

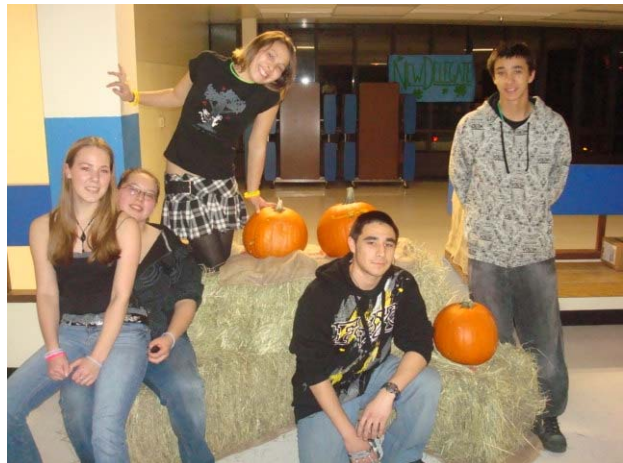


Alaska Association of Student Government (AASG) Fall Conference Palmer, AK October 9-11, 2008

AASG Mission is to provide leadership training, communication, and a student voice for all of its members on a local, state, and national level. AASG Beliefs are: 1.) The organization should promote leadership, character, cooperation, and unity of Alaska's diverse cultures; 2.) The organization should be student run; 3.) The AASG Conference should promote both leadership and political action; 4.) The organization should be the voice for Alaskan students on all pertinent action; 5.) Conferences should be a positive experience for hosting schools. The experience of hosting a conference should provide students with many growth and leadership opportunities.

AASG is involved in a variety of leadership opportunities activities, for example: helping with Winter Special Olympics, RSVP, Let's Vote Alaska program and each summer they send a state delegate to the National Association of Student Councils (NASC) Conference.

The Teen Center Youth Council members **Molly Norback**-Alternate Chair, **Casey Graham**- Co-Chair, **Erin Norback**-Alternate Co-Chair, **Tiana Gibbens**-Community Correspondent and **Casey Graham**-Member and chaperone **Samantha Holmberg** attended the AASG Fall Conference, theme named *Alaska Grown Leadership*, held at Palmer High School. We were 6 of 476 attendees at this years' conference.



Several fundraisers were held in order to travel; scholarships were submitted and accepted for half of the cost of travel and thanks to Isabelle Harrington for requesting additional funds from the Eight Ball Teen Center grant to attend this leadership conference. There will be more fundraising coming soon for their AASG Spring Conference on April 16, 2009 travel to Mt. Edgecumbe in Sitka.

The trip began with the RSVP-Raising Student Voice and Participation Training, formed in 2007. *"School-wide summits conducted by students lie at the heart of RSVP. Then the school Leadership Team forms, and is made up of students who are diverse, representative and willing to listen and honor student voices"*. There were several small group activities that encouraged necessary skills to facilitate meetings, prep rallies, community events, etc. to encourage *students to identify and address issues in their schools and communities.*



Some of the participants from High Schools across the state.

The main focus of this conference was the 24 submitted Resolutions that were all actively discussed, debated and then voted on by all participating schools. Discussions were broken down into Regions and we were in Region 1, the smallest out of 7. All active involvement is from the students, run by students and implemented by students.

Collectively, after discussions in their Region meetings the schools then met in the gym though General Assemblies (GA's) where all schools across the state then have open floor debates and then adoption of resolutions were conducted as a whole. Here they voted on when to adjourn, when to recess and when to table things by holding up a sign that indicated which school or town they were from. Example, the E-Board would say Palmer moves, seconded by McGrath and asked who was in favor and of course who was opposed.



All parliamentary procedures were educationally explained, then illustrated and diligently implemented exactly in the way the City of McGrath and McGrath Native Village Councils conduct their regular meetings. Through a creative twist involving all schools at AASG, they were able to involve each school with active participation through the General Assemblies (GA's).

There were a total of five Regional Meetings for constructive discussions and understanding of the 24 submitted Resolutions, seven General Assemblies that involved open on floor debates in front of the E-Board (in which McGrath students actively participated) and in between workshops that consumed the days starting at 730am-10pm on Thursday, 7:45am -9pm on Friday followed by a recorded dance that evening and 7:45am-7pm on Saturday, the final day.

Erin Norback spoke of interest in writing a resolution to the Spring Conference for a Trade School based in McGrath, and we hope we can all encourage and support such a plan. She is a bright and talented shy one, who really surprised me on her speaking ability in front of a crowd of 476. Tiana Gibbens was so supportive and had no problem voicing her opinions. Molly Norback was very outgoing and talkative on top of being hilarious but was tentative to get her point across in serious situations. Ricky Cristo and Casey Graham also were ones that really surprised me with their interests and involvement.

On Saturday the keynote speaker was Chris Rose of Palmer; the founder and executive director of the Alaska Renewable Energy Project (REAP). Chris Rose is newly appointed to the Governors Renewable Energy Task Force and spoke of this coalition during one of many General Assemblies.

The REAP has adopted five primary strategies to reach their goal:

1. To advocate for the construction of viable renewable energy projects proposed for Alaska;
2. To help develop and implement polices that will lead to increased production of renewable energy;
3. To build a market for renewable energy in Alaska;
4. To foster and demonstrate stakeholder unity in support of renewable energy and;
5. To promote energy efficiency.

REAP is led by a diverse board of directors and works with state and federal energy agencies to help bring the benefits of clean, economic and inexhaustible renewable power to the citizens of Alaska.

After leaving Palmer and rushing back to the hotel, our students didn't stop there with their leadership involvement. We had scheduled a meeting in the lobby of the Holiday Inn Express with Glenn Clark of the McCain Campaign, to discuss the issues as they related on a National level. For more details of what



discussions took place, please ask questions of our youth delegates. With that agenda, we all were drained and exhausted when returning home 😊

To visit the AASG website go to:
<http://aasg.org/cms/>

Student participation in this project is funded through a grant from the State of Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health.

Reported by Samantha Holmberg.