

@SeeStories

Building inclusive communities with film and story.



From See Stories Director

Dear See Stories Family,

If anything describes the second half of 2023, it's growth. We are somewhere in the middle of a small, scrappy start-up and a mid-sized, stable nonprofit with some meat on her bones. From gathering funds to hire new team-members to training a cadre of educators around the state to lead workshops, and from moving into the federal granting world to planning for our next 5 years, we are honored to continue our mission with the many fabulous humans we meet on the journey. Thank you for being one of them!

Humbly, Marie

Top moments of 2023



and more!

TOP MOMENTS of 2023

1 DEED AFTER-SCHOOL DIGITAL STORYTELLING

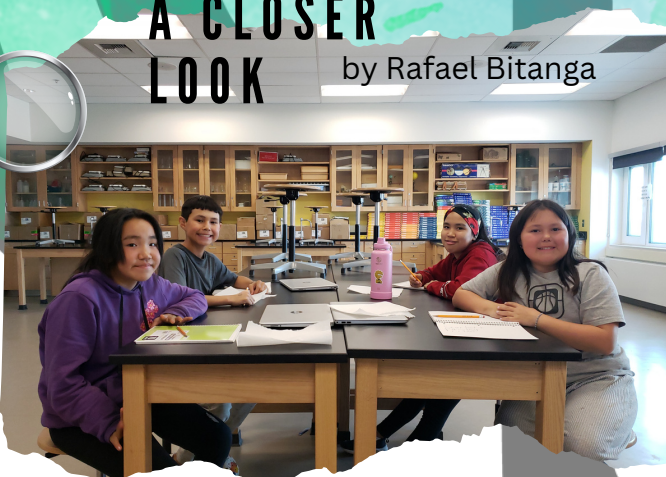


In 2023, we scaled up our programs to support teachers in 15 communities around the state to lead after-school youth film programs. As a result of grant funding from the Alaska Department of Education (DEED), 20 teachers have been receiving curriculum and ongoing mentorship from See Stories to support students in telling the stories of their lives, schools, and communities.

Coming from all corners of Alaska, teachers from Akiak, Wrangell, Hoonah, Alakanuk, Stebbins, Palmer, Gambell, Wrangell, Upper Kalskag, and more have worked independently and as a cohort to navigate implementing these programs into their schools. Students are working across grade levels and electing to spend their time after school to participate in these programs. Their films and podcasts are diverse in topic; some include documenting flooding and climate change, access to clean water, using tundra as ice cellars, subsistence hunting and fishing practices, and observing change by Elders. We are inspired by these dedicated teachers and students for documenting the stories important to their communities, and grateful to them for sharing these important stories for all to learn and appreciate. These after school programs will wrap up at the end of the school year, so stay tuned to see all the amazing films currently in production!

A CLOSER LOOK

by Rafael Bitanga



Spotlighting the passionate students participating in Alakanuk's digital storytelling after-school program.

Armed with their own notebooks to capture ideas and progress, plus laptops for research and video editing, the young trailblazers in Alakanuk's digital storytelling after-school program are revving up to spotlight their community's future!

Leading the charge are two sets of devoted siblings: Prettina (6th grade) and her sister Angelina (7th grade), and Ian (7th grade) alongside his sister Scarlett (6th grade). Though young in years, their drive to uncover and share their people's stories is mighty.

DEED AFTER-SCHOOL DIGITAL STORYTELLING: A CLOSER LOOK AT ALAKANUK DIGITAL STORYTELLING



In just a few short weeks, many connections have blossomed. Students are trading meaningful ideas, speaking up with confidence, and bonding through brainstorming real issues in their community. From flooding wrought by climate change to shifts in childhood behavior across generations – even to technology's impact on village culture – their curiosity knows no bounds. And they can't wait to interview Elders and leaders

to shed light on these topics. It's been amazing to see these students take charge of the discussions and lift each other up. Their passion for storytelling – and their community – fills me with hope and excitement for the projects still to come. No doubt their films will showcase Alakanuk's proud spirit and the bright leaders already walking among us!



