

September 12, 2008

Dear friends,

Today we are joining together in a small, grassroots effort to help our fellow Alaskans. We share the story of our effort because we sense that others may wish to join us. This week, Alaskans will receive a windfall in the form of a \$1,200 energy rebate payment added to the annual permanent fund dividend. For many, these dollars will be a critically important factor in their ability to heat homes, keep the lights on and feed families. For others of us, it's a nice, but unnecessary payment.

Independently, a number of us felt the need to pass our checks along to those who will face the greatest hardship from high energy costs. Through conversations, we found others who shared the same feelings. We've put together a simple approach. It doesn't solve the energy cost problem in any long-term or sustainable way and it doesn't attempt to help everyone. It is our way of doing something, however small it may be, that connects those of us who can help with people who need our help. We believe it reflects the best of our Alaskan spirit and human values.

With help from United Way of Anchorage and the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC) we have put in place a way for Alaskans who are interested in sharing a portion or all of their energy rebate money.

We know that rural Alaskans face the greatest challenge, but we also recognize that many Anchorage residents are being impacted. With this in mind we have decided that 70 percent of the funds raised will go to rural Alaskans. These funds will be distributed by AVEC to those with the greatest need. The remaining 30 percent will be distributed to Anchorage residents through existing needs-based programs. United Way has agreed to act as the fiscal agent, which means that funds contributed are tax-deductible. United Way will take no fee for this wonderful service they are providing.

We are not actively soliciting donations to this program because we realize that many of you are already very generous with your personal resources. We do not want this effort in any way to impact the fundraising of organizations that are already doing so much to improve the quality of our lives in communities throughout Alaska. However, we continue to hear that others share our thoughts on using some or all of their energy rebate to help others. This is one option for how you can do that.

If you wish to participate, please make your check payable to United Way of Anchorage, noting that it is for the "Energy Assistance Program" and mail it to 701 West 8th Avenue, Suite 230, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

Sincerely,
Nils Andreassen
Carla Beam
Michele Brown
Natalie Janicka
Gloria O'Neill