

## ADOLESCENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN ALASKA SCHOOLS

### **Donor-funded licensed behavioral health providers offer students care where and when they need it most**

Mia is an 8th grader living with her grandfather in Anchorage. During the pandemic, Mia's grandpa noticed she had become withdrawn and sullen in the virtual learning environment. He struggled to connect with her, to understand how she was feeling, and to help her cope with the new challenges she faced. Without help, he was worried Mia's depression would worsen or that she might even hurt herself.

**But because of the generosity of our donors, Mia and her grandfather didn't have to face their troubles alone.** Help was available in form of JB, a licensed behavioral health provider working in Mia's school to offer students the care they need, where and when they need it most. JB was able to help them identify tools to cope during these difficult times and to connect meaningfully to each other.

Mia's grandfather had this to say:

*"I got [custody] of my granddaughters and became their father. I am so happy that Mia can have counseling right at school... life is so busy I don't think I could do another appointment. Most days, I really don't feel like I am doing this right - I didn't know how hard this was going to be. The therapy has really helped me understand about kids these days... much different than how I was raised! Thank you so much for being here."*

Today Mia understands she is not alone. She says, "It's nice to talk about it with someone who understands and has the time to listen."

**Our donors make this possible—thank you.** Donor support, along with key nonprofits in our community, has helped Providence build a program to place behavioral health counselors directly in Alaska elementary and middle schools. The professionals are integrated with staff and students to work in the school every day and support students when they need it most, guiding them through behavioral health challenges and onto the path of healing.

It began as a pilot at a single Anchorage school and the program has already grown five schools across the state, with more on the way. **Imagine what our communities would look like if every child in need had access to behavioral health services and intervention. Imagine how many children could be saved from depression, self-harm, and suicide if they received the right care when they needed it most. Because of the generosity of our donors, that dream is now possible.**

For thousands of families like Mia's and her grandfather's, donors are infusing help, hope and healing into their communities and their lives.