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 Department of Labor & Workforce Development
 Division of Business Partnerships
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## Denali Training Fund - Youth Program Quarterly Progress Report

Funds for this project are provided by the Denali Commission and the USDOL and managed, in partnership, by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

|                       |                                          |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Name of Organization: | Avant-Garde Learning Foundation / 10-316 |
| Name of Project:      | Career Explorations Program              |
| Reporting Period:     | 04/01/2011 - 06/30/2011                  |
| Contact Name:         | Kameron H. Perez-Verdia                  |
| Contact Number:       | 907-279-0361                             |

Certification: I certify that the information in this report is current, correct and true and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.

Signed by:  Dated 7-6-2011

The performance of this grant will be based upon the success achieved in relation to the goals established and approved by the Alaska Department of Labor, and will be reported in the Grantee's quarterly progress reports. Specific goals and objectives for this project are:

The Career Explorations Program (CEP) will provide pre-employment skills development and career exploration for 100 participants co-facilitated by business, industry, education, and other organizations. Distance learning technology will include an e-learning portal, web conferencing and videoteleconferencing (VTC). Curriculum is aligned with state standards for graduation and will provide information and experience to help students plan and prepare for future employment opportunities.

During the 2010/2011 academic school year, students will take part in Youth Employability, Work Experience, Job Shadowing, Career Projects, and Exposure to Career Opportunities,

Preparation, Resource Development, and Academic Training through the Internet, Videoteleconferencing, and working within their community.

The CEP program will be integrated into standard curriculum available to participants as part of their normal classroom activities. The onsite teachers will mentor students and lead those through Career Projects, AKCIS, ALEXsys, resume writing, and interview skills.

CEP will focus on the rural communities of Southeast Island Schools, Oscarville, Kipnuk, Napaskiak, and Atmautluak. We will also offer services to North Slope Borough School District, Kodiak, Nome, the Bering Strait School District, and any other communities that need our services.

High school youth will be selected by the enrolled sites – there are no prerequisites. Students are normally part of a class that is already being offered at the school site. CEP state aligned projects and curriculum is incorporated into the classroom by the teacher as he/she sees fit. Barrier to Employments training is included as part of the regular curriculum content. All actions have consequences and what happens when students do things that are unlawful could have long term effects on their career choices. After every session teachers will send in attendance so we can keep track of participation.

|                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TARGET POPULATION:</b> 100 (16 to 24 year olds) |
|----------------------------------------------------|

**Number of participants served to date:** 36 (most participants have experienced 15 or more VTC lessons, with all the participating teachers having received more than 20 state standards aligned lesson plans to prepare for and demonstrate knowledge acquired during these VTC sessions. 11 students have also participated in a Job Shadow experience).

|                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>GOALS/OBJECTIVES ACCOMPLISHED TO DATE:</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------|

|                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Please provide the number of participants served to date in the table below. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Goal One:** To provide 100 participants with relevant information about careers from Alaska High Growth Industry Leaders via a virtual learning portal in collaboration with in-class curriculum.

**Objective 1** Participants will take part in the Grant Recipient’s state education aligned curriculum.

**Objective 2** Participants will take part in resume writing and interview skills building activities.

**Objective 3** Participants will complete a job shadow.

**Objective 4** Participants will complete an assessment and evaluation worksheet.

**Objective 5** Participants will be assessed and evaluated by on-site teachers.

**Objective 6** Participants will take part in Barrier to Employment training.

| Goal/Objective |   | Number to be Served                                                                     | Number Served to Date | Documentation             |                                                                                               |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1              | 1 | Participants will take part in state education aligned curriculum.                      | 100                   | 5 teachers<br>31 students | Participant attendance roster.                                                                |
|                | 2 | Participants will take part in resume writing and interview skills building activities. | 100                   | 36                        | Copies of resumes and interview results should be maintained in the participant files.        |
|                | 3 | Participants will complete a job shadow event.                                          | 100                   | 11                        | Participant records documenting the job shadow experiences.                                   |
|                | 4 | Participants will complete assessment and evaluation worksheet.                         | 100                   | 36                        | Copies of assessment and evaluation worksheets should be maintained in the participant files. |
|                | 5 | On-site teachers will complete assessment and evaluation worksheet.                     | 100                   | 36                        | Copies of assessment and evaluation worksheets should be maintained in the participant files. |
|                | 6 | Participants will take part in Barrier to Employment training.                          | 100                   | 36                        | Participant attendance roster.                                                                |

