes “Friend of Nursing” award. “We value not only their tremendous skill, but also the compassion and care they put into their relationships with customer-owners and co-workers.”

SCF Case Manager Tracie Wright won the Patient and Family Centered Care Nurse of the Year Award for her willingness to go

above and beyond to advocate for families receiving outpatient pediatric services at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center at ANMC. She was instrumental in starting a free summer camp for school-age children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis. In 2012, Camp ARCTIC (Arthritis Can’t Tame my Independence and Courage), became the first camp of its kind in Alaska and has interest from the national Arthritis Foundation to support the camp and help it grow.

Brittany Andrew, of the ANMC Central Nursing Office, was awarded the Direct Care Award for her effective communication skills, diligent attention to details, outstanding clinical skills and highly effective time management skills as a registered nurse with ANTHC. She is also a volunteer for the Make-A-Wish Foundation and a member of the National Society for Collegiate Scholars.

Sherry Hammock received the Federal/Military Award for demonstrating commitment to the mission of the Commissioned Corps as a nurse case manager, pediatric endocrine nurse and pediatric diabetes education professional for ANMC’s inpatient and outpatient pediatrics. To ensure a continuity of care, she travels to four rural clinics a year and visits pediatric speech/language pathology customer-owners via video teleconference. She also helps manage 50-60 children that attend the Alaska diabetes camp where she also helped boost the enrollment of Alaska Native children with diabetes.

Other ANMC nurses were also nominated, including SCF Nutaqsiivik Nurse Christa Phelps for the Maternal Child Health award, SCF Case Manager Marlyn Morgan for the Mentoring award, SCF Case Manager Barry Skelton for the Direct Care award, and SCF Certified Nurse Midwife Bonnie Bishop Stark for the Advanced Practice award.

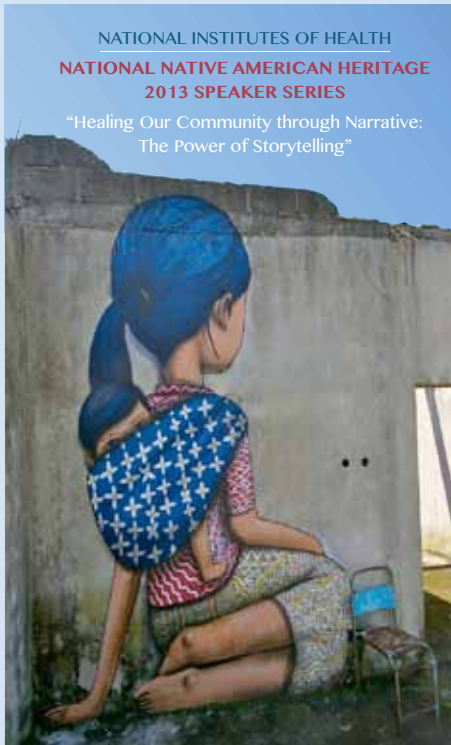
Congratulations to these employees and to all that work together to provide the best services and care for ANMC customer-owners.

## Dr. Ted Mala speaks at the National Institutes of Health

By SCF Public Relations

Dr. Ted Mala, director of tribal relations and traditional healing at Southcentral Foundation (SCF), was featured as part of the National Native American Heritage Speaker Series at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Rockville, Maryland. He spoke Nov. 14 on the topic “Healing Our Community through Narrative: The Power of Storytelling.”

In Mala’s remarks, he emphasized SCF’s Alaska Native ownership and management and SCF’s achievement in being the first tribal organization to receive the Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award. Instead of focusing on the health disparities that many Native Communities face, Mala shared a more positive account of how Alaska Native people have taken control of their wellness and health care.



# Southcentral Foundation’s partnership with charter school featured in best practice publication

By SCF Public Relations

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) was recently featured in “Best Practices: A blueprint for success” published by the Anchorage School District/Anchorage Chamber of Commerce School Business Partnerships.

SCF was highlighted for its partnership with the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School. As a result of a suggestion from Rasmuson Foundation President/CEO Diane Kaplan, and under the leadership of SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb, SCF Vice President of Behavioral Services Chanda Aloysius visited the school a year ago to talk about potential partnerships.

Soon after, SCF Clinician Marta Muntean, of Inupiaq descent, began to visit the school for a few hours each week.

Muntean, a master’s level therapist and also a mother, provides guidance and assistance with student behavior. Teachers appreciate her as a resource who can offer techniques for supporting positive student behavior, either with specific students or in the classroom in general. From the students’ perspective, she is simply someone that greets them with a cheerful, calming smile, helps them during class and attentively listens.

According to the Anchorage School District/Anchorage Chamber of Commerce,

“In her (Muntean’s) role, the students open up on a different level. She gives students guidance and encouragement. Marta’s role is not that of a therapist; it is that of a helper and a listening ear.”

Muntean also chaperones field trips and stays late for many of the school’s family night evenings, which is another way SCF collaborates with the school.

SCF is proud to connect with families and teachers through this School Business Partnership, which is viewed as part of the mission to “work together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.”

