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ALASKA GIRLS WRESTLE TO HOST A WRESTLE LIKE A GIRL EMPOWERMENT CAMP FOR 64 GIRL WRESTLERS ACROSS 20 ALASKAN COMMUNITIES

(WASHINGTON, DC) – Alaska Girls Wrestle (AGW) will host a Wrestle Like A Girl (WLAG) Empowerment Camp for 64 girls across 20 Alaskan communities in PALMER, AK. The aim is to support the intentional growth of girls wrestling in Alaska, along with the leadership development of Alaska's next generation of wrestlers. The curriculum will focus on physical and technical wrestling development and include mental skills training, healthy relationships/boundaries, student-athlete scholastic and collegiate navigation, and personal and professional leadership development.

The Empowerment Camp will feature MasterClass Clinicians **Michaela (Hutchison) Schmitz**, Alaska State Champion (Boys Division), and 2004 Alaska Wrestling Olympian **Tela O'Donnell Bacher**. Girl's wrestling teaches technical competencies of athleticism while helping girls own their space, voice, and bodies. O'Donnell Bacher said,

"With the many benefits that wrestling offers young women, and the increased challenges that Alaskan girls and women face, it is critical that we strengthen the pipeline to bring girls into the wrestling room and support the upward mobility opportunities sports provides to girls and women."

With a wrestling-specific focus paired with an evidence-informed social-emotional learning curriculum, over 60 participants from across AK, many on need-based scholarships, will get exposed to Freestyle wrestling, the style of wrestling contested for women at both the university and the Olympic levels. More than 110 colleges and universities offer women's wrestling as a varsity sport, providing ample athletic and educational opportunities for girls and women who want to wrestle while attending school.

Alaska was among one of the first states in the nation to recognize girls' wrestling as an official high school sport, starting a sporting history that has produced multiple college All-Americans, National Champions, and an Olympian. In recent times, participation for girls wrestling in Alaska declined due to the lack of intentional development, and in 2019, participation further decreased due to the global pandemic.



With over 70% of Alaskan athletes receiving scholarships, this camp was made possible by Duglegur Alaska, Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation, Knik Tribal Council, Kodiak Area Native Association, Interior Grappling Academy, Kids Kupboard, Orthopedic Physicians Alaska, Pioneer Grappling Academy, Mat-Su Seahawks Booster Club, The Sports Bra Project, Women Win, and Youth 360.

Communities represented: Anchorage, Chevak, Chugiak, Dillingham, Eagle River, Esther, Fairbanks, Gambell, Homer, Iliamna, Kenai, Kodiak, Newhalen, Nome, North Pole, Palmer, Soldotna, Utqiagvik (Barrow), Valdez, and Wasilla.

Events include:

March 10: Cauliflower Ears and Mocktails Meet & Greet at Birchtree Charter School in Palmer, Alaska

March 11-13: WLAG Empowerment Camp at Pioneer Grappling Academy in Palmer, Alaska

About Wrestle Like A Girl

Wrestle Like A Girl, Inc. is a 501(c)3 whose mission is to empower girls and women using the sport of wrestling to become leaders in life. More information is available at:

WrestleLikeAGirl.Org.