

**PRESENTA  
TION:  
WINTER  
BEAR  
PROJECT  
2013**

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PROJECT 2013</SUBJECT><COMM>HHSS28</COMM></TARGET>

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# The Winter Bear Project

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## Our Mission

Alaska has the highest rate of suicide per capita in the country and, in rural Alaska, the suicide rate for young Alaska Native males is seven times the national average.

Our mission is to broaden awareness of the causes of teen suicide; help communities implement their own strategies for combating this epidemic; and promote healing through the performing arts.



Photo by Ryan Adkins

*Together we can change the climate of fear and hopelessness that breeds suicide.*

[www.winterbearproject.com](http://www.winterbearproject.com)



The Winter Bear Project

## The Play

*The Winter Bear* is a play by former Alaska Writer Laureate Anne Hanley, that focuses on the root causes of Alaska Native suicide. The play tells the story of an Alaska Native teenager who's had so much trauma in his life that he's decided to kill himself – until Athabascan Elder Sidney Huntington shows him how to use traditional culture to work through his despair and find his own voice.

Although the story is fiction, Sidney Huntington is a real person who has mentored many young men over the course of his long life.

### Why a Play?

Plays tell stories and stories are the way Alaska Native people have always made sense of their experience and passed it on. Stories open safe space where people can talk about the root causes of emotionally charged events such as suicide.

## The Outreach

The *Winter Bear Project* facilitates outreach using the play as the starting point. Project partners, The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Tanana Chiefs Conference, work with Behavioral Health specialists in each location to provide behavioral health support and follow up.

By combining our theater company's talents with our partners' Behavioral Health expertise, we have the capacity to translate the emotional response to the play into concrete, place-based action for change.

## Our Goals

- To bring *The Winter Bear* to our target audience of Alaska Native young people by touring all over the State, especially to areas with high suicide rates.
- To work with communities to help them discover and utilize their own resources to combat suicide in place-based, culturally appropriate ways.
- To bring *The Winter Bear* to a general audience in order to change perceptions that contribute to Alaska Native male suicide.
- To be catalysts for positive change through the performing arts.



Sidney & Angela Huntington at *The Winter Bear*, Galena, Alaska, 2010

"I think this play will help young people, especially young Alaska Native males, by showing them they've got to look out for themselves and make their own way, but at the same time respect their elders and their culture." ~ Sidney Huntington

Contact us if you would like *The Winter Bear Project* to come to your community. We can help you put together a funding package.

## PROPOSED TOUR SCHEDULE

### Summer 2013

Date	Description	Location
May	Interior Alaska Road Tour	Road Accessible Communities
August	Fly-in Tour	Barrow

### Fall 2013

October / November	Fly in tours	Northern Alaska Locations To Be Announced
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### Winter, Spring, Summer 2014

Winter/Spring	Fly in tours	Bethel area and Bristol Bay
Summer	Yukon River Boat Tour	Upper, Middle and Lower river villages

### 2015

Southwest Alaska Coastal villages, lower Kuskokwim River villages, Alaska Peninsula locations

## Our Plans

Thanks to The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Tanana Chiefs Conference for Indian Health Service Methamphetamine Suicide Prevention Initiative funds to support our Summer 2013 Road Tour of Interior Alaska communities.

Also to the Arctic Slope Native Association for MSPI funding support for our fly-in tour to Barrow .



Cast photo from Galena

*"The most important message of this play is that it exists. The subject of the story, and the dialogue of the message are so important. It shows that talking and listening about something so painful might just be the answer. Thank you."*

*-Audience Member*

**Help keep *The Winter Bear Project* moving across rural Alaska, especially to those areas hardest hit by suicide.**

*The time is right.*

*The people are ready.*

*The will is there.*

*The play can open up new dialogue.*



**Join the many organizations that have helped and continue to help:**

- The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Tanana Chiefs Conference
- The Alaska Community Foundation
- Denakanaaga Inc
- The North Star Community Foundation
- Southcentral Foundation
- The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Rasmuson Foundation
- Maniilaq
- Doyon Limited

### **Become a Sponsor**

**Tax deductible contributions can be made to:**

North Star Community Foundation:  
Winter Bear Project Fund  
P.O. Box 82290  
Fairbanks, AK 99708

**To talk about corporate or individual donations contact:**

Anne Hanley  
(907) 750-7007  
hanleyanne@mac.com

Tracie Pendergrast  
(907) 750-4902  
akinterpservices@gmail.com

Or donate at [www.winterbearproject.com](http://www.winterbearproject.com)

