

# Alutiiq Museum Hires New Gallery Manager

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

There have been a lot of changes at the Alutiiq Museum this past year. A number of long-time staff members said goodbye in 2013, and the museum continues to welcome new faces to its staff and board of directors. Cristina Faiella is the museum's newest employee these days. She started her role as gallery manager last week and said she's excited to be working with a passionate group of people so committed to preserving Alutiiq culture.

"And such an intricate and wonderful culture, with the art and the music and the language being completely different. I'm Italian, and I grew up speaking Italian, but it's phonetic. So you look at a piece of paper and you can pretty much sound it out and you're going to be a little off but you're going to be able to say whatever you read. And this is so different for me."

Faiella originally hails from New York, but studied sports and entertainment management in Florida, where she went on to the professional sports industry working for the Miami Heat.

"And then I was working for the Mets. And then I fell in love, to a military man. And that ended that and meant we were moving around after that. So we've moved around quite a bit, and I love it, I love the lifestyle."

The lifestyle brought her here to Kodiak, where she said she was drawn to the Alutiiq Museum and all it had to offer.

"I love the museum I love the atmosphere. And I loved the mission of, it's not just a museum but the preservation of a culture. And I just happened to call her and said, you know do you have a position open and it was kismet because they did. And it happened to be something that my skills and my experience were easily transferred to. And I really loved the whole process of meeting the other people that work here and everyone has been so welcoming and so supportive and my enthusiasm is just through the roof about it because I'm just really happy to be here."

Despite only having one week under her belt, Faiella said she's excited about the direction the museum is going, including expanding the gallery in the months to come.

"We're hoping to expand the gallery so that it actually has more artists, more variety and also has a wider range of objects within it."

Faiella said the museum is also gearing up for a new basket exhibit that will open this spring. She said they are also working to increase Alutiiq language programs and practice opportunities in the year ahead.

