



## **School Visit Information**

Alaska Native Heritage Center  
8800 Heritage Center Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99504  
(907) 330-8000

Dear Teacher:

We are delighted that you will be visiting the Alaska Native Heritage Center and look forward to your visit. This packet of information will prepare you and your students for your visit to the Center.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Alaska Native Heritage Center is: “Sharing, perpetuating, and preserving the unique Alaska Native cultures, languages, traditions, and values through celebration and education.”

### **Your Visit**

Your class of \_\_\_\_\_ students and \_\_\_\_\_ chaperones will visit the Alaska Native Heritage Center on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

The **Standard School Visit** lasts two hours and includes DVD, Art Project (our choice), Village Sites Tour (please dress for outside), and **one** of the other programs listed below.

The **Customized School Visit** last two hours and has endless possibilities. For instance,

1. Choose your own film, program, art project, and tour of the facility.
2. Ask for a specialized tour that fits your class’s current interest, such as architecture, environment, or oral tradition.
3. Choose one of Alaska’s eleven Native cultures to study during your visit. The film, stories, dance, and art will relate to that culture.

You have selected the activities marked below for your students to experience (any changes to the program must be made prior to your arrival at the Center).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Film:** DVD related to your program choice.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Art Project (3-12):** This art project takes 20 to 45 minutes to complete. The art area can accommodate up to 20 students at a time. Groups consisting of more than 20 students will be rotated. These choices are appropriate for grades 3-12.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Village Sites Tour (K-12):** Students participate in a quarter-mile tour of the five recreated

village sites that illustrate traditional structures in a typical village before or shortly after contact with non-Native cultures. Knowledgeable cultural tradition bearers will share the history, culture, and traditions of each site. Please dress appropriately for the outside tour.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Hall of Cultures Tour (K-12):** This indoor tour features traditional watercraft, clothing, and artwork. Knowledgeable tradition bearers will share information on who made them, including construction and utilization of the items.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Native Dance and Drumming (K-12):** Students will learn the importance of dance and be introduced to the meaning of the motions and the words of the song. They will learn about drums and drumming while participating in a dance using traditional Native regalia and/or dance props.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Native Games and Yo-yos (K-12):** Students will participate in games that prepared youth for the rigors of life in the North. They will learn the history and importance of these games, which part of the body each was meant to condition, and the relevance to both traditional and contemporary culture. Students will learn how yo-yos are made, their traditional purpose, and will learn how to use them.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Native Stories and String Stories (K-12):** Students will listen to traditional and string stories. They will have the opportunity to use props and artifacts that help bring the story to life. They will learn and practice a string story.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Whales and Whaling (K-12):** Students will learn about the bowhead whale hunt, which is still undertaken by the Inupiat and St. Lawrence Island Yupiit. They will learn how the whale played an important part of each Alaska Native culture. Following this and weather permitting, students will examine the gray whale exhibit. Students will participate in a tug-a-whale activity.

#### Whaling Lending Boxes

The Heritage Center has Alaska, Hawaii, and New Bedford Whaling Lending Boxes available for check out for those who choose the Whales and Whaling option. Each of the three boxes includes information on whaling, teacher resources, activities, books and/or videos, and artifacts. Contact the Education Programs Manager at 330-8000 for more information.

#### Late Classes

In order to ensure that you receive the full benefit of your visit, please arrive at the Center promptly at the designated time; we often have other schools visiting immediately afterwards. When your group arrives, you will be given a brief introduction by the staff who will be working with you during your visit. If your class is late, your school visit will be shortened accordingly. Be advised that we cannot run over the allotted time for your school visit because we have other events scheduled afterward.

#### The Role of Chaperones

Your class needs to be accompanied by at least one chaperone (admitted free) for every ten students. Please give each chaperone a copy of the enclosed "Letter to Chaperones". This details the important role everyone plays in making your visit worthwhile and fun.

