

# Marlene Johnson to head project

Marlene Johnson, an Ahtna shareholder, has been selected as the director of a pilot project in cultural awareness by Alaska Children's Services, the state's largest private child and family service agency.

Alaska Children's Services

(ACS) serves some 800 children annually in a network of programs including three emergency shelters, four community-based group homes, a residential treatment center and school (The Jesse Lee Home) and an adventure-based pro-

gram serving delinquent boys.

Children are placed in ACS projects from throughout the state. Approximately 35 percent of the young people in care are Alaska Native.

According to Dr. John C. Garvin, executive director of ACS, "Alaska Children's Services is committed to the development of a model program to serve the needs of minority children in our institutional care. We are delighted to have Ms. Johnson as director of this important pilot project. Marlene was selected from a field of nearly 100 applicants. We feel her professional experience will be a tremendous asset to her as she works with the children in our care, our staff and resource persons in the community."

The goals of the project she will direct are fourfold — to assist ACS in recruiting and hiring Native staff, to establish links between the children served and the Anchorage Native community, to create a positive environment within ACS projects that will affirm the cultural heritage of Alaska Native children and to help Native children in care and staff come to a working understanding of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

Prior to joining ACS, Johnson served as director of cultural personal development for the Cook Inlet Native Association and earlier as director of their social service division. Johnson has also had considerable experience working as a counselor with young people and their families as a result of two and one-half years employment as an after-care specialist with the Clitheroe Center of the Salvation Army.

Over the past nine years, Johnson served as a participant and provided leadership in over 30 workshops in the area of cultural heritage, education and health and management as related to Alaska Native issues.

She is a member of the Ahtna Regional Corporation, a member of Cook Inlet Native Association and a member of the board of directors of the Food Bank of Alaska.

In 1981, she directed the Alaska Native Youth Olympics and is well known throughout the South Central Region of Alaska as the founder of the Alaska Native Dress Review of the Cook Inlet Native Association.

"I'm really delighted to work for an agency that has established a high priority in helping Alaska Native children explore their cultural heritage," said Johnson.

Funding for the pilot one-year project was provided by special grants from the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church and The Public Welfare Foundation of Washington, D.C.

Alaska Children's Services is a joint project of American Baptist, American Lutheran, United Methodists and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).