Awards

Honoring national, state and local leaders



# Healthy smiles begin with the very first tooth

## Southcentral Foundation Pediatric Dentist Dr. James Singleton answers questions about a child’s first visit to the dentist

By SCF Dental

### When should I take my child to the dentist for the first checkup?

- The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that children be seen by the dentist between six months and a year, as this is the age that children typically get their first teeth.
- This first appointment allows the dentist to perform a thorough oral exam and an opportunity to give valuable information to parents about their children’s dental development, prevention of cavities and injuries to the mouth.

### What should I use to clean my baby’s first teeth?

- Some parents use a soft cloth or finger mitten to clean the teeth. Our clinic provides parents with a toothbrush that looks like a teething ring, so that the child becomes accustomed to the feel of the bristles.
- The toothbrushes that our clinic provides are extremely soft and will clean the teeth effectively without injuring the gums.

### How often does my child need to see the dentist?

- Generally an exam every year is adequate but some children, either because of their risk of getting dental cavities or some other condition that the dentist wants to monitor, are seen every six months.

### Are baby teeth really that important to my child? Aren’t the baby teeth going to fall out anyway?

- Primary (baby) teeth are very important for many oral health reasons. Proper diet and nutrition, speech development, and maintaining space for permanent teeth that will erupt later, are just some of the critical functions of primary teeth.

- Painful or abscessed teeth can affect school performance, self-image and social interaction with friends and classmates.
- Recent studies associate poor dental health with heart problems and other systemic conditions.

### How can I prevent decay caused by nursing?

- What used to be called “baby bottle tooth decay” is mostly associated with the child using the bottle or breast when they are not actively feeding.
- If milk is allowed to pool in the mouth it will become sour, especially at night. The bacteria in the mouth then use this source of sugar to make acid, which breaks down the teeth at a very rapid rate.
- If use of the bottle or breast is discontinued once the child stops actively feeding, and the teeth are wiped off or brushed before sleeping, the risk of dental cavities is greatly diminished.
- It should be a goal for a child to be drinking from a sippy cup by the time they are a year old. Brushing twice a day, after breakfast and right before bedtime, with a small swipe of children’s toothpaste is also valuable to prevent dental cavities in children.

For more information, or to schedule a checkup for your child, please contact the Southcentral Foundation Fireweed Dental Clinic at (907) 729-2000.



The Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center Dental Clinic is offering new pediatric dental services for children ages 6 and under on Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Customer-owners living in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley can make appointments by calling (907) 631-7690.

## Check It Out: Family Matters Night

By SCF Public Relations

Join Southcentral Foundation (SCF) on Thursday evenings for Family Matters Night, a potluck gathering and family-friendly event. This is an excellent opportunity to socialize, get a closer look at learning circles, and spend quality time with your children during a night out in a healthy and supportive environment.

Family Matters Night offers learning circles that strengthen and build relationships and cover a range of topics, including cultural activities, nutrition, fitness, parenting, recovery support and more.

“I appreciate the Family Matters Night learning circles because it’s where people with similar challenges in life have a chance to get together in a safe place and talk about how to deal with the problems we face,” said Jocko Younger, a recent Family Matters Night participant.

Bring your favorite dish for a healthy potluck meal and start a fun, new weekly routine with your family!

### Family Matters Night

4201 Tudor Centre Drive,  
Anchorage  
Weekly, on Thursdays  
Potluck meal  
5:30 p.m.  
Learning circles  
6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

For more information, please contact SCF Learning Circle Manager Sandy Bohling at (907) 729-5725 or sbohling@scf.cc.

# Expanding learning circles as an option for customer-owners

By SCF Public Relations

Many different types of learning circles will be available at Southcentral Foundation (SCF) in 2014. The term “circle” is used to describe people coming together to explore a topic or subject. SCF’s learning circles will be tailored to different needs including focuses on cultural activities, nutrition, fitness, parenting, pregnancy and recovery support. New learning circles will be scheduled as early as February at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center and SCF Health Education and Wellness Center.

Learning circles may sound like something new, but have been used at SCF for many years, including in the Traditional Healing Clinic, Behavioral Health Clinic,

within the Family Wellness Warriors Initiative, and as part of employee trainings. The new learning circle options offer easy access for customer-owners, as well as opportunities for connecting with peers, sharing life experiences, and supporting one another. This expansion of services is aimed at building healthy relationships and promoting healthy communities, and aligns with SCF’s philosophy and values.

While there are many learning circles open to the community, some may require that you are a SCF customer-owner or are referred by a provider as part of SCF’s

holistic approach to health care. SCF’s Nuka System of Care is oriented toward working together with individuals, families and communities to achieve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.

Information is available for each learning circle through your provider or on SCF’s Learning Circle and Events Calendar posted at [www.southcentralfoundation.localist.com](http://www.southcentralfoundation.localist.com).

If you have any questions about the offerings, please contact SCF Learning Circle Manager Sandy Bohling at (907) 729-5725 or sbohling@scf.cc.