**NARRATIVE OF SERVICES:**

Provide a brief narrative of services provided this quarter by applicable Goal/Objective.

During this quarter the Career Explorations Program designed state aligned curriculum for teachers, created resume and interview skills building activities for students, brought guest speakers into the classrooms virtually, and provided 11 students with job shadow experiences. The first half of the quarter was dedicated to learning about post-secondary opportunities and careers in high demand industries. Students engaged virtually with speakers from the University of Fairbanks, Kuskokwim Campus, The Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP), Ryan Air, and the University of Alaska's School of Nursing. Representatives from each of the organizations spoke to students about existing opportunities, successes and challenges faced, Barriers to Employment in the field, and other career related items. At the end of the academic year, students gave presentations on the career of their choice. Time was also spent supporting a group of 11 students from Southeast Island School

District on a Career and College trip, where students toured college campuses, experienced a job shadow, and traveled outside of their home communities.

#### PARTICIPANT WILL TAKE PART IN STATE EDUCATION ALIGNED CURRICULUM

All participants involved have taken part in state education aligned curriculum. As part of the program, lesson plans have been developed for each videoteleconferencing (VTC) session. The lesson plans not only support student learning, they also align with state curriculum standards. The lesson plans and other resources are sent to participating teachers through Constant Contact, a tool that helps format, track, and archive emails while allowing live links and surveys. Teachers have also been sent the lesson plans via email. At the end of the academic year, teacher and student evaluations were collected. Again, it was unanimous that all teachers and students have participated in and enjoyed most of these lesson plans. It was reported that the CEP lesson plans “help students acquire the background information they need to understand and engage in the VTC to come.” The lesson plans, activities, and resources give teachers and students the background necessary to understand the context of the guest speaker. Then, the post-lessons help the students use and process the information. All VTC sessions and lesson plans have been aligned with state education curriculum under the Employability, English, Math, and/or Technology Content Standards. There have been five VTCs this quarter.

#### PARTICIPANTS WILL TAKE PART IN RESUME WRITING AND INTERVIEW SKILLS BUILDING ACTIVITIES

All participants practiced their interview skills through VTCs with industry leaders, university representatives, and other students. All participating classrooms experienced four or five VTCs during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Before each of these VTCs teachers were provided with state aligned lesson plans and activities that focused on resume writing, job searching, building interview and other skills. Through the lessons students learned about resume writing, developed interview questions, and also practiced answering interview questions developed by their peers. During the VTCs, students asked questions to the guest speakers. Students were also responsible to answer questions that were asked by the guest speakers.

Interview skills have proven difficult for our participants, not only because interviews can be challenging, also because (as teacher feedback has assessed) in some ways behavioral traits leading to successful interviewing skills run contrary to cultural norms. In general, our students are very shy and are lacking many the “soft skills” necessary in industry. Through our projects and interactions, students are given the opportunity to build up the soft skill necessary for interviews. We recently changed the format of our VTCs to encourage more engagement and participation from the students. VTC conversations are now conducted in a very structured way, where students are expected to ask questions and be engaged. The results of this effort were very apparent this quarter. Having structured conversations and clear expectations has lead to higher rates of student participation and engagement.

Students also gave presentations to their classrooms and a larger audience over VTC. Presentation skills improved vastly from their first presentations last year. Students spoke more clearly, projected their voices, had better presentations, and did not shy away from the camera.

