



2020 Alaska Communications' Summer of Heroes

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND FAQ

Now in its 10th year, Alaska Communications' Summer of Heroes is a partnership program between [Alaska Communications](#) and [Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska](#) to promote awareness and support for youth development programs throughout the state. Running from mid-June through mid-August 2020, 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 Boys and Girls Clubs - Alaska and engage Alaskans in a meaningful way. Through the pandemic, Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Alaska are continuing to serve youth in non-traditional methods and they could use our support now, more than ever.

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 Boys & Girls Clubs – 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.

This year, a hero's efforts may have come to light during the pandemic when he/she took action to help others in the community during a challenging time.

How and when will the heroes be recognized?

Alaska Communications and Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska will select five outstanding local heroes based on their nomination forms and short answer questions. The heroes will receive:

- a \$1,500 scholarship through the Alaska 529 college savings plan, and
- special recognition in their local community.*
 - *2020 recognitions may be impacted by COVID-19. Alaska Communications will follow state and local guidelines.

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. This 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 June 22, 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 from any [Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska Clubhouse](#) or by downloading the PDF from the [Summer of Heroes website](#). Complete the form and submit it in-person at a Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska Clubhouse or via email to SummerofHeroes@alaskacommunications.com.

All nominations must be received **by 11:59 p.m. AKDT on August 14.**

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 \$1,500 scholarship and recognition.

Participants who would like to nominate a child or grandchild 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 August 14.

Alaska Communications will recognize the selected Employee Program youth hero with a \$1,500 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?

June 22	Nomination period opens. Forms are available online and at Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska locations .
August 14	Nomination period closes. Completed forms must be submitted online or in person by 11:59 p.m.
August/September	Heroes are recognized during a special celebration in their local community. Date is dependent on local schedule and COVID-19 related health and safety guidelines.
September	Alaska Communications presents donation to Boys and Girls Clubs – Alaska.

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

For more information, please visit www.alaskacommunications.com/summerofheroes or any Boys & Girls Club – Alaska Clubhouse. Stay up-to-date on Summer of Heroes initiatives and events by connecting with Alaska Communications on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

SALES PROMOTION TO SUPPORT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

How can I participate to help support Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska?



Alaska Communications recognizes that youth education and development programs, such as the programs provided by Boys & Girls Clubs, are critical to helping children succeed in life. During the Summer of Heroes, Alaska Communications will contribute \$25 to Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska for every new Unlimited or Business Internet connection established between June 22 and August 14, 2020, up to \$15,000 total. This donation will help support Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska’s programs 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 Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska by visiting www.alaskacom munications.com/summerofheroes.

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

For more information, please visit www.alaskacom munications.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.alaskacom munications.com.

2019 HEROES

Ethan Ahkvaluk, Nome

Simply put, Ethan Ahkvaluk makes his community of Nome a safer and friendlier place for both residents and visitors alike. His community involvement and volunteer service are multi-faceted. He serves as member of the jury for the Nome Youth Court. His work helps rehabilitate juvenile offenders and repair the damage to the community. He is certified in maritime basic training, and has completed additional training in CPR, personal safety and social responsibility, personal survival techniques and maritime basic fire fighter training. He also volunteers for the community safety patrol, ensuring that homeless, transient and inebriated individuals are safe from frigid Bering Sea coastal conditions during times of impairment. A recent graduate of Nome/Beltz High school, Ethan was known for his help to others as well as school programs to benefit his peers. At the age of 18, Ethan is currently trying to work on his emergency trauma technician training to better help the community.

