



# Rise Above - Partnering to Celebrate

Bringing together athletes and coaches for an evening of fun

BY DAVID RURIK

It is quite a sight to watch as a youth launches high into the air off of a blanket made of stretched hides during what is known as 'blanket toss'. At the culmination of Alaska's Native Youth Olympics (NYO), CYAK partnered in hosting a celebration event bringing youth into contact with God's people and positive influences in the community.

Every year, student athletes from over 100 communities around Alaska come together to compete in the NYO Senior Games. The games carry on the traditions that have been integral to Alaska Native survival for thousands of years. The weekend is full of energy and healthy competition with games that call upon strength, resiliency, skill and knowledge, both individually and collectively.

Concluding the NYO Games, CYAK partnered with Baxter Road Bible Church (BRBC) to host a celebration event. The pressures that youth face today can be overwhelming and, through partnership, a safe and engaging place was created for these young athletes to celebrate together.

While the games are competitive, the focus is on encouraging all athletes

to strive for their best. "I love how in NYO it is less about competing and more about cheering each other on, even your opponents. And when you go to watch, you can feel it in the air," Brenda Dock shared.

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It is this spirit that impacts students' lives for the better. Involvement in NYO has often positively influenced students' academic performance and strengthen their overall health and well-being. The celebration that CYAK partnered in allowed for the continued wellbeing of students.

More than 300 youth gathered for the celebration event at the Alaska Aviation Museum and were surrounded by fun activities, encouraging volunteers and CYAK staffers, music and opportunities.

This partnership event with BRBC is a great example of how CYAK enters partnerships across Alaska to encourage, equip and engage with young people. Partners like you allow CYAK to seamlessly enter

ministry partnerships locally, bringing resources, people and knowledge to the table.

Partners who give financially, as well as partners who volunteer locally, give our team the opportunity to take advantages of these excellent partnerships. CYAK was able to spread the word about local college ministries to the seniors, gather names and interest for community and regional events, and be a source of light in young people's life.

### CONTINUE YOUR IMPACT TODAY

You are a part of the team that God has called together to impact youth and young adults in Alaska.

Not only do we have some of the most committed staff on the ground in Alaska, but we have some of the most committed partners around the country driving the vision of CYAK forward.

Events across the state allow students to have specific encounters with God. Consider the impact that your giving has on the lives of young people as we do kingdom work in partnership together.

[www.cyak.org/YourImpact](http://www.cyak.org/YourImpact)



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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).