

Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. Memorial Trust 2025 Annual Program Report



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The Board of Trustees works to ensure that the goals of our organization are met. Each Trustee is an accomplished leader dedicated to furthering the mission of Aqqaluk Trust.

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Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. Memorial Trust is named after one of NANA's most influential leaders, the late Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. from Noorvik, Alaska. Robert served as the first President and Chairman of NANA Regional Corporation. The Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. Memorial Trust, also known as the Aqqaluk Trust, was formed in 1989 to honor Robert as an exemplary Iñupiaq leader. Our mission epitomizes his legacy, "Empowering the Iñupiat through Language, Culture, & Education."





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Letter from the Board Chair and the President



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we look back on 2025, we are deeply moved by the strength and unity of our community. This year was a testament to the endurance of the Iñupiat spirit, and we are honored to share this report on our collective efforts to revitalize our language, uphold our Iñupiat Iḷitqusiāt values, and support our students through scholarships.

2025 was a year of strategic adaptation. In response to significant fiscal challenges, our team worked hard to overcome years of operational deficits to ensure Aqqaluk Trust remains a sustainable pillar for future generations. By streamlining our budget and aligning our fiscal year with our principal donor, NANA Regional Corporation, we have built a stronger foundation for the long term. We made a difficult choice to winterize Camp Sivunniigvik until funding is secured for critical camp repairs, but our commitment to our youth did not falter. Instead, we assisted local camps in the region and distributed a record number of SIVU Summer kits with support from NANA, Maniilaq Workforce Development, and Bering Air.

These achievements—and the hope they represent—are made possible by the unwavering support of NANA. We are proud to work alongside a partner who shares our dedication to the advancement of our people.

Taikuu for your continued trust, partnership, and commitment to the legacy of Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. and best wishes in the new year!

Nanuuraq Brett Kirk
Chair

Mīgīaq Julie Lowndes
President

2025 Program Highlights

- Distributed \$1.1 million in scholarships: 369 Aqqaluk Trust scholarships totaling \$925,100, 62 Teck Alaska scholarships totaling \$198,333.34, and 3 Dr. Lathrop scholarships totaling \$6,000
- Received a 3-year, \$849,627 federal ANA grant to begin building curriculum for an adult Iñupiaq language program
- Received a \$176,750 grant to host a regional archiving and data management training session in the spring of 2026



Culture

Iñuuniatigput (pronounced in-you-nay-thlik-put) means “Our way of life.” The Iñuuniatigput Department is working to preserve and revitalize our Iñupiaq language, strengthen cultural ties through Iñupiat Iłitqusiat, and promote the well-being of NANA Shareholders, their descendants, and dependents whether residing on our traditional lands of Northwest Alaska or beyond.

Our Iñupiat Iłitqusiat outreach is based on traditional Iñupiaq values:

Respect for Elders

Respect for Nature

Respect for Others

Cooperation

Sharing

Avoid Conflict

Knowledge of the Iñupiaq Language

Knowledge of Family Tree

Hunter Success

Responsibility to Tribe

Love for Children

Domestic Skills

Family Roles

Humility

Humor

Hard Work

Spirituality

Iñuuniatigput Outreach

February 2025

- Iñupiat Iłitqusiat in Schools and Regional Basketball Tournaments
- Conducted Iñupiat Iłitqusiat activities and presentations for high school students in Buckland
- Coordinated with Alaska 907 Safe Riders on a safety presentation in Buckland where they distributed 10 sets of goggles
- Co-sponsored Player of the Game awards with Akima for 16 Buckland Bash Games and trophies for three Middle School Tournaments in Buckland, Noorvik, and Kiana
- 1A Regionals Basketball Tournament
- Partnered with Bering Air for Bump for Bering Air Freight and Fan of the Day Award for 18 Halftime games
- Conducted TikTok-popular games with students in Iñupiaq and participated in Resource Fair
- Distributed 37 Senior Recognition Bags and 300+ Iñupiaraaqta shirts with contributed items from Maniilaq, Northwest Arctic Borough, Chukchi, NANA



