

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contact: Taylor Bickford
907-227-9718, taylorb@strategies360.com

Expanded Ciuneq Program Helps Western Alaska Youth Explore Future Pathways

Anchorage, AK—Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) recently wrapped up the newest offering in its Ciuneq pathway program, focusing on eleventh-grade students living in its 20 member communities. Ciuneq, which refers to “the future” in Yupik, is designed to provide an opportunity for youth from rural Alaska to explore the educational destinations that may be available to them if they continue to work hard in high school.

Building on the program’s progressive curriculum, eleventh-grade students traveled to the East Coast to learn about government, economics, and educational opportunities during two week-long sessions. Students visited Washington D.C., New York City’s financial district, and six higher education institutions.

While in Washington D.C., students spent time learning about American democracy, American enterprise, and American Indian history at various museums and had the opportunity to meet with Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney. Students also toured the Capitol and the Supreme Court and had the opportunity to meet with Senator Dan Sullivan and Senator Lisa Murkowski.

“I had the privilege of welcoming to Washington D.C. two groups of outstanding eleventh-grade students from villages across western Alaska with the Ciuneq Education Pathways Program,” said Senator Dan Sullivan. “The students serve as inspiration to us all, with their determination to experience new things and expand their horizons. I am grateful for programs, like Ciuneq, dedicated to investing in our students’ future and the future of our great state!”

Students spent time exploring higher education opportunities, adding to the portfolio of traditional colleges, universities, trade schools and vocational training opportunities covered by the experiential programming during the ninth and tenth-grade focused curriculums. The eleventh-grade students visited two service academies as well as four private universities that offer a variety of educational programs and learning environments.

“The Ciuneq program identifies high performing students and gives them resources to develop themselves into world class leaders and bring economic activity back to our communities,” said CVRF’s Community Benefits Manager Nathaniel Betz. “The program is structured to support hard working students and help prepare them for whatever pathway they choose to take after

high school. I am continually impressed by the students in this program and excited to see what the future has in store for them.”

During the week-long sessions, students also learned about global financial systems and spent time touring and learning about the New York Stock Exchange and how economic activity in their communities fits into a global system.

“As the Ciuneq program has developed, I have seen great things come out of the youth who have been involved,” said CVRF Community Service Representative Louise Paul from Kipnuk. “Increasing knowledge of the global financial system, our nation’s government system and exploring diverse educational opportunities will help prepare students for a prosperous future. This is what we want for our region, to create tangible opportunities for our youth and stronger communities for our future.”

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Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) uses Bering Sea fishing rights granted to it by the Community Development Quota (CDQ) program to foster sustainable and diversified local economies in western Alaska. CVRF is organized as a 501(c)(4) Alaska non-profit corporation and operates in 20 member communities located along the west coast of Alaska, from Scammon Bay to Platinum. CVRF generates the money to fund its programs by harvesting fish in the Bering Sea with its own fleet of vessels.

CVRF is dedicated to creating sensible, tangible, and long-term economic development opportunities that generate hope for the more than 9,500 residents of its communities. It is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of one member democratically elected from each community. CVRF is the largest Alaskan-owned seafood company in history and the first CDQ group to own and control the vessels that harvest the vast majority of its CDQ allocations.

For more information, visit www.CoastalVillages.org and www.facebook.com/CoastalVillagesRegionFund.