

Mission Statement: "United Way collaborates with partner agencies to strengthen and improve Health, Education and Income Stability in Southeast Alaska."

**United Way of Southeast Alaska
Board of Directors Meeting**

**Thursday, December 14, 2017
5:15-7:00 PM**

United Way of Southeast Alaska 3225 Hospital Drive, Suite 106

Teleconference: (800) 315-6338, Code: 32251#

I. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS –Chair Mesdag

II: APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Corrections/Additions

III: APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Corrections/Additions

October 19, 2017 Board meeting minutes

November 16, 2017 Work session minutes

IV: PRESENTATIONS –

V: COMMITTEE REPORTS

Resource Development

Finance Committee – Karmen Bowman, Treasurer; Chris Pace, Mark Mesdag

October Finance report

Campaign Committee –Mark Mesdag, Kendri Cesar, Warren Russell, Jennifer Treadway

Events Committee– Brittany Pace, Jennifer Treadway O’Dea, Rosemary Hagevig,

Karmen Bowman

Governance Committee

Board Development Committee – Mark Mesdag, Warren Russell

Personnel Committee –Rosemary Hagevig, Karen Crane

VI: STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS –

Update

VII: Old Business

President/CEO Evaluation – Adopt Recommendations

VIII: New Business –

Authorize Establishment of Account at Edward Jones to receive gift of Stock

Set Date for January Annual meeting

X: CHAIR ELECT REPORT – Warren Russell

XI: PRESIDENTS REPORT – Wayne Stevens

XII: BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

XIII: ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting January , 2017

Vision Statement: "United Way of Southeast Alaska addresses individual needs and improves lives by organizing the caring and collaborative power of our communities"

		2017 Board Member Attendance																	
Board Term Ends	First Name	Last Name	1/21	2/4	2/16	3/23	4/20	5/18	6/15	7/20	8/24	9/21	10/19	11/16	12/21	Attend	%	X's	Total
Jan - 2020	Karmen	Bowman	E	X	X	E	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	E		67%	8	12
	Karen	Crane	E	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	E			75%	9	12
Jan - 2020	Kendri	Cesar	X	X	E	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	E	X			75%	9	12
Jan - 2018	Rosemary	Hagevig	E	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	E	X	E			58%	7	12
Jan - 2019	Jennifer	Treadway O'Dea				X	X	E	E	X	X	X	X	X			78%	7	9
Jan - 2018	Joy	Lyon	X	X	E	X	E	X	E	X	X	X	X	E			67%	8	12
Jan - 2019	Mark	Mesdag	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	E	X	E			83%	10	12
Jan - 2020	Brittany	Pace	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	E	X			83%	10	12
Jan - 2020	Chris	Pace	X	X	X	E	X	X	E	X	X	X	E	E			67%	8	12
Jan - 2020	Fred	Parady	X	X	E	X	X	E	X	E	X	E	E	E			50%	6	12
Jan - 2018	Warren	Russell	X	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	E	X	X	X			83%	10	12
Jan - 2019	Millie	Ryan	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	E	X	E	E	X			67%	8	12
Jan - 2019	Robbie	Stell	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			100%	12	12
Total Board			14	14	14	15	14	14	14	14	13	13	14	14	14	0.732026	##	153	
Attendance			9	11	9	10	11	10	8	10	11	9	8	6	-				
Average Percentage attending			64%	79%	64%	67%	79%	71%	57%	77%	85%	69%	57%	43%	0%	68%			
		X = Attended																	
		T = Teleconferenced in																	
		E= Excused																	
		A=Absent																	

**United Way of Southeast Alaska
Board of Directors Meeting**

Thursday, October 19th, 2017

5:21-7:00 PM

**United Human Services Conference Room
3225 Hospital Drive, Suite 106, Juneau, AK**

Board Members in Attendance					
X	Mark Mesdag - Chair	X	Joy Lyon		Staff
X	Karen Crane – Past Chair	E	Brittany Pace	X	Wayne Stevens
X	Warren Russell – Chair Elect	E	Chris Pace	X	Kaylee Matheny
X	Jennifer Treadway O'Dea – Secy.	E	Fred Parady		
X	Karmen Bowman, Treasurer	E	Millie Ryan		
E	Kendri Cesar	X	Robbie Stell		Guest(s):
X	Rosemary Hagevig				
Legend: X = present E = excused absence T = teleconference A=absent					

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS-

Chair Mesdag called the meeting to order at 5:21 PM. A quorum was established with 8 members present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA-

Motion: Board Member Hagevig moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Chair Elect Russell seconded the motion.