Iñuuniaḷiqput Outreach



March 2025

- Sold 109 copies of Suvak's First Fish and A Doll Named Puya, two new children's books produced by Aqqaluk Trust in 2024 and now available on Amazon
- Hosted the Ocean Conservancy Arctic & Northern Waters Team for their annual meeting in Kotzebue and coordinated their community dinner with dancing by the Northern Lights Dancers, dog mushing, and a mini tour of the Siglauq food preparation facility
- Created a NANA Annual Meeting coloring book for distribution to kids who attended the NANA Annual meeting in Shungnak under contract by NANA Communications
- Participant and speaker at the Arctic Science Summit Week and the Fourth International Conference on Arctic Research Planning Summit (ICARP IV) in Boulder, Colorado – March 20-28, 2025. Made new contacts with potential partner institutions and explored ways to partner on new research in the region

Iñuuniaᑭᐅᑭᑭᑭᑭ Outreach



April 2025

Native Youth Olympics Outreach

- April 11-12, 2025 – Regional Tournament
- April 24-26, 2025 – State Tournament
 - Provided Iñupiaaraqta shirts for 13 students and 11 staff and a banner for use in the Grand Entry

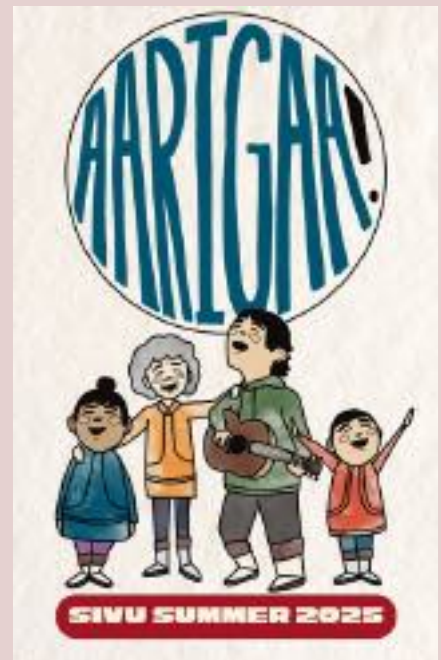
May 2025

- Held a 5-day Uqapiaqta Trial Week
- Attended Iñupiaq Language Commission and Regional Elders Council Meetings to prepare for participation in the First Alaskans Institute 42nd Annual Elders and Youth Conference, October 12-15, with Iñupiaq as the Language of the Year. (Weathered out of Red Dog)
- Attended Alaska Humanities Forum (AKHF) Dinner
 - Supported a new partnership between AKHF and the Northwest Arctic School District (NWASD) for the Cross-Cultural Competence (C3) Educator Program and AKHF support of the Kiana Elders Camp – July 31-August 3 (and August 6-9)
 - The C3 program is a cultural induction program that supports educators to build resilient cultural identities while reflecting on the lens through which they view their students and communities, their relationship-building, and their teaching practices
 - Helped to coordinate participation of new NWASD Principals at Buckland camp with AKHF, July 23-26
- First Alaskans Institute (FAI) monthly meetings with Statewide Delegates
 - 2025 Theme – Qapinaiññiglu Siqsuniglu Kinuvaaksraptignun - Perseverance and Fortitude for the Future Generations (North Slope dialect). Qapinaiᑭᐅᑭᑭᑭᑭ Anuqsruᑭᐅᑭᑭᑭᑭ Kiñuviaksraptitnun (worked on our dialect with Elders for FAI)



SIVU Summer 2025

Aqqaluk Trust first started SIVU summer in 2022 to provide Iñupiaq Iḷitqusiat-focused activities. The SIVU Summer kits include an instruction booklet, t-shirt, and activity supplies. Our initial 2025 goal was 800 signups for SIVU Summer kits. We received more than 1,120 signups from 370+ families, including 245 new families!



All 11 Villages had participants, closely split between families in and out of the region.