A CLOSER LOOK

by Seth Bader



Let's just face it, Laura Davies is amazing. Some teachers have a zest for collaboration and making big things happen for their students. That's Laura. In the Spring of 2023, See Stories was hosted by Laura in Wrangell, AK where we worked with her 7th-8th grade students making



“Stories of the Land.” Laura fell in love with the interview and filmmaking process – noticing the meaningful connections students make with their community. During the summer of 2024, she independently fundraised and was able to purchase a professional camera set up and audio recording equipment. This helped launch her new after-school club “Stikine Stories.”

Still, Laura knew she could do more and wants to share with as many educators as possible about her journey, so others can follow on the trail she has blazed. (cont.)

TOP MOMENTS of 2023

DEED AFTER-SCHOOL DIGITAL STORYTELLING: LAURA DAVIES & STIKINE STORIES



As a leader on this front, we are thrilled and proud on behalf of Laura to share that she will be traveling to Denver this summer to present her work at the Alaska Society for Technology in Education (ASTE) Conference.

Her presentation is titled “Empowering Voices: Student-Created Place-Based Documentaries and Podcasts.” At the ASTE Conference, Laura will share about her amazing work and guide other teachers through her filmmaking process.

Laura modestly explains in her own words:



“This all started with See Stories. My goal is to share the good, not take credit for things I did not create or do. See Stories lit a fire and then I kept going, but most importantly my goal is to share what my students are creating.”

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HAWAII ETHNOMATH SYMPOSIUM



We were honored to join Angoon students at this year’s Ethnomath Symposium in Hawaii. One of our main projects was in collaboration with our student intern from Angoon, Luke, while he and Seth interviewed elders, teachers, students, and researchers on the topic of ethnomath.



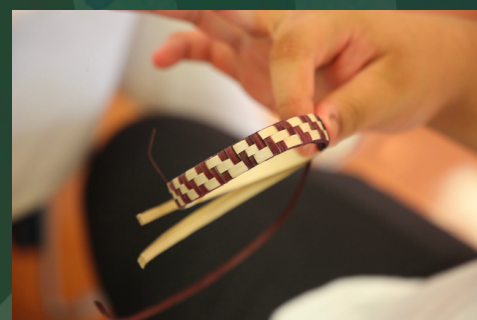
Ethnomath & Storytelling



Reflection and interview
by Seth Bader

Over the past year, See Stories has been working with students in the community of Angoon, AK on several projects. After multiple film workshops, summer internships, and an independent study course, we have been fortunate to spend

time consistently in the school. A source of pride amongst students and teachers at the school is their Ethnomath class and curriculum. People seem to be confused about the topic. “What is Ethnomath?” I have to admit, before See Stories’ time in Angoon, I had never heard of Ethnomath. After learning more about it, I have noticed that everyone defines it a bit differently, but a common thread is that Ethnomath is about **helping students to learn and see math through their own cultural lens**. It’s approaching math with students such that they see themselves and their culture in the math they are learning; making the math meaningful, relevant, and applicable to them as individuals. This approach is something that teachers and students in Angoon are meeting head on and taking pride in, through Ethnomath projects like carving dugout canoes and building hydroponic systems.



In recent years, Angoon students have traveled to Hawaii, where Ethnomath as a subject has been pioneered, to participate in an “Ethnomath Institute,” an immersive week of collaborative learning and projects. And given the nature of our collaboration with Angoon High School this year, Marie and I were invited to attend. This year’s trip marked the first annual Ethnomath Symposium. Teachers and students from across the Pacific Northwest and Hawaii were invited to participate and collaborate. In attendance were teachers and students from the Southeast Alaska communities of Klukwan, Angoon, Juneau, and Hoonah, as well as Nisga’a Nation in British Columbia and Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu. A gathering of communities connected by the Pacific is a powerful and humbling experience, and we were honored to be welcomed to participate in the songs, dancing, celebrations, and learning shared by all.

See Stories' official role in the symposium was to work in collaboration with Luke, a student from Angoon who has been working on several See Stories projects this school year. Luke and I worked together as a filmmaking dream-team during the symposium; facilitating over 15 interviews with elders, teachers, students, and researchers all on the topic of Ethnomath! Throughout the spring, Luke will create a short documentary film untangling the nuances of Ethnomath; revealing what it means, how it is unique, and how it is beneficial to students.