Chair Mesdag asked if there were any objections to adopting the agenda as presented. Members expressed no objections to the adoption of the agenda as presented.

With no objections, the agenda was adopted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

Motion: Secretary Treadway-O'Dea moved to approve the minutes of the September 21st, 2017 Board of Directors meeting. Treasurer Bowman seconded the motion.

Motion to approve minutes as presented was approved unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS- Juneau AmeriCorps Program Romee McAdams, Program Manager

Romee McAdams, the AmeriCorps Program Manager, gave an update to the Board of the recent progress of the AmeriCorps program. With the program starting a few months ago, UWSEAK currently have 3 members in service and 2 that are in the process of starting their service. Of the 3 current members, 2 are serving at AWARE and the other is serving at JDHS with the Choice Program. The 2 new members will be serving at AEYC and SEARHC Front Street Clinic. With 5 members, UWSEAK should be on target to reach 9 members in no time. Additionally, UWSEAK is waiting on 1 individual to agree to service, which Romee is highly confident that they will say yes, which will give UWSEAK a total of 6 members.

**United Way of Southeast Alaska
Board of Directors Meeting**

Thursday, October 19th, 2017

5:21-7:00 PM

**United Human Services Conference Room
3225 Hospital Drive, Suite 106, Juneau, AK**

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

Resource Development:

Finance Committee- Treasurer Karmen Bowman, Chris Pace, & Chair Mark Mesdag

The finance committee met to review the year-end finance report. Chair Mesdag explained that when the committee first took a look at the report they found that UWSEAK experienced a loss in revenue in the amount of \$49,000. Another review took place, finding that there were uncollected pledge expenses and after cleaning up the reconciliation report and adding the uncollected pledges, UWSEAK increased its revenue by \$14,000. With the increase, Treasurer Bowman explained that UWSEAK was still at a loss of \$32,000.

Campaign Committee- Kendri Cesar, Chair Elect Warren Russell, Secretary Jennifer Treadway- O'Dea, Co-chair Tom Sullivan, & Chair Mark Mesdag

Chair Elect Russell discussed how the campaign committee met for lunch and joining them for the first time was Co-chair Sullivan. Co-chair Sullivan, who was recently appointed, is very well known in the community and is a very big supporter of United Way.

Chair Elect Russell reminded board members to work on the cards and to focus on the amount of people they talk to rather than looking at the money side of things. No company/agency is too big or small, the more people you talk to whether they say yes or no, can potentially create a new connection and get more people involved which in turn leads to an increase in revenue. As an incentive to get board members motivated, Chair Elect Russell suggested that the board member with the most people reached will receive a dinner of their choice for two.

Piggybacking off of the comments of Chair Elect Russell, Chair Mesdag recommended that each board member make at least 1 connection every month and to get a new and different card at each board meeting. Chair Mesdag found that while in the process of making a new connection, you might know the owner(s), president, or person in charge very well, but the people you know very well may end up referring you to a different contact that you do not know at all. If this happens, Chair Mesdag suggests finding a board member that knows the referred contact to better the chances of making and keeping a potential connection.

Events Committee- Brittany Pace, Secretary Jennifer Treadway-O'Dea, Rosemary Hagevig, & Treasurer Karmen Bowman

President Stevens gave a brief report as Board Member Pace was not able to attend the board meeting. President Stevens explained the success of the Campaign Kickoff/Thank You event that was held on September 29th, 2017. There were about 40 people that attended with many that had donated to UWSEAK. Those that attended gave great reviews on the oysters as well as the appearance of the venue. Many attendees enjoyed seeing the betta fish and liked the idea of using them as a center piece for some of the tables.

