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Seven Alaska leaders receive a 2024 Foundation sabbatical

Anchorage, AK – Leaders of seven Alaska nonprofit organizations will get a chance to refresh, reset and renew in 2024 through a Rasmuson Foundation Sabbatical Award. Each recipient will have three to six months to unplug from demanding jobs with paid time off in the coming year.

The 2024 awardees were selected by the Foundation’s Sabbatical Committee, which includes prior recipients. Awards of up to \$50,000 are made to the individual’s employer to help cover the leader’s salary, travel, and other experiences during the time off from work.

Leaders get time with families, a chance to pursue personal interests, and an opportunity to decompress. This year’s cohort are dedicated to their organizations’ missions and led their teams through several changes and growth. They demonstrated a pressing need for time away and recognized that their organizations will benefit by allowing others to step up. The need was also exasperated by the changing landscape of nonprofit leadership that started after the pandemic.

The Foraker Group and the Alaska Tribal Administrators Association will support organizations and leaders through the sabbatical process. GCI Gives is a new partner with the Foundation, providing sabbatical awardees with a generous gift of a new cell phone to help leaders disconnect entirely from their roles.

Monica Garcia-Itchoak, program officer and sabbatical lead, said about the program, “When I connect with leaders from across the state about the Sabbatical Program, I remind them how this opportunity allows them to step back and let go of the organization. And, in return, they get to be the CEO of their life.”

Since the first awards in 2005, the Foundation has funded 114 sabbaticals counting the 2024 cohort.

Those selected are:

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Jennifer Busch, executive director of Valley Transit for six years. With all the changes that were happening at Valley Transit, Busch had trouble finding time to step away even working at the hospital after giving birth to her children. She considered applying for a sabbatical when she saw a leader from a fellow transit organization receive one last year. With the transit's larger projects winding down, it was the perfect time for Busch to take time for herself. She plans to spend next summer resting, recharging, and going on adventures with her two young children.



Katrina Hoffman, president and CEO of the Prince William Sound Science Center for 12 years. Hoffman manages the research, education, development, communications, facilities, and administration staff who are all dedicated to the institute's mission. She recently led a successful \$25M capital campaign to raise funds to design and construct a new campus, keeping the project on track even during the pandemic. Hoffman plans to travel internationally and reconnect with people dear to her and is excited to share new experiences with her husband and young son.



Alannah Hurley, executive director of the United Tribes of Bristol Bay for 10 years. Hurley has dedicated her entire young adult life to protecting Bristol Bay and the cultures and communities within the region. However, two decades of this work has taken a toll on Hurley and she applied for a sabbatical to prioritize her wellbeing and prevent further burnout. Hurley plans to focus on healing, rest, and reflection through spending time with family, cultural practices, and travel.



Catherine Moses, tribal administrator of Asa'carsarmiut Tribal Council for 13 years. She is responsible for many aspects of the council including applying for grants, managing budgets, program development staff training and planning annual meetings. Because of the pressing needs of the tribe, Moses struggled to prioritize her life outside of work. During her sabbatical, Moses will refocus her life on family, travel and her favorite activities like snowmobiling and ice fishing. She looks forward to traveling and spending more time with her daughter and on subsistence practices.



Janice Nightingale, executive director of the Hospice of the Central Peninsula for six years. She manages and directs all the programs at the hospice while ensuring efficient use of time and resources. Nightingale also coordinates community relations and community programs and supports clients and their families along with the volunteer and bereavement coordinators. After experiencing the passing of several people dear to her, she decided she needed to take the time to rest, refresh and restore her soul. Nightingale will reconnect with her husband, children, grandchildren and, most importantly, herself. She will take a trip to Greece, Athens, Corinth, and Rome with her husband and attend a solo wellness retreat.



Teresa Pond, artistic director of Cyrano's Theatre Company for eight years. During her time, the theatre experienced massive growth and change. Pond strengthened internal processes, developed a fundraising program, increased staff and board numbers and garnered stronger support in the local artist community. With the encouragement of a past sabbatical recipient, she decided to seek time for rest and personal exploration. Pond plans to travel the world to experience different cultures and focus on rest and reflection.



Jodi Rodwell, executive director of the Denali Education Center for 14 years. At the center, Rodwell is responsible for internal and external operations. She develops and directs strategies, policies, and values, manages budgets, maintains partnerships between the center and other entities and acts as the center's spokesperson. After leading the organization through the pandemic, Rodwell recognized the need to prioritize her wellbeing. For the first time in her adult life, she will travel during the summer. Rodwell and her family will go overseas, something they've wanted to do since 2020. She will also spend time with her parents and brother in Montana.

About the Foundation

Rasmuson Foundation is a private family foundation based in Anchorage, Alaska. [The Foundation was created in 1955 by Jenny Rasmuson](#), a Swedish missionary, to honor her late husband, banker E.A. Rasmuson.