# Rural Community Wellness

## Rural health clinics host safeTALK trainings

By SCF Denaa Yeets’

More than 20 participants attended safeTALK trainings held in Nikolai, Takotna and McGrath this December. At the request of these communities, Southcentral Foundation (SCF) offered this opportunity to learn how to connect people who have thoughts of suicide to suicide first aid resources. The trainings were open to all community members ages 15 and older.

Participants of safeTALK training are able to move beyond common tendencies to dismiss conversations about or avoid suicide. They also learn how to take that next step of connecting a person with thoughts of suicide to local intervention caregivers.

SCF Director of Employee and Community Assistance Dr. Bob Chaney

visited the villages with the safeTALK trainer to offer support to participants and other community members after each training.

“It was a positive training for our community,” said Colin Meglitsch, Community Health Aide at McGrath Regional Health Center. “And it was very well attended.”

A Lead the Change presentation was also provided to the middle school and high school students in Nikolai and McGrath by SCF Behavioral Health. This presentation informs students of signs of concern in relation to suicide risk, and encourages them to speak to a friend if they are concerned, connect a person who may be thinking about suicide to the appropriate resources, and take action when someone needs help.

## Advisory council membership

By SCF Public Relations

The Village Service Management Team (VSMT) is an advisory committee to the Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Board of Directors on matters pertaining to the 55 villages of the Anchorage Service Unit. In December, new officers were elected to serve as VSMT leadership.

Tim Anelon of Iliamna Lake Villages is VSMT’s new chair. In addition, Alice Verdene Anselment of Upper Kuskokwim Area Villages is the new vice chair, and Jennifer Yeoman of Kenaitze Indian Tribe is the new secretary.

VSMT was established by the SCF Board of Directors in 1998 and works together to ensure the highest quality care for SCF’s more than 13,000 rural customer-owners.



Village Service Management Team chair Tim Anelon.



Village Service Management Team secretary Jennifer Yeoman.

# Healthy Heart Challenge: Take the quiz!

By SCF Health Education

### TRUE OR FALSE?

**Heart attacks happen suddenly, so there isn’t much you can do to prevent having one.**

**FALSE.** As many as three out of four cases of heart disease may be prevented by changes in lifestyle.

Some of the most important things to lower your risk are:

- Physical activity, aim for at least 30 minutes daily, but any is beneficial!

Southcentral Foundation offers appointments with exercise specialists to help you meet your health goals, call (907) 729-2689.

- Eat a healthy diet. You can help prevent heart disease by including at least five daily servings of fruits and vegetables into your daily routine, and eating foods high in fiber and low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.
- Choose not to smoke or use tobacco products.
- Visit your provider for routine

check-ups to track your cholesterol, blood pressure, weight and blood glucose.

### TRUE OR FALSE?

**Smoking is bad for the lungs, but doesn’t really affect the heart.**

**FALSE.** When you smoke your heart beats faster, your arteries become narrower and your blood pressure goes up. The increased blood pressure damages blood vessels and your heart has to work harder to pump blood through your body.

After 24 hours of not smoking, there is less chance of having a heart attack.

Southcentral Foundation offers a tobacco cessation program. To schedule an appointment, call (907) 729-2689.

### TRUE OR FALSE?

**You can’t tell if you have high blood pressure by how your body feels, you can only find out by having your blood pressure checked.**

**TRUE.** People with high blood pressure may have it for many years without any symptoms, which is why it’s important to have it checked regularly

High blood pressure can cause serious problems such as a heart attack, stroke or kidney problems, and is sometimes called a “silent killer.”

### TRUE OR FALSE?

**You will know if you are having a heart attack.**

**FALSE.** Although the majority of heart attacks have common symptoms, at least a quarter of people having a heart attack have either no signs or untypical symptoms.

Common heart attack symptoms include pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, back or arm(s), chest pain or discomfort, feeling weak or faint, or shortness of breath.

On average, only about half of the women having a heart attack will have chest pain and the other half will show untypical symptoms such as headaches, nausea, fatigue and stomach upset.

### TRUE OR FALSE?

**If you think you might be having a heart attack, it’s best to wait to find out before calling a doctor or going to a hospital.**

**FALSE.** When you have a heart attack, the faster you get care, the better your health outcome will be. Even if you’re not sure, have it checked out immediately or call 911.

Many people do not want to believe they are having a heart attack or stroke, are not convinced the symptoms are serious, or think the symptoms are caused by something less serious such as acid reflux or indigestion.



Heart disease is preventable and controllable. Will you pledge to take at least one small step to reduce your risk of heart disease?



# Commitment to Quality

## Continued from page 1, Family wellness

For example, SCF Behavioral Health and FWWI are working together to offer new service options geared at breaking the silence and helping with the impacts of past harm. They are also partnering with SCF Health Education to host a weekly Family Matters Night, where families share a potluck meal and then move into learning circles to build relationships with their peers facing similar challenges.

In SCF’s residential behavioral health programs and in primary care, there are trauma-focused screenings, brief interventions and referrals to FWWI activities and other services that are supportive and protective of family wellness. Behavioral health consultants are available during primary care visits to further support families and offer guidance on developmental stages for families with children.

