

ANCADA continues to wage war on alcoholism

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The following speech was presented by Ms. Lamont at the recent Alaska Federation of Natives Convention.

Because Ms. Lamont's words were so important we reprint them in their entirety.

It is an honor and a privilege for me to speak before such a distinguished audience. It is also with a great sense of pride that I can reiterate the sentiments of the AFN President, that out of respect for the villages voting to go dry that the AFN members voted to have a dry convention. ANCADA wholeheartedly endorses this action.

ANCADA still endorses the "declaration of war" on alcoholism passed by the National Congress of American Indians, however, as Alaskan Natives, we have made this progress to implement this "declaration of war."

Regions have done much to change the attitude during the past 10 years through their efforts to provide cultural and social education and information directly within rural areas; by developing prevention and education materials; by regions providing technical assistance to the villages; by working directly in schools and other agencies; by holding workshops on alcoholism for people in regions and villages.

By developing and disseminating a list of resources available to treat alcoholism; by supporting a resolution to establish a statewide Alcoholism Awareness Week; by supporting local option decisions to vote dry; by working with the judicial system in supporting the concept of treatment rather than incarceration for alcoholics or alcohol-related crimes; and by establishing village committees and boards at the local level to provide input into agencies from a grassroots level.

Villages and regions have accomplished these tasks with funds from local, state, and federal sources. We owe a debt of gratitude to those funding

sources, however, our work has only just begun.

We can not afford to let our accomplishments die because of a lack of funds. We will continue to maintain our pride and dignity as Alaskan Natives by utilizing our own strengths and our own vision, regardless of the obstacles.

It is also with a certain amount of pride that we look at village after village using local option to vote dry. At last count, about 50 villages banned importation of alcohol. While this substantially reduced the violence and crime in villages — 60 percent, 52 percent of Alaskan Natives are within treatment programs.

It alone is not the answer. It is a beginning and it shows that Alaskan Natives have taken full control of their destiny. Of 17 million dollars of state funds appropriated for alcoholism, slightly over \$6 million goes for rural Alaska.

However, I am clearly convinced that even though such a small amount goes to rural Alaska, the rural programs have been effective and have accomplished positive results. More than 10 million state dollars go to urban areas such as Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau.

We will continue to work at education on attitudes about alcohol and drug abuse. Yesterday, AFN President Frank Ferguson spoke of education in rural areas. ANCADA will assist in the development of educational materials in all classes such as home economics; culture, sports, hygiene, etc. It would be a great opportunity to educate our youth as our great chief Andrew Isaac suggested.

Chief Andrew Isaac said, "We live by the land, we still need it for survival." Our culture and values come from the land, from the animals, from our use of the game from the land, not from the abuse of the game, or of the land. He urged you to keep our law to hunt and to trap.

Our culture, our beliefs, our way of life is important to our

still threatens our way of life more than anything, whether it be man or the elements.

Alcoholism and our acceptance of it is changing our way of life faster than any technological advancement. To keep our way of life, to keep subsistence, to keep our culture, to keep our beliefs and values, we must do something about alcohol abuse, using our way of life.

ANCADA is proud of its past achievements — of all the regions. As I stated before, we have just begun. With your support our plans for the future would be in keeping with the AFN President's

committees for coordinating health-alcohol-education, etc.

We will continue to tie in and coordinate training, treatment, media, prevention, and education into one statewide entity, using local option, using values and culture, using the knowledge of our Elders, in other words, using you to guide us.

Seventy-two students have graduated from alcohol training. It has been nice to have training for our people in the field using academic tools. We, as Alaskan Natives, have tied in values and culture. It has given us strength, through our cultural and spiritual beliefs in

a positive way in treatment design and prevention.

ANCADA will develop, with the assistance of local village people, a statewide Native philosophy on the treatment of alcoholism.

What is it? What is the best way of treating the Native alcoholic? What should our methodologies be? How should the family of the alcoholic receive treatment?

As Alaskan Natives, we will develop and train ourselves to do this in the village using an intensive day care or adult intensive treatment method.

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My Turn

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It is not necessary to send people out of their environment for treatment to an expensive center when we have the knowledge and know-how of doing it locally.

ICC has developed an outstanding Public Service Announcement that has a sense of pride to be an Alaskan Native. Several types of materials still need to be developed and targeted to certain audiences. Elderly, youth, women, village, urban, professional people, and to the masses. ANCADA is prepared to and has the knowledge to develop such specialized material.

Preventing alcoholism was a challenge which we met. We know that if a person drinks, he or she may activate the seed of alcoholism which may or may not take years to develop into a state where it may cause problems in a person's life. It is a challenge that we are prepared to continue preventive measures. We have 10 years of experience and know-how on our side.

We can not do this without each other. Nor can we do this without funds. For this reason, I urge you once again to ask the federal, state, and local areas to continue to support this much-needed effort for ongoing local programs.

I am reminded of the fellow that went into a blacksmith shop where the blacksmith was working on a horseshoe. The horseshoe was still hot because the blacksmith was just finished pounding on it. The fellow picked it up and immediately dropped it. The blacksmith said, "It's hot, eh?" The fellow answered, "No, it just doesn't take me long to look at a horseshoe."

Sometimes when an issue is too hot, or when we don't understand it, we will drop it, rather than take the time to look at it, continue to explore options and then decide what course of action to take next.

Our approach to the treatment, prevention and training has come of age. We are ready to use our knowledge of alcoholism, our cultural identity, and our sweat and tears to move forward in these areas.