

For Immediate Release

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Alaska's students send powerful messages to help save lives in Suicide Media Contest

CORDOVA – The Alaska Association of Student Governments (AASG), the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and GCI honored students from all corners of Alaska on Saturday by awarding prizes in the Suicide Media Contest. Jaden Nethercall of Barrow earned top prize for his poignant and powerful video. Stephanie Sison of Cordova placed second out of 32 entries in the competition.

All contest submissions are available now for online viewing at <http://bit.ly/idZNhj>. The top four entries are being turned into television public service announcements, which GCI will air around Alaska.

“When media messages about suicide are presented to the public by teens, it opens dialogue and makes an immediate impact,” said Bob Terrazas, ANTHC Marketing and Communications Director. “Because of this awareness, Alaska’s suicide crisis hotline, Careline, will see a spike in phone calls and hopefully kids’ lives will be saved.”

Award winners were:

- **1st place:** Jaden Nethercall from Barrow: <http://bit.ly/fgxs6G>
- **2nd place:** Stephanie Sison from Cordova: <http://bit.ly/g5Qs1g>
- **3rd place (tie):** Michael White from Bethel: <http://bit.ly/gIEBvn>
- **3rd place (tie):** Sophie Clark from Klawock: <http://bit.ly/dLYN6m>

Honorable mentions:

- Michael White from Bethel: <http://bit.ly/eAWMvy>
- Mitchell Forbes from Bethel: <http://bit.ly/g2YZwn>
- Shulammite Sison from Cordova: <http://bit.ly/h3LUIPI>
- Theron Paul from Manokotak: <http://bit.ly/ihtEUW>
- Emily Brease from Tri-Valley: <http://bit.ly/h7S1yU>

Increasing numbers of Alaska teachers, medical providers and community members continue gaining insight about suicide, but AASG is the only student group in Alaska to make suicide awareness and prevention its primary focus.

AASG meets four times annually and holds teleconferences every month. AASG executive director Carol Waters said suicide awareness and prevention rose to a focus when one student shared that she had lost a classmate and friend.

“She was still having lots of feelings around that,” Waters said, and had realized “there wasn’t much the school districts were doing to talk about or help prevent it. Responders would come into the

schools after the fact, but in general, students felt helpless in not knowing much about how to prevent it.”

Waters added, “Our student leaders wanted proactive rather than reactive solutions — they wanted to help save lives.”

One way the students decided to share their message was with a media contest. Creative teens were invited to enter skits, songs, poems, digital stories and posters, among other things, to encourage others to mindfully make healthy choices. AASG partnered with the ANTHC and GCI to give the competition and entries statewide exposure.

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About the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is a not-for-profit tribal health organization managed by Alaska Native tribal governments and their regional health organizations. We provide statewide services in specialty medical care; construction of water, sanitation and health facilities; community health and research; information technology and professional recruiting. For more information, please visit www.anthc.org.

About AASG:

Alaska Association of Student Governments (AASG) serves all student leaders in the state. AASG is led by an all-student Executive Board, with an Executive Director as advisor. AASG provides training in leadership, advocacy, and collaboration. The goals are to develop leaders with passionate and compassion! The Suicide Prevention Campaign includes training, Kognito/AtRisk, resolutions for action to be presented to the State Board of education and Early Development, and the Media Contest. It presents a leadership conference twice a year. The Fall 2011 Conference will be at Service HS, and next spring will be hosted by Kodiak High School.

About GCI

GCI (NASDAQ: [GNCMA](http://www.gncma.com)) is the largest telecommunications company in Alaska. A pioneer in bundled services, GCI provides local, long distance and wireless telephone, cable television, Internet and data communications services throughout Alaska. For more information, visit www.gci.com.