Our Traditional Healing Clinic and Native Men’s Wellness Program help in many ways, including restoring traditional values that promote healthier ways of relating. FWWI is mentoring and collaborating with Native Men’s Wellness Program employees to increase the chances of success in the program’s four focus areas: Healthy Living, Awareness, Cultural Connectivity, and Employability.

Our OB-GYN and pediatrics clinics are promoting healthy family changes by working to improve coordination and effectiveness of care from pre-conception to age 5. The programs are implementing practices that are known to improve bonding between mother and child, and are also partnering with Alaska Cares and the Office of Children Services to improve referral processes and the customer-owner experience.

FWWI is engaging churches, nonprofit organizations, families, and entire communities. The healing work is being invited into many regions of the state through FWWI’s three-year partnership model focused on community capacity building, training and consultation. Community partners, such as local schools and law enforcement, are also working with programs such as the Nilavena Subregional Clinic to create local awareness around domestic violence and child maltreatment.

To restore wellness within the state of Alaska, SCF will continue its history of partnership for multifaceted prevention programming and supportive care. The goal is physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness for the individual, the family, the community, and the world in which we live.

## Making the Fast Track faster

By SCF Medical Services Division

Are you and your family familiar with the Alaska Native Medical Center’s (ANMC) Fast Track? The Fast Track option is available in the ANMC Emergency Department for customer-owners with a low-risk emergent need such as a sprained ankle or high fever. In order to decrease waiting time, customer-owners who check into the Emergency Department with these kinds of needs are triaged to the Fast Track.

Over the course of 2013, Fast Track worked on improving its efficiency in order to provide a higher quality of care to an increased number of customer-owners. For example, just since the beginning of 2013, Fast Track decreased the length of stay by seven minutes. Employees working at Fast Track also have better access to data that allows further improvement.

“Providers are interested in how they’re doing and always want to improve,” said SCF Fast Track Manager Chanse Haas. “We have made extraordinary strides to collect the data needed to improve the access for customer-owners. This has allowed us to improve throughput as well as reduce the number of customer-owners who left without being seen.”

In 2014, Fast Track will continue working with improvement staff and leadership to sustain the changes and, like other SCF programs, become a model for similar clinics across the nation.

## We listened: New research on genetics set to begin

By SCF Research Department

For nearly five years, Southcentral Foundation (SCF) has been studying how genes influence people’s responses to medications for heart disease, breast cancer, and organ transplants. This specific type of research on the relationship between genes and medication is called pharmacogenetics. With the use of pharmacogenetics, researchers can help determine what types of treatment work best for different people.

In 2013, SCF received a grant from the Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH) that will broaden pharmacogenetic research in a growing partnership with the University of Washington.

Guided by community input, the expansion of pharmacogenetic research at SCF includes two new studies. The first study will see how genes may affect an individual’s response to medications used for tobacco cessation. The second study will explore whether Alaska Native people think medications should be used in treating alcohol-related problems and what they think of current treatment options offered. These studies could lead to improvements in treatment and future research on other health conditions such as pain or depression.

Receiving the NARCH grant enables SCF to expand research training not only for staff, but also for students. This will provide opportunities for customer-owners and providers to be involved in research designed to improve Alaska Native health.

If you would like to join a research project or training opportunity, please call the SCF Research Department at (907) 729-8575.



# Access to Recovery

### Do you:

- want to learn cultural arts and crafts?
- need a bus pass for transportation?
- have an interest in taking computer courses?
- want to get connected with faith-based programs?
- like to increase your physical activities and go to a local gym?
- need new eye glasses or contacts?
- want to learn how to play an instrument?
- want to connect with peer support?

### Eligibility requirements include:

- Alaska Native and/or American Indian heritage.
- Meet the income eligibility requirements.
- Applicants must be an adult, age 18 or older.
- Screen positive for substance use in your past or present and complete follow up with your care coordinator.

### We can help!

Southcentral Foundation’s Access to Recovery Program can provide you with funding to participate in a wide range of recovery support services.

This material was developed, in part, under grant number 5H79Tl023136-02 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.

For more information, please contact:  
**Access to Recovery**  
4155 Tudor Centre Drive, Suite 104  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
(907) 729-4253  
www.southcentralfoundation.com





# Nuka is about customer ownership

By SCF Public Relations

Alaska Native people began to assume management of our health care system more than 30 years ago. Today, the growth and transformation of Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) Nuka System of Care continues to be empowering to Alaska Native individuals, families and communities.

A key feature of SCF’s Nuka System of Care is that Alaska Native people are “customer-owners”. The use of the word “customer” encourages a respectful, responsive, service-oriented attitude by providers and employees. It also encourages a more active role for those receiving care and services. The use of the word “owner” is to remind everyone involved that our system is customer owned. It also aligns with SCF’s philosophy that the individual and family/household are put firmly in the driver’s seat for their lifelong health care journey.

