

### Yukon Flats School District



On May 14, 2023, an ice jam on the Yukon River brought severe flooding to Circle City, Alaska. As fast as the water came in, it quickly receded, revealing the ruin it caused. The following day Design Alaska received a request for help from the Yukon Flats School District to assess damage to their school and teacher's housing. On May 16, Samuel Mitchell and Blake Burley went to Circle. This is the story of the events that unfolded.

The day began as most typical days do. Blake stopped by McDonalds for breakfast and Samuel showed up to the office shortly after 6am. From there they loaded up the donation of food, water, leather gloves, and disposable bowls Design Alaska purchased to donate to the hurting village. Samuel and Blake traveled the four hours to Circle and were met with an incredible site, ice as far as the eye could see still filled the slough of the Yukon River nearest the village. Downed power lines, houses swept from their original location, debris piled high against buildings, and river silt covered the floor of most every building. The entire village stank of diesel from overturned heating oil tanks. A three hole outhouse appeared in town from an unknow location upriver. One summer cabin had come to rest in the center of a street when the water receded. The most often repeated phrase of the day was "That? Ya, we don't know where that came from."



Everything was wet. Very wet. Residents were busy taking items from their home and putting them outside to dry in the beautiful 70 degree sunshine. No one seemed exceptionally down despite the destruction that surrounded them. They all seemed to have a noble perspective, thankful to be alive and unhurt.

Samuel and Blake met with Paul Nathaniel, a longtime resident of Circle. His home was severely damaged and during the flood, his dog was swept downriver, never to be seen again. When asked "Was anyone hurt?" he replied "It's only a material thing. It won't follow you where you are going."



## President's Corner

The recruiting process has changed considerably over the years since I was last looking for work (26 years ago!!!). I found my job at Design Alaska by reading the help wanted ads in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner and sending my standard resume in by US Postal Service customized only by the information in the ad.

Today our strategy to find new employees is a little different to adapt to the ever-changing recruitment landscape. We post jobs on our website and State of Alaska digital job boards, we are currently building a LinkedIn presence, and we specifically reach out to the University of Alaska system through the technical departments and Handshake, their advertising platform. We participate in seasonal job fairs at UAF which gives us a physical presence in recruiting and a chance to meet many people for a quick introduction to what we do. For our administrative staff hiring, we use TDL to help match us with potential employees.

People are frequently drawn to Design Alaska because of our community involvement. They know of us because of our actions in the community and can learn more about us when researching through our website, archived newsletters, and Facebook posts. It is very common for a local Fairbanks individual to refer someone looking for work to us because they know our name and our commitment to the community.

We are always on the lookout for good people that will be an investment in our growth for the future. We hire a number of college interns to work for us as we feel it is a great way to get to know young professionals, train them in the work we do, and spread the word to attract future applicants. We have several people who have started as interns and worked for 30+ year career.

We also have great success when current staff recruit others to join us. As you are visiting with your friends, encourage them to apply through our website and tell them to let us know you mentioned them so we can see if we are a good fit for each other. We leave a permanent General Interest application on our website so if someone is interested, they can apply formally.

Please feel free to share with Kym and I if you have any thoughts about recruiting. We are currently advertising for an Architect, Senior Civil Engineer, and Land Surveyor to join our team.

~ Chris Miller P.E.

President

## Welcome New Employees Matt, Margaret, Hayden, Kyle, Sebiyam, and Aisha.



Matt Encelewski joined the Structural Department as an EIT in April. He decided to come to Design Alaska after hearing great things throughout his time at UAF. When it came time to apply for jobs, we were his number one choice.

Matt grew up in the small fishing village of Ninilchik, Alaska, located on the Kenai Peninsula. He moved to Fairbanks around second grade. He still spent summers in Ninilchik working as a deckhand on a commercial fishing boat, ironically Matt is allergic to most fish. After he finished high school, he started at UAF and found a passion for engineering.