#### PARTICIPANTS WILL TAKE PART IN A JOB SHADOW EVENT-

This quarter the Career Explorations Program worked in partnership with the Southeast Island School District to send 11 students on a Career and College trip. Southeast Island School District agreed to provide two chaperones and organizers for this trip. Amy McDonald, the district counselor and a participating teacher in the Career Explorations Program, was one of the chaperones.

The students first went to Kotzebue where they participated in job shadows of their choice. Then, the group went on to a seven day college tour around Alaska. Students spent this time exploring the different pathways to their career of choice. Students toured AVTEC and four other Alaska Universities (University of Alaska, Southeast, University of Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University, and University of Alaska, Fairbanks). Students who enroll in college or university will have school as their career after high school. For this reason, visiting a college campus, going on a tour, interacting with college students and teachers, and having meals in a dorm cafeteria serves as a job shadow. Students got to experience what life is like away from home and surrounded by students. The students also participated in a group tour of the Wells Fargo building in Anchorage, where they learned about job opportunities that exist in the banking industry and participated in a Barrier to Employment training.

During the Career and College trip all of the 11 students participated in at least one job shadow and a Barrier to Employment training. It was a very successful trip; students gained a vast amount of experience and knowledge that they otherwise would not have had.

#### PARTICIPANTS WILL COMPLETE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION WORKSHEET-

Students are continuously assessed. Throughout the program students have been given several types of assessments including, but not limited to, checklists, surveys, observation, and rubrics. Some results have been communicated to Avant-Garde directly through the teachers, while others have been witnessed first-hand working with the students through VTC. Most participants took part in five VTCs this quarter. Participation levels have more than doubled and students are more engaged. At the end of each VTC we debrief the presentation and students talk to one another about what they learned and liked about the presentation. During the debrief conversations, teachers and Avant-Garde staff assess student learning and comprehension. Teachers also reported that student skills have been enhanced through the program.

#### ON-SITE TEACHERS WILL COMPLETE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION WORKSHEET-

Teachers were given assessments and evaluations. They are "very happy with the support from Avant-Garde," and "want to be involved in the program next year." The Career Explorations Program offers students ways to learn about different careers and opportunities in a way that they wouldn't normally be able to. Segue Grant from Qugcuun Memorial High School in Oscarville mentioned that because of the "pre and post lesson plans the students gain a thorough understanding of the presentations." Amy McDonald from Southeast Island School District reported that "students really enjoy the program and feel like they are learning a lot while able to use the information."

PARTICIPANTS WILL TAKE PART IN BARRIER TO EMPOLYMENT TRAINING-  
During the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter most students participated in five VTC's. In four of these sessions students took part in Barrier to Employment Training. The guest speakers who represented universities or academic opportunities spoke about barriers to acceptance. In the final VTC, students presented about their career of choice, including barriers to employment in that specific industry. The Southeast Island School District students who did not participate in all five VTC's experienced a Barrier to Employment training during their tour of Wells Fargo.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS: SUCCESS STORIES:**

Provide a narrative of participant successes resulting from participation in your program. Please include a separate photo attachment.

