



**LIVE TO RIDE.
CALL TO LIVE.**

Ride for Life

Thanks to sponsorships from the National Park Service and Arctic Cat, the Ride for Life suicide prevention campaign will once again hit the trail on March 19, this time snowmachining more than 1,800 miles across Alaska to engage school children and adults in village in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta up to the Norton Sound. Alaska Wildlife Troopers Darrell Hildebrand, Jon Simeon, Thomas Akelkok and National Park Service Park Ranger Brad Honerlaw will launch from Fairbanks and make their way across Alaska spreading the message that there is always hope in the midst of despair and that suicide is preventable. As long as conditions allow, they'll visit as many as 13 communities along the way before ending the trip in Nome on March 31. That includes plans to visit Hooper Bay, a village that was especially hit hard by suicides last fall.

This year Arctic Cat and the National Park Service have stepped forward to support the effort to get the message out to villages from Holy Cross to St. Michael's, a part of the state that has been especially impacted by suicides in past years. NPS, in honor of its 100th anniversary, will cover the fuel costs of the trip while Arctic Cat is providing the sno-gos the four will use to make this ambitious journey.

All three wildlife troopers grew up in rural Alaska – Hildebrand in Nulato, Simeon in Aniak and Akelkok in