

Area cooperative ready to promote local arts and crafts

By George Olanna, Business Development Specialist, Kawerak

The Bering Strait Inuit Cooperative (BSIC) was formed in 1995 to provide its members with any and all goods and services related to producing and marketing Native art and crafts.

Several departments at Kawerak are working to revive the cooperative to help artists in the Bering Strait region. Our first activity was to provide tables for artists to sell products during the 2003 Kawerak Elders and Youth Conference. We provided five tables for six artists. We also sold items for 10 artists.

BSIC is a non-profit organization formed by artists for artists.

Our goals are to promote quality arts and crafts; provide markets to our members through art and crafts fairs, retail networks and Internet sales; and to protect the uniqueness of the Native arts and crafts.

Our members can help other artists by sharing their knowledge through demonstrations and teaching BSIC workshops. Kawerak can help artists develop portfolios and business cards, help with business start up, and offer a variety of workshops and eventually Web page design.

BSIC will not compete with other village arts and craft organizations, but

will support and assist them in operating their sales. We will have newsletters published where you can share your successes with other organizations and individuals.

BSIC will eventually buy art and crafts from its members to market within Alaska, and will expand to art and craft fairs in the Lower 48. We will only buy art with Alaska Silver Hand labels. This will allow us to assure customers that the art and crafts we sell are Native made.

We welcome all artists to join BSIC, including carvers, skin sewers, basket weavers, bead workers, jewelers, mask makers, doll makers, and clothing makers. Having your biography, the title and a short description of your art will increase the price of your art. We hope to begin by showcasing art and crafts in various places around Nome.


To join BSIC, contact George Olanna (443-9008; george@kawerak.org) with your name, address and phone number. The annual membership fee is \$12.50. You can pay with a check or cash, or have the fee deducted from your first sale. Also let me know if you would like to demonstrate or instruct Native art. We encourage all artists and crafts people in the Bering Strait region to join. We are here to help in any way we can.

To be eligible for a Silver Hand permit, you must be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- Are you a resident of Alaska?
- Are you 18 years old or older?
- Is your art in traditional Alaska Native art forms?
- Are you creating traditional art in whole or significant part of natural materials?

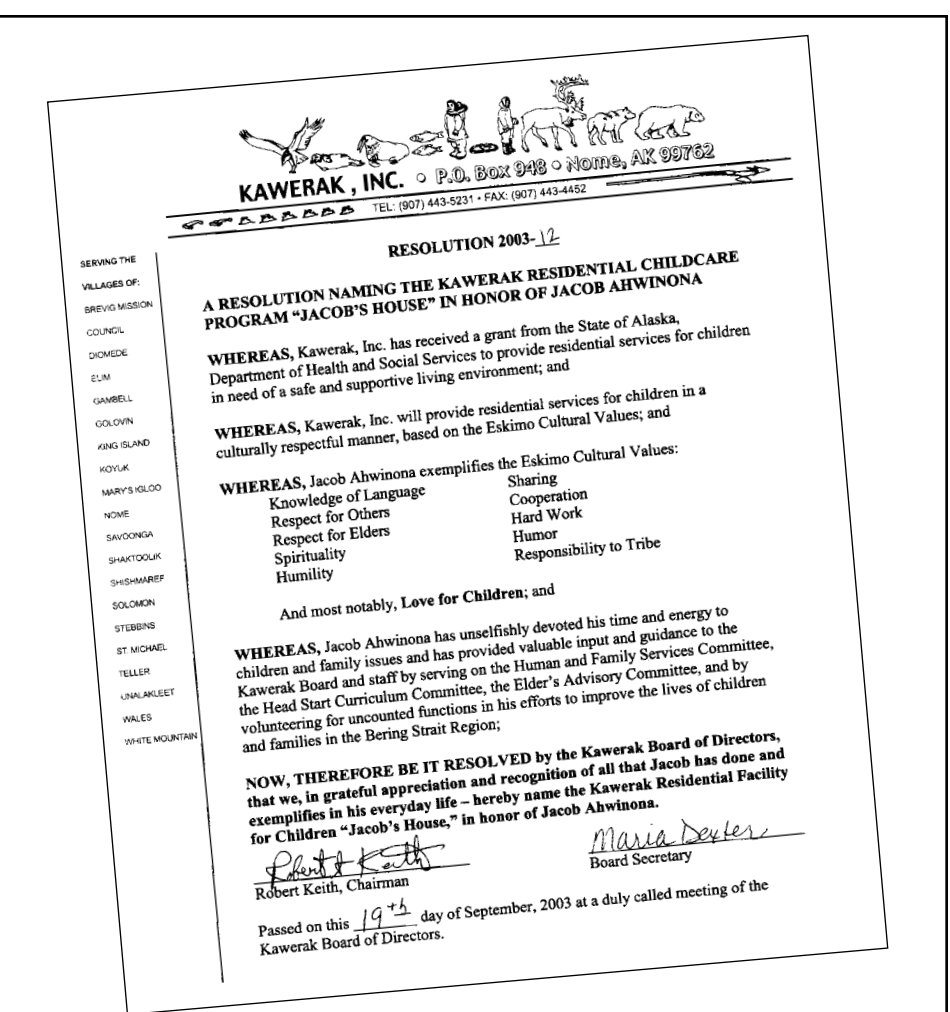
To apply for a Silver Hand permit, please write: Saunders McNeill, Native and Community Arts Development Program Director, Alaska State Council on the Arts, 411 W. 4th Ave., Suite 1E, Anchorage, AK 99501-2343.

