

NEWS RELEASE

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GAMES OF THE NORTH PLAYING FOR SURVIVAL

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ALASKA NATIVE GAMES CHAMPIONS BRING TRADITIONS ON FILM TO NYC; ATHLETES SAY GLOBAL WARMING THREATENS TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE

NEW YORK—October 7, 2008—It will be an exciting night in with an Arctic multimedia event at *Alaska House, New York*, on Thursday, October 16th.

In *Games of the North*, Director Jonathon Stanton follows the lives of four Native Alaskan athletes as they compete in the traditional sports of their ancestors. Mental strength and physical endurance are tested with contests of high kicking to seal hopping. But such games are more than sport—they instill a survival instinct for living in the Arctic, building perseverance, strength and Alaska Native values.

The film's footage showcases the diverse Alaskan landscape and its peoples. *Games* gives viewers a first-hand glimpse of the environmental changes in the Arctic – and the effect these changes have on the traditional peoples. While filming, Stanton said, "In Point Hope, after the ice left, I remember feeling a loss. There was definitely a presence that was missing."

"The sea ice here has been changing for the past 15 years but there was nobody to listen to us, recounted "Big Bob" Aiken, Native Games Coach and World Record Holder. "When they finally come around to listening, you know it's a little late."

"I feel the games are more important now, especially for the hunters who depend on the

ice for survival, 'cause of how quickly things are changing out there. It's important to be aware of yourself and your surroundings and the games build that," said World Champion David Thomas.

Filmed on location throughout Alaska, *Games of the North* shows how Alaska Native people have thrived in synergy with the natural world. The feature-length documentary will hit the festival circuit in early 2009, with a K-12 curriculum and interactive website to follow. An hour-length version of the film will premiere on **PBS** spring 2010.

Clips from the film will be shown Oct. 16 at the *Alaska House, New York*, a new nonprofit arts and cultural center representing the Alaskan point of view. The Alaska House strives to increase public awareness of the issues and opportunities for the vast and remote 49th state. In addition, throughout the evening, athletes will demonstrate the ancient games and elements from the films' original score will be performed by the award-winning Yupik tribal funk band, *Pamyua*.

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p. 2 Games of the North

Stanton said, “I’m excited to be presenting our project at the **Alaska House, New York**. It’s the perfect environment for us to introduce **Games of the North**. I feel 100% about supporting both the space that they’ve created and the Alaskan Indigenous artists.”

The 7-9 p.m. event is open to the public. To **RSVP**, please send an email to: NY@gamesofthenorth.com. For more information about **Games of the North**, go to: www.gamesofthenorth.com. The Alaska House is located at 109 Mercer St. For more information about the Alaska House, call (212) 431-1580 or go to www.alaskahouseny.org.

Games of the North was produced by **Starseed Media, Inc.**, in association with the **Alaska Native Heritage Center**, a nonprofit whose mission is sharing, perpetuating and preserving the unique Alaska Native cultures, languages, traditions and values through celebration and education.

The film was funded with generous contributions from the Rasmuson Foundation, Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT), Arctic Slope Regional Corp., Ukpeagvik Inuit Corp., Chugach Native Corp., North Slope Borough ECHO Project, Conoco Phillips and Alaska Humanities Forum.

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