“Ownership of one’s own health journey in the context of family and friends is central to everything the Nuka System of Care is,” says SCF Vice President of Medical Services Dr. Douglas Eby. “It recasts the clinical staff as coaches, supporters, advisors and partners for the long haul.”

Providers and customer-owners, along with our families, work together to make informed health care decisions within SCF’s Nuka System of Care. Beyond day-to-day decisions, customer-owners are also heavily involved in the further development and management of our health care system.

Several customer-owners were asked at an SCF Gathering to share what owning the Nuka System of Care meant to them. Responses ranged from the impact of ownership on healthy eating choices and exercise, to staying up to date on important health screenings and remaining tobacco free.

One customer-owner shared her appreciation of the Nuka System of Care’s emphasis on healthy living. Another said, “Being part of SCF is like going home.” While a third was enthusiastic about the integration of care: “I communicate with my primary care provider who then communicates with other departments so that I get the best care!”

Through consistent and ongoing relationships with providers, and strong communication at all levels, customer-owners will continue to maintain and improve on the progress we have made in the creation, maintenance, and sustainability of our health care system.

*In a system that has been designed, created, and improved by YOU, the customer-owner, what does ownership of the Nuka System of Care mean to you? In what ways do you feel empowered knowing that you’ve built this system and that you have the power to make changes? Please send your responses to SCFMediaRelations@scf.cc.*



“Ownership of one’s own health journey in the context of family and friends is central to everything the Nuka System of Care is,” says Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Vice President of Medical Services Dr. Douglas Eby.

## “Open access” comes with a range of options

By SCF Medical Services Division

The Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Nuka System of Care is the entire health care system working together with Alaska Native people to achieve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. An important feature of the Nuka System of Care is open access to your primary care team and to your personal health record through the Web-based myANMC tool.

A good first step to reaching your overall health and wellness goals is to contact your primary care team to discuss the best way to meet your needs.

Here are some helpful tips for scheduling a visit with your primary care provider:

- Mornings tend to be less busy than afternoons.
- Arrive 15 minutes early for appointments to allow time for important screenings.
- Remember to bring your insurance information.
- Clinic hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, with some teams working evenings and Saturdays

Often, your needs can be met over the phone or by email. Examples of services that can be provided over the phone include:

- Referrals to a support clinic to get lab draws or blood pressure checks
- Referrals to specialty services such as the Traditional Healing Clinic, or the SCF Health Education and Wellness Center
- Medication refills
- Home self-care

For non-urgent matters, you can also communicate with your primary care team through myANMC, a free online health management tool for customer-owners. Once you have registered, you can access myANMC anywhere you have access to the Internet – home, work, school, the library, etc. Within this tool, you can send secure messages to your primary care team (normal turnaround time is one full business day), request appointments, and view clinical data including:

- Allergies
- Health issues
- Immunizations
- Medications
- Surgeries or procedures

You can access lab results separately using the Lab Results link in the Health Record navigation panel. For up-to-date features and information on myANMC, please visit [www.scf.cc/myANMC](http://www.scf.cc/myANMC).

*If you have any questions about your access to primary care, please call (907) 729-3300. Your provider and primary care team are ready to help!*

# Developing new depression treatment app

By SCF Research Department

Depression affects one out of every five people at least once in their lifetime. Unfortunately, only half of those suffering from depression receive any form of treatment, and most of those who do discontinue it before it has a chance to be effective.

In an effort to decrease the percentage of customer-owners suffering from depression, Southcentral Foundation (SCF) began screening for depression in primary care clinics 12 years ago. SCF is currently creating an iPad based app

to support customer-owners making choices about treatment. This tool will provide information about treatment options including strengths and weaknesses of different treatments.

To create this tool, the SCF Research Department collected input from customer-owners, leadership and primary care providers. Each group shared that the app should talk about common causes and types of depression among Alaska Native people. The groups also suggested that SCF provide information about depression treatment options, with and without medication.

SCF Research and the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center (ANPCC) will be asking some customer-owners and providers to test the new iPad app this year. The first tests will ensure the app is quick, easy to use and helpful. After the first phase of testing, customer-owners will have the option to use the app at all of the ANPCC clinics.

*For more information about the app, please call the SCF Research Department at (907) 729-8575. For more information about signs of and treatment for depression, please contact your primary care provider.*





A picture says a thousand words.

## Elder Christmas Party



Southcentral Foundation (SCF) employees sing Christmas carols at SCF's annual Elder Christmas Party at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center.



SCF Vice President of Executive and Tribal Services Ileen Sylvester honors Elders and SCF Elder Program employees on stage at the Elder Christmas Party.



Nearly 500 Elders attended the festive event Dec. 17, which included a lunch service.

## Russian Christmas Celebration



St. Innocent Russian Orthodox Cathedral Archpriest Father Peter Chris presented the history of Starring and then led the choral group. Starring is a ritual that represents the three wise men following the star.

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium hosted a Russian Christmas Celebration with Elders, customer-owners and employees on Monday, Jan. 9, at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby.



The star holder spun the star as the choir group sang Orthodox Christian hymns and Christmas carols.