### **Our Team**

#### **Board of Directors**

Norman L Phillips, Jr.  
Nadine Winters  
Ann Jamieson

#### **Steering Committee**

Sidney C. Huntington,  
Honorary Chair  
Cynthia Erickson  
Charlotte Fox  
Betty Huntington  
Tom Huntington  
James Johnsen  
Fred Kopacz  
Norman L. Phillips, Jr.  
Peter Pinney  
June Rogers  
Sharity Sommer  
Agnes Sweetsir  
Brian Wescott  
Nadine Winters

#### **Leadership**

Anne Hanley, Executive Director  
Don & Tracie Pendergrast,  
Project Managers

[www.winterbearproject.com](http://www.winterbearproject.com)

# Three Year Funding Plan

**FY 2012 – 2013     \$160,000**

Kick Off Shows in Fairbanks and a road tour to Interior Villages

**Fully Funded**

- \$150,000 Federal Grant Funds through TCC and ANTHC
- \$10,000 Donations

**FY 2013 – 2014     \$496,739**

Ramp up to reach more Alaska communities with three fly-in tours and a Yukon River boat tour

**Seeking funding:**

- **\$250,000 State of Alaska Legislative Budget Capital appropriation**
- \$175,000 Federal grant funds
- \$75,000 donations

**FY 2014 - 2015 \$383,000**

Visit more villages where there is a need through two fly-in tours and ferry tour

**Seeking funding:**

We hope to continue financing through a mix of State, Federal and private donation support.

Winter Bear: Budget Summary July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014		
	Total Project	State Request
<b>Operating Costs</b>		
Contract Personnel	103,400	51,700
One-Time Costs & Equipment	19,300	9,650
Travel – Admin & Operations	6,578	3,289
Administration	8,000	4,000
Marketing and Promo	12,000	12,000
<b>Total Operating Costs</b>	<b>149,278</b>	<b>80,639</b>
<b>Tour Cycles</b>		
Base Camps (rehearsals)	28,737	14,368
Tour 1 Yukon River (boat)	166,431	83,216
Tour 2 Barrow (air)	41,325	20,663
Additional fly-in tours	35,825	19,575
Fly-in/ferry tours	40,000	20,000
<b>Total Tours</b>	<b>312,318</b>	<b>157,821</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>461,596</b>	<b>238,460</b>
<b>Other</b>		
5% Contingency reserve	23,080	11,540
5% Inflation	12,064	0
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>35,114</b>	<b>11,540</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>496,739</b>	<b>250,000</b>

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[The Play](#)[Journals & Stories](#)[2013 Tours](#)[Feedback](#)[Sponsors](#)[Engage](#)

## *Enaa Neenyo • Welcome!*

*The Winter Bear* is a play that tells the story of an Alaska Native teenager who rises above the traumas of his past to become a leader with the help of mentor Sidney Huntington and a Winter Bear.

The Winter Bear Project combines the play with outreach developed in cooperation with rural Alaskan communities.

### **Native & Non-Native Actors: Try-outs for *The Winter Bear***

Two full casts needed for Road Trip to Interior villages  
May 6 - 15. Rehearsals in Fairbanks April 15 - May 1.  
Fairbanks shows May 2,3,4.

[Click here to contact us for try-outs](#)

***Enaa maasee'* • Thank you • for visiting our website.**



Andrew Demientieff as Duane David.  
Photo by Anita Algiene


**BEAR  
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# WINTER BEAR PROJECT

[Home](#)
[About Us](#)
[The Play](#)
[Journals & Stories](#)
[2013 Tours](#)
[Feedback](#)
[Sponsors](#)
[Engage](#)

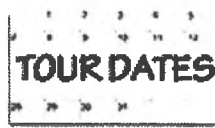
## *Our Mission*

Alaska has the highest rate of suicide per capita in the country. We work in partnership with communities to change the climate of fear and hopelessness that breeds suicide, especially in rural Alaska where the suicide rate for young Alaska Native males is seven times the national average.

Our mission is to broaden awareness of the causes of teen suicide; help communities implement their own strategies for combating this epidemic; and promote healing through the performing arts.



Irene Bedard talks to students at Effie Kokrine Charter School in Fairbanks, Alaska.


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**BEAR  
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# WINTER BEAR PROJECT

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[The Play](#)[Journals & Stories](#)[2013 Tours](#)[Feedback](#)[Sponsors](#)[Engage](#)

## *Meet Sidney*

**Sidney Charles Huntington** was born in 1915 in Hughes, Alaska. His mother, Anna, was a Koyukon Athabascan woman who once walked from Nome back to her family on the Hogatza River alone in mid-winter, a journey of over 400 miles. In 1897, his father came to Alaska from New York looking for gold. When Sidney was five years old, his mother died suddenly leaving Sidney and two younger siblings to survive on their own for two weeks. That experience gave him a spirit of self-reliance that he instilled in his own 20 children and in countless other young people he mentored over the years. He's been a trapper, miner, fisherman, business owner, member of the State Board of Game, civic leader, and advocate for his people.