United Way of Southeast Alaska Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, October 19th, 2017

5:21-7:00 PM

United Human Services Conference Room
3225 Hospital Drive, Suite 106, Juneau, AK

Governance:

Board Development Committee- Chair Mark Mesdag & Chair Elect Warren Russell

Chair Elect Russell explained that the committee is always looking to grow the board in areas where connections particularly those individuals in specific social group that UWSEAK is currently lacking.

Personnel Committee- Rosemary Hagevig & Past Chair Karen Crane

Discussed at the end of the meeting to allow for executive session on the evaluation of the President.

STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS-

Review updates and progress:

Income Stability Committee Report:

NEW BUSINESS-

CHAIR'S REPORT- Chair Mark Mesdag

PRESIDENT'S REPORT- President Wayne Stevens

President Stevens explained that Chair Elect Russell was able to get UWSEAK an opportunity to present at the Juneau Chamber of Commerce Luncheon, Thursday October 26th, 2017. The topic of discussion will be about who our partner agencies are (possibly getting some of our partner agencies to participate and say a few words on how we work with each other) and the types of projects we do.

Also discussed was the Papa John's teleconference that staff had participated in to discuss Papa John's Non-profit Charity Code. Each month Papa John's designates a month to a non-profit agency (United Way is the month of September) and any customer that uses the code "AKCharity," a dollar donation from each order will go to the current month's agency. Unfortunately, we were told about the promotion late and didn't get a chance to advertise and promote the code as much as we would have liked.

President Stevens reminded everyone of the activity report for the President is in the board meeting packet on page 10.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Discussed, was the Day of Caring event and the concern that board members had over the agency coordinators not being prepared for the volunteers when they arrived at their facility. With the agencies knowing about the event in advanced, there is only so much UWSEAK can do to help prepare. Ultimately, it is up to the agency to be ready when attendees walk through the door.

Executive Session – Employee Evaluation –

Motion: Board Member Hagevig moved to go into Executive Session to conduct the annual review for President/CEO Stevens. No action was expected to be taken in Executive Session. Secretary Treadway-O'Dea seconded the motion.

Motion to go into Executive session was approved unanimously.

**United Way of Southeast Alaska
Board of Directors Meeting**

Thursday, October 19th, 2017

5:21-7:00 PM

**United Human Services Conference Room
3225 Hospital Drive, Suite 106, Juneau, AK**

**Motion: Board Member Hagevig moved to come out of Executive Session.
Secretary Treadway-O'Dea seconded the motion.**

Motion to come out of Executive session was approved unanimously.

Board Member Hagevig reported that the evaluation for the President/CEO had been conducted and that members of the board would meet with President/CEO Stevens to review the evaluation at a future date. No action relative to the evaluation was taken in Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, Chair Mesdag adjourned the meeting at 7:00 pm

**United Way of Southeast Alaska
Board of Directors Meeting**

Thursday, November 16th, 2017

5:22-6:15 PM

**United Human Services Conference Room
3225 Hospital Drive, Suite 106, Juneau, AK**

Board Members in Attendance					
E	Mark Mesdag - Chair	E	Joy Lyon		Staff
E	Karen Crane – Past Chair	X	Brittany Pace	X	Wayne Stevens
X	Warren Russell – Chair Elect	E	Chris Pace	X	Kaylee Matheny
X	Jennifer Treadway O'Dea – Secy.	E	Fred Parady		
E	Karmen Bowman, Treasurer	X	Millie Ryan		
X	Kendri Cesar	X	Robbie Stell		Guest(s):
E	Rosemary Hagevig				
Legend: X = present E = excused absence T = teleconference A=absent					

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Elect Russel called the meeting to order at 5:22 PM. With only 6 members present, a quorum was not established.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: No adoption of the agenda. With no quorum, voting of all business will have to be done at the next board meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: No approval of minutes.

