



Alaska Communications Announces 2011 Summer of Heroes Honorees

Five Alaska heroes receive scholarships, recognition at Alaska State Fair



Alaska Communications and Boys & Girls – Clubs Alaska recognize five youth heroes as part of the 2011 Summer of Heroes program. Alaska Communications presented each hero with a \$1,500 scholarship during a ceremony at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer on Sunday, Aug. 28. This year's honorees are Jayden Tumbaga of Kenai, Alaska, represented by family friend Jacqueline Garcia (top left); Mercedes Basford (top center), Fred Falealili (top right), and Krista Stapleford (bottom left) of Anchorage, Alaska; and Samuel Allred (bottom right) of Wasilla, Alaska.

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – Aug. 29, 2011 – [Alaska Communications](#) announces the five Alaska youth heroes as part of the 2011 Summer of Heroes program. The Anchorage-based communications company honored the heroes yesterday at the Alaska State Fair with a special ceremony and presentation of \$1,500 scholarships to each hero. In addition to the scholarships, Alaska Communications hosted the young heroes and their families for a welcome banquet on Saturday, Aug. 27, followed by a day at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer on Sunday. The 2011 Summer of Heroes program is a partnership between Alaska Communications and Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska to support youth development programs throughout the state and recognize young Alaskans making a difference in their local communities.

The five recipients of this year's Summer of Heroes scholarships, ranging from ages 11 to 18, were selected from dozens of nominations collected from communities across the state this summer. The winners are:

- Sam Allred, age 11, Wasilla – Sam suffers from a rare kidney disease but he hasn't let it stand in his way. Instead, Sam founded a non-profit, Kindness for Kids, and wrote a book to support children who are ill and their families, and encourage people around the world to not judge others by the way they look. He is now teaming up with the Nephcure Foundation to help launch the organization's work in Alaska.
- Krista Stapleford, age 12, Anchorage – Krista was born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy. She created the "Wheelchair Project," a program designed to help kids understand what everyday life is like for children living with Muscular Dystrophy. Krista is working with the Muscular Dystrophy Association to take the program to other schools throughout Anchorage and the Pacific Northwest.
- Fred Falealili, age 17, Anchorage – Fred is a friend, role model and mentor to dozens of kids and teens throughout the Anchorage area. He's committed to helping other youth achieve success. Fred has impacted many young lives by volunteering at his local church as a Sunday school teacher and through his work with Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska, where he coaches and leads afterschool athletic programs for young men.
- Jayden Tumbaga, age 17, Kenai – After battling several medical conditions as a child, Jayden had to grow up quickly, particularly after his parents were in a major car accident that left his dad in need of intense daily care. Jayden took on a job to earn extra income for his family and assisted with his father's medical care. Even with his responsibilities at home, he remained focused on his academics and commitment to his community, volunteering in special needs classes throughout his school years to help children with severe disabilities.
- Mersades Basford, age 18, Anchorage – Mersades consistently puts the needs of others before her own, showing compassion and kindness to everyone she encounters. From sewing blankets for homeless children, to helping abandoned pets find new homes, to volunteering with toy and food drives, it's heroes like Mersades who make us proud of our Alaska communities.

"Alaska Communications is committed to helping youth in Alaska succeed and we are proud to recognize those who are giving back," said Heather Cavanaugh, Alaska Communications director of corporate communications. "We launched this program with Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska to build awareness for programs that provide positive environments and experiences for young people, but we had no idea how many inspiring stories we would hear along the way. We are thrilled to be part of a community with so many outstanding individuals."

Commencing in June, the Summer of Heroes program recognizes Alaska youth for their outstanding work, volunteer efforts and commitment to their communities. Alaska Communications partnered with Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska to collect nominations and help spread the word about the importance of giving back. Alaska Communications also pledged to donate \$25 to the Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska for every phone sold during the campaign, up to \$15,000. The final tally and donation announcement will take place at Boys & Girls Clubs – Alaska's annual gala on Sept. 17.

For full biographies of each Summer of Heroes scholarship recipient and more information about Alaska Communications' work in the community, visit www.alaskacommunications.com/summerofheroes or visit Alaska Communications on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

About Alaska Communications

Headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska Communications Systems Group, Inc., through its subsidiaries, provides Alaska Communications services and is a leading provider of high-speed wireless, mobile broadband, Internet, local, long-distance and advanced data solutions for businesses and consumers in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. The Alaska Communications network includes the most advanced wireline and wireless data and voice networks and the most diverse undersea fiber optic system connecting Alaska to the contiguous United States. For more information, visit www.alaskacommunications.com or www.alsk.com.

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