

## Renewing Relationships in Grayling, Alaska

By Staff Member Brian Bruxvoort

This time we join the Bruxvoort family as they go to Grayling to hold some CEF clubs for the local children. Although many 'alternate' airports were fogged in on the day they departed, the Soldotna airport was clear below 12000' and the flight to Grayling took just under 2 hours. And now, the rest of the story from Brian: We were greeted by Thomas & Janna and Marvin. We loaded both sleds full of the food we took along for them and ourselves and the crew went into town to unload and set up for the afternoon club while Brian stayed and put all of the covers on the airplane.

The first club went well, with 8 children in attendance. When we got to the house of Marvin and Janna we discovered that we were sleeping in their bedroom and Lucas and Jonathan on a bunk in the bedroom and on the floor, while they were sleeping on the couches in the living room. This was especially humbling as Thomas was still getting over a bad cough and not feeling well.

The first night their daughter celebrated her 12th birthday with the pizzas, pop, and ice cream we were able to take along. Elizabeth and Janna had many long talks as they got to know each other and Janna was very interested in learning about Elizabeth's missionary upbringing and how God called us to Alaska. The next day we had another club in the afternoon. This time Janna had Elizabeth took the lead and we were able to have a club more structured like a typical CEF club. Lucas and Jonathan followed their mom's lead and plugged in with the games, songs, crafts, and Bible stories. Lucas also led the Bible verse memorization games and did a great job. The second club went better than the first and we were grateful to see the same kids come again plus one or two new ones.

During the time we were in Grayling the local water supply was shut off for most of Saturday. When it came back on it the water pressure never exceeded about the size of a small pencil. It turns out that the local supply freezes up quite often, so they melt snow on the wood burner to have water. After the club on Saturday Brian spent most of the afternoon filling the buckets. Saturday night we had pizza again with a couple of the local older teens and young adults coming over. Also on Saturday, we found out that someone in the village had gone up to Nulato to buy a big sled load of alcohol. There was much concern about the havoc it would bring to Grayling when it got back. We prayed that the Lord would stop it, and found out that the man's snow machine broke down on the way back, so the alcohol did not arrive on Saturday as planned!

Sunday morning found Brian taking the generator out to the airplane at 7:30 a.m. to preheat the engines, as it was again 20 below zero. We worshipped with Marvin's leading the singing, another lady playing a guitar, and Thomas bringing a message. There were 6 adults and 4 children from the village in church. After church we had a nice dinner of Red Salmon from the Kenai and rice. Brian spent quite a bit of time on the phone on Sunday as the Marvins had no internet connection in their home. He finally found out who was open in Aniak to sell fuel. This was a concern as the only airports open on the Kenai were Palmer and Homer and we had been using fuel from the airplane to run the generator. Brian did

not want to stay another night and get low on fuel in that main tank so Marvin took us to the airport and prayed that we would have a safe trip home.

The engines started well and after a long warm up time we took off for Aniak. We topped off in Aniak to ensure lots of landing options. Visibility in Soldotna was still too low to get into when we left Aniak, but we had many people praying for us. We started the approach into Soldotna with the plan to go to Homer for the night if we had to do a missed approach. By the time we got abeam of Kenai, Soldotna had gone VFR!!

Elizabeth and I are very grateful for the relationships renewed in Grayling after so many years of not being there, and for the new relationships forming. We are also grateful for the invitation to come again. Please pray for the few Christians that are trying to stay faithful in a village of indifference, and often face rejection or rebuke for their faith. Also please pray for Thomas, a native from Grayling and Janna, his Caucasian wife, as they lead the church with no formal Bible training.