In-region participants from:

- Kotzebue (57)
- Noatak (42)
- Buckland (22)
- Kiana, Selawik, and Noorvik each had 18
- Ambler, Kobuk, Shungnak, Kivalina, and Deering each had 4 families

The signups had a wide age range of participants

- Pre-K – 180
- K-2nd grades – 177
- 3-5th grades – 191
- MS 6-8th grades – 167
- HS 9-12th grades – 203
- Adults – 182
- Elders – 21



SIVU Summer 2025



2025 SIVU Summer Activities

- Sewing
- Plant your seeds
- Story bracelets with clay (activity hosted at NANA offices)
- Iñupiaq Iḷitqusiāt challenge texting campaign
- Elder story/archiving
- Self-portrait “I am loved”
- Community leadership letter/spotlight
- Write a letter to your representative(s)
- Tattoo history
- Sourdough hotcakes
- Family tree

Grateful for new sponsorships from Maniilaq Workforce Development's 477 Program and Bering Air for freight to ship kits to region villages



- Partnered with NANA Shareholder Resources to have NANA Shareholder Resource Coordinators (SRCs) and Summer Interns host a bracelet making activity in each village and hand out the SIVU summer kits during the week of July 7
- Partnered with North Carolina State University (NCSSU) to create an Iñupiaq Iḷitqusiāt challenge and a new TEXTING CAMPAIGN for participants to participate in by texting PAKAK to 1-866-310-0160





NASA on the Noatak

Received an \$8,000 NASA grant from Idaho State University to hire interns Anthony Lambert and Creed Hansen (ANSEP) to measure river sediment on the Noatak River to provide on-the-ground calibration for NASA satellites.

“We put a boat thing in the water to check some things, then got some samples from three different parts of the width of the river and three different depths at each spot. We did that at two sites. ...They need really expensive things to record the different things they are measuring, humidity, depth, and temperature and the currents and speed and where it is going. Cool things.” -Anthony Lambert



Qatnut 2025

- 2025 Qatnut was hosted by Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corporation (KIC). Aqqaluk Trust staff participated in all planning meetings from March to July
- Co-hosted and sponsored prizes for Iñupiaq Games competitions on July 2 & 3, and sponsored bottled water for Elders and dance groups
- Chair Brett Kirk provided a welcome along with other community leaders at the Opening Ceremony
- Helped coordinate Miss Teen and Miss Arctic Circle Pageants, June 30-July 4
- Decorated an Aqqaluk Trust Float and participated in the July 4th Parade in Kotzebue



Camp Outreach



Kattivik
June 28
(Leadership Talk)

Buckland
July 9-11 (IRA & AT)
July 23-26 (C3 Principals)

Kiana
July 31-August 3
August 6-9 (C3 Teachers)
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Language - Uqapiaqta

"Uqapiaqta" (pronounced oo-kah-pak-tah) is an Inupiaq phrase that means
"Let's speak Iñupiaq!"

Uqapiaqta Program GOAL: Bring Iñupiaq language into daily use among the next generation of NANA shareholders and descendants.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE: We are working to build a full-time, paid, one-year adult Iñupiaq immersion program called "Uqapiaqta Iñupiaq Language Year." Building the program curriculum is a key step toward our language goal. In 2025, our work focused on creating a stable foundation to build this new program while supporting other critical language work in the NANA region.



Uqapiaqta Iñupiaq Language Year Trials

Uqapiaqta staff have been conducting trial runs of curriculum to use in a future, one year-long language immersion program. These trials are helping us to refine curriculum and establish best teaching methodologies and practices. Efforts in 2025 included:

- A 5-day trial week in May with 3 Iñupiaq learners, for lessons using Total Physical Response methodology and language centered around traditional activities such as ice fishing, wood cutting, and making hotcakes
- Half-day Iñupiaq language training with NANA college intern class in July, focused on the structure of the language and how to make best use of the new edition of the Iñupiaq dictionary completed by Aqqaluk Trust and distributed to NANA shareholder households by NANA in 2023
- Staff completed a 400-level UAF linguistics course in Second Language Teaching Methods in preparation for developing Iñupiaq immersion curriculum



ANA Grant



The Uqapiaqta Program received a 3-year, **\$849,627** federal grant from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) to fund curriculum development for the Uqapiaqta Iñupiaq Language Year.