The procession at SCF stopped in front of offices and waiting rooms at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center (ANPCC). SCF Director of Tribal Relations and Traditional Healing Dr. Ted Mala joined with the procession.



# Healthy Food Fun

## Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center

Southcentral Foundation is now offering “Healthy Food Fun” cooking demonstrations Mondays and Fridays at the *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center and Anchorage Native Primary Care Center.

Health educators cook and provide free samples of everything from roasted red pepper soup to quinoa dishes. Who knew that recipes featuring fruits, veggies and whole grains could be so be tasty, healthy and fun?

*Turn to Page 10 for the February and March schedule of demonstrations.*



The Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Health Education Department offers cooking demonstrations on Thursdays in the *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center lobby. SCF Health Educators share recipes and prepare samples of healthy, delicious and seasonal foods for customer-owners and employees.



SCF Health Educator Kim Aspelund discusses a roasted root vegetable recipe, seasonal shopping and the nutritional value of fall foods.



SCF Health Educator Cherise Cummings shares a sample of roasted kale chips and discusses the health benefits of kale.



Visitors to the Healthy Food Fun booth sampled healthy snacks and had an opportunity to make support cards for cancer survivors.



# SCF leadership visits White House

By SCF Public Relations

By personal invitation from President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama, Southcentral Foundation (SCF) President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb, along with her guest, SCF Vice President of Resource and Development/Chief of Staff Dr. Kevin Gottlieb, attended a Dec. 13 holiday reception at the White House.

The event was hosted by the president and first lady on the first floor of the White House. Each room featured special Christmas trees and decorations related to the theme, “Gather Around: Stories of the Season.”

In accordance with the storytelling theme, Dr. Katherine Gottlieb wore a special kuspuk made by SCF Tribal Doctor Sarah

Smith. “The kuspuk has a lot of bead work,” said Smith. “That is part of our culture, when we bead we tell stories.”

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb and SCF Vice President of Resource and Development/Chief of Staff Dr. Kevin Gottlieb pose in front of the presidential portrait of U.S. President John F. Kennedy at the White House.



## Circle of Life: Healthy aging

By SCF Public Relations

Elders are highly respected within our Alaska Native communities and are considered our culture bearers and first teachers. For many, their first language was their traditional language and they lived the subsistence lifestyle lived by our ancestors so many years ago. Traditionally, to reach old age and become an Elder meant that you had survived and that you had a wealth of knowledge to share with younger generations. This sharing of knowledge remains equally important today. Below, three Elders share guidance for living a full, healthy life.

Staying healthy becomes increasingly important as we age. Choosing nutritious foods and keeping active is important to maintaining a well-balanced life as an Elder. Alaska Native Elder Max Huhndorf from Nulato incorporates many colorful fruits and vegetables into his diet, including baby carrots, turnips, red and green cabbage, and blueberries. He also drinks green tea, and enjoys physical activity throughout all the seasons. “I love shoveling snow,” said Huhndorf. “It is my free Alaska Club.” Huhndorf recognizes that the mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of wellness are just as important as the physical. He mentioned that he and his wife pray as part of their daily routine, and he encourages “tending to your mind like you tend to a garden.”

Agnes Brookey, an Elder from Eklutna, is always on the move. She shares that she is losing her eyesight, yet finds ways to get out of the house and keep busy. She frequently walks to get from place to place. Her advice for staying young?: “Keep your sense of humor. If you live long, you have got to be happy.”

Louise Britton from Pilot Station is a Southcentral Foundation Elder Provider and also an Elder. She enjoyed a long time with her parents and grandparents and shared that her grandmother lived to be 104. Her grandmother taught her “Be supportive of your family, and learn forgiveness. If you forgive, it gives you strength to go on.” She also passed on the value of kindness, especially kindness to Elders. “When you’re kind, it goes from one person to another,” said Britton. The last piece of advice she shared from her grandmother: “Accept who you are, it shows happiness to everyone.”

As we get older and our bodies age, we become more susceptible to disease and illness. No matter what age you are now, think about healthy everyday habits you can start today that will become routine as you advance in age. Even better, share what you have learned with your family and friends so that they can be healthy, too.

## 2014 Alaska Native Art Auction

By Koahnic Broadcast Corporation

Koahnic Broadcast Corporation’s Alaska Native Art Auction will be held Thursday, Feb. 20, at the Dena’ina Civic and Convention Center from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

This annual fundraising event features artwork by Alaska Native artists from throughout the state. The proceeds from the auction support the Native programming heard on KNBA 90.3 FM, including National Native News, Native American Calling and Earthsongs.

Koahnic is accepting donations of Alaska Native artwork for the auction. For more information about donating

artwork or reserving seats at the event, please contact Cindy Hector at (907) 793-3528.

To learn more about Koahnic or to listen online to programming on KNBA 90.3 FM, visit [www.knba.org](http://www.knba.org).



