

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coastal Villages Puts Alaska's Youth to Work with Record Breaking Participation

ANCHORAGE, AK- Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) employed over 820 young Alaskans this summer through its popular Youth-to-Work and internship programs.

This year, a record setting 806 youth ages 14-18 earned nearly \$610,000 through CVRF's annual Youth-to-Work program. The work took place in 19 CVRF communities over 2 sessions, between May and August. While working for CVRF, Youth-to-Work employees performed a variety of tasks including working on community service projects, job shadowing, and cultural skill development. The latter included making fish traps, drums, and clothing, as well as gathering food for elders. The Youth-to-Work program emphasizes the value of a strong work ethic and the importance of completing tasks while building foundational work skills the participants can build upon.

"The Youth-to-Work program continues to make a tremendous impact to our region," said Jonathan Lewis, Community Service Manager for CVRF. "It gives hope to our young people by giving them an opportunity to have work experience and connect with local experts to learn new skills that are important in our communities." Mr. Lewis manages CVRF's Community Service Representatives in Nightmute, Kipnuk, Kongiganak, Napaskiak, Napakiak, and Oscarville and lives in Chefornak.

In addition to putting young Alaskan's to work, CVRF's Youth-to-Work program contracted with 67 adult instructors to share their knowledge and expertise with CVRF's youth employees. Some returning youth employees were also hired as team leads to assist local instructors, supervise younger employees, and document some of the projects completed through the Youth-to-Work program.

This summer also marked the 20th anniversary of CVRF's long standing internship program. Nineteen interns earned over \$118,000 assisting Community Service Representatives at CVRF's local Community Service Centers and various departments in CVRF's corporate offices in Anchorage. In addition to supporting CVRF's business operations, the Anchorage interns further developed foundational workforce skills such as writing resumes and composing and formatting memos and emails. These activities culminated with a formal presentation to CVRF's management team.

"The youth of today will become the adults of the future and it is our duty as adults to help guide them on their journey," said Peter Speaks, CVRF's Network Administrator. Peter worked closely

with Kenyon Paul, a student from Kipnuk, who joined CVRF's Information Technology department this summer as an intern. "Kenyon came in on his first day with a great attitude to learn new things and he also came with his own motto, 'Always gotta be fast.' During his internship, Kenyon learned about information technology and how to rebuild computer systems. He gained experience in a field that he is interested in and knowledge he may use in the future or share with others. By having programs such as internships and Youth-to-Work, it gives us a great opportunity to learn from younger generations as they learn from us. It is a win-win situation for everyone involved."

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Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) is a 501(c)(4) Alaska non-profit corporation with 20 member communities located along the west coast of Alaska, from Scammon Bay to Platinum. It is one of six Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups granted fishing rights in the Bering Sea to foster sustainable and diversified local economies in western Alaska.

CVRF is dedicated to creating sensible, tangible, and long-term economic development opportunities that generate hope for the more than 9,300 residents of its communities. CVRF is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of one member elected from each community. It is the largest Alaskan-owned seafood company in history and the first CDQ group to own and control the vessels that harvest the vast majority of its CDQ allocations.

For more information, visit www.CoastalVillages.org and www.facebook.com/CoastalVillagesRegionFund.