Anna DeVold, Soldotna

Anna DeVold is small but has a significant impact to the world around her. At 14-years-old, she created the Promote Our Pollinators program. This effort helps to educate the public about the importance of pollinators and provides easy-to-implement ways to support these essential creatures that have a multi-billion dollar impact on global food production. Anna created a children’s activity book, instructional fliers, digital and social elements, and presentation materials she shares at community and school events in Soldotna and across the Kenai Peninsula. She is a mentor to elementary students, a role model to her peers and an inspiration to members of her community, business owners, and seniors. Anna is showing others it’s cool to be smart, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) can be exciting for everyone and age doesn’t matter in order to make a positive impact in the community. Anna is collaborating with the city of Soldotna and the Parks and Recreation Department to create permanent Promote Our Pollinator signs and labels in the city’s public gardens, parks and Visitor’s Center.

Sasha Ferguson, Healy



18-year-old Sasha Ferguson is a young woman who cares about others and is passionate about changing the world – not just because it can be a scary place for her, but because she wants it to be better for other people she sees struggling. Sasha shared her personal story of autism after seeing other students struggle. She does not let labels define her and she's not waiting until she grows up to try and make a difference in her community of Healy. Sasha is active in advocating for education, participating in several face-to-face meetings with legislators to talk about the importance of public education with a focus on the needs of students with disabilities. She participates in service learning efforts, is active in her local church and encourages her peers to join in on volunteer efforts to improve their community. In everything she does, Sasha shares joy and kindness. Sasha plans to attend AVTEC for culinary arts training. She also would like to be involved in politics to continue making positive differences in the lives of others.

Zachary Halstead, Kenai

At 15-years-of-age, Zachary Halstead is already known for his kindness and commitment to his Kenai community. While most kids his age are sleeping, Zachary gets up every Tuesday to help make breakfast for students and families at Kenai Alternative High School, an activity he's participated in since first grade. Zachary also serves others through the Help a Veteran Experience Alaska program. He's helped chop wood, build a handicapped ramp, serve and clean up meals, and write articles for his school newspaper to raise awareness about the program. He can be found helping families in need at the food bank or through his local church. His care is also seen through his help of his grandmother. While she was recuperating following a series of medical procedures, he would shovel snow, carry groceries or do whatever was needed. When faced with various opportunities, Zachary is known for always making the choice that would benefit others. Zachary will be attending Kenai Central High School for the 2019-20 school year and plans to continue his volunteer service and serve as an excellent example of the good in his community.

Carlee Rizzo, Nikiski

Carlee Rizzo's unselfish commitment to others is having a positive impact on dozens of families in her Nikiski community as well as the communities around her. After seeing classmates in need, she established the Nikiski Children's Fund to provide everything from shoes and winter clothes to electricity or even driving lessons. The Fund, started in 2015, has raised more than \$16,000 and supports students in schools in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District from Nikiski to Kenai, Soldotna, Homer and Seward. NCF fills in where other organizations can't and immediately addresses the needs of a student. In addition to providing financial or material assistance, the program lets young people know that someone truly cares about them and their needs. As Carlee enters college, she has secured funds to establish an internship to ensure NCF operates at least until 2027. In addition to NCF, Carlee coded and created a video game that teaches elementary students they can be a solution to environmental problems. She also has served as a page and intern in the state legislature and completed an internship at U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski's office in Washington, D.C. Carlee is now attending Utah State University.

Claire Schimmack, Eagle River

Claire Schimmack always pushes herself to be the best she can be, but she also manages to find time to help others in need. She was highly involved in high school, singing in the choir, excelling in academics and earning a Seal of Biliteracy, playing two varsity sports, and serving on her school's activity council and student government. Claire gives back to her Eagle River community in a variety of ways. She has made blankets for a teen recovery center, assisted at the library, served her church community, led afterschool sports clinics for younger children and assembled feminine hygiene kits for young women in need. Claire will attend Western Washington University where she plans to double major in Communication Disorders and Spanish. She hopes to become a speech and language pathologist to help young Alaskans who are suffering from disabilities caused by traumatic injury, autism or fetal alcohol syndrome. Claire is a 2019 youth hero selected from the Alaska Communications' Employee Program. Her father, Barry, is a network technician foreman with the company.

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