Although his formal education ended in the third grade, he has never stopped learning and figuring out how to do things on his own. Sidney and his wife, Angela, live in a cabin Sidney built on the banks of the Yukon River in Galena, Alaska, where they still spend their summers fishing.

Sidney's book ***Shadow's On the Koyukuk*** details his life and gives a compelling glimpse into what growing up was like in those days for Native Alaskans. **[Buy the Book](#)**

Hear ***Sidney talk about his life***, click on videos below.



Sidney driving his car in Galena.  
Photo by Anne Hanley.

**BEAR  
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# WINTER BEAR PROJECT

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[The Play](#)[Journals & Stories](#)[2013 Tours](#)[Feedback](#)[Sponsors](#)[Engage](#)

## *Our Team*

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### **Board of Directors**

Norman L. Phillips, Jr., President

Nadine Winters, Vice President

Ann Jamieson, Secretary/ Treasurer

### **Steering Committee**

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Tom Huntington

James Johnsen

Fred Kopacz

Norman L. Phillips, Jr.

Peter Pinney

June Rogers

Sharity Sommer

Agnes Sweetsir

Brían Wescott

Nadine Winters

### **Creative Team**

**Anne Hanley (Playwright & Producer)** is a former Alaska Writer Laureate whose plays have been

**BEAR  
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# WINTER BEAR PROJECT

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[The Play](#)[Journals & Stories](#)[2013 Tours](#)[Feedback](#)[Sponsors](#)[Engage](#)

## *Why a play?*

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Plays tell stories and stories are the way Alaska Native people have always made sense of their experience and passed it on. Stories open safe space where people can talk about the root causes of emotionally charged events such as suicide.

### **The Winter Bear is a play that seeks to:**

- Promote understanding of stress factors that lead to teen suicide
- Examine the trauma related to loss of culture and traditional ways of life
- Challenge the prevailing negative stereotype of young Alaska Native males
- Give the general public an inkling of the wisdom and depth of Alaska Native cultures


**BEAR  
PROJECT**

# WINTER BEAR PROJECT

[Home](#)
[About Us](#)
[The Play](#)
[Journals & Stories](#)
[2013 Tours](#)
[Feedback](#)
[Sponsors](#)
[Engage](#)

## *The Winter Bear*

A play by Anne Hanley that tells the story of Duane "Shadow" David, an Alaska Native teenager and his relationship with Koyukon Athabascan elder Sidney Huntington. Although the story is fiction, Sidney Huntington is a real person who has mentored many young men throughout his long life.

### **Play Synopsis**

After an incident at school, Duane is sentenced to live with Sidney for the winter and cut wood for him. Neither is thrilled with the arrangement. When Sidney figures out Duane's hunting experience is limited to video games, he decides to teach him some of the old ways, beginning with making a Bear Spear. Duane is a sullen pupil, but Sidney keeps at him until Duane finally confides in the old man that he's thinking about committing suicide. Sidney is determined to stop him since he knows firsthand about the pain suicide inflicts on survivors. Soon after, Duane and Sidney are forced to confront a marauding Winter Bear. Sidney is wounded in the encounter and Duane must kill the Bear himself using nothing but the primitive spear. When Sidney finds himself stuck in the hospital, he asks Duane, who has always been deathly afraid of showing himself in any public way, to speak for him at the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention. Summoning up all the courage of a traditional warrior confronting a Bear, Duane is finally able to stand in the spotlight and speak from his heart.



**BEAR  
PROJECT**

# WINTER BEAR PROJECT

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[The Play](#)[Journals & Stories](#)[2013 Tours](#)[Feedback](#)[Sponsors](#)[Engage](#)

## Galena

### From the Playwright, Director, Cast & Crew of the 2010 Winter Bear Production

We were scheduled to perform *The Winter Bear* in Galena, the home of Sidney Huntington, on Oct. 16. On Oct. 14, we received word that a 21-year-old man in the village had committed suicide the night before.

*We didn't know what to do. We were afraid that our play, which explores the causes of suicide, would be too raw, that we would be intruding on their grief. Yet we also felt our timing could be perfect to help those in need. They told us to come ahead. No one had any idea what would happen.*

*When we landed in Galena, 95-year-old Sidney was there to meet us at the air taxi. At a potlatch in our honor, he spoke eloquently about the need to bring the pain of suicide out in the open. He gave a blessing at the play and then he and his wife Angela sat in the front row.*

*We did our play. Everyone listened. They shared their grief with us. We listened.*

*Something in all of us shifted.*



*Irene Bedard, Sidney Huntington,  
and Jayne Wenger at Galena Airport.  
Photo by Milton Diaz Perez*

Everything that we have been given from this play comes from the fact that Sidney Huntington was willing to expose painful parts of his life to help others and that his family was willing to let him do this.