Throughout the program we have been supporting students' understanding of the careers that exist and how they can prepare for life after high school. We started the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter building off of information learned in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters. In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters, VTCs introduced and taught students how to use specific search tools in AKCIS and how to navigate through the system. As a result of the lesson plans and VTC sessions, 100% of the participants created electronic portfolios. Participants also completed an Occupation Search, Alaska Schools Search, or both, and saved the results to their electronic portfolios. Next, through the "Pathways Project" all participants first, learned about a specific career field through pre-content lesson plans and activities. Then, through a live, interactive VTC from a content provider students learned more about the career option of *their choice* and the "pathway" (or steps to take to get there) to earn future employment within that career. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters we focused on academic programs and institutions that, through attending, will help students take the next steps toward reaching their overall career and/or academic goals. During the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter we also focused on high demand industries in Alaska—including aviation and health.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter we changed the format of the VTC presentations, making them more structured. This structure carried on through the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Students knew what was expected of them during the VTCs, as a result student engagement and participation increased. Each speaker presents for five to ten minutes before taking a short break where students huddle in small groups to think of their top questions. Once two minutes have passed, students are given time to ask the presenter their questions. All questions are asked before the speaker responds. The speaker then has about 5 minutes to answer the questions. This process is then repeated for the second topic or speaker. Once the presentations are over, students pair up to discuss what they learned. Then they share out to the group in a short debrief session. During the interactive VTCs students are given the opportunity to build their interview skills by asking questions and listening to responses. Changing the structure of the VTCs has proved to be very successful; students participate more, take more notes, and stay engaged throughout the presentations.

All of the virtual guest speakers spoke about Barriers to Employment. 100% of our participants received Barrier to Employment training on more than one occasion. Higher education institution representatives also spoke about barriers to acceptance and what behavior could get students kicked out of different programs. This was very helpful information for the students

to hear. They need to know in advance that alcohol and drug abuse can not only prevent you from getting a job, but it can also prevent you from attending school.

Another success story is that all of our participating teachers continue to use the state education aligned curriculum that we prepare and provide. Our overarching goal is to support teachers and students. By designing lesson plans that are useful to teachers and meet state education curriculum, we have met one of our goals. We have found that some teachers are making modifications to our lessons to make them achievement level appropriate.

Supporting 11 students to experience job shadows, Barrier to Employment Training, and travel outside of their home community is also a major success for this program. All of the schools we are working with are located in villages with very few local job shadow opportunities. We are faced with the logistical challenges of organizing job shadow experiences outside of the students' home communities. Organizing something like this requires funding to cover travel expenses, knowledge of the area, along with a chaperone. Through the partnership we created with SISD we were able to work out the challenges that were preventing job shadows from becoming an actuality. Because of the program, students were able to experience job shadow opportunities amongst other wonderful things.

**PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD:**

Describe the grant activities you expect to complete during the next quarter.

During the extended period we will continue to focus on students experiencing job shadows and expanding our services to a larger number of students. Over the last couple of months Avant-Garde has worked to build partnerships that will allow for us to continue working towards meeting our goals.

Partner Information

*UAF Rural Alaska Honors Institute*

RAHI is a bridging program that assists students in Rural Alaska in making the academic and social transition between high school and college. It is for college bound students who are willing to work hard and who are dedicated to excellence. For many students college is going to serve as their 'career' for the next several years, taking up most of their time and attention. For this reason, we are considering this program as a job shadow of sorts. Students will get a taste of what college is like while they earn full university credits and experience life outside of their villages. Avant-Garde will work with students to support their growth during this experience.

*Ilisagvik Career Exploration Camp*

This summer camp offers a wide variety of career training camps ranging from construction classes and certification to STEM opportunities. Primarily serving the North Slope, students from some of the most remote villages in the state will be served by this newly emerging opportunity. This experience is set at the local collage, thus offering students exposure to the wide array of careers and post secondary opportunities afforded there. Avant-Garde

will work to help students process their experiences and link experiences to career readiness.

During this extension we will focus on strengthening the partnerships to ensure that students gain career readiness related experiences, including, but not limited to, job shadows. Avant-Garde will use the in-office VTC to stay connected with partners throughout the state. We will use VTC to continue interacting with the students.

**ON TIME AND ON BUDGET:**

Are the grant activities progressing as planned? Are you within your budget? If not, what is the cause? What is the solution? How can we help?

We are finding more and more partnerships, increasing the amount of state aligned curriculum, and learning a lot of the actual needs of rural teachers and their students. These are all positive movements of progress.

