



# Caring for Rural Volunteers Essential to CYAK Mission

Equipping volunteers with everything from song books to pizzas is key to ministry

BY DAVID RURIK

Alyssa Williams knew there was something special in how young people connected to God through music. God worked in her heart to recognize the value of what could be done in her home village of Mekoryuk on Nunivak Island.

In early January Williams and Devin Thurston, a local school teacher, called the CYAK office in Anchorage to see what help was available to replace the few tattered songbooks the youth group still had from years past. Mekoryuk is a village of just over 200 people, a two hour flight west of Anchorage off the coast of Western Alaska. Williams has been a camper at Covenant Bible Camp in Unalakleet, is a graduate of Alaska Christian College in Soldotna and has attended many CYAK Young Adult Retreats.

Williams said, ***“Before we got the songbooks, we had only 2 or 3, and that made it harder for our youth group to sing during worship time. After the new ones came in, we had enough song books for everyone, and it was easier to teach them new songs because they had the lyrics in their hands to follow along.”***

It’s no surprise that they thought to approach CYAK to see if songbooks could be made for the youth in Mekoryuk. Through CYAK’s rich 25 year history the organization has played a unique part in supporting those in-

dividuals who regularly connect with youth in their communities. Both Williams and Thurston have been working alongside the local church to facilitate the youth group programming there.

Some of the youth in Mekoryuk shared their thoughts after the songbooks landed on site in February.

***“The new songbooks are easier to look at and have more NEW songs to praise the Lord!”***

***“The song books are cool, thank you! It is helpful that you sent them to help us learn more about God.”***

***“I like the songbooks because they remind me of Bible Camp!”***

CYAK places a high value on supporting those who are doing ministry work on a volunteer basis in rural communities. The CYAK team has packaged and shipped ready-bake pizzas out to communities to be sold as fundraisers to send youth to Covenant Bible Camp. These fundraisers are often hugely successful, enabling campers who struggle to pay for travel to raise the needed funds.

This winter, CYAK compiled care packages for volunteers in our network, which included everything from a CYAK water bottle to journals, books and chocolate. These care packages helped confirm the reality that these volunteers are not alone in the Kingdom work that they are doing in their

local community.

Youth ministry volunteers in rural Alaska often feel disconnected from the support that will help them flourish. CYAK strives to create opportunities in which they can continue to develop skills through ministry training, can share the joys and challenges of the work they are doing, and are supported by a network that stretches beyond the immediate community of their village.

As a partner, your giving helps impact youth through the work of a diverse volunteer network around the state.

People from around the country make these special projects - central to the identity of the vision for CYAK - happen. When partners give to the mission of CYAK they are participating in the lives of not only youth and staff, but also volunteers across the state.

## CONTINUE YOUR IMPACT TODAY

You are a part of the team that God has called together to impact youth and young adults in Alaska. When you give, you impact volunteers who are discipling students across Alaska for the glory of God. Thank you. For information and how to make a gift follow the link below.

**Will you continue your impact?**

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Covenant Youth of Alaska is a relational outreach, discipleship and leadership ministry for Alaska youth and young adults. A ministry of the Alaska Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church, we work in partnership with 19 churches across Alaska for the cause of ministry to young people. To join our efforts or to learn more, go to [www.cyak.org](http://www.cyak.org).