The project will support a Multimedia Specialist and 3 Iñupiaq Language Specialists to document elders sharing their knowledge in Iñupiaq, which will then be used to build the immersion curriculum. This successful grant request was the result of a team effort at the Trust and the support of our partners including NANA, the Regional Elders' Council, the Iñupiaq Language Commission, and the Native Village of Kotzebue.



Upper Kobuk Placenames Project

Over the decades, our elders shared over 1,000 Iñupiat placenames across the region with staff and researchers from NANA and government agencies. This information is in a GIS database managed by the National Park Service (NPS), and for various reasons has never been made widely accessible to shareholders. NANA and the NPS have begun a collaboration to make this placename information accessible to our communities, starting with the Upper Kobuk.



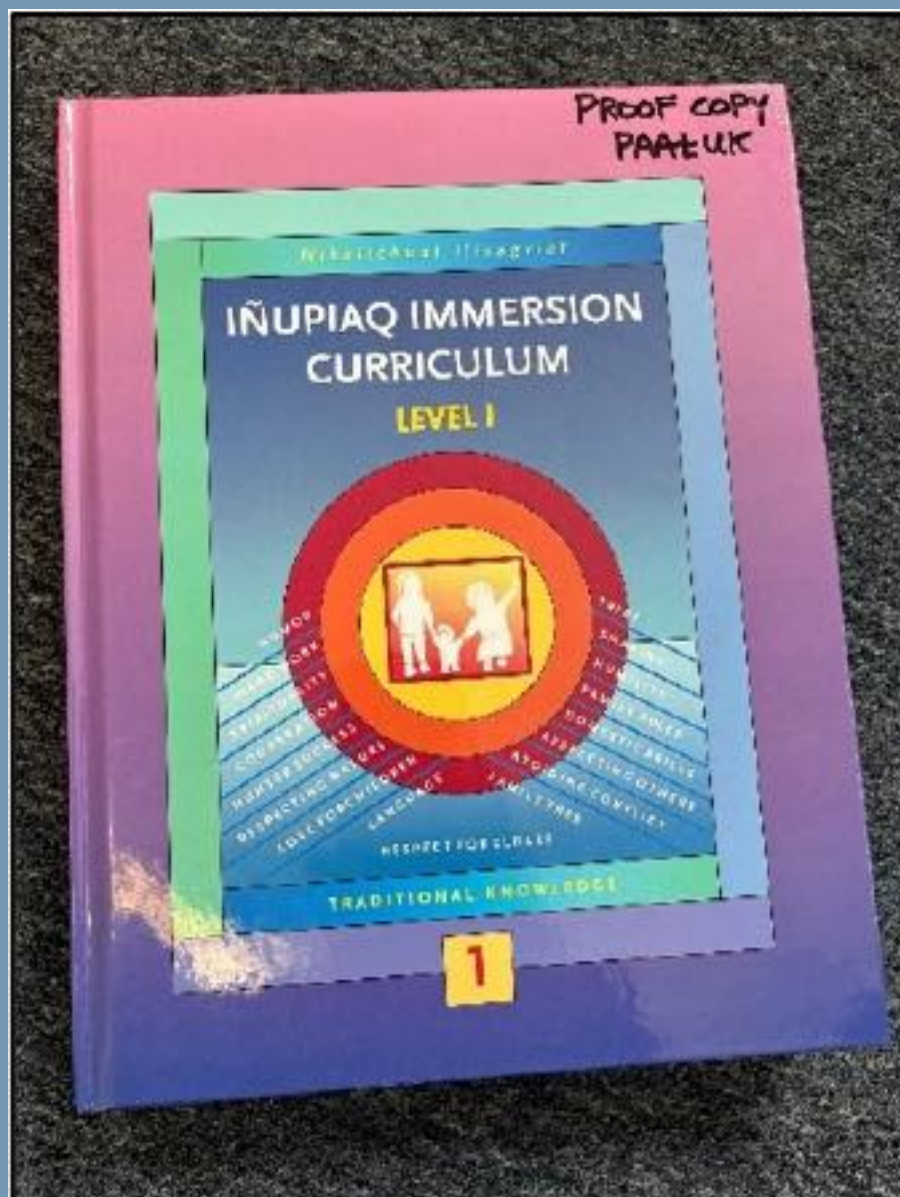
Uqapiaqta Program staff is providing support for this effort, including fieldwork in both Shungnak and Kobuk last summer. As part of those trips, we took elders out on the river over three separate days to verify placenames, clear up uncertainties, and take pictures for documentation. Ultimately, this work will result in an updated Search & Rescue map and an interactive web map.



