



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Denakkanaaga Annual Elders and Youth Conference Set for June 6, 7 and 8, 2017 in Holy Cross, Alaska**

*Fairbanks* - Denakkanaaga will hold its annual elders and youth conference in Holy Cross on June 6, 7 and 8, 2017. The theme of this year's gathering is "Listening and Speaking to Move Forward."

"We believe the theme succinctly conveys what we all must do to work on important matters that affect our elders and youth," said Denakkanaaga Executive Director Sharon McConnell. "We look forward to the dialogue that will occur at the conference."

Conference participants will discuss various issues impacting Interior Native elders and youth, including federal and state budgets and their impact on elder programs and services, subsistence fishing, the rising opioid problem, and revitalization of Native languages. Elder delegates from the 42 Interior Alaska villages and Fairbanks will attend the conference, along with youth, leaders and representatives from various organizations.

In conjunction with the conference, Denakkanaaga will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, June 8 at which time delegates will elect five elders and one youth representative to the Denakkanaaga Board of Directors.

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Established in 1983, Denakkanaaga is the regional non-profit organization that serves as the voice for Native elders within Interior Alaska, advocating on behalf of and for the elders and youth. Denakkanaaga is a Koyukon-Athabaskan word meaning "our people speak".

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