

Ilisagvik College introduces Green Team, starts recycling

You read it right—Ilisagvik College is going green!

They are sending out aluminum cans and No. 1 and No. 2 plastics, and so far over 400 pounds of recyclables have been saved from the trash — that is a lot of recyclables!

How are they doing this? It all started around Earth Day 2014, when a group of conscientious College employees formed a committee called the Ilisagvik Green Team. Their mission is to go green, or at least greener, little by little. Waste reduction, recycling, composting, energy conservation and pollution prevention are all sustainable practices that the group is striving to cultivate in the community, and they are starting with themselves.

“We realize that the issues we are facing can seem challenging and overwhelming. We are starting small with what we can influence in hopes of branching out from here,” says founding member John Bergman. Bergman was an integral part of the Ilisagvik Green Team creation. He lends his years of experience working on sustainability practices to the goals of this college. The main goal of the Green Team is to raise awareness within the community about small changes that can be made in our daily lives right now.

Green Team meetings are held monthly, and ideas and reflections are discussed in an open dialogue. No idea is too far-fetched. When you are thinking of ways to go green in the Arctic, sometimes you have to get creative. Many of the ideas are not huge undertakings; the Green Team maintains that doing ANYTHING, even if it seems insignificant, is better than doing nothing. Some of their smaller projects include reducing the number of single-use cups from campus by encouraging guest mug systems, working toward growing the number of healthy-air plants in the buildings, and finding creative ways to reuse scrap paper.

The Road to Recycling

When the Green Team started asking questions about recycling, they discovered



PHOTO PROVIDED

Green Team members Zach Roundy, Austyn Cordon, John Bergman and Sarah Martinson

some challenges, like the prevailing myth that it is too expensive to recycle, or that it is time consuming and maybe not green enough when fuel used in shipping comes into the equation. Those fizzling of previous programs could be discouraging to some, but to the Green Team, every preceding effort provides valuable lessons for how things can be done better this time around. Overwhelmingly, sustainability is supported and encouraged. “It is really refreshing to see initiative to get recycling restarted,” says student member Forrest Ahkiviana, “When we live aligned with our values, and respect every resource that we have, we are better off.”

Initially, it seemed as though the recycling program was going to have to wait until the perfect grant opportunity came along. Then the Green Team caught wind of ALPAR (Alaskans for Litter Prevention and Recycling), in Anchorage. Much to their satisfaction, ALPAR not only pays to

backhaul recyclable cans and plastic bottles on Northern Air Cargo, they will even pay the College for the materials! Using the funds of the recycled materials, the Green Team has been able to start creating a budget for their efforts, to assist in carrying out its mission of being an eco-conscious organization, and leaders of an environmental movement in the Arctic. “We are proud to state that we have begun the Northern-most recycling program in the United States,” says Dean of Community and Workforce Development Ben Glover. “It may not be perfect, but it is a start, and it is something to celebrate.”

Going Green

Getting recycling started for the College is a great accomplishment, but expect to hear more from the Green movement at Ilisagvik; the Green Team is just getting started! Upcoming plans include workshops for the community and establishing a

Secretary of Environmental

Affairs position for the Ilisagvik student government, whose focus will be to facilitate and lead the student body in this effort.

There is no one way to be green. When people hear the term ‘green,’ often they associate certain political views along with environmentalism. The Green Team maintains that environmentalism is for everyone! Just because you care about your waste does not mean that you can’t love your driving your car and flying on airplanes. The Green Team is focused on positive outcomes that can be achieved by working together and slightly tweaking how we do things, and educating ourselves and our community is an important first step.

Learn more about the Green Team and how you can be a part of the Green movement on the North Slope by contacting greenteam@ilisagvik.edu.

BEGICH

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sional and gubernatorial candidates and my opponent’s hesitation to attend the debate is disrespectful to the tens of thousands of Alaskans who depend on our fisheries for work.

The Alaska fishing industry provides more jobs than any other industry in Alaska and is the backbone of the economy of many coastal towns and cities. As a candidate for the Alaska Senate seat, Dan Sullivan owes Alaskans an honest appraisal of his knowledge of the fishing industry and his views on best practices for the industry’s management.

As chairman of the Fisheries Subcommittee, I’ve brought Alaskans to Washington to share their perspective with my Senate colleagues and educate the rest of the country about the uniqueness of Alaska. I worked to pass the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act to ensure safety of our waters, bring new Coast Guard cutters to Juneau & Ketchikan, improve our maritime infrastructure and protect small vessels from burdensome EPA regulations.

I have also fought against pirate fishing and fought against genetically engineered (GE) salmon which would do massive irreversible damage to Alaska’s wild fisheries. I’ve passed legislation to require GMO salmon to be labeled, because I know consumers will pick wild Alaska fish when

given an informed choice.

Now I am working on the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the landmark legislation for all of our nation’s fisheries. I’ve held public meetings across the state to gather the needs and concerns of Alaskans and will not move the bill unless it reflects Alaska’s unique needs. That includes my proposal to authorize electronic monitoring and reporting so fisherman can avoid the cost of a traditional onboard observer.

When it comes to supporting Alaska fisheries and the jobs at stake, I’ve worked to hold public meetings and listen to all fishing interests to seek find common ground and promote the health and well-being of our fisheries. As long as I am in the

Senate I will advocate for Alaska’s fisheries and the families and communities who depend on fish for their livelihood.

I will stand behind my record of delivering for Alaska. It’s a shame Dan Sullivan was going to skip an Alaska tradition like the fisheries debate.

Dan Sullivan owes Alaskans more than one liners when it comes to Alaska’s fisheries and tens of thousands of fishing jobs. Declining the debate and only agreeing to attend after weeks of public pressure suggests he’s not interested in Alaska’s needs and unable to give Alaskans a serious discussion about one of our largest industries.



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