**Photo courtesy of KNBA.** Guests at the 2013 Alaska Native Art Auction bid on silent auction items.

## Southcentral Foundation community events

### February

#### Weekly

**Family Matters Night**  
Thursdays, potluck 5:30 p.m., learning circles 6:30-7:45 p.m.  
Southcentral Foundation Health Education & Wellness Center  
4201 Tudor Centre Drive

#### Twice weekly

**Healthy Food Fun demonstrations and samples**  
Monday, Feb. 3, 8-10 a.m.  
Other Mondays and Fridays (except President’s Day), 11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, Healthy Kitchen Room 1127

Mondays (except President’s Day), 12:30-1:30 p.m.  
*Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center lobby

#### Friday, Feb. 7

**National Wear Red Day® fashion show and wellness activities**  
11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby

#### Wednesday, Feb. 12

**Fiddle My Heart Elders’ Dance**  
5-8 p.m.  
Southcentral Foundation Gathering Room, 4501 Diplomacy Drive

#### Friday, Feb. 14

**Love Your Heart Health Fair**  
11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby

### March

#### Weekly

**Family Matters Night**  
Thursdays, potluck 5:30 p.m., learning circles 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Southcentral Foundation Health Education & Wellness Center  
4201 Tudor Centre Drive

#### Twice weekly

**Healthy Food Fun demonstrations and samples**  
Monday, March 3 and Friday, March 21, 8-10 a.m.  
Other Mondays and Fridays (except March 28), 11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center Healthy Kitchen Room 1127

Mondays, 12:30-1:30 p.m.  
*Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center lobby

#### First three Mondays

**Colon Carnival**  
Noon-3 p.m.  
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby

#### Tuesdays, March 11 and 18

**Get Your Garden Growing with free seedlings and door prizes**  
10 a.m.- 2 p.m.  
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby

#### Wednesday, March 12

**Tobacco Free Kids Day family-friendly activities**  
Noon-2 p.m.  
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby

#### Tuesday, March 25

**American Diabetes Association Alert Day®, with free diabetes risk test**  
10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby

#### Saturday, March 29

**Southcentral Foundation’s 17th Annual Gathering (see Page 1)**



## Scholarship deadlines

### Indian Health Service (IHS)

IHS currently funds three Health Career Scholarship programs to train the professional health personnel necessary to staff IHS health programs.

**Deadline:** March 28

For more information, visit:  
[www.ihs.gov/scholarship](http://www.ihs.gov/scholarship)

### The CIRI Foundation (TCF) Howard Rock Foundation Scholarship Program

The annual scholarship is available to Alaska Native undergraduate and graduate students. Applicants must be original enrollees of an ANCSA regional and/or Village Corporation, direct lineal descendants, or members of a tribal organization affiliated with Alaska Village Initiatives ([www.akvillage.com](http://www.akvillage.com)). Awards are made based on available funding from Alaska Village Initiatives, Inc. and through generous donations from Verbeck Smith.

**Deadline:** March 31

For more information, visit:  
[www.thecirifoundation.org](http://www.thecirifoundation.org)

### Bering Straits Foundation

Various scholarships available

Eligible applicants must be either a shareholder of Bering Straits Native Corporation or a lineal descendant of a shareholder of Bering Straits Native Corporation.

**Deadline:** April 30 for high school seniors for fall term, all others June 30

For more information, visit:  
[www.beringstraits.com](http://www.beringstraits.com)

### Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Various scholarships available

Provides scholarship funding to eligible Alaska Native people who meet the program eligibility requirements.

**Deadline:** June 1

For more information, visit:  
[www.citci.org](http://www.citci.org)

# Affordable Care Act

## Complete your Indian Status Exemption paperwork now

*By SCF Public Relations*

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires that individuals show proof of health care coverage – starting this year – to avoid an annual tax penalty, but Alaska Native and American Indian people are eligible for a special lifetime exemption.

While Alaska Native and American Indian people may choose to purchase insurance - a decision that not only benefits their family, but also helps strengthen the tribal health system - they are exempt from the requirement if they can show evidence of:

- Enrollment in a federally recognized Tribe;
- Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) shareholder status (village or regional); or,
- Eligibility to receive services from an Indian Health Service (IHS) facility/Tribal health care provider.

To qualify for the “Indian Status Exemption,” you need to apply through a paper application process before the end of 2014. The Alaska

Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) has created a version of the application with helpful tips on how to fill it out ([anthctoday.org/aca](http://anthctoday.org/aca)), and is encouraging completion no later than Oct. 1 to ensure the federal government has time to process your application before the deadline.

When you complete the application, you must send copies of supporting documents for every member of your family that qualifies for the Indian Status Exemption. Within a few weeks of mailing the form, the federal government will inform you if they need additional information. If you receive this exemption, you will be sent an Exemption Certificate Number that you will need to use on your federal income tax return. It is important to keep a copy of this number in a safe place for future use.

*For assistance with the Indian Exemption Status paperwork, you may contact the ANTHC Health Reform group at (907) 729-7777 or Southcentral Foundation’s Family Health Resources at (907) 729-4470, or visit your local Tribal clinic. To download the application, visit [anthctoday.org/aca](http://anthctoday.org/aca).*

## Already have health care coverage?

You are not required to complete the Indian Status Exemption paperwork if you have health care coverage through Medicaid, Medicare, Denali KidCare, Veteran’s Benefits or through one of your employer’s health insurance plans.

