

SEARHC healthbeat

SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium
a bi-monthly newsletter from your partner in health

Bob Germain buys ATV as reward for quitting tobacco



Bob Germain wanted to quit smoking for his health. Then he added a financial incentive, saving the money he would have spent on cigarettes. Now he owns an all-terrain vehicle bought with his tobacco savings.

"I bought the ATV like after six months of not smoking," said Germain, a 46-year-old Juneau resident who had smoked for 30 years. *"I saved and put in a down payment of \$2,000, then came up with the rest of the money. It cost me \$3,800, and it's definitely money I would have spent on cigarettes. It was kind of a reward for six months of not smoking."*

Germain said his mother died from emphysema and he saw himself facing a similar fate. So he quit smoking on Sept. 1, 2005, and already he can tell his health is better.

"I don't want to die like that," he said. *"My whole reason to quit was because I wasn't feeling good. I had chest colds and I was sick like three or four times a month. I can tell the difference. I'm not getting sick as much."*

When Germain began thinking about quitting tobacco, he saw a television ad where a guy showed his buddy the new ATV he bought with his cigarette savings.

"The TV ad kind of made it a goal to quit. But I didn't buy the \$10,000 one like on TV," said Germain, who bought a Honda 250 utility four-wheeler.

When he decided to quit, Germain called Tobacco Health Educator Rowena J. Reeves of the SEARHC Breath For Life program. Reeves gave Germain tobacco patches, which he used for two months, and helped him create a plan of action for quitting.

"It was kinda hard. It wasn't easy," said Germain, adding that the support he received from his wife and three children helped him quit.

"Quitting smoking is one of the most important things people can do to safeguard their health and the health of others," said Reeves, a former smoker.

Germain is still saving his tobacco money. He said he might buy another ATV so his son can join him on rides.

The SEARHC Breath For Life program can be reached during business hours at 364-4440 in Juneau, 966-8721 in Sitka and 766-6315 in Haines. There also is a toll-free number of 1-888-966-8875 that reaches the Sitka office. The state's Alaska Tobacco Quit Line can be reached 24 hours a day at 1-888-842-QUIT (7848). ❖

An important message from the President



It was pouring down rain, but that didn't dampen the spirits of the hundreds of people who came to help raise the Kootéeyaa Project Wellbriety totem pole on Oct. 14 in front of the SEARHC Community Health Services building in Sitka.

*Raising the totem pole — called *Yei éek kwa néix* (“You are going to get well”) — is one of the most inspiring events in SEARHC history. It is a true symbol of our culture being healthy.*

Feeling the weight of the 4,000-pound pole was a stern reminder for those of us who carried the pole about what's been lost through substance abuse and disease. But watching the community come together to help carve and raise the pole showed we are in the process of healing.

The pole's purpose is “to promote and demonstrate the natural partnership between health and Alaskan cultures through the embodiment of wellness, community collaboration and traditional values.”

After watching the way the community came together to help raise the pole, I think it is already accomplishing its purpose..

Ken Brewer

SEARHC earns AAAHC accreditation for Klawock, Haines

SEARHC Community Health Services in August earned a three-year accreditation for two of its clinics from the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, Inc. (AAAHC) Accreditation Committee.