Matt enjoys biking, walking his dog Lily, and taking hikes with his fiancée Daisy. He also has a passion for cooking. Due to his food allergies, he enjoys challenging himself to find fun new recipes to try out. Matt and Daisy have a large board game collection and enjoy hosting game nights with friends.

His favorite song is My. Brightside by The Killers, favorite movie is Dodgeball, and his favorite childhood show is Avatar the Last Airbender. One of his goals is to travel a lot more. He has traveled the lower 48 some, but would like to travel to other countries.

Welcome to the Team, Matt!



Margaret, "Maggie", McCormick joined the Mechanical Department in May as a summer intern. Maggie is currently a Mechanical Engineering student at UAF. She grew up outside of Philly, but has now lived in 6 states and 4 countries.

Maggie loves to travel, and her favorite thing to collect on her travels are postcards. She said they are easy to fit in a suitcase and it saves her from having to get the perfect picture.

Growing up she and her brother were such big fans of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles that they nicknamed their uncle Ninj, and it stuck, they still call him that today.

Maggie considers herself to be more of a night owl. Her ideal meal is something spicy (Thai, Indian, or Korean), and an Italian pastry for dessert.

Welcome to the Team, Maggie!



Kyle Callegari joined the Survey Department in May. He grew up in a military family and moved around a lot. His parents settled back in Texas where they are from. Kyle settled in Fairbanks with his wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth is currently finishing up her PhD in Fresh Water Ecology at UAF.

Kyle is very outdoorsy. He enjoys hiking, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, backpacking, biking, playing ultimate frisbee, and hunting. Fairbanks was the perfect spot for him and Elizabeth to settle down because it offers endless access to trails and remote wilderness.

Something about Kyle that not many people know is that he is a decent artist. He draws and paints when the mood strikes him. If he could live anywhere in the world, he would choose to spend spring, summer, and fall in Fairbanks, and then snowbird to Mexico. One of his life goals is to spend two to three summer months on a continuous backcountry hiking trip in the Brooks Range.

Welcome to the Team, Kyle!



Hayden Galloway is another recent addition to the Mechanical Team, as an intern. He joins us from Anchorage, where he is currently attending UAA.

Hayden’s hobbies include working out and playing soccer. He also enjoys watching sports, mainly football, soccer, and basketball.

Not many people know that Hayden is bilingual, speaking both English and Spanish. He isn’t sure if he would want to live anywhere else in the world, as he hasn’t lived anywhere other than Alaska and Oklahoma.

Hayden likes almost all music, and his favorite tv show is Burn Notice. His ideal meal is any Hispanic dis. One of his life goals is to travel the world.

Welcome to the Team, Hayden!



Aisha Malik recently joined the Civil Department as a Landscape Architecture Intern. She grew up in Fairbanks. Her parents both immigrated from different countries in the 90s. Her father is from Pakistan, and her mother is from the Ukraine, making her a first generation American. She is the oldest of four. She has one sister and two brothers. She also has two cats, Appa and Denali.

Aisha is a very avid artist, she has been making art since she was young. She enjoys using any material she can get her hands on, from cheap office pens to high end acrylic paints. A little known fact about her is that she has an art account on Instagram with over 11,000 followers. She also enjoys rock climbing, fashion/thrifting, hiking, lifting, and running.

If Aisha could live anywhere in the world it would be British Columbia or Ireland. While she has never visited either place, she finds the natural beauty intriguing. Her favorite song is Roslyn by Bon Iver, and her favorite movie is Spider Man: Into the SpiderVerse. Growing up her favorite show was Wild Kratts. Her ideal meal is sushi, mango, watermelon, and a kiwi-strawberry Italian soda. One of the goals on her life’s to do list is to go climbing in Yosemite, or any national park. She said she isn’t the best climber but eager to get better.

Welcome to the Team, Aisha!



Sebiyam Werdin-Kennicott is interning throughout Design Alaska this summer.

Welcome to the Team, Sebiyam!



