



NATIVE VILLAGE OF KOTZEBUE

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Tribal Government serving the Iñupiaq people of Qikiqtaġruk.

Nikaitchuat Iļisaġviat Recognized With Design Award

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Native Village of Kotzebue

Kotzebue, Alaska – Feb. 7, 2025 – The American Institute of Architects Alaska Chapter recognized the unique design of the Native Village of Kotzebue Nikaitchuat Iļisaġviat Iñupiaq Language Immersion School and Early Learning Center with its “Lowest Energy Bill in February” award. Honored at the winter 2024 AIA Alaska conference, the award recognizes the building’s Net Zero design and acknowledges the structure’s innovative energy conservation measures that meet the challenging northern Alaska environment. Bill Guevremont, Kuna Engineering, was the lead architect for the building design.

Out of nine impressive entries, only four received recognition. The award serves as a powerful form of acknowledgment from peers and industry leaders. Specifically, it highlights Guevremont’s commitment and success in implementing innovative energy conservation methods in a challenging environment north of the Arctic Circle.

Nikaitchuat Iļisaġviat serves children 3 through 8 years-of-age. Its mission is to instill the knowledge of Iñupiat identity, dignity, and respect, while cultivating a lifelong love of learning. Nikaitchuat Iļisaġviat is the only Iñupiaq immersion school in the United States. The school opened in 1998 with an enthusiastic staff of three teachers and 20 students. Today, Nikaitchuat Iļisaġviat has served more than 130 families. Annually, they average more than 300 parent volunteer hours, 75 community volunteer hours, and 75 elder volunteer hours, each seeking to instill within local youth and the community the importance of revitalizing and preserving the region’s identity and culture.

Better Life, Greater Security
The Qikiqtaġruņmiut, forever sovereign, will live our Iñupiaq way of life for all generations.

AIA Alaska's Design Awards Program was established in 1965 to promote community awareness of great designs being developed by Alaskan architects. For more than 50 years, these annual design awards have recognized buildings that both satisfy the needs of the user and significantly contribute to a stimulating built environment. AIA Alaska was formed in 1961 and is a Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.