Sidney was there to see us off when our plane left. He made us feel loved, respected, cared for, and important. Through his example, he showed us what we have to do for every precious young person.



Irene Bedard with teens at the Galena Interior Learning Academy. Photo by Milton Diaz Perez.

### **Sidney Huntington's Speech**

Speech given at a potlatch honoring cast & crew of *The Winter Bear*, Galena, Alaska, October 15, 2010

Thank you for all coming to show your support for the play "Winter Bear." During my early life, young people taking their own life was unheard of. The culture has changed and the way of life has definitely changed. The elder of those days taught the younger generation how to survive off the resources that the land provided.

It has been my sole goal to try to help educate young people to meet the challenges ahead of them to survive in this continually changing world. Education is the key to survival and to the prevention of suicide.

You, the young people, you are the future of this country. We need you. You were put on this earth for a purpose. Life will be difficult at times but those times will pass; your elders are here for you and want you to choose life.

God Bless you all. Again, Thank You.


**BEAR  
PROJECT**

# WINTER BEAR PROJECT

[Home](#)
[About Us](#)
[The Play](#)
[Journals & Stories](#)
[2013 Tours](#)
[Feedback](#)
[Sponsors](#)
[Engage](#)

## 2011 Audience Survey

*"I cried 3 times - powerful message, powerful story, teared up. WOW Award, Bring it to the schools especially in the villages please."*

**Mark Erickson, MD, Medical Quality Improvement Director** of Southcentral Foundation's Behavioral Services Division, created an Evaluation questionnaire for our 2011 Anchorage production. It was distributed to approximately 700 audience members and 396 completed forms were returned. The respondents were:

- from over 50 communities in Alaska
- 37.9% male; 62.1% female
- 54.1% Alaska Native
- 33.7% in 10 to 20 year-old male

## Survey Results

Question		Response
Would you recommend this show to a friend?	98.2% Yes	"So glad to see this issue of suicide addressed in this way. Reach even more people with this message. AK needs you!"

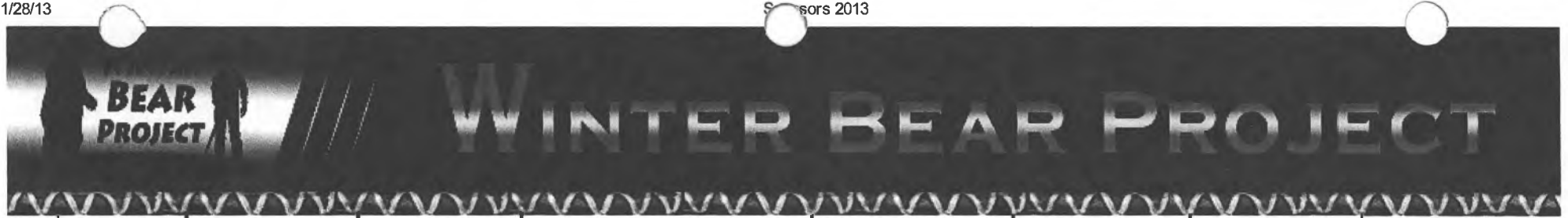
Would you be interested in seeing the play come to your community?	96.9% Yes	"Everyone needs to know they are not alone. Bring this to Western Alaska."
Did the play help you understand someone contemplating suicide?	83.1% Yes	"This play showed me that this was a real problem."
Would you be much more likely to reach out to someone who was at risk for suicide after seeing the play?	83.4% Yes	"I believe it could encourage other young people to get/be involved."
Did the play make you feel hopeful?	88.8% hopeful/very hopeful	"We need to face this reality and fight and change what makes this reality."

**Compiled by Walter Kookesh, Southcentral Foundation Improvement Specialist**

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=zYF\\_2b7vG12PkdGRz\\_2f5rA0tiadMDXSftOBvLcVii9rvik\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=zYF_2b7vG12PkdGRz_2f5rA0tiadMDXSftOBvLcVii9rvik_3d)

If we all work together, we can **change** the climate of fear and hopelessness that breeds suicide. You can become part of The Winter Bear Project. Just click the **"Donate"** button.





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[2013 Tours](#)
[Feedback](#)
[Sponsors](#)
[Engage](#)

## *Sponsors 2013*

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Thank you to everyone who has brought the Winter Bear Project this far, **especially Sidney Huntington and the Huntington family.**

<b>Major Sponsors</b>	<u><a href="#">Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium</a></u>	
	<u><a href="#">Tanana Chiefs Conference</a></u>	
	<u><a href="#">North Star Community Foundation</a></u>	
	<u><a href="#">The Alaska Community Foundation</a></u>	
	<b>Denakkanaaga, Inc.</b>	
	<u><a href="#">The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority</a></u>	