FRONTIER COMMUNITY SERVICES NEWSLETTER

SUBMIT NEXT MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS TO: AFAULKNER1@FCSONLINE.ORG



Cast your votes on Facebook or to:
cburns@fcsonline.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Tater Bingo at FMN**

  November 13, 2026

  Join us at the Forget-Me-Not Center for a morning of bingo, delicious baked potatoes with all the fixings, and salad! Spend time connecting with local seniors while enjoying good food, fun, and great company!

- **ILP's Fall Carnival**

  November 16, 2026

  Join us for a FREE morning of carnival games, a bounce house, crafts, prizes, and more! Free hearing and vision screenings will also be available. Peninsula Grace Church's Youth Center from 10 AM to 12 PM, ages 0–5!

NOVEMBER IS

National Family Caregivers Month

November is National Family Caregivers Month, a time to recognize the people who give so much of themselves to caring for others. At Frontier, we see the importance of caregiving every day through the compassion and dedication our staff bring to the individuals and families we serve. But caregiving reaches far beyond the work we do. In one way or another, we all play a role in caring for someone, whether through our jobs, within our families, or simply by being there when someone needs us. Caregiving is not always something we consciously choose or even recognize in ourselves. Often, it becomes a natural part of the relationships we build and the responsibilities we carry. While the ways we care for others may look different, they share something important: a willingness to give our time and energy to someone else's well-being, even when doing so requires sacrifices of our own. With Thanksgiving approaching, this month offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the people whose care and dedication make a difference in our lives, especially those whose efforts often go unnoticed. Caring for others can be deeply rewarding, but it can also be challenging, and even those who seem to have endless patience and strength need support themselves. As we recognize the dedication of our staff, the families we serve, and caregivers throughout our community, may we also remember that gratitude is not only about appreciating what others do for us, but recognizing what it takes for them to do it.







One Woman's Journey of Recovery, Motherhood, and New Beginnings with FCS

"When I first met Nikki Marcano and Bexx Geleide, I was newly sober, pregnant with my son Cole, and preparing to serve a scheduled prison sentence. I was living in a small shack in Nikiski, Alaska, with no family and very little support—just a new faith, a new life in recovery, and a baby on the way who gave me every reason in the world to keep moving forward. I wasn't without potential. Before addiction changed the course of my life, I had earned an associate degree in paralegal studies and built experience in accounting, bookkeeping, and other professional positions that gave me a résumé I was proud of. But coming home with a criminal record in a small community where it felt like everyone knew my past made rebuilding seem almost impossible. I had the skills and the determination; what I desperately needed was someone willing to see beyond where I had been and help me find a way toward where I was trying to go. I found that in Nikki Marcano, Rebecca "Bexx" Geleide, the IPS employment program, and Frontier Community Services. Nikki and Bexx did not simply help me look for a job—they stood beside me while I rebuilt a life. There were countless hours of support along the way: helping me secure stable housing, health care, and food assistance; helping keep my electricity on; making sure I had a working phone and service so employers could reach me; helping with interview clothing; and being there through the late-night and early-morning phone calls when I needed to talk through every tiny detail before or after an interview. Nikki listened when I vented, answered questions when I doubted myself, celebrated the victories, and continued showing up through the challenges that came after I became employed. Finding a job wasn't treated as the finish line. When real life followed me through the doors of the workplace (as real life always does), Nikki and the IPS team stayed beside me. Their support gave me the stability and confidence to keep showing up until, little by little, I wasn't simply rebuilding anymore. I was building something new. Today, I work at a local screen-printing shop in Soldotna, where I run and operate the embroidery department alongside a team I believe in and that believes in me. My quality of life is almost unrecognizable compared with the life I was living when Nikki first met me. I am a mother, a professional, a coworker, a person in recovery, and someone trusted with responsibility—and I have a future that once felt impossibly far away. I did the walking, but Nikki, Bexx, the IPS program, and Frontier Community Services made sure I didn't have to walk alone. They helped give me the tools, opportunities, stability, and support I needed long enough for me to begin seeing in myself what they had apparently seen all along. My past is still part of my story, but it no longer gets to write the ending. Today, when I look at how far I've come, I don't see the woman in that little shack wondering whether the world would ever give her another chance. I see the woman she was fighting to become." — **Chelsey Payne**



FCS's Policy Podcast Series



Newest Podcast: 700 Series – Part One

You may have noticed some podcasts popping up in your email lately! Amanda Elder has been working on a creative new way to make agency policies more accessible, engaging, and easier to understand. Keep an eye on your email for announcements about new episodes! Amanda welcomes your feedback on whether the podcasts are helpful and how they could be improved. Your input helps make this a more useful learning experience for everyone at Frontier!

Want to listen to an episode or follow along? Visit SharePoint and open Employee Resources → Policies and Procedures.

