

New VISTA Volunteer in Bethel to Increase Tourism

By: Sara Scott

As a recent graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University with a background in marketing and design, I am excited to be the new Tourism VISTA here in Bethel. I am currently part of the Bethel VIP (Visitor Industry Panel), which has planned a three-day tour of the city of Bethel on the weekend of June 17th. Visitors will fly in from Anchorage and be immersed in the Y'upik culture including native dances, native arts and native foods. Along with the June tourism project, my main goals for the year include developing a marketing plan for the city of Bethel, and also assembling brochures and city guides to better serve Bethel's visitors, city residents and local businesses. I also plan to travel to nearby villages in order to promote surrounding areas of Bethel as tourism destinations. Additionally, through trips to villages such as Quinhagak I will have the opportunity to teach AlaskaHost, a statewide customer service training program for people working in the tourism industry. Support for these trips as well as the AlaskaHost training has come from the D.A.R.T. project and the City of Bethel. It is amazing how much support I have gotten from the people of Bethel and surrounding communities, all of whom are anxious to start seeing the changes that promoting tourism and community development will bring. There is so much culture to experience here in Bethel, and I think this town has such great potential for being one of the many destinations that makes Alaska so appealing to visitors.

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