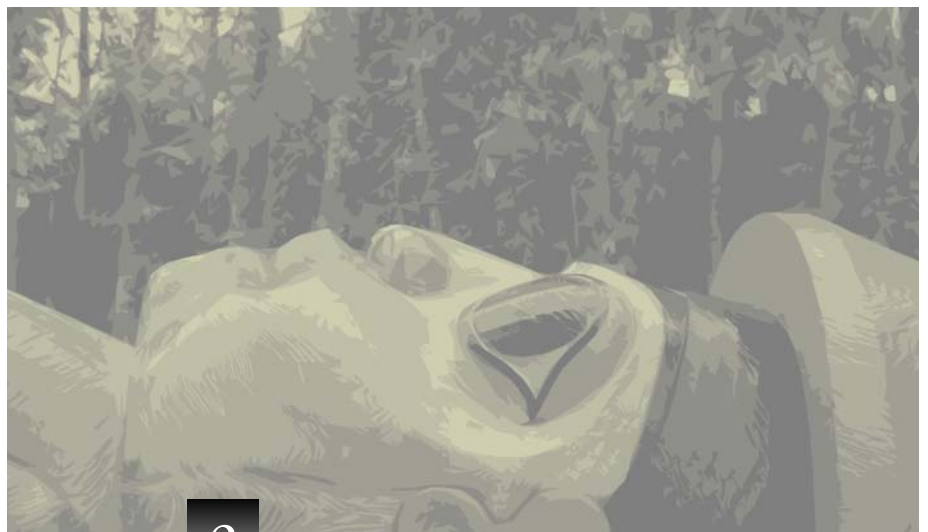
The AAAHC accreditation is for the Alicia Roberts Medical Center in Klawock and for the Haines Health Center. In May, an AAAHC survey team visited the two clinics to see how they met a set of several hundred standards used to rate similar facilities across the nation. The two SEARHC clinics were found to be substantially compliant in all of the main AAAHC standards categories that applied to the two facilities.

“Achieving AAAHC accreditation is a very significant and tremendous milestone,” said Mark Gorman, VP of Community Health Services. *“It speaks to our commitment to the delivery of the highest quality health care services to the people we serve. It puts us in the league with nationally recognized urban clinics.”*

This was SEARHC's first attempt at earning AAAHC accreditation for any of its remote clinics, and the three-year accreditation is the highest level awarded by AAAHC. The accreditation process is optional and SEARHC has three of the nine AAAHC-accredited sites in Alaska.

“For me, AAAHC accreditation offers tangible proof that the Alicia Roberts Medical Center can meet and beat national quality standards; that our clinic provides the same quality and standard of care that is offered by ambulatory care clinics anywhere in the United States,” said Cindy Gamble, ARMC Clinic Administrator, who added that she remembers 11 years ago when SEARHC only provided Community Health Aide-level care to Prince of Wales Island.

“An important aspect of AAAHC accreditation is continuous quality improvement,” said Marcia Scott, Clinic Administrator for the Haines Health Center. *“We will continue to monitor the care we provide, identify where we can do better and continue to make improvements.”* ❖



Klukwan WISEFAMILIES hosts first moose harvest camp

The Klukwan Traditional Knowledge Camp, which has been in operation for five years, this year expanded its subsistence skills camp to include the harvesting of a moose.

The purpose of the camps is to promote a healthier, more traditional diet while encouraging more physical activity. The Klukwan Traditional Knowledge Camp partnered with SEARHC's WISEWOMAN program last year to create the WISEFAMILIES program in order to obtain a one-year grant from the Indian Health Service. In September that grant was extended for an additional three years.

"Heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and strokes weren't common among our people in the days when our people lived closer to the land and ate a diet that consisted mainly of fish, wild game, berries and other plant foods," said Lani Hotch, who coordinates the Klukwan Traditional Knowledge Camp for the Chilkat Indian Village. *"The camaraderie generated by working together in the camps is an additional social benefit that helps to build strong families."*

The inaugural Moose Harvest Camp took place Sept. 1-15 in Klukwan and focused on hunting safety, Tlingit language and values, skinning and hanging wild game, butchering techniques, pressure processing and grinding meat for sausage and burger.

There were 17 people of all ages who participated in the camp. Elders Sally Burattin and Evelyn Hotch helped with the Tlingit language component of the camp. The moose was shot by Charles



Walter Hotch-Hill (R) learns how to butcher a moose during a Klukwan Traditional Knowledge Camp in September. Left is Kimberley Strong, tribal council president of Chilkat Indian Village.

