



A Trip to Remember

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On Friday, August 28 and Saturday, August 29, I experienced one of the most memorable trips I have ever taken. As Vice President of NAAP, I had the honor of going to Kenai (Key-nigh) Alaska and presenting a 2-day seminar entitled “Gear Up For Senior Quality of Life!” This 2-day seminar has been “in the works” since 2013 and is part of the National Association of Activity Professionals board’s vision of providing Regional Workshops throughout the country. Many Recreation/Activity Professionals have voiced their concerns about not being able to attend national conferences due to limited funds and company budgets, therefore bringing educational programs and services to our current and future members is and will be one of this board’s top priorities throughout the coming years.

Recreation/Activity Professionals, Certified Nursing Assistants, Directors of Nursing, Social Workers, Meals on Wheels Transportation Specialists and Directors of various community organizations from all across the great state of Alaska gathered together at the Kenai Senior Center for two full days of education. A total of 34 health care professionals attended the 2-day workshop! Day One offered 8.0 hours of continuing education: the National Certification Council of Dementia Practitioner’s Certified Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Care Seminar.

Participants gained current knowledge, best practices, essential skills and proven programming directly related to Alzheimer’s and Dementia. Topics included information facts and figures, different types of Dementia, listening and communication skills, wandering, hoarding, nutrition and hydration, spirituality, community environment, and activity programming.

Attendees participated in a variety of educational scenarios that promoted Quality of Life strategies for persons living with Dementia.

Day Two offered 7.0 hours of continuing education, specifically addressing activity programming for today's resident living in all types of community settings: Independent, Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing, Adult Day Centers, Memory Care and Behavioral Health. Attendees experienced the Eden Alternative philosophy, programming and sampling a variety of chocolates, the power of reminiscence with one-to-one, small and large group meetings, strategies for creating and maintaining quality "A+" health care teams, and finally how even seniors can be bullies!

Kenai Peninsula Borough, or better known simply as Kenai, boasts a population of 7,452. The town is a flat open area meadow bordered by the Gulf of Alaska on its south and Prince William Sound on the east. The city's motto, "*Village with a past, City with a Future*" rings brilliantly to the newcomer as soon as one enters this picturesque town! And, the untamed beauty of Alaska's geography is simply breathtaking! Kenai has an allure that just cannot be overstated. I felt as if I were on top of the world! Like a young boy in the most elaborate toy store you could ever imagine, it was nearly impossible for this Recreation/Activity Professional to stay within the boundaries of the Kenai Senior Center Day Room during the 2-day seminar; however, I did!



Active learning, lively discussions and a variety of role plays and interactive scenarios were enjoyed by all throughout the two days. More importantly, seminar attendees earned 15.0 continuing education hours approved by the following national organizations: the National Association of Activity Professionals Credentialing Center, the National Certification Council for Activity Professionals, the National Certification Council of Dementia Practitioners, and the University of Tennessee's Personal and Professional Development Division.

On a personal note, I would like to extend a sincere and heartfelt "Thank You" to Rachael Craig, Carol Bannock and Kathy Romain, the leadership team at Kenai Senior Center. These ladies, along with the amazing support from Mr. Jake, Miss Bonnie, and Miss Vivian, Kenai Senior Center team members and volunteers, hosted a spectacular two day event! Without their dedication and many hours of preparation and planning, this Regional Workshop, sponsored by NAAP, would not have been the success that it truly was for all that attended!

Seminar participants' comments included the following: "The insight into human needs was so enlightening, relevant and useable for my residents and family members."; "I learned so much from all the presentations. Thank you for engaging me throughout the two days."; "I never thought about my residents and the bully factor. I do, indeed have bullies in my community."; "Great tools to fill my toolbox."; "I really enjoyed the Reminiscence presentation. It gave me a new perspective on this very important activity program." and, "I enjoy being challenged. The material presented did just that!"

Local Kenai radio host and award-winning environmental curriculum consultant, Merrill S. Sikorski, visited the Senior Center on Saturday and conducted an interview with Anthony regarding this statewide educational event. Radio station KSRM, which can be found at radiokenai.com, will broadcast the interview all across the Internet! Congratulations, Kenai Senior Center! Finally, as I toured various sections of Kenai and its surrounding neighborhoods, I noticed a sign, strategically placed on the main highway. The sign, boasting and beaming great pride of a health care community's mission statement read, "***Exceptional People who offer Extraordinary Care***". I can proudly say, the health care professionals that I had the opportunity of meeting and learning with at the Kenai Senior Center are exceptional people that offer extraordinary care. This truly was "A Trip to Remember."