You can call McNeill at (907) 269-6610.



Medicaid Minute

How does Medicaid work?
For each month you are eligible, you will receive a Medicaid recipient card. On this card are small, green, peel-off stickers (sometimes called "coupons"). You must show your recipient card to your doctor or other health care provider each time you receive medical treatment.



Kawerak celebrates grand opening of Jacob's House

The Kawerak Human and Family Services Division has a new program for children in the Bering Strait region. Kawerak received a grant from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to operate a residential childcare program for children in the foster care system.

The program, previously operated by the Nome Receiving Home, had been closed for two years. The Nome Receiving Home Board of Directors handed over the building to Kawerak. Thanks to the Rasmusson Foundation, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and DHSS, Kawerak was able to renovate the facility. Kawerak also paid for a significant amount of the renovations.

Kawerak was concerned about the number of children who had to

be sent out of the region for lack of foster homes. The new program has a home-like atmosphere with a live-in house parent. The program can take up to five children at a time.

The Kawerak Board of Directors authorized naming the new program "Jacob's House" in honor of elder Jacob Ahwinona. The resolution above explains why Kawerak chose Ahwinona.

The region is still in need of foster homes for children. A foster home is the preferred placement option for children. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, please call the Kawerak Alternative Care Specialist at (907) 443-4361 or toll-free at 1-800-478-5153 (see page 9). For more information about Jacob's House please call (907) 443-4464.



Above: Jacob Ahwinona speaks at the grand opening of Jacob's House. "When a neglected child looks at you, he looks you right in the face. It hurts you. It won't be like that in this house," Ahwinona said. Left: Susanna Horn of St. Michael and Jenny Lee of Teller try out the new furniture and some snacks under a photo of Ahwinona.



About Denali KidCare and our sliding fee scale

Insuring Alaska's children and our future with Denali KidCare!

Benefits coordinators are here to help you in Nome and the villages!

If you have any questions or need help applying for Denali KidCare or Medicaid, please let us know.

Denali Kid-Care can ...

- Pay for doctor or health aide appointments
- Pay for dental and other medically necessary travel
- Pay for glasses for children 18 and under

Sliding Fee Scale
Norton Sound Health Corporation serves all patients regardless of

ability to pay. Discounts for essential services are offered depending on family size and income. You



may apply for a discount at the front desk.

For questions regarding eligibility for the sliding fee scale or for help filling out a Denali KidCare or Medicaid application, please call a benefits coordinator at 443-3323 in Nome, 624-3535 in Unalakleet, or 1-888-559-3311 in the villages!

—Darlene Hebel, Benefits Coordinator, NSHC