

<u>Program Name</u>	<b>Awakening Spiritual Unity (ASU)</b>
<u>Sponsoring Agency</u>	ASU is a 501c3 (not for profit organization)
<u>Director Name</u>	Inez Larsen, PhD
<u>Geographic Area</u>	Statewide
<u>Contact Information</u>	AlaskaASU@yahoo.com

#### Program Description

Awakening Spiritual Unity responds to community needs by offering a variety of workshops, gatherings, and training activities designed to promote wellness, wholeness, sobriety and healing. ASU trainers are group of experienced Alaskan and American Indian professionals, and presenters of the *Gathering of Native Americans* (GONA) training. GONA is a community gathering that addresses self, family and community, and focuses on healing from historical and intergenerational trauma, and a reduction in unhealthy and violent behaviors (see additional information for program details.)

#### Brief History

ASU began in December 2010 and only recently received its non-profit status. Its experienced trainers are prepared to deliver a variety of training and healing workshops, even as the organization itself works to further define its mission and goals.

#### Project Goals

Awakening Spiritual Unity is made up of Alaska Natives and American Indians who believe that healing Alaska Native people must come from the people themselves rather than from those who have not, "walked in our moccasins." The director described ASU trainers as, "a group who offer healing to those seeking healing by various holistic methods. The mission of this organization is to help re-establish wellness, wholeness and dignity in mind, body and spirit. We are all related. The healing of one promotes the healing of all."

#### Training Goals

The specific workshop and GONA training goals are developed with the community. ASU trainers have a wide range of experience and expertise in counseling, visioning, spiritual healing, substance abuse and violence prevention, and community healing and wellness. (See additional program information.)

#### Who is trained?

Community members, community human services providers, tribal leaders.

#### Who are the trainers?

The trainers are ASU board members and associates, some of whom are also employed by other agencies or have private counseling and consulting businesses.

#### Where does training take place?

Training can take place in any Alaskan city or village.

### How long is the training?

The GONA gathering is 3 days with one day of preparation and a time for debriefing after the training. Details of other trainings will be worked out with the requesting community.

### What does the training include?

The GONA includes ceremony, prayer, personal stories and testimony, and a variety of activities designed to build trust, understand historical trauma, community resiliency and problem solving, and the development of a community wellness plan. The details of other trainings will be developed with the community.

### What follow-up is available after the training?

Follow-up will be based on community needs and wishes.

### What does the training cost?

Varies

### Has the program been evaluated?

The GONA training has been in existence for 18 years and has been evaluated.

### Future Plans

Providing wellness training and healing throughout Alaska.

### Additional Contact Information

Address: Awakening Spiritual Unity, 3705 Arctic Boulevard, #483 Anchorage, Alaska 99503

### Program Funding Source

ASU is currently seeking grant funds.

### Trainer Qualifications

ASU Alaska Native and American Indian trainers have many years of experience working with Native people and communities. In addition, some have advanced "Western" degrees including a PhD in psychology and an MSW.

### Additional Program Information: **Gathering of Native Americans (GONA)**

ASU trainers provide the *Gathering of Native Americans* (GONA) training

Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) is a Native-specific community prevention and strategic planning curriculum that was developed under contract by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) in the 1990s in partnership with American Indian and Alaska Natives. The curriculum was originally designed as an intervention to drug and alcohol abuse problems but has since been used for a wide range of issues in a wide range of settings to facilitate community engagement and move communities toward healing and to address issues related to planning and prevention in a culturally appropriate way.

The four goals for a GONA training are:

1. To provide a training experience that offers hope, encouragement and a positive basis for Native community action.
2. To provide Native communities with a framework to examine historical trauma and its impact on substance abuse and other social/behavioral issues today.

3. To provide a training experience that emphasizes skills transfer and community empowerment.
4. To create a prevention strategy framework that is based on values inherent in traditional Native cultures.

The GONA takes place over three days and is built around four themes that are presented sequentially: Belonging, Mastery, Interdependence, and Generosity. It follows a structured format with activities that include ceremony, team building, storytelling, group exercise, testimony and prayer. There are usually at least four facilitators who have previously trained to facilitate the GONA.

It's recommended that a community prepare for a GONA by creating a planning team to work out all the details related to site, food, promotion, equipment supplies and participation of community leaders.