

Ft. Yukon Enjoys Nicest, Biggest Community Center in Alaska

By LAEL MORGAN
Staff Writer

FORT YUKON—The biggest, nicest, newest community center in Alaska is located in Ft. Yukon, population 700. The \$618,704 facility is the result of five years of hard planning and perseverance and villagers think it was well worth the work.

The idea originated with Capt. Tom Trull, army worker for the Episcopal Church. He did the early planning and much of the footwork to government agencies using his vacation time to travel to offices in San Francisco and Washington.

The community backed him all the way raising \$30,000 for equipment and offering a \$5,000 contribution of land. Housing and Urban Development came through with a \$317,264 grant.

The State of Alaska granted \$203,220 for the project and the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska made a 10 year, interest free loan of \$92,220.

The facility has a gymnasium, multi-purpose rooms, library, kitchen, meeting rooms, office space and —most convenient—public laundromat and showers.

"It saves us all so much carrying of water," remarked Mrs. Carolyn Peter program coordinator. "The kids spent so much time under water—some were taking three or four showers a day—that we had to limit them. It's working out just fine."

Even more heartening is the use made of the center by Ft. Yukon families.

"We have family day every other Sunday from 3 to 6 p. m. and you can only come if you bring your family. It's free for all and it's really cool to see the people playing with their children," Mrs. Peter said.

The center also offers a program for oldsters, baseball and basketball competitions, arts and crafts.

"This winter the old people want to get their stories down on tape and we hope to have the kids dramatize the stories. The Alaska State Library has given us a grant for \$12,000 for equipment and also 2,000 volumes. We're working to establish an Indian Section."

To show exactly what the center means to the community, Mrs. Peter got quotes from the villagers who use it.

"I think it is the best thing to ever happen to Ft. Yukon," said Robert Englishoe. "It is a place for the younger people to go. I think it is good for the younger generation because when I went to high school there was nothing like it."



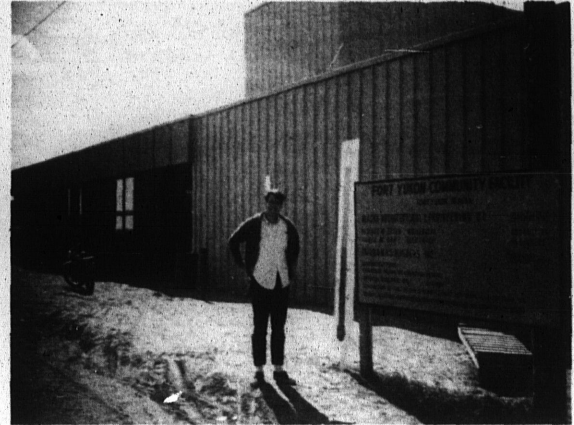
THE KIDS LIKE IT—Everything from the library to the showers. And there are recreational programs too for all age groups. The facility was built at the cost of \$618,704. With funding from government, church and local agencies.

Rose Baalam said, "It is good to have the community center. Especially for the kids. It is good for the showers and washing clothes. . . and when we drink a long time."

"I never thought that a place like that would be in Ft. Yukon.

It is like a dream," added Minnie Peter.

"An excellent meeting place, a good place to chit-chat with long-time-no-see friends," observed Nels Peteresen. And Nat Englishoe Jr. concluded, "I see clean Indians all the time now."



TOM TRULL, Army worker for the Episcopal Church at Ft. Yukon stands grinning in front of his dream come true...a super, deluxe Community Center. He's been working on the project several years and, with the backing of the town, it became a reality in July.