PRESENTATIONS

Campaign Giving Discussion

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Resource Development:

Finance Committee - Treasurer Karmen Bowman, Chris Pace, & Chair Mark Mesdag

Due to Veterans Day holiday, there was a delay in getting the October financial statement.

Campaign Committee - Chair Mark Mesdag, Chair Elect Warren Russell, Secretary Jennifer Treadway-O'Dea, Kendri Cesar, Co-chair Tom Sullivan & Co-chair Peggy

No report.

Events Committee - Brittany Pace, Secretary Jennifer Treadway-O'Dea, Rosemary Hagevig, & Treasurer Karmen Bowman

Orca Point Dinner Cruise is set for Wednesday, May 2, 2018. With a set date, UWSEAK is now in search for a guest speaker. As part of a discussion among board members, Michaela Goade, illustrator of several books in Sealaska Heritage Institute's Baby Raven Reads series, was mentioned as a potential speaker. With a goal of trying to get millennials more involved in giving, Michaela could potentially increase turnout from millennials as well as other generations due to her popularity in Juneau.

United Way of Southeast Alaska Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, November 16th, 2017
5:22-6:15 PM

United Human Services Conference Room
3225 Hospital Drive, Suite 106, Juneau, AK

Governance:

Board Development Committee- Chair Mark Mesdag & Chair Elect Warren Russell

Chair Elect Russell talked about his training with Foraker on board and board management. From the training, he identified areas of improvement such as 1) including board terms on attendance form which would allow UWSEAK to find the best candidates, 2) identifying candidates that can fill any existing gaps with regard to social settings. Another area of improvement would be having incoming board members sign documents to be more official and to hold members more accountable for their position.

Personnel Committee- Rosemary Hagevig & Past Chair Karen Crane

Chair Elect Russell informed the board about how President Steven's evaluation went and decided to share the letter with board members so everyone was well informed about the decision that was made.

STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS

Review updates and progress:

Chair Elect Russell discussed updating the Code of Ethics and description of duties for board members as this is supposed to be done annually, but has not been updated.

Income Stability Committee Report:

NEW BUSINESS - How do you define success for United Way of Southeast Alaska?

Board members were asked to define what success looked like for UWSEAK. Board members defined success as campaign goals having been met; the steady attendance and participation of board members; healthy, financially stable, and well educated communities; broader awareness of UWSEAK, the return on investment with regard to collaboration with other agencies, UWSEAK on the forefront of everyone's mind, and an easily recognizable brand like Rotary.

CHAIR'S REPORT - Chair Elect Russell

Chair Elect Russell reminded everybody to focus on the target number of connections rather than the number of dollars UWSEAK has raised so far and how much is still needed.

Chair Elect Russell also encourage board members to get involved in the presentation process for workplace campaigns, explaining that you can speak as much or as little as you would like and focusing on why you give to UWSEAK.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - President Wayne Stevens

President Stevens shared that he is working with Alaska Grafix to get a commercial in movie theaters throughout Southeast Alaska. It is a 40-second-long commercial that explains why and how to give to United Way. At the end of the commercial, a text to give number will be added so those wanting to give can text GIVEUW to 313131. This will be paid using funds UWSEAK would have used to hire an AmeriCorps member, costing about \$2000.00 for 11 theaters through Southeast AK. The ad will run for six weeks.

**United Way of Southeast Alaska
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**Thursday, November 16th, 2017
5:22-6:15 PM**

**United Human Services Conference Room
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President Stevens also reported a meeting with Keith Gregory, President of Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority, and the discussion of the VITA tax program. UWSEAK and THRHA are partnering to provide free tax assistance to low income clients.

President Stevens ended his report by reminding board members that the UWSEAK office will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 23 and 24 for the Thanksgiving holiday. He will be traveling from Wednesday through Monday and back in office Tuesday, November 29.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Discussion was had on when and where the December board meeting should be held, as it is currently scheduled for December 21st, only a few days before Christmas. Discussion was had over changing the date of the meeting to December 14 and having a social meeting at someone's house for a holiday gathering rather than a formal meeting. A poll will be given to vote on changing the date.

