

Raven's Way wins national accreditation

The Native-administered Raven's Way program in Sitka has become the first youth substance abuse treatment program of its kind in Alaska to receive national accreditation. Raven's Way is a free-standing, or non-hospital based, treatment program. After an exhaustive on-site evaluation of the program last month, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) found that Raven's Way successfully meets the organization's "high standards of performance."

SEARHC - the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Corporation - operates the Raven's Way

program through funding from the Indian Health Service and the State of Alaska.

"A number of exceptional initiatives have been developed for Native youth, including a ropes course," the CARF report says of the Raven's Way program. "Utilization of the natural environment to develop self-sufficiency and self-esteem via kayaking, hiking, and related activities is commendable."

"Four years ago, SEARHC took a risk and embarked on a new treatment program using the experiential (outdoor) education model. Now we're seeing it pay off," said Mark Gorman,

SEARHC's Vice President of Community Health Services.

CARF also commended SEARHC for expanding its successful experiential education focus into a broader multi-component approach. "The corporation has wisely developed and implemented a comprehensive treatment program which addresses the physical, social, psychological, cultural, and spiritual needs of the person served," the report notes.

The Raven's Way program serve youths from throughout the state. Although the program targets Native youths, state funding supports services for non-Natives as well.