While in Hawaii for the symposium, I took the time to interview Luke to ask him about his experience interning with See Stories, what he's been working on during his independent study, and the lessons he's learned along the way.

INTERVIEW WITH LUKE

Angoon Student Intern

Could you introduce yourself?

I'm Luke Jack, I'm from Angoon, Alaska and I'm in the 11th grade of Angoon High School.

Could you explain what you did for your summer internship and your independent study this school year with See Stories?

During the school year I've been working to make some short videos for the museum we're going to have for the tourist spots all around Angoon. So it would help tourists locate where all the central foundations of our town are at, like the City Hall clinic or even the store.

Who have you been interviewing for that?

I've been interviewing Pauline Jim. She's an elder at our town and she has done various projects helping the communities such as law, protecting the forests, doing service work at the clinic and teaching the newer generation how to bead and sew.



How have you enjoyed getting to meet with an elder every week and talk about a different spot in Angoon?

It's been nice. Getting to know you are preserving information for the next generation. Here an elder's voice is being heard, and you need to cherish tiny things that will always exist.



INTERVIEW WITH LUKE



You are making a film about Ethnomath. Can you explain what your Ethnomath film is going to be about?

The Ethnomath movie is generally going to focus on how it's helping students establish cultural connections between communities and preserve traditional practices. We should have more Ethnomath classes, not to get rid of colonialism, but to keep bonds to our family closer to what we do.

Let's imagine that your Ethnomath movie does have some impact in helping change things. How would that make you feel to know that you made a movie that actually changed the state you live in?

It'd be really nice. Knowing that people all around Alaska, it's just not one community but multiple, and knowing that their culture can be preserved and not being forgotten throughout time. Technology made it easy to share information, but also disregard what we already have. There's some things you can't be taught by a screen.

What's your favorite part about the whole filmmaking process? What are some things you've learned?

My favorite part is meeting up with people and finishing the project. I get to know more about the world from other people's perspectives. I get to enjoy what I have right now and also showing off the project also makes people proud. I've learned that taking photos is more than just getting the right shot. I've also learned that editing is really hard. There's good things I want to keep, and there's lots of less good things, but I want to keep it still.



Do you think it's important that people have access to learning stories from Angoon? And how does it make you feel knowing that you're helping that happen?

Sharing stories is important because you know information needs to be preserved. And knowing that I'm doing it, it would be like a light and a torch. And even when I'm gone, when technology surpasses my lifespan, it'd be a candle in the dark.

Anything you feel like you've had a thought in your head and I didn't ask you about it?

Digital stories are like art and reading a book. Because you learn and look at the same time, which can help gain knowledge in your head, because we're visual learners and verbal learners.

How does that make you feel to know that you're helping other people, adults even, learn new things about their world?

It's a good way to share knowledge because it connects the tourists to the land that they're going to and makes it more personal to the experience. The reason why it's personal is because it's our home and we welcome them.

Watch our film on the 2023 Ethnomath Symposium [here](#).

2023 ETHNOMATH SYMPOSIUM

TOP MOMENTS of 2023

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STEERING COMMITTEE FOR ENGAGING ARCHIVES DOCUMENTING INDIGENOUS ENSLAVEMENT



See Stories has implemented a steering committee composed of Archivists, Indigenous educators and creators, and an evaluator to plan and design curriculum and to instruct our upcoming professional development course, “Alaskan Educators Engage Archives Documenting Indigenous Enslavement.” Steering Committee members include Yaari Walker (Cultural Consultant, St. Lawrence Island, Yup’ik), Amber Webb (Artist, Educator, Activist, Yup’ik & Sugpiaq), Alberta Demantle (Elementary Educator in Akiak, Yup’ik), Hanna Sholl (artist, educator, activist, Sugpiaq), Rachel Cohen (Archivist & Rare Books Curator at University of Alaska Fairbanks), and Sarah Asper-Smith (Founder, ExhibitAK). Funded by The National Historical Publications and Records Commission

with an award of \$149,250, this professional development course designed for 6th – 12th grade Alaskan educators aims to equip educators with the tools to navigate and integrate archival materials detailing the history of Indigenous enslavement in Alaska into their curriculum. With the Steering Committee, See Stories aims to approach the history of Indigenous enslavement with a culturally sensitive lens for educators, students, and community members.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

INTERVIEW WITH SUGPIAQ ARTIST, HANNA SHOLL

One of these members is Sugpiaq artist, educator and activist, Hanna Agasuuq Sholl. Hanna shares the significance of studying the topic of Indigenous enslavement and the importance of using primary sources to grasp a full picture of the history of Indigenous enslavement on Kodiak. Read that interview on our website [here](#).