ADJOURNMENT

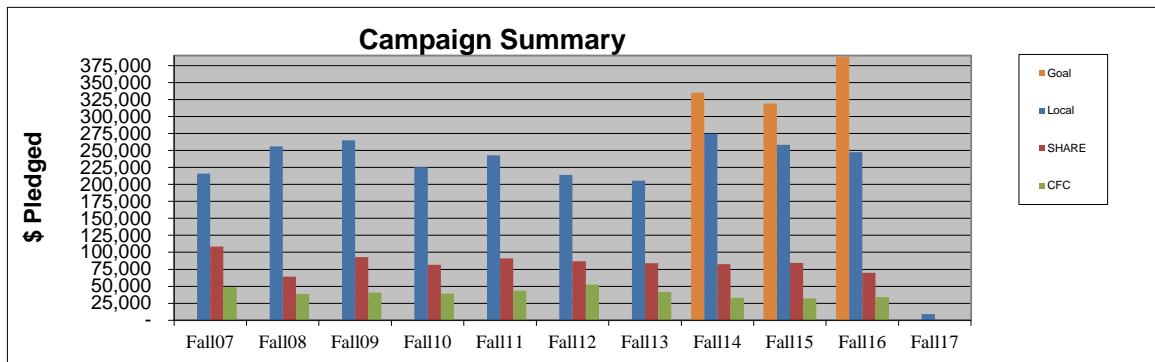
With no further business to conduct, Chair Elect Russell adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm.

**United Way of Southeast Alaska
Financial Summary
October 31, 2017**

	Year to Date Actuals	Prior YTD Actuals	Year to Date Budget	Variance
Revenues				
Fall 16 Campaigns				
Private Cpgn to UW	9,150	-	-	9,150
Community Impact Revenue	-	-	-	-
Designations from Other United Way	-	-	-	-
SHARE to UW	-	-	-	-
CFC to UW	-	-	-	-
Total Gross Campaign Revenue	9,150	-	-	9,150
Less Designations Expense	(25)	-	-	(25)
Uncollectible Pledge Expense	-	-	-	-
Net Campaign Revenue	9,125	-	-	9,125
15% From private cpgn	4	-	-	4
Subtotal Campaign	9,129	-	-	9,129
Non-Campaign Income	29,540	34,334	-	29,540
Total Revenues	38,668	34,334	-	38,668
Expenses				
Human Resources	33,188	25,948	-	(33,188)
Travel & Training	6,749	116	-	(6,749)
Community Impact	-	-	-	-
Other Expenses	20,904	25,952	-	(20,904)
Total Expenses	60,841	52,017	-	(60,841)
Net Income (Loss)	(22,173)	(17,682)	-	(22,173)

Liquidity (Current Ratio)

Assets, Liabilities & Equity	Current Year	Prior YTD	Liquidity (Current Ratio)	
			Current FY	Prior FY
Assets			August	1.52
Cash	56,556	79,857	July	1.32
Accounts Receivable	72,597	68,011	June	1.42
Other	13,621	380	May	1.60
Total Assets	142,775	148,248	April	1.48
Liabilities & Equity			March	1.90
Agency Designations Payable	78,161	70,864	February	2.04
Other	38,918	19,945	January	2.07
Equity	25,696	57,439	December	1.71
Total Liabilities & Equity	142,775	148,248	November	1.67
			October	1.22
			September	1.15



Campaign Collections

	Private	SHARE	CFC	TOTAL
Fall 15				
Total Campaign Pledges	9,150	-	-	9,150
Designated to UW	9,150	-	-	9,150
Designated to Agencies	-	-	-	-
Total Collections to date	23,021	-	-	23,021
% Collected	252%	0%	0%	252%
Fall 16				
Total Campaign Pledges	222,931	69,773	34,229	326,933
Designated to UW	222,906	69,773	34,229	326,908
Designated to Agencies	25	-	-	25
Total Collections to date	172,044	48,987	19,432	240,463
% Collected	77%	70%	57%	74%

