



RurAL CAP

Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.

731 East 8th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501
907.279.2511 - www.ruralcap.org

June 2, 2022

For Immediate Release

Contact:
Development & Communications
907.268.8516
communications@ruralcap.org

Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc., ends final program year at Sterling Head Start with celebration

Sterling, Alaska –The Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc., (RurAL CAP) ended its final program year on May 13 due to 2019 state budget cuts, after more than two decades serving Sterling and the surrounding communities by remembering the Head Start site’s positive community impact.

Since 2001, the RurAL CAP Sterling Head Start site supported children and families in the surrounding area with services in early education and family well-being, serving an average of 40-50 families each year.

“[Sterling Head Start] was a place for people to belong and feel supported,” Janice Smith, Local Program Supervisor, said. “We were a bright light in the community that created an open door to kids and families to strengthen relationships and build connections.”

The site hosted generations of families from diverse backgrounds, advocated for families with low-incomes, and partnered closely with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District to conduct developmental screenings and weekly in-classroom services.



Sterling Head Start children enjoy the sunshine outside in spring 2022.

“Our program staff, leadership, and agency advocated tirelessly on behalf of the children and families of Sterling Head Start to minimize the impact of the state funding reduction,” said Tiel Smith, RurAL CAP CEO. “Despite extensive efforts to sustain services, the program was forced to close its doors due to insufficient state funding. Our hearts are heavy for Sterling’s loss, and we certainly cannot thank the community, families, and staff enough for their support and dedication over the years. As a mission-driven organization, our agency will continue to engage in advocacy opportunities for early childhood development and education statewide.”

As the class of 2035 celebrated their graduation to kindergarten, the site’s staff facilitated donations of playground equipment, kids’ picnic tables, and sentimental toys to local families and organizations. The donations are an opportunity to spread the positive impact of the program and thank the community for their trust and dedication over the years.

Founded in 1965, RurAL CAP is a private, statewide, nonprofit organization with a mission to empower low-income Alaskans through advocacy, education, affordable housing and direct services that respect our unique values and cultures. RurAL CAP is one of the largest and most diversified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in Alaska.

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