Funding:
The USDA, NIFA, competitive National Research Initiative (now Agriculture and Food Research Initiative) Human Nutrition and Obesity Program awarded IAC a Bridge grant in December, 2006, for the purpose of revising and improving the project proposal. In January, 2008, the Troth Yeddha’ Nutrition Project became one of 78 projects funded since the program’s inception in 2004. The current funding is $1,000,000 for three years, ending January 2011. Our vision is to seek additional funding to build on current successes, developing and delivering a (proposed) Certificate in Rural Nutrition Services (RNS), as well as Associate of Science and Associate of Arts and Science degrees with Nutrition focus that will provide academic pathways to the Bachelor’s degree and beyond.

Goals:
- To deliver integrated, culturally relevant education and extension pathways for Alaska Natives and rural residents that increase understanding of behavioral and community environment factors that influence healthy weight.
- To use information gathered from Goal 1 to develop and deliver effective, culturally congruent intervention strategies for promoting health and preventing obesity.

Note: Until September 2009, Alaska was the only state in the USA that did not have any postsecondary degree in Nutrition, resulting in severe workforce development needs.

Approach:
- Teaching Alaska Native and rural students who then deliver nutrition outreach to their community.
- Community collaborations to promote wellness.

TYNP Personnel:
Clara Johnson, I-AC Director, continues as Principal Investigator of the project, and Sarah McConnell, LCSW, continues as TYNP Program Manager/Faculty. After building a firm foundation of nutrition science coursework, Registered Dietitian Faculty Madeline Patterson – O’Dell left TYNP to return to direct patient services. A big thank you to Marcia Anderson of Kenai, one of three Alaska Native R.D.’s in state, as she filled in as adjunct faculty for the rest of the semester. In August, we welcomed Susan Runyan, R.D., who is off to a wonderful start as TYNP’s R.D. Faculty.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer and educational institution.
Academic Progress and Workforce Development:

Seven of ten students completed the full 12-credits offered in this proposed program. After trial offerings of these courses in 2008 - 2009, the UAF Faculty Senate has approved all courses. Application has now been made for approval of an Occupational Endorsement and a Certificate in Rural Nutrition Services. Fifteen new students began the RNS course of study in September 2009. Participants in RNS Group I are actively using nutrition knowledge and skills to serve rural Alaska.

Practicum Fair:

Ten students participated in the First Practicum Fair, attended by Tribal, State of Alaska, and University leaders and educators. Students displayed and described their community projects with Head Starts, elementary schools, Elder programs, and parents, while sharing nutrition information about healthy eating, especially traditional Native foods. Many of the community people touched by these projects increased physical activity, decreased soda and sugary beverages, increased drinking water, switched to healthier olive and canola oils, learned the healthful nutritional values of local berries, salmon and game meat while increasing health awareness. In Chistochina school children decided to stop drinking soda, adults and Elders added flax seed to their diets, while Elders helped school children compose and record a song in their Ahtna language about healthy traditional foods.

Rural Nutrition and Health Change:

This one-credit entry level course was offered in Nenana, Ft. Yukon, Arctic Village and Tok - with requests to offer in several other communities as soon as possible. Participants included school cooks, early childhood educators, Elder nutrition program staff, Community Health Aides, stakeholders and high school students. Local grocery store managers welcomed a class field trip. Follow-up student audio discussion highlighted significant changes in nutrition and physical activity ("I walk to work now." "I'm reading food labels ... nutrition information and ingredients") and a marked increase in awareness of the importance of healthy nutrition and activity.