Spud, who was one of the designated hunters under a special "cultural education" permit granted by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

Former professional butcher Valentino Burattin taught the participants how to butcher the moose, following the natural divisions of the meat created by the membranes between muscle units. The meat was distributed to all the participants of the camp, village elders, and a small portion was retained to be used in a fundraising dinner for the Jilkaat Kwaan Cultural Heritage Center.

The Klukwan Traditional Knowledge Camp is collaborating with the SEARHC WISEFAMILIES program to host a Hooligan (Eulachon) Camp in the spring, a Salmon Camp in July and Traditional Fine Arts Camps throughout the year to teach Northwest Coast basket weaving, carving and Chilkat/Ravenstail weaving. ❖



Relieving stress can help control diabetes



Stress is a big problem, especially for people with diabetes.

Stress is a response to something our bodies see as a threat, said Jennifer Henderson, RN, a Certified Diabetes Educator for SEARHC. We prepare for “flight or fight” when threatened, and our bodies prepare to fight off the attacker or run from danger by releasing stress hormones. These hormones cause changes in the body, including increasing glucose levels, blood pressure, heart rate and alertness. This can cause high blood glucose for people with diabetes.

These changes help us escape from danger and then our stress hormone levels return to normal. When stress goes on too long it becomes a problem. If we have stress every day from our jobs or traffic jams, the “fight or flight” hormones are being released too much. This can lead to poor diabetes control, poor health, anxiety and depression.

Here are some ways to relieve stress:

- ◆ **Relax with breathing exercises** — Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Breathe in deeply and slowly. Breathe out slowly. Repeat the slow deep breaths for several minutes, feeling your muscles relaxing. Repeating a word such as “calm” or “peace” to yourself can help you relax and prevent you from thinking about your worries.
- ◆ **Visualization** — Add visualization to your deep breathing. Picture a place where you feel happy and at peace, such as a park, beach or forest. See yourself in this place as you breathe deeply. Experience the feelings, sights, sounds and scents of your special place. Go there when you feel stressed.
- ◆ **Music** — Listening to relaxing music helps relieve stress. You can add music to your deep breathing and visualization as well.
- ◆ **Meditation** — The practice of meditation is the oldest recognized relaxation technique known. There are tapes, CDs, and books that teach meditation.
- ◆ **Prayer** — Prayer and spiritual connection relieve stress and help people cope.
- ◆ **Exercise** — Exercise relieves stress, lowers blood glucose levels, and helps get the levels of stress hormones back down..
- ◆ **Humor** — Laughter is the best medicine. Watch a funny movie or read a joke.
- ◆ **Counseling** — See a counselor for more help with relieving stress or if you are having trouble coping or feel depressed.

Around the Consortium

Sitka

The Kootéeyaa Project Wellbriety totem pole was raised Oct. 14 in front of the SEARHC Community Health Services building. The pole has a Tlingit name, *Yei éek kwa néix* ("you are going to get well"), and it was carved this summer by Tlingit master carver Wayne Price of Haines. During the carving of the pole, circles of healing were held where community members gathered to discuss an aspect of wellness then each person got to make his or her own mark on the pole. The pole celebrates a Native journey to wellness.

Juneau/Sitka

SEARHC teamed up with the State of Alaska Division of Public Health, Sitka Community Hospital, the Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium to host Well Workplace University on Sept. 25 in Juneau and Sept. 28-29 in Sitka. This event featured trainer Kelly Stobbe from Wellness Councils of America, who taught local business and government leaders how to reduce their health costs by designing workplace wellness plans.

Juneau

SEARHC and Juneau Youth Services on Oct. 4 hosted the grand opening for the new \$3 million Montana Creek Residential Facility and Program, which provides mental health and drug and alcohol treatment for youth ages 12

to 18. The 7,212-square-foot facility can handle up to 15 clients and nearly 20 staff members, providing living quarters, programming rooms and classrooms.