“ You do not have to be afraid of the truth...knowing the full history can be painful and shocking, but it is worth knowing. Take your time [learning the history of whoevers land you reside on] and let it sink in. ”



HANNA
AGASUUQ
SHOLL

SUGPIAQ ARTIST,
EDUCATOR, AND ACTIVIST

[INTERVIEW WITH HANNA SHOLL](#)

TOP MOMENTS of 2023

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SEE STORIES AWARDED
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRANT



We are also thrilled to announce we have been awarded \$1,547,918 over the course of 3 years from the US Department of Education American History & Civics Education National Activities Grant for our project titled Anchored Histories Teacher Professional Development: Digital Storytelling Tools for Alaska Native & English Language Learner Students to Engage History, Civics, & the Power of Place through Primary Sources. We are beyond excited that this funding allows us to scale up and deepen our work with teachers, students, and

communities across Alaska, and it scales up Teacher Training, including an in-person teacher retreat, launching us into the next phase of our growth as a nonprofit! (Find more information at the end of this newsletter!)

THANK YOU to our funders!

Chatham School District
Kootznoowoo, Inc.
Alaska State Council on the Arts
Alaska Department of Education
Alaska Children's Trust
Anchorage Museum
Arts Midwest
RuralCap
Crossett Fund
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MSU Denver Teaching with Primary
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National Endowment for the Arts
KTOO
Center for Safe Alaskans
Spirit of Youth
Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed
Council
McLaughlin Youth Center
UAA Trio Upward Bound
Rasmuson Foundation

New from See Stories

Alaskan Educators working with 6th-12th grade students are encouraged to apply for our upcoming workshop, *Digital Storytelling as a Culturally Responsive Teaching Tool*. This training is all about digital storytelling and being culturally responsive. We will have time together online, and it includes a one-week Teacher Intensive Retreat in Homer. Applications are open until Wednesday, February 28th.

[APPLY HERE](#)

***Successful applicants will be fully funded**

SeeStories

Virtual:
The following Saturdays from 9 - 1:
April 27, May 11, May 25, June 22,
September 7, October 12, November 9

In-person:
Homer, Alaska June 3rd - 7th

ALL VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON DATES ARE REQUIRED

Application Deadline February 28th

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AS A
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING TOOL

Teacher Intensive Retreat

This Teacher Professional Development workshop is generously funded by the US Department of Education American History and Civics – National Activities Grants.

SEE STORIES & HEARTHKYN PRESENT

TEACHER TALES

SEVEN EAGER EDUCATORS
SHARE THEIR STORIES ON STAGE

BEAR TOOTH THEATERPUB
THURSDAY 02 MAY | 05.30PM | \$20

NOMINATE OR
SIGN UP HERE

➔

See Stories has partnered with Hearthkyn to bring a special event, Teacher Tales, coming to the Bear Tooth Theaterpub on May 2nd, 2024. From Hearthkyn: *“We are here to amplify the voices of educators of every variety through the best way we know how: Story.”* Tickets go on sale through the Bear Tooth on February 13th. Save the date and nominate someone or sign up below.

[SIGN UP HERE](#)

Support See Stories



We are delighted to announce that you can now donate to See Stories through Pick.Click.Give on your upcoming PFD! You can find us on the button below or find out how to give [here](#).

PICK.CLICK.GIVE SEE STORIES

HOW TO SUPPORT SEE STORIES

Would you like to support See Stories? Workshops for students are 100% free, but our programs depend on the generosity of supporters like you. Consider supporting See Stories with the options below.



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Donate directly on our website seestoriesalaska.org/donate

Keep up-to-date with See Stories' work by following us



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PARTNER

VOLUNTEER

Email See Stories' Founder/Director, Marie Acemah, at info@seestories.org to learn more about getting involved.

Sign up for on our mailing list!



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