



Stories of Fish Creek—Ch'atanaltsegh

Prepared by NeighborWorks Alaska (NWAK)

**A CREATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
UNITING STORYTELLING, ART AND CULTURE TO
INCREASE CONNECTEDNESS AND PRIDE IN SPENARD.**

WHAT IS CREATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

Creative community development happens when residents, community organizations, artists and other partners come together to harness the power of culture, art and creativity to bring about positive change in their communities. More than mere “art projects,” creative community development initiatives take intentional aim at specific community needs such as building community, revitalization, safety, beautifying public spaces, honoring history, promoting economic growth and more.

THE PROJECT Art plays an important role in community building and creating a sense of place and belonging in Spenard.

The Fish Creek connects residents to each other and to their neighborhood. Ch'atanaltsegh is the Dena'ina name for Fish Creek, meaning “yellow water comes out.” The Fish Creek Trail is an important neighborhood connector that was significantly rehabilitated in 2019 and in 2021, our Stories of Fish Creek project sought to build on that success by

- integrating local culture and storytelling into the experience of the trail through art that represents the diverse range of neighborhood identities
- increasing community connectedness, civic engagement and social cohesion
- building neighborhood identity and pride
- involving residents in making a positive difference in the community

Participants: NeighborWorks Alaska, Spenard Community Council, Anchorage Park Foundation, Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department

Artists: Scott Clendaniel, Jane Peyton Johnson, Holly Mititqu Nordlum, Lee and Alexandra Post, Rhonda Scott



Stories of Fish Creek was a collaboration among nonprofits, local government, artists and residents. The project was developed by a resident-led group in 2021-2022.

The Spenard community came together to celebrate the trail and the development of the project on Halloween 2021, engaging over 1,000 youth and their caregivers.



EVALUATION In early 2022, NWAK participated in the Success Measures' Creative Community Development Evaluation program for the Stories of Fish Creek project. This included a community survey to assess the link between creative placemaking and residents' desire to live in a community and their sense of pride and belonging, and a focus group discussion to measure components of community connectedness. Data for both were collected in spring 2022.

RESULTS

Respondents enjoy the Fish Creek Trail overall.



52%

often visit the trail; and 25% do "sometimes"



48%

would bring visitors to relax and play or to see the neighborhood

Survey respondents are very satisfied living in Spenard.



81%

would continue to live in Spenard



78%

are proud to tell others they live in Spenard

Respondents are overwhelmingly proud to live in Spenard.



84%

feel like they really belong in Spenard.



52%

feel they can make a positive difference in the community

Respondents agree arts and culture are valued and help them belong.



65%

believe Spenard is welcoming



59%

support artists and creative businesses

“ The art and creativity in the community is something I feel all around me. ”

“ I've never felt like I 'belonged' in a neighborhood before, but Spenard has welcomed me and given me opportunities that I've never felt I had in other neighborhoods. ”



WHAT'S NEXT NWAK and the Spenard Community Council continue to work to build community involvement through:

- Neighborhood park beautification
- Neighborhood clean-ups
- Local arts and culture initiatives
- Community building events

NWAK and its community partners are eager to plan and fund future creative community development projects and apply NeighborWorks America's evaluation tools to measure their impact.

VISIT the Fish Creek Trail and enjoy the stories

CONTACT NWAK about joining and supporting future creative community development projects

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For more information about the project and evaluation visit <https://www.nwalaska.org/programs-events/community-engagement/spenard>