United Way of Southeast Alaska

3225 Hospital Drive, Suite 106
Juneau, Alaska 99801
tel 907.463.5530

unitedwayseak.org



MINUTES of the Campaign Committee Meeting

Date of meeting: December 11, 2017 Time: 4:30 pm

Place: UWSEAK Conference Room

Members Present (first & last name): Tom Sullivan, Peggy Cowan, Mark Mesdag, Warren Russell, Kendri Cesar

Members absent (excused):

Other persons present: Kaylee Matheny, Wayne Stevens

Chairperson: Kendri Cesar

ITEMS DISCUSSED: Campaign update, challenges and opportunities. Committee reviewed letter to potential donors, reviewed list of donors from past campaign efforts and discussed a letter to partner agencies.

DECISIONS MADE: Staff to print spreadsheet and add to Index Card Sign-on list.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOARD FOR APPROVAL: Continue efforts to connect with potential places to make campaign presentations.

Adjourned at: 5:35pm

President/CEO Evaluation and Salary Adjustment Determinations

While the evaluation indicates a salary increase is well deserved, United Way's budget and financial climate are uncertain. The Board has determined it will defer a salary increase decision for six months and re-evaluate income stream at the end of April 2018.

In recognizing Wayne's dedication and performance the Board has approved a change in carry-over leave hours, increasing the annual year-end allowable rollover from 80 hours to 120 hours.

Recommended Motion:

Move to approve a change in carry-over leave hours for the President/CEO, increasing the 2017 year-end allowable rollover from 80 hours to 120 hours.

Presidents Report for December 14, 2017

Meetings

- 11/20 – Meet w/Kathie Wasserman, Alaska Municipal League
- 11/21 – Credit Union Financial Reality Fair JDHS, Rotary meeting
- 11/22 – 11/27 Out to Madison WI
- 11/28 – Rotary meeting
- 11/29 – Meet w/ Brian Naplachowsdki Juneau Empire, fund raising idea
- 11/30 – Meet w/Erin Walker–Tolles CCS, Best Starts conversation JEDC
- 12/1 – Inventory KIDS materials Worldwide Movers
- 12/4 – Campaign presentation Wildflower Court
- 12/5 – Rotary meeting
- 12/6 – Attend Juneau Radio celebration Perseverance Theater
- 12/7 – Chamber meeting
- 12/8 - Capital Chat KINY, Campaign Presentation Wildflower Court
- 12/11 – KIDS distribution, Lunch w/Samantha Dye, Richard Burns Alaska Radio Center, UWSEAK Campaign Committee
- 12/12 – Rotary meeting, UWSEAK Finance Committee meeting
- 12/13 – Lunch w/Jim Calvin McDowell Group,
- 12/14 – Chamber meeting, BEST Starts Conversation, United Way Board meeting

Worked on following tasks –

- AmeriCorps Program Management, reporting and recruiting process
- Reading on the Fly implementation and kick off
- Campaign presentations

The Seattle Times

Program helps southeast Alaska kids take flight with books

Originally published December 2, 2017 at 8:20 am



1 of 2

University of Alaska Southeast Public Services Librarian Jonas Lamb, left, and Hannah Weed, of the Association for the Education of Young Children, stock a new bookshelf with children's books at the Juneau International Airport in Juneau, Alaska, on Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2017. A partnership between United Way, AEYC, Friends of The Juneau Public Libraries, Alaska Airlines and

the Juneau Airport, the "Read on the Fly" program will offer free books to children to take as they travel to or from Juneau. (Michael

Penn/Capitol City Weekly via AP) More



2 of 2

Hannah Weed, of the Association for the Education of Young Children, left, Louise Miller, of the Friends of the Juneau Public Libraries, center, and Juneau Public Librarian Jonas Lamb apply stickers to books for a new bookshelf for children at the Juneau International Airport in Juneau, Alaska, on Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2017. A partnership between United Way, AEYC, Friends of The Juneau Public Libraries, Alaska Airlines and the

Juneau Airport, the "Read on the Fly" program will offer free books to children to take as they travel to or from Juneau. (Michael Penn/Capitol City Weekly via AP)

By

[CLARA MILLER](#)

The Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Both airplanes and books have the ability to take people on journeys. Now with the help of Read On the Fly, children can take flights of fancy while ascending into the clouds to cruise at thousands of feet.

