



HEALTHY AlaskaNatives FOUNDATION
OUR WINTER IMPACT
 WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER

This winter, our hearts are warmed by the generosity of our donors and happy faces of our kids. In this seasonal spotlight, we highlight the impact of these connections.
 ~The Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation Team

Seasonal Spotlight

HANF Donors support Child Life Program in revolutionizing care for kids at the Alaska Native Medical Center



Children play at the patient housing facilities during their stay at ANMC

During the coldest months of the year, we at the Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation (HANF) are reminded of the importance of holding our loved ones close. Children are at the center of what we do year round but during the darkest days, more than ever, kids are at the forefront of our hopes and efforts, and keeping kids healthy is a full-time job.

As Medical Director of Maternal Child Health Services at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), Dr. Matt Hirschfeld knows this better than most. Partnering with HANF from his earliest days at the ANMC, Dr. Hirschfeld has

been an advocate for the ANMC Child Life Program.

Specifically trained in the developmental impact of illness and injury, Child Life Specialists help kids understand, process, and remain calm during medical care they or their family members are receiving. First established at ANMC in 2017, the Child Life Program has since become an invaluable part of care at the hospital.

Michelle Ball, Lead Child Life Specialist at ANMC since 2019, works directly with children to cultivate trust and a sense of safety by talking and playing alongside them. This relationship not only helps health care workers provide children with the best care, but also limits traumatic experiences, setting up kids for life long health.

Playing is Healing

“Play is how children learn, process, and develop. When they’re playing with toys or building something, that’s all brain development...they’re testing and learning how we react to things...how they engage with the world around them is all through play.”

-Michelle Ball

The sterility of medical environments and task-focused nature of medical care work, without the right tools and perspective, can leave little space for children to acclimate and feel secure. Ms. Ball’s work with both patients and staff gives kids the resources they need to respond positively, even in the most difficult circumstances.

Dr. Hirschfeld and Ms. Ball continue to advocate for the program and its expansion. Though Ms. Ball’s position encompasses much of inpatient care, there is need in other departments as well, especially in the Emergency Department and clinics where children are seen across campus. Their hope is that with greater funding and the hiring of new staff, Child Life’s services can be expanded not only beyond inpatient care but also beyond ANMC to other Tribal Health Organizations across Alaska.

A Commitment to Kids

“The Child Life Specialists raise the game for everybody. You can’t help but learn from them, which improves everybody’s care for kids as Child Life techniques become ingrained in the pediatric staff.”

-Dr. Matt Hirschfeld

From dolls where kids can practice injections, to coloring books, video game systems, and space to play, HANF is proud to support the ANMC Child Life Program in helping children through their medical journey

Many of the resources and tools utilized by the Child Life Program are funded by grants and donations. If you, your organization, or someone you know is interested in giving to Child Life or other pediatric focused programs at ANMC, click the Donate Now button. If you are in need of funds, click Request Funds.

We’re better together, and with your support, we can continue to work towards a healthy happy future for Alaska Native kids and their families.

[Donate Now](#)

[Request Funding](#)

Our Impact By The Numbers

In the last year, your donations have made an impact

Healthy Patients Fund

HANF’s Healthy Patient Fund supports patient recovery and comfort, cancer care, provider training and education, and travel needs.



60

ILEOSTOMY KITS

were provided for the Ileostomy Pathways project, aiming to increase health literacy and reduce readmissions and complications.

Healthy Kids Fund

HANF’s Healthy Kids Fund supports Alaska Native kiddos with surgery recovery, emotional support, coping with the loss of a loved one, or managing a painful, life-limiting condition.



4

IPAD TABLETS

were provided for the Child Life Program, helping kids understand the medical care they are receiving.

Healthy Communities Fund

HANF’s Healthy Communities Fund supports Elder programs, disease, injury and suicide prevention, oral health care, and improvement of environmental conditions in remote communities.



220

ROLES OF REFLECTIVE TAPE

were provided, keeping people safe during the winter months from non-motorized and motorized off road vehicle related injuries

Area of Greatest Need

The Area of Greatest Need is a collection of unrestricted funds allowing for quick responses to unexpected challenges across the Alaska Tribal Health System.



1,500

SLEEP SWADDLES

were purchased for new parents providing education on safe sleeping practices for their newborns

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