However, this is a lifetime exemption, so you are still encouraged to complete the paperwork in order to prevent a penalty if you are ever unexpectedly without coverage.

# Native Men’s Wellness Program shares goals for 2014

*By SCF Native Men’s Wellness Program*

The beginning of a new year is an exciting time to set goals and take steps toward achieving them. With that in mind, Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) Native Men’s Wellness Program would like to share a few of its plans for 2014 with you.

In response to participant feedback, activities such as drum making and drum group practice will be incorporated into the monthly luncheon lecture series, now titled “Our Stories, We Share.” The program will also pilot a short time for musicians of all backgrounds to share how their traditional music has influenced them today.

The program also received feedback that the late afternoon meeting times for the weekly talking circle, now called “Warrior Learning Circle,” was a barrier to attendance, so SCF decided to schedule additional opportunities. The Warrior Learning Circle will now be offered Tuesday

afternoons from noon to 1 p.m., Thursday afternoons from 3 to 4 p.m., and Thursday evenings as part of Family Matters Night.

Lastly, 2014 will see the launch of a second “You Are a Warrior” Workshop. In today’s society, many men are struggling with their identity as a provider, protector, father, etc. This workshop will be offering useful tools that men can apply to their daily lives.

The Native Men’s Wellness Program will remain focused on four areas: Healthy Living, Awareness, Cultural Connectivity and Employability, and will continue building on successful pilots from last year in 2014.

*These improvements to the program have been made possible by active participation and feedback. If you are an Alaska Native and/or American Indian man, and would like to share any ideas or areas in which the Native Men’s Wellness Program*

*could better meet your needs, please contact Shon Stewman of the SCF Native Men’s Wellness Program at (907) 729-5208.*



Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Manager of Development Joshua Franks learns drum making skills from SCF Tribal Relations Specialist David Harrison, one of the Native Men’s Wellness Program’s featured guest lecturers.



Elder Drum

Promoting independent living through fostering an environment of quality, dignity and pride

MONDAY

Shopping

12:30 to 2 p.m.

Value Village  
Northway Mall  
Fred Meyer  
Sears Mall  
Wal-Mart  
Please call  
(907) 729-6500  
for transportation.  
Space limited!

TUESDAY

Sew and Bead Group

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bingo

12:15 to 1 p.m.

THURSDAY

Health Education on Nutrition and Fitness

1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Now located at the SCF Elder Program  
6901 East Tudor Road

Please call the Southcentral Foundation Health Education Department at (907) 729-2689 for more information.

FRIDAY

Game Day

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

(Every first, second and third Friday of each month)

Game Day is Elder directed, with a variety of games offered.

Movie Day

12:30 p.m.

(Fourth Friday of each month)

Popcorn and juice are provided.

Important Phone Numbers

SCF Elder Program Event Hotline: .... (907) 729-6588

Alaska Native Medical Center: ..... ( 907) 563-2662

Cook Inlet Housing Authority: ..... (907) 793-3000

Senior Benefits: ..... (907) 352-4150

Anchor Rides: ..... (907) 343-2550

People Mover: ..... (907) 343-4536

Food Bank of Alaska: ..... (907) 272-3663

Division of Public Assistance: ..... (907) 269-6599

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP): ..... (907) 272-1444

Salvation Army Meals on Wheels: .... (907) 349-0613

Anchorage Police Department (non-emergency): ..... (907) 786-8500

The impact of Elder Food Drive

By SCF Elder Program

Every year, Southcentral Foundation (SCF) employees come together as a community in an annual drive to donate canned goods, turkeys and hams, and other food items for the SCF Elder Program. Nearly 3,000 food items were donated this fall, making a huge difference for our Elders during the holiday season. The food items were

divided up into 40 individual food boxes for Elders and their families in need of food for the holidays.

One of the Elders who received a food box shared the following note:

*“I wish I could find the perfect way to thank you all for being so thoughtful and caring. You always seem to know just what people need and what will*

*brighten their day. Kindness is such a part of your nature that I’m sure you’re not even aware of some of the little things you do that make such a difference in someone’s life. That’s why I want you to know your generous spirit has touched my life more times than I can count. And so, although I’m sure that “thank you” is a phrase you hear very often, I want to say it again and to tell you that I appreciate you more than*

*you know. God bless you all! Thank you so much.”*

The SCF Elder Program thanks everyone for making this annual activity a success. SCF Dental received special recognition for championing this effort and donating more than 1,300 items. SCF’s Dena A Coy employees also received a special thanks for donating 670 items.

Southcentral Foundation Elders’ Wellness Program

Kristine Friendly paints a holiday card in a painting class with the Elders’ Wellness Program.

Sharon Dye proudly shares her watercolor poinsettia card.

A selection of the cards painted during this seasonal activity with the Elders’ Wellness Program.