Last week Design Alaska employee Ryan Morse, along with professionals from FAST, AIA, and ASLA, had the opportunity to volunteer at the AIA Northern Section’s Architecture Camp. Fifteen young inspiring designers created a 15-Minute-City Master Plan for Pioneer Park based on a hypothetical flood event similar to the big flood of 1967. Each student built a 1-2 square foot model for an assigned area which were then combined to create an the overall master plan for the Park.

It was a rewarding experience for us to support this AIA sponsored STEAM event and we wish all of the future designers the best in their pursuits.

# UAF Summer Music Academy and Summer BBQ



On Wednesday, June 14, UAF Summer Music Academy treated Design Alaska to a concert during our June BBQ. There was a choir, guitarists, flautists, pianist, and many other instruments.

The BBQ prepared by Dantasia and Jim consisted of hamburgers, hot dogs, pasta salad, macaroni salad and other fixings.



What technology do you use to manage your work and personal calendars? What are your best practices for staying in control?	
Blake Burley	For work, I use outlook and OneNote to plan out my days and keep myself from getting sideways. At home, my wife and I keep a paper calendar on the fridge that we use to plan out summer BBQs, camping trips, etc. so we make the best use of our time away from work. Facebook and the calendar on my phone remind me of upcoming birthdays.
Lyle Axelarris	For work, I keep a weekly to-do list on paper and map out some time for key tasks on a private Outlook calendar (this planning often gets derailed, but it helps me stay focused on priorities). For personal, I employ the “use smarter people” approach – I let my social coordinator/ wife to tell me what to do.
Ryan Morse	Google Calendar App on my phone is critical external brain space. I sync up my work and personal calendars as well as Dom’s Pilates schedule so that I can see the color coded overlay and avoid double booking myself or disrupting the home studio when my partner is working with a client. It’s great to be able to create, see, and edit events on the go, even ones that I haven’t accepted yet but have an invite in my inbox.
Chris Miller	I don’t manage my calendars perfectly. Outlook is my work tool. I have my iPhone set up to alert me 15 minutes before a work meeting and it works most of the time. For my personal calendars I use Gmail, with a bunch of categories. My iPhone only alerts me to some categories because I share home calendars with others. I have trouble putting things on the correct calendar/categories and actually remembering to look at my personal calendar when scheduling a work thing outside normal work times. I do seem to remember to look at work calendar for personal things during work hours.
Deanna Woods	I *try* to use the calendar on my phone and outlook. But without fail I seem to forget to add something to my personal calendar. It makes my after work hours interesting
Taylor Tharp	For most of my work meetings and personal plans I use the calendar app on my phone which combines all of my email calendars onto the same calendar on my phone. I also have multiple friends that work out of town or do shift work and after years of asking them what their schedules are, we finally created a shared calendar on the Family Wall App that we can all see and edit with everyone’s work schedules. For projects schedules and deadlines, I use a printed calendar with sticky tabs that I can peel off and move when project schedules inevitably change or move onto the next phase.





# Occupational Wellness

By Kym Pihlaja



There are many aspects and definitions that describe occupational wellness. One definition is that you feel a sense of commitment to your job, you feel your work has a crucial influence on the success of your organization, and you feel empowered when working independently as well as when working with a colleague or a team. It also means you have only a manageable amount of workplace stress with which you can effectively deal. Occupational wellness makes you feel seen, heard, and respected at work.

If you don't feel that you have achieved occupational wellness, here are a few tips:

- Strive to always do your best.
- Challenge yourself.
- Don't settle, keep motivated, and work towards what you want.
- Increase your knowledge and skills to accomplish your goals.
- Find the benefits and positives in your current job.
- Enjoy what you do, do what you enjoy.
- Create connections with your co-workers.
- Set realistic goals and boundaries.
- Achieve an ideal work/life balance.
- Know how to reduce and manage work-related stress.
- Take a break.

Another definition of occupational wellness relates to having a work/life balance.

