

February 17, 2011

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For Immediate Release:

Games of the North: Playing for Survival, an acrobatic documentary that ties ancient Alaskan traditions to modern athletes, comes to PBS in April 2011

Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. (NAPT) proudly announces the release of a new documentary that examines four modern Inuit athletes' ties to the Arctic Winter Games—an event drawing hundreds of athletes from the northern territories of the Arctic circle. Held biennially for a week in March, participants compete in strengths of endurance, agility, mind, body and spirit in front of large crowds comprised of family, friends, supporters and media alike.

Produced by Starseed Media, Inc. in association with the Alaska Native Heritage Center and presented by NAPT and KCTS Television/Seattle, *Games of the North* is a very personal journey for many athletes past and present. The Arctic Winter Games connect athletes living in very distinct worlds—bonding urban and rural Alaska Natives in a spirit of support and camaraderie with each character featured in the film revealing a unique relationship to the games.

“When a friend first showed me the Native Games, I was blown away by the level of athleticism and the grueling strength of these athletes. I became immediately drawn-in as both an athlete and filmmaker,” stated *Games of the North* producer Jonathon Stanton. “I’m an avid ski mountaineer and originally came to Alaska seeking the raw beauty of the vast mountain ranges, but in the end, the games and the people that it brought together, kept me coming back for more.”

Following four, competitive Inuit athletes as they trek across Alaska to live, compete, hunt, train and pursue their goals is where you’ll revel in the complex, interconnectedness of Inuit culture. The very core of their village life is centered around the idea of community and the values that must be honored to sustain it.

“The relevance of the games to today’s northern territories—such as Alaska, Quebec, and Greenland just to name a few—is so crucial to the survival of the culture. The harsh and unforgiving Arctic is not child’s play. It takes knowledge from the past and one’s personal strength to endure what mother nature gives you,” stated Steven Wounded Deer Alvarez (Mescalero Apache/Yaqui/Upper Tanana Athabascan), the film’s executive producer who is also a director at the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

Games of the North is a follow-up to the documentary film *To Play the Games*, which documents the unique lives of Alaska Native athletes as they prepare to compete in a single sporting event. Due to demand for more in-depth coverage of the games as a whole, *Games of the North* was made.

To inquire about station carriage in your area, please visit www.pbs.org/stationfinder.

About KCTS Television/Seattle

KCTS’ mission is to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve by providing meaningful programming on air, online and in the community that informs, involves and inspires.

About NAPT

Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. (NAPT), a non-profit 501(c)(3) which receives major funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, shares Native stories with the world through support of the creation, promotion and distribution of Native media. Founded in 1977, through various media—public television, public radio and the Internet—NAPT brings awareness of Indian and Alaska Native issues. NAPT operates AIROS Audio, offering 24/7 downloadable podcasts with Native filmmakers, musicians and Tribal leaders. VisionMaker is the premier source for quality Native American educational and home videos. All aspects of our programs encourage the involvement of young people to learn more about careers in the media—to be the next generation of storytellers. NAPT is located at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. NAPT offers student employment, internships and fellowships. Reaching the general public and the global market is the ultimate goal for the dissemination of Native-produced media.

Additional Information Regarding *Games of the North: Playing for Survival*:

Run time: 26:46

Broadcast feed dates/times:

NOLA Code HD: GNOR 000

Release/Feed Date: Monday, April 18, 2011, from 2230-2300ET

Credits: Produced by Starseed Media, Inc. in association with the Alaska Native Heritage Center. Presented by Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. and KCTS Television/Seattle.

Funding for *Games of the North: Playing for Survival*: Major funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Additional funding provided by the Rasmuson Foundation, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation and Education through Cultural Historical Organization (ECHO).

Press Kit available online at: www.nativetelecom.org/games_of_the_north

Additional Resources: Lesson plans for grades 7-higher education and a post-viewing discussion guide will be available for download from visionmaker.org in Spring 2011.

Official Website: www.gamesofthenorth.com

About the Crew:

Jonathon Stanton, *Producer & Director*

Creating works in film, television and cross-platform media, Jonathon has proven his abilities to balance the unique demands of producing while staying true to the story. The wilderness has greatly influenced Jonathon's style by sculpting his strength and sense of self. His experiences as an adventure athlete, outdoor guide, photographer, writer and journalist have uniquely shaped his filmmaking career. Since 1998, he has followed his passion for story into a diverse range of genres including feature film, documentary, commercial, music videos, television and web—collaborating with the best team for the job.

Steven Wounded Deer Alvarez (Mescalero Apache/Yaqui/Upper Tanana Athabascan), *Executive Producer*

Alvarez comes to Anchorage, Alaska, from the San Francisco Bay Area where he was active as both a performer and educator. He graduated from San Jose State University with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Music (Voice and Percussion) and History, plus a minor in Philosophy. An artist with hands in many mediums, he works professionally as a percussionist, vocalist, stage actor, film and stage producer and music educator. Alvarez's work as a film producer includes: *Asveq*, *The Walrus Hunt*, *Living from the Land and Sea*, *In This World* (a music video for the Native band Medicine Dream) and he has also served as Project Director for *Drums of the North*, a traditional Yup'ik music CD.

Phillip Kill'aq Blanchett (Yup'ik Eskimo), *Associate Producer & Co-Creator*

Internationally acclaimed music producer, Phillip has successfully combined his Alaska Native heritage with his artistic talents for new media. Through the award-winning musical group Pamyua, Phillip has collaborated on film, television and music projects. He made his directorial debut for the award-winning film *To Play the Games*. As lifelong athlete in the Alaska Native Games, Phillip has been achieving top honors for over 20 years.

Torin Jacobs, *Composer*

Torin Jacobs (Yup'ik, Inupiaq & African American) was born into the community of Bethel, Alaska. Torin grew up mostly in Bethel, Alaska, with several early years spent in Philly. While serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, he began exploring his talent for music which has become one of his greatest passions in life. He completed a certificate in audio engineering and music production in New York, and he is now working toward the completion of a B.A. in Business in Alaska where he plans to own and operate his own sound production company.

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