On Wednesday, Nov. 15, a group made up of representatives from the Association for the Education of Young Children, Southeast Alaska (AEYC), Friends of the Juneau Public Libraries, United Way of Southeast Alaska, Alaska Litho, and Rainforest Custom gathered at Juneau International Airport's charter plane wing to shelve boxes of books for one of their new Read On the Fly shelves.

Read On the Fly's goal is to increase literacy amongst Alaska children by encouraging them to pick up a book instead of an electronic device before, during or after a flight, according to its website. The idea originated from Alaska travel writer and journalist Erin Kirkland of Anchorage. As an avid reader, three

years ago when performing her annual holiday purge of her sons' toys, she noticed one of them had outgrown his books. She wanted to do more than donate them to local thrift stores that were already well populated with used books.

“As a travel writer, I fly through Alaska’s airports very frequently, and I noticed, especially in our more rural communities, kids are very much running amok and there’s not really anything for them to do. So I started looking at literacy rates, which are pretty low for Alaska. Are our kids ready for school? Not really, especially in the rural areas,” Kirkland said. Lack of reading at home and school readiness preparation from preschools are contributing factors, she said.

Alaska’s literacy rates are indeed low. According to Kids Count Data Center, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, being able to proficiently read by the end of third grade is crucial to children’s educational development; unfortunately in Alaska in 2015, 39 percent of children were below the basic achievement level for fourth graders as measured and defined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test.

Kirkland contacted Alaska Airlines to see if she could leave a box of books at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport in the main seating concourse area for people to take, but the airline had already been planning to make the place more kid friendly, so they began talking about shelving. The Read On the Fly name came from the former Anchorage airport manager and soon a logo was designed for the first shelves. It was official.

“Right away people were emailing me saying we want one in our airport. When an airport calls me and say we want to start a bookshelf, I find the community partners to pull it together, but really, it’s the community that’s ultimately responsible for it,” she said. Read On the Fly is not an entity, but a diverse group of local volunteers spread across the state.

Last winter she came to Juneau to meet with president of United Way of Southeast Alaska, Wayne Stevens, executive director of AEYC Joy Lyon, and others to figure out how to set up bookshelves in Juneau that could be maintained locally. Alaska Airlines paid Rainforest Custom to build the shelves (one past security, and the one in the charter plane wing), and Alaska Litho placed the logo on them. AEYC is donating books children have outgrown from its Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, which are for kids up to the age of five. Friends of the Juneau Public Libraries will donate books targeted for kids 5-18 years old. Both will regularly stock the shelves.

“It’s not like the Little Free Libraries where it’s take a book leave a book,” Kirkland said. “It’s you take a book. If you’re a kid between the ages of 0-18, take a book. There’s no expectation that you have to give it back. Hopefully they’ll pass them along to someone else, but they don’t have to do that.”

By May of 2016, there was one shelf behind security and there were three in the main area of the Anchorage airport; now there are six, since play structures were added to the airport that had book nooks in them. Besides the two new ones in Juneau, Fairbanks and Ketchikan also have two. Valdez and Bethel each have one as well. Kirkland said she hopes Read On the Fly keeps expanding throughout Alaska.

“Reading can take you anywhere, and that’s why I love it. Stepping on an airline and opening the pages of a book can be so similar. You can go anywhere you want to in a book even if you can’t physically go there yourself,” she said. “That’s why Read On the Fly is such a personal project for me.”

Information from: Juneau (Alaska) Empire, <http://www.juneauempire.com>

CLARA MILLER

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