Nikaitchuat Curriculum

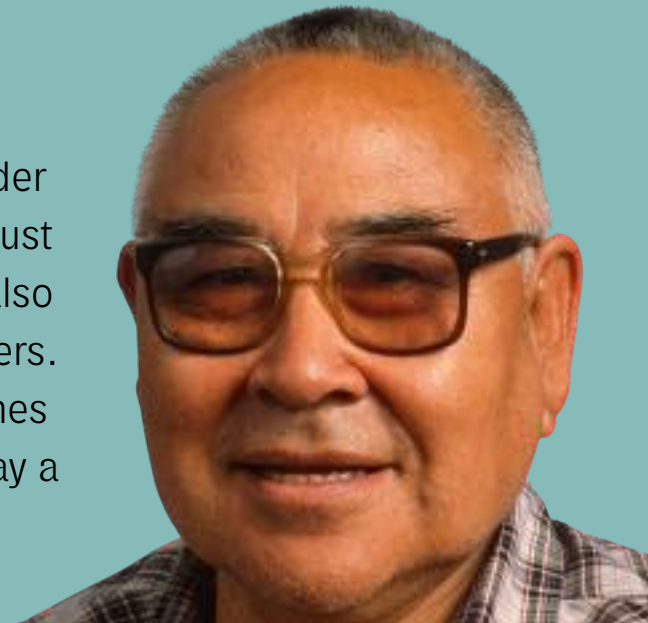
Uqapiaqta Program staff is assisting the Native Village of Kotzebue through a paid contract to complete the publication of two levels of Nikaitchuat curriculum and an Iñupiaq grammar book for teachers. This summer we printed complete proof copies of all three books, which are in use at Nikaitchuat this school year.

Following review by the original authors for any needed corrections, a final version will be released publicly.



Education

Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. recognized that in order to survive in the changing world, young people must not only have a strong cultural identity but must also be educated and well prepared for jobs and careers. He once stated, “When an Iñupiaq person becomes educated and understands his identity, he can play a vital role and become a leader.”



Since our founding in 1989, our organization has proudly awarded over **\$16.4 million** in Aqqaluk Trust scholarships. We are audited annually and remain fully committed to responsible financial stewardship of our Endowment Fund. Every dollar is managed with care to ensure long-term support for the programs that matter most to our communities and to our people.

Aqqaluk Trust is the steward of a \$41.8 million Endowment Fund established in 1999 which is supported annually by 7(i) scholarship contributions from NANA Regional Corporation. It is managed by UBS Financial Services, Inc. and is restricted to scholarships and fund management fees. Our spending policy limits distributions to no more than 5% of the Fund annually. We are exploring ways to increase the fund’s benefits to our people and strengthen the growth of our organization, extending its reach for future generations. The Endowment stands as a lasting promise: a foundation built to sustain opportunity, honor our Iñupiaq values, and carry forward the vision of Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr.



Scholarships

Aqqaluk Trust Scholarships

Aqqaluk Trust scholarships provide financial assistance to NANA shareholders, their descendants and dependents (stepchildren) who are pursuing higher education, whether at a vocational school, technical program, or a college or university. It is funded by annual 7(i) scholarship distributions from NANA Regional Corporation and from an Endowment Fund.