"Achieving wellness means that your life doesn't get in the way of your job and your job doesn't stop you from having a life."

Is work/life balance even possible? Sometimes! It's up to us to take steps to draw the line when we start to feel like our life is out of balance.

The balance between work and life promotes health and wellness of the mind, and when you are in a healthy state of mind in general, your overall success will improve when you are working. Also, you will be happier, and you can't put a price on health, wellness, or happiness.

Here are some tips to achieve a good work-life balance:

- Know your values.
- Practice time management.
- Set boundaries.
- Enjoy your work.
- Consider your finances.
- Nurture relationships.
- Focus on your health.
- Have down time.

Excerpts taken from article written by Steven John



# Circle Muck Out Crew

by Samuel Mitchell



Following Blake's and my trip to Circle to investigate the school district buildings, I wanted to see if there was more that could be done to help the local residents affected by the flooding. Being that this was the first disaster response I was going to be a part of, I wanted to make sure we could fill in where the village needed and not just try to jump in where us as bystanders thought was helpful. Thankfully, Leif Olson, former employee here and good friend of mine who was helping me organize the effort, connected me with Susan Davis, the coordinator for the local arm of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD). This independent organization helps coordinate the efforts of small volunteer groups of all backgrounds to have a coordinated disaster response. Through Susan, we were connected with the local Team Rubicon response team, a military veteran led international response

organization. It ended up working out perfectly because Team Rubicon had direct communication with the village tribal coordinators and was mobilizing in Circle a couple days before us. Leif and I were able to organize a group of about 14 volunteers from our local church to head in for Memorial Day. We connected with Team Rubicon in Circle Sunday night and jumped into the work early Monday morning. Our main task was muck-out, which involved pulling out all insulation and finishes below the high-water line before black mold took over. Two homes were readily accessible to begin the clean-up, but most others were still resting atop melting river ice where they were picked up and placed during the flood or were just too unstable to safely access. In addition to clean-up, a couple of us were able to peel off and stabilize the foundation of a home in preparation for a subsequent response team, which ended up being a different church group led by Blake the following weekend. Important to the native culture is sharing meals together, so we brought food to prepare a Memorial Day barbecue for the community. My wife, Ally, and my mother volunteered to join the trip to help relieve the cooks at the central feeding area that was providing meals for the community during the aftermath. Laurel tagged along with Ally and was a big hit in the cooking area as most of their kids had been sent to Fairbanks immediately following the flooding until more clean-up could happen. It was definitely one of the most meaningful ways I have spent a long holiday weekend in a while. There is ongoing work to do in Circle and also are opportunities to be involved in future disaster work. If you are interested in volunteering, I would definitely recommend reaching out to VOAD. The local chapter is NAR-VOAD (Northern Alaska Region, I believe). If you want to learn more, they are hosting a potluck lunch at 2 PM Sunday, June 25. I can pass along information if you or a community organization or a church you are a part of is interested in getting involved.



# July 2023 ~ Upcoming Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Design Alaska Closed In Observance of Independence Day	4	5 Table Massage	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Cake Day	18	19 Table Massage	20 Food Truck	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 Manager's Meeting	28	29
30	31					

## July Birthdays

Tehya McLeod	July 1	
Hayden Galloway	July 8	
Grant Olson	July 16	
Don Hopkins	July 22	
Deanna Woods	July 28	

## Design Alaska Anniversaries

Eric Gabrielson	29th Anniversary	July 30, 1994
Molly McGuire	10th Anniversary	July 15, 2013
Emily Winfield	9th Anniversary	July 30, 2014
Dantasia Baum	6th Anniversary	July 10, 2017
Pete Jacobsen	6th Anniversary	July 24, 2017
Kayla Messina	1st Anniversary	July 18, 2022



Design Alaska's lunch run group was able to get one last run together with Josiah on his last day of work. We wish him luck in his future endeavors and hope he continues to find exercise a rewarding place in his life.