

Letters to the Editor

Kongignak, Alaska 99559
August 17, 1969

Mr. William Allen
Vista Co-ordinator
P.O. Box 1957
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Dear Mr. Allen,

We are sorry to hear you denied our request for re-enrollment for another year for our present Vista Volunteer, Blanche Andrews. She awakened a lot of interest in the people in the Adult Education program she started here last year and she was very understanding and a real source of encouragement, especially to the young people.

Although the time is late, we are writing to you again asking you to change your decision. We are best qualified to judge whether or not the Vista Associates can take over the Adult Education program in this village at this time.

Starting this fall, we wanted Blanche to work very closely with Associates tutoring and working with them as much as she could so that possibly by summer, 1970, they could perhaps take the high school equivalency exam and in the fall, 1970, they would have enough knowledge and experience to take over the Adult Education program here. We also wanted Blanche to work particularly with young married people, teaching them on specific grade levels and helping them to prepare themselves to eventually take the high school equivalency test sometime in the future.

If we can carry through with our plans for Adult Education in this village for this year, by fall, 1970, we will not need the services of lower 48 Vistas. We want to be as self-reliant as possible and to a great extent we already are. We are looking forward to the day when we can run our own programs without outside help. But we have to be prepared first and in this particular village at this particular time the Associates are not yet ready to take over the Adult Education at the level we want the various subjects taught. Hopefully, by next fall they will be, but all of us still have much to learn and the Associates want and need guidance and direction so they will be well prepared for next year.

The Anti-poverty programs in Alaska designed to help the native people would be a lot more effective if program administrators and directors learned to listen to, respect, and heed the suggestions and advice of the native people of Alaska. We are tired of other people making decisions for us that directly affect us. It is very unfair and it must end NOW.

We are enclosing a petition signed by the people of Kongiganak asking that our present lower 48 Vista be allowed to re-enroll and work with us for another year.

We hope to hear from you

soon, at least by August 28.

Respectfully,
Peter J. Daniel, Sr.
Vice President
Kongiganak Village Council
Walter Wallen - Marshall

Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indians of Alaska
1675 C St.
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
August 15, 1969

Dear Howard:

As the Alaska natives continue their efforts to assert the land rights of their people before the Congress of the United States, it is of more than passing interest to note that travel to Washington, D.C. relative to this vitally important matter, had its beginnings many years ago. The following extract from the case of the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. the United States clearly indicates that our efforts to protect our lands began before Statehood and before the discovery of oil—contrary to mistaken efforts to assign a sense of recency to these efforts.

The message is a tribute to the vision, courage, and eloquence of these wise men.

Sincerely yours,
John Borbridge, Jr.