TECK Alaska Scholarships

Teck Alaska is the operator of the Red Dog Mine and contributes an annual gift of \$100,000 to the Aqqaluk Trust to administer the Teck Alaska Scholarship Program. This program funds scholarships to college and vocational students who major in mine-related fields. In 2025, 62 awards were made for a total distribution of \$198,333.34 in Teck Alaska scholarship awards.



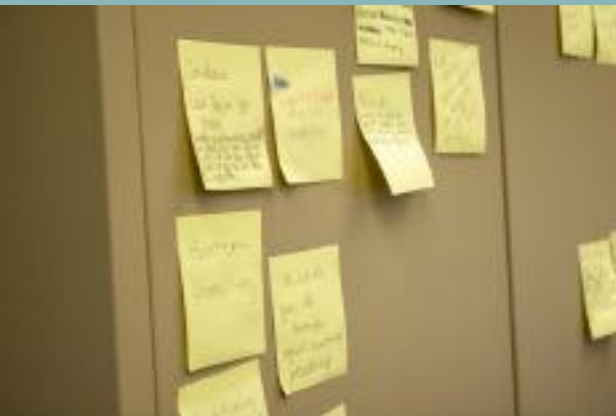
Dr. Lathrop Scholarship

This scholarship is named after the late Dr. Robert Lathrop who served as an Alaska Native Service Doctor of Dental Surgery in Kotzebue from 1954 to 1964. In 2009, Dr. Lathrop contributed \$40,000 to support college and technical training students in the areas of dental hygiene, anthropology, and museum curation. In 2025, three awards were made for a total distribution of \$6,000 in Dr. Lathrop scholarship awards.

2025 Scholarships By the Numbers

369 Aqqaluk Trust Scholarship Awards totaling \$925,100

- 89% (328) for degree awards
- 11% (41) for vocational/technical awards
 - 67.8% (250) full-time students
 - 32.2% (119) part-time students



257 students received the 369 scholarship awards

- 68.1% of recipients (175) were female
 - 92% or 161 for degree awards
 - 8% or 14 for vocational/technical training awards
- 31.9% of recipients (82) were male
 - 79.3% or 65 for degree awards
 - 20.7% or 17 for vocational/technical training awards
- 90% (231) were NANA Shareholders
- 10% (26) were descendants of NANA Shareholders



Student Spotlight

NANA Shareholder Wells Suuputaq Aurruk Crosby graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with honors on May 29, 2025 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computation and Cognition (computer science and neuroscience). Wells' parents are Cana Itchuaqiyag of Kotzebue/Noorvik and Ben Crosby. His grandparents are Gladys and the late Caleb Pungowiyi of Noorvik/Savoonga. Wells also co-authored, *Suvak's First Fish*, one of the books written during a workshop sponsored by the Aqqaluk Trust.



NANA Shareholder Cerena Ipalook-Reich graduated from the Alaska Career College with honors on August 9, 2025 with an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Business Administration and Human Resources Management. She received the Valedictorian Award for graduating with a cumulative 4.0 GPA. Cerena's parents are Jed Ipalook of Kotzebue and Crystal Reich-Venkov of Anchorage. Cerena received both Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. Memorial Trust and Teck Alaska scholarships. She is pursuing a career in human resources management where she can help people grow and develop while fostering her faith and Inupiaq Values within the workplace.



2025 High School Senior Scholarship

This scholarship is for NANA Region high school seniors who are planning to pursue higher education and would like their scholarship awards to be announced at their graduation ceremonies. In Spring 2025, four high school seniors received the high school senior scholarship:

- i) Kiana High School – Alec Mills and Moody Barr both received \$3,000 Aqqaluk Trust and \$2,000 Teck Alaska scholarship awards for Heavy Equipment Operator training at the Alaska Technical Center.
- ii) Kotzebue Middle High School – Blaze Lie received a \$3,000 Aqqaluk Trust Scholarship award to pursue a Computer Engineering degree.
- iii) Buckland High School – Tony Jones III received \$3,000 Aqqaluk Trust and \$6,000 Teck Alaska scholarship awards to pursue a Mechanical Engineering degree.



Taikuu!