There, you'll find:

- Policy Podcasts: Recordings you can listen to that discuss FCS policies.
- Agency Policies: The official written policies that employees are responsible for knowing and following.
- Employee Guides: Additional learning materials that help explain the policies in simpler terms.

Aging Summit





Frontier Community Services was pleased to participate in the Aging Summit in Anchorage, October 15–17, where Cindy Burns, Melissa Klein, and Amanda Elder shared our Rural Health Transformation project, Elder Connection through Remote Support. This initiative combines technology, personal connections, and hands-on assistance to help older Alaskans remain safe, independent, and connected in their homes. With Alaska facing significant workforce shortages, remote support offers an innovative way to complement traditional services. The summit provided a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, learn from others, and explore partnerships that strengthen support for aging Alaskans.

Honoring Nikki Marcano: 20 Years of Service & Statewide Recognition!



October has given us two incredible reasons to celebrate our very own Nikki Marcano! Not only is Nikki celebrating 20 amazing years with Frontier Community Services, but she was also recently honored with the Employment Systems Upholder Award at the Employment First Conference! This statewide award recognizes individuals who work to expand meaningful employment opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities through advocacy, collaboration, and positive change. For two decades, Nikki has dedicated herself to helping individuals discover their strengths, achieve their goals, and find meaningful employment. But her impact goes far beyond those she serves. Nikki is truly the laughter and heart of our agency! She is always the first to lend a hand, offer encouragement, recognize someone's potential, and celebrate the accomplishments of others. Her compassion, humor, and unwavering dedication have touched countless lives throughout our community and across Alaska. Receiving this recognition during National Disability Employment Awareness Month makes the celebration even more special. Those of us fortunate enough to work alongside Nikki see her passion and commitment every day, and watching her accomplishments recognized statewide was a truly proud moment for our FCS family. Congratulations, Nikki, on 20 incredible years and this well-deserved honor! Thank you for the lives you've touched, the opportunities you've created, and the laughter and encouragement you bring to Frontier. We couldn't be prouder or more grateful to have you as part of our team!





Forget-Me-Not Spotlight!!!



GLORIOUS GLORIA



SID AT WORK



BIRTHDAY GIRL FUN



YOUTH DRUMMERS FROM SALAMATOF TRIBE

November 16: International Day for Tolerance

International Day for Tolerance was established by the United Nations in 1996 to confront discrimination, prejudice, and the exclusion of people simply because they are different. The observance followed UNESCO's 1995 Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, which specifically recognized disability as a characteristic that should never be grounds for denying someone their basic human rights. For generations, people with disabilities have been excluded from schools, workplaces, and communities, not because they lacked the ability to participate, but because society failed to make room for them. At Frontier, this day reminds us that our responsibility goes beyond providing services. It means advocating for the people we serve, challenging barriers to inclusion, and continually finding ways to improve the support we provide. While progress has been made, there will always be more we can learn and do better.

Recent photos



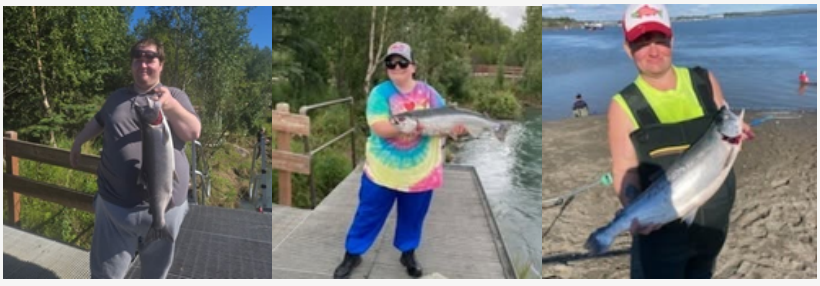


PICNIC AND FISHING AT JOHNSON LAKE





MOVIE NIGHTS AT HOPE COMMUNITY RESOURCES



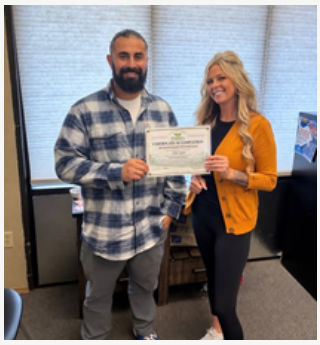
LAST SALMON OF THE SEASON



MEGAN WOHLERS ADVOCATING FOR FASD AWARENESS, FUNDING, AND SUPPORT IN WASHINGTON D.C.



BRANDON TIMPKE'S SUCCESSFUL REENTRY



ERIC LUNA'S SUCCESSFUL REENTRY



CHABINGO AT FMN!!!



ILP AT THE ELK'S COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER



NIKKI MARCANO'S EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS UPHOLDER AWARD