

Activity Report 2015–18

The Ayalik Fund was founded in March 2015, three months after Eric Ayalik Pelly died.

That summer of 2015, the Ayalik Fund sent two youths from Cambridge Bay on an Outward Bound adventure. Ian Kavanna and Shania Angohiatok, both 16, flew south (for the first time!) to join other youths from across Canada on a backpacking trek in the Rockies. With that, the Ayalik Fund's program for Inuit youth was launched.

In the second year, 2016, we supported 14 youths to attend eight different programs with three different organizations: Outward Bound Algonquin Park canoeing and Vancouver Island kayaking, Northern Youth Leadership canoeing and drum-making camps, and Encounters with Canada in Ottawa. That year, we expanded beyond Cambridge Bay to include youth from Gjoa Haven. In 2017, we supported 17 Inuit youth from four Nunavut communities to attend ten programs, and added tall-ships sailing with Brigantine Inc. to our list.

And in 2018, the Ayalik Fund sent 29 youths on a full range of challenging adventures, participating in a total of 15 different programs. Once again they canoed rivers and climbed mountains, sailed in a tall-ship, learned traditional skills, sometimes winter camping and sometimes swimming in warm summer lakes, explored potential careers and new frontiers, always making new friends and discovering new strengths within themselves. This year's youths came from Iglulik, Pond Inlet, Iqaluit, Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Taloyoak and Kugaaruk, as the Ayalik Fund continued to spread its wings across Nunavut.



The picture is worth 1000 words: Boys who never thought they would or could do such a thing, climbing to new heights, high enough to have a view like this of the world around them, from atop their own mountain. The metaphor is vivid. When they arrived home, the community noticed: they were more mature, more self-confident, and positive in their outlook.

Youth Response

There is no better endorsement than what the youths themselves say after their trip.



"I've found love and peace on this trip. On my solo night I learned that there are good days and bad days, and you just have to look up and be a prouder person than who you were yesterday."

Erika M. Otokiak, 16

Outward Bound canoe trip, Algonquin Park, 2016

"After this trip, I feel motivated. I realized, if you want something in life, you have to work for it ... I couldn't be more thankful to the Ayalik Fund for taking me here, [to] places not a lot of people are able to go – this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I feel more confident that I can go to different places now."

Ethan Kaiyogana, 18, Tall Ship Expeditions, Quebec City to Halifax, 2017



"The thing I like the most about this trip was overcoming being homesick, making new friends and going on a fun adventure. This trip has helped me figure out how to make new friends, and who I truly am, and [it] has made me a stronger person. I am going to finish school and try to contribute to my community."



Sherry Evetalegak, 16, Keele River Expedition, 2018



"I changed my life around. I'm proud of myself. Outward Bound helped a lot. The experience changed me. Thank you so much."

Eekeeluak Avalak, 15

Outward Bound trek, Rocky Mountains, 2018



"This is something that I thought my body wasn't capable of doing, but now I know I could ... Everything is possible if you make it possible. Thank you for giving me such an opportunity. This is something I'll be talking about for the rest of my life."

Megan Muckpah, 19, Outward Bound
Indigenous leadership, backpacking trek, 2018

Community Feedback

Many people have positive things to say about the Ayalik Fund and what it is doing.

"You're hitting the nail on the head in terms of giving young people new, and high quality, life experiences within the context of really good adult guidance. Teenagers are so yearning to spread their wings, have new experiences, be challenged while at the same time being supported. The real payoff comes later when they draw upon the self-confidence they've acquired through the kind of adventures you're offering through the Ayalik Fund. Real happy for you that you've found this positive outlet for the profound sorrow you've borne. I applaud what you've done; it can only go on from here."

Murray Angus
Director & Founder
Nunavut Sivuniksavut

"The Ayalik Fund is such an inspiration to Inuit. Quana [Thanks] for making youth realize they're special."

Aopak Angulalik
Cambridge Bay

"It's such amazing work! I'm so thankful, as an Inuk, a northerner, for your passion to make a difference in the lives of our youth. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Udlu Hanson
Deputy Minister
Government of Nunavut



"This is totally inspiring"

Carolyn Bennett

Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

"I see the kids after they get back from their Ayalik Fund trips ... they're walking a bit taller ... their shoulders are back. It's great!"

Paul Emingak

Executive Director

Kitikmeot Inuit Assoc.

"Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to inform the House and the listening public about a worthy initiative that helps our youth.

Mr. Speaker, the Ayalik Fund was established to honour the memory of Eric Ayalik Okalitana Pelly, originally from Cambridge Bay, who died suddenly and unexpectedly of heart failure at age 19 in December of 2014.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the foundation is to provide opportunities to Inuit youth of the sort that Eric's parents felt made a great contribution to the development of his self-confidence.

Mr. Speaker, the Ayalik Fund targets youth who would not otherwise have access to such opportunities and stand to benefit from a boost in life.

The foundation is supported by a long list of donors and continues to grow, with the aim of providing these opportunities for youth over many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in expressing our appreciation to the Ayalik Fund founders, donors, and administrators for establishing this fund."

Keith Peterson

Minister of Finance

MLA for Cambridge Bay,

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