

# Covenant Youth of Alaska

*A relational outreach, discipleship and leadership ministry  
for Alaska youth and young adults*

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## Observing, Learning, and Serving

### Scammon Bay teacher Michelle Benisek finds joy in serving youth through lifestyle ministry.

It is no secret that teachers have a unique ability to impact young lives in a special way. This is one of many reasons why CYAK is so encouraged by partnerships with Christian teachers in rural Alaska.

Michelle Benisek first came to Alaska to serve at Covenant Bible Camp in Unalakleet for two summers during college. She shares how through that experience she became aware of the need for teachers and church youth workers in the village. Over time, she decided to move to a village to teach and live, and she did!

In 2011, Michelle moved to Scammon Bay, a community of about 500 people in the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta region, and home to one of the 19 Covenant churches in Alaska. Over the past 5 years she has made an incredible impact! She is concluding her time in Scammon this year, but leaves with a full heart. Read in Michelle's words about her experience:

### What made you decide to start volunteering with youth in Scammon?

*I believe in lifestyle ministry. I am so incredibly thankful for pastors, missionaries, and*

*youth pastors that have devoted their lives to serving the church body. Growing up in the church I have observed and seen the need for members of the church body to volunteer their time and gifts as well. When each member of the church body is seeking out how God can use them to serve, support and give everyone is better off. When I moved to Scammon Bay I was in a completely different culture and I wanted to observe, learn, and be apart of the church body that was already alive here. I was prayerfully seeking how and where God wanted to use any of His gifts through me.*

***"When each member of the church body is seeking out how God can use them to serve, support and give, everyone is better off."***

*After about a year, I had a few conversations with a family from the church, our pastor, and CYAK about youth ministry in Scammon Bay. Youth ministry had been done before in different ways in the past, they all encouraged me to pray about where God was leading me to volunteer and then they encouraged me to try. Honestly, I needed to know I had that church family support. A few families encouraged their girls to come to Bible study and they kept coming! A few families mentioned wanting their kids to go*

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## Ministry Highlights



### Spring Camp

Spring Camp was a success; preparing young adults for the summer /season ahead!



### Aarigaa FBX Camping

Aarigaa Fairbanks students went on a wilderness retreat to grow deeper in Christ a few weeks ago - a sweet time.



### Leadership Camp

Leadership Camp is taking place now at Bible Camp! May 31 - June 6: join in prayer!



...from front page

to Unalakleet Bible Camp, so we did some fundraising and ended up sending more and more every summer.

### What has been encouraging working with youth?

*Seeing youth grow in their faith and want to live it out in their daily lives. I also LOVE hearing kids talk about Bible Camp through the year!*

### What has been challenging working with youth?

*Trying to schedule around school activities - youth ministry has many of the same struggles everywhere! Many of our youth have faced tragic life events at a young age (related to suicide, depression, and substance abuse) and just want a listening ear or an adult that they can trust.*

### Do you have some favorite youth group memories?

*I love the in-between moments. Planned youth groups and Bible studies are fun and full of learning, but the everyday life is what it's about. In a small village a youth worker or teacher sees their kids everyday and multiple times a day. I love walking down the road and seeing students from youth group (or maybe they don't go at all) and just stopping to chat. The knock on the door asking if they can hang out or the text to go out sliding or berry picking. Those are the moments and memories where the meaningful conversations within youth ministry happen. This is what I love the most and will miss the most in moving from Scammon Bay.*

### How can supporters be praying?

*I was so thankful when a full time youth worker, through CYAK, moved to Scammon Bay in 2014. Drew and Holly Williams have been such a blessing along with Allie Whitaker (another teacher) and Chance Hunter who all share a passion for youth ministry. When this group arrived the small group girl's dinner Bible study exploded! It is amazing what can grow out of new ideas and volunteering hands and hearts! They are an answer to prayers! Please, continue to pray for these leaders in Scammon Bay and for the youth of Scammon Bay to continue to seek and grow in their faith.*

## PRAYER PRAISES & REQUESTS

**Sign up to receive monthly prayer updates, visit [www.cyak.org](http://www.cyak.org).**

**Praise:** For a wonderful Spring Camp with young adults in Chickaloon.

**Praise:** For another school year complete - filled with God's faithfulness.

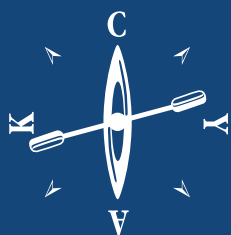
**Praise:** For teachers like Michelle, and all those with a heart for youth.

**Prayer Request:** For students to stay strong in the Lord this summer.

**Prayer Request:** For the Aarigaa House to be filled up for next semester!

**Prayer Request:** For refreshment for our staff as summer approaches.

**Thank you for your faithful support of CYAK's ministry through prayer.**



## Covenant Youth of Alaska

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A ministry of the Alaska Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church



### Enjoying God's Creation

Young adults loving the sunshine in Portage.



### Annual Meeting Singspiration

Scammon Bay youth sharing a song at conference!



### CYAK Staff and Board

enjoying a gathering to kick off strategic planning.

### CONNECT AND PARTNER!



Visit our website, like us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram, or find us on YouTube to learn more about CYAK's ministry! **Search: Covenant Youth of Alaska**

## CURRENT MINISTRY NEEDS

**Scholarships:** Give the opportunity for a young person to attend one of CYAK's retreats via scholarship.

**Yurt at CRC:** We are excited to be expanding the Chickaloon Retreat Center's capacity by building a yurt. This will provide indoor meeting space for groups. Consider partnering in this!

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