We had planned on launching our Moodle site during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, but have now assessed that we will no longer be using a Moodle site. Lots of time and work was put into development of the Moodle site, but in the end we found that Constant Contact was a great replacement for Moodle that met our needs. Through Constant Contact we track usage, send live links, and send surveys. It is a more user friendly way to get a lot of the same tasks accomplished. We decided that creating and hosting a Moodle site would take too much time and funding to fully develop.

We recently submitted an extension and budget revision for this grant. The extra time will allow for us to participate in the summer programs mentioned above. The budget revision will allow us to expand outreach and support content that we once thought we would be providing.

**DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:**

List the number of participants, the age groups, the school the activities took place at (list community if not at a school), number of the participants in school, and the number of participants that are not in school and the training dates.

| # OF YOUTH                                                      | # OF 16 - 18 YEAR OLDS | # OF 19 - 24 YEAR OLDS | SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY | # YOUTH IN SCHOOL | # YOUTH OUT OF SCHOOL | TRAINING DATES |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| <b>VTC#1: UAF, Kuskokwim Campus - Opportunities at UAF, KuC</b> |                        |                        |                     |                   |                       |                |
| 8                                                               | 8                      | 0                      | Oscarville          | 8                 | 0                     | 4/17/11        |
| 6                                                               | 6                      | 0                      | Kipnuk              | 6                 | 0                     | 4/17/11        |
| 9                                                               | 9                      | 0                      | SISD                | 9                 | 0                     | 4/17/11        |
| <b>VTC#2: ANSEP - Opportunities at and from ANSEP</b>           |                        |                        |                     |                   |                       |                |
| 8                                                               | 8                      | 0                      | Oscarville          | 8                 | 0                     | 4/22/11        |
| 6                                                               | 6                      | 0                      | Kipnuk              | 6                 | 0                     | 4/21/11        |
| 8                                                               | 8                      | 0                      | SISD                | 8                 | 0                     | 4/21/11        |

| <b>VTC#3: Ryan Air - A Day in the Life of a Pilot...</b>             |    |   |            |    |   |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|------------|----|---|----------|
| 7                                                                    | 7  | 0 | Oscarville | 8  | 0 | 4/29/11  |
| 6                                                                    | 6  | 0 | Kipnuk     | 6  | 0 | 4/28/11  |
| 9                                                                    | 9  | 0 | SISD       | 9  | 0 | 4/28/11  |
| <b>VTC#4: Nursing - Careers in Nursing and Pathways to Get There</b> |    |   |            |    |   |          |
| 8                                                                    | 8  | 8 | Oscarville | 8  | 8 | 8        |
| 6                                                                    | 6  | 6 | Kipnuk     | 6  | 6 | 6        |
| <b>VTC#5: Student Presentations - My Career of Choice</b>            |    |   |            |    |   |          |
| 8                                                                    | 8  | 8 | Oscarville | 8  | 8 | 8        |
| 8                                                                    | 8  | 8 | Kipnuk     | 8  | 8 | 8        |
| <b>Southeast Island School District Career and College Trip</b>      |    |   |            |    |   |          |
| 11                                                                   | 11 | 0 | SISD       | 11 | 0 | 03/31/11 |

**STATISTICAL DATA:**  
Please complete the table below as applicable.

| By Quarter   | Career Guides Activities & Exploration | Youth Employ - ability Skills | Work Experiences | Academic Training | Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 01/1 - 03/31 | 23                                     | 23                            | 0                | 23                | 0                                     |
| 04/1 - 06/30 | 31                                     | 31                            | 11               | 31                | 0                                     |
| 07/1 - 09/30 | 24                                     | 24                            | 0                | 24                | 0                                     |
| 10/1 - 12/31 | 24                                     | 24                            | 0                | 24                | 0                                     |

**Please note:** The data collected in your Quarterly Progress Report provides vital information that can have a direct impact on future funding for our grant programs. Forwarding your success stories and photos as part of our requests is further evidence of how rural youth training is crucial to building a strong workforce for Alaska. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.