### **Admission and Payment**

The Center can accommodate up to 60 students at a time. Admission is \$6 per student when part of a school group, year-round. This fee applies to all students. For every 10 students (winter) or 5 students (summer), there must be one adult chaperone or teacher who attends free of charge. Additional chaperones may attend by paying the student rate of \$6. Full payment in cash, credit card, or single check for the entire group should be made at the ticket window on the day of the visit.

**Pre-school Children:** Please do not bring pre-school children. All of the activities are designed for school age children.

### **Food**

No food or beverages are available for purchase at the Center on weekdays during the winter season. However, since our morning programs last until 12:30, we allow students to bring and eat sack lunches at the Center. They may eat in the uncarpeted areas (the Crossroads or the foyer). Please be sure students clean up thoroughly after themselves.

### **Preparing Your Class for the Visit**

Before coming to the Center, you need to divide your class into groups of 10 to 15. Remind the students that they will need to dress warmly for the outside Village Sites Tour.

### **Map of Alaska and Descriptions of Alaska Native Cultures**

Two maps depicting Alaska Native territories are included in the booklet “Cultural Descriptions of Alaska’s Native People.” The first shows traditional territories occupied by speakers of 20 different languages. The second shows general culture areas rather than languages and follows the divisions reflected at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. Neither arrangement is more or less correct; they’re simply different ways of grouping indigenous peoples who have very diverse life styles and languages.

Make copies of one or both maps and distribute them to students. Using maps, locate Anchorage and its indigenous culture. Learn the names of the other Alaskan cultures. If students are unfamiliar with the geography of Alaska, refer to the text and teacher’s guide to *Alaska in Motion* or *Alaska: A Thematic Atlas*, available in your school library and local bookstores.

Review information of the cultures, referring to the “Cultural Descriptions of Alaska’s Native People”, if necessary.

### **Visit the Website**

Students may want to visit the Alaska Native Heritage Center’s website before their visit. The url is: <http://www.alaskanative.net>

### **As You Leave**

All teachers will be given an evaluation form to complete so we know how we are doing and how we can improve in the future. You will also be provided with a packet of information that includes guest passes for your students and ideas on extending the impact of your visit in your classroom.

### **After Your Visit**

When you return to school, you can follow up on the visit. Refer to the packet of ideas we have given you. For instance, you could:

- Give students a chance to complete art projects, if they were not able to do so at the Center.

- Have students write or talk about the experience. How does it relate to other topics you have covered in class? How did students feel about it? Which part of the experience did they enjoy the most?
- Write thank you letters to the tradition bearers and send them in care of the Alaska Native Heritage Center.
- Check out books from your school library on the cultures of the tradition bearers who worked with your students; read them aloud in class.
- Refer to library books for additional art activities relating to Alaska Native cultures.
- Perform a dance or story the students learned at the Center for another class in your school.

### **Afterthoughts**

If you should have further questions or would like more information on what your experience at the Heritage Center, please contact us.

The Anchorage School District's Indian Education Program also has many resources on Alaska Natives and Native Americans. Contact the Indian Education Department or the Bilingual/Multicultural staff at your school to access this information.

You will be signed up for a subscription of "The Center Source", the Center's newsletter. Each issue contains a schedule of events for the ANHC. If you do not receive "The Center Source", contact the Center at 330-8000.

### **Let us Know How we are Doing**

- The Alaska Native Heritage Center appreciates feedback about the programs we offer.
- The highest compliment you, your class, and the school can pay us is to visit us again.
- If you enjoyed your visit to the Heritage Center, let others know.
- Please consider becoming a member of the Center by contacting 330-8000 so you and your family can enjoy our many programs year-round.

### **Additional Websites**

The following websites are designed to offer educational resources on Alaska Native cultures.

[www.ankn.uaf.edu](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu)

[www.alaskool.org](http://www.alaskool.org)

[www.scnea.org](http://www.scnea.org)

[www.akhistory.org](http://www.akhistory.org)

[www.newtradewinds.org](http://www.newtradewinds.org)

[www.echospace.org](http://www.echospace.org)

### **Attachments**

"Letter to Chaperones"

"Cultural Descriptions of Alaska's Native People"

Curriculum Guidelines K-6 or 7-12