Kake/Sitka

The SEARHC Diabetes Prevention Program kicked off the Soggy Walkers program on Oct. 1 in Sitka and Kake. Participants record their daily steps or time spent on physical activity through Dec. 15. For information, call Walleen Whitson in Sitka (966-8916) or Georgie Reese in Kake (785-3260).

Haines

The Haines Health Center has opened a tobacco program office, which will be staffed 20 hours a week by Jane Weagant, RN. The office is able to provide free nicotine replacement therapy products and other tobacco cessation services. For information, call Jane Weagant at 766-6315.

Klawock/Haines

During an Aug. 11 ceremony in Sitka, U.S. Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Alex Azar presented a check for \$1.5 million to examine the effectiveness of the Frontier Extended Stay Clinic (FESC) program, which is run by SEARHC and has several sites in Alaska and rural Washington. This is the third year SEARHC has offered FESC services at the Alicia Roberts Medical Center in Klawock, and SEARHC recently extended FESC services to the Haines Health Center. FESC gives remote clinics a place to comfortably hold someone awaiting a medevac or to be able to provide routine treatment in the clinic that might otherwise require transport to a larger facility.

Angoon

Two new mid-level providers have started work at the Angoon Health Center – Michelle Kelley and Victoria Bennett, both Adult Nurse Practitioners (ANPs). Bennett will serve as clinic director.

Hydaburg

The Hydaburg Health Center has hired two new employees. They are Tracy Ray, a Physician Assistant-Certified, and Sandy Vent, a Certified Wellness Advocate.

Consortium-wide

At its Grand Camp meeting in October in Hoonah, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Alaska Native Sisterhood passed a resolution taking all ANB/ANS facilities tobacco-free on Jan. 1, 2007. The ANB Hall in Juneau will go tobacco-free earlier, on Dec. 1, 2006.

State-wide

Facilities in Anchorage run by the Alaska Native Medical Center, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Southcentral Foundation all are scheduled to go tobacco-free on Thursday, Nov. 16, the 30th anniversary of the Great American Smokeout. The Anchorage-based organizations are following the lead of SEARHC, which declared all of its facilities tobacco-free on April 1, 2005. Please respect the tobacco-free designation by not using tobacco at any of these facilities. ❖



Patient Tip: Juicing it up for kids

Parents want to make sure their children are eating right, so they'll pack a juice box in their kid's lunch. But sometimes what's in the juice box isn't any healthier than soda pop.

Here are some tips so parents insure their kids get the healthier drink.

- ◆ Read the labels. Many popular "fruit" drinks – such as Tang, Sunny Delight, Capri Sun and Snapple – have as little as 5-10 percent actual fruit juice.
- ◆ Avoid drinks sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup, which has been closely linked to diabetes and obesity in several medical studies.
- ◆ Drinks of 100-percent fruit juice are better, but even they should be limited. Fruit juice has its own natural sugars, and too much can cause cavities, upset stomach, diarrhea and other health issues in small children.
- ◆ Young children should drink no more than six ounces of fruit juice a day (up to 12 ounces for teens and adults), according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Whole fruit is a better source of nutrients and dietary fiber than fruit juice. ❖



Find it at www.searhc.org

Web site has the latest SEARHC scoops

Looking for the latest information about your health consortium? Then check out www.searhc.org.

The SEARHC Web site is the place to go for updates about the consortium. Links direct you to What's New at SEARHC, recent press releases and there's even an archive of past issues of the HealthBeat newsletter.

The site also has information about several SEARHC programs, such as the Raven's Way residential youth substance abuse treatment program or the WISEWOMAN cardiovascular health program.

And keep checking back, because in the near future more programs, services and health information will be featured at www.searhc.org.

HealthBeat is produced every two months by the SEARHC Corporate Communications department. To be added or removed from our mailing list, or to offer comments or questions, please contact the Corporate Communications office at 907-463-6666.

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