



2026 Alaska Communications' Summer of Heroes

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND FAQ

Now in its 16th year, Alaska Communications' Summer of Heroes is a partnership program between [Alaska Communications](#) and [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska](#) to promote awareness and support for youth development programs throughout the state. Running May 5 through June 14, 2026, Summer of Heroes includes two main components: a youth recognition program and cause-related sales promotion targeting both businesses and consumers. Summer of Heroes events raise awareness for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska and engage Alaskans in a meaningful way.

From its roots as a local telephone company, to becoming the state's leading provider of broadband and managed IT services, Alaska Communications is committed to the local communities where its people live and work. The company recognizes investing in youth and their futures is critical to building local communities that are positive, healthy places to live. That's why youth and education—including leadership and learning opportunities, promoting positive environments to learn and grow, and access to technology—are the core focuses of Alaska Communications' commitment to responsible corporate citizenship.

YOUTH RECOGNITION PROGRAM

What is the Summer of Heroes youth recognition program?

Studies show youth who are engaged in community service tend to do better in school, avoid risky behaviors, and maintain positive relationships with adults and peers. Through Summer of Heroes, Alaska Communications is partnering with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska to recognize five outstanding young heroes, plus one hero from the Employee Program, who are making a difference in their local Alaska communities.

What defines a hero?

A hero can be any Alaska resident between the ages of 6 and 18 who is making a positive difference in his or her community. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following types of efforts:

- Volunteering or raising funds for a cause,
- Making a difference in school through education or sports,
- Making a significant contribution to his or her community,
- Considering others' needs before their own, or
- Inspiring others to take action.

We want to hear about young people who have made their Alaska community better.

How and when will the heroes be recognized?

Alaska Communications and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska will select five outstanding local heroes based on their nomination forms and short answer questions. The heroes will receive:



- a \$2,000 scholarship through the Alaska 529 college savings plan*, and
- special recognition in their local community.

If the youth chooses not to receive the scholarship, a donation to a community non-profit may be made in lieu of the scholarship, at the sponsor's direction.

What are the criteria for nominating a youth for the Summer of Heroes program?

Any youth who meet the above criteria can self-nominate or be nominated by someone they know. The winners will not be selected based on school grades, but rather the positive impact the youth makes on the community and those around them. The nominator could be a parent, guardian, sibling, teacher, coach, mentor, friend or anyone who has a relationship with the child and believes they should be recognized as a local hero.

How do I nominate someone for the Summer of Heroes program?

Starting May 5, nominations can be submitted one of the following two ways:

1. **Online nomination form:** Visit the [Summer of Heroes website](http://www.alaskacommunications.com/summerofheroes) (www.alaskacommunications.com/summerofheroes) and follow the instructions for completing and submitting the nomination form.
2. **Hardcopy nomination form:** Obtain a hardcopy nomination form Alaska Communications' office at 600 Telephone Ave. in Anchorage or by downloading the PDF from the [Summer of Heroes website](http://www.alaskacommunications.com/summerofheroes). Complete the form and submit it in-person at the Alaska Communications office or via email to SummerofHeroes@alaskacommunications.com.

All **online** nominations must be received by 11:59 p.m. AKDT on June 14, 2026.

All **paper** nominations must be received **by 5 p.m. AKDT on June 12, 2026.**

Can I nominate a youth related to an Alaska Communications employee?

Yes. Alaska Communications recognizes one additional youth hero through its Summer of Heroes Employee Program. The internal Employee Program is separate from the external Summer of Heroes program, and only Alaska Communications employee family members are eligible for this single \$2,000 scholarship and recognition.

Participants who would like to nominate a child, grandchild, niece or nephew of an Alaska Communications employee must complete the Summer of Heroes nomination form and fill out the special section for the Employee Program. Employee Program nominations should be submitted via the online form or by email to EmployeeHeroes@acsalaska.com by 11:59 p.m. AKDT on June 14.

Alaska Communications will recognize the selected Employee Program youth hero with a \$2,000 scholarship and local recognition in the hero's community.

See official rules for full details, available at www.alaskacommunications.com/summerofheroes.



What is the timeline for the Summer of Heroes youth recognition program?

May 5	Nomination period opens. Forms are available online and at the Alaska Communications office in Anchorage.
June 12	Paper nomination period closes. Completed forms must be submitted in person by 5 p.m.
June 14	Online nomination period closes. Completed forms must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m.
July	Judging panel reviews nominations and selects 2026 youth heroes
July/August	Heroes are recognized during a special celebration in their local community. Date is dependent on local schedule.
September	Alaska Communications presents donation to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska

Where can I find more information about the Summer of Heroes program?

For more information, please visit www.alaskacommunications.com/summerofheroes. Stay up-to-date on Summer of Heroes initiatives and events by connecting with Alaska Communications on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

SALES PROMOTION TO SUPPORT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

How can I participate to help support Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska?

Alaska Communications recognizes that youth education and development programs, such as the support offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska, are critical to helping children succeed in life. During the Summer of Heroes, Alaska Communications will contribute \$25 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska for every new internet connection established between May 5 and June 14, 2026, up to \$15,000 total. This donation will help support Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska's mentoring relationships and expand the organization's capacity to positively impact the lives of young people in Alaska.

Alaskans can also make individual or business donations directly to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska by visiting www.alaskacommunications.com/summerofheroes.

About Alaska Communications

Alaska Communications is the state's leading provider of broadband and managed IT services in the state. The company operates a highly reliable, advanced statewide data network with the latest technology and the most diverse undersea fiber optic system connecting Alaska to the contiguous U.S.

Alaska Communications in the Community



Alaska Communications started as a local telephone company and today is Alaska's leading provider of broadband and managed IT services. As part of its ongoing commitment to the communities it serves, Alaska Communications engages in activities and programs to support causes that are most important to its employees and customers – youth education and development. Through cash and in-kind donations, employee volunteers, and community involvement programs, the company strives to improve the quality of life for all Alaskans.

More information can be found on the company's website at www.alaskacommunications.com.

2025 HEROES

Makai Warren-Dowl's kindness says it all. From peer mentoring at Special Olympics Alaska to quietly delivering clothes to students in need in his Chugiak community, Makai's the kind of person who lifts people up just by being himself. He's creating a more inclusive world, one friendship at a time.

Shelby Rider is doing all the things to support her North Pole community. She's an EMT, mental health advocate, book drive leader, Aurora Borealis Lions member, community holiday decorator and more. She's raised tens of thousands for mental health, answered emergency calls, and inspired her peers to step up and serve - all without needing a spotlight.

Ella Boerger is changing lives by showing up and helping others feel safe, supported and seen. Her kindness shows up in steady and important ways: comforting newborns at a local hospital, serving meals to Anchorage families in need and encouraging younger kids in remote villages.

Grace Kahn is the kind of leader who makes you want to do better. She supports her Kenai community by refereeing youth sports, tutoring algebra, stocking food pantry shelves and lending a hand at local charity events. She's been mentoring kids through sports for years, volunteering at the food bank and tutoring others in math, making sure every person she encounters feel like an MVP.

Lola Swanson is making sure dance isn't just performance, it's community in her hometown of Seward. She created a youth dance program from the ground up, offering classes, performances and school residencies that give kids a place to belong. She even helped launch a scholarship fund through a partnership with Youth360 to ensure no child misses out.

Xiling Tanner is a civic voice, STEM mentor and Kenai Peninsula 4H agricultural advocate helping shape the future of the Kenai Peninsula. From raising funds for local food programs to coaching young math learners or serving as the student representative to the Kenai Borough City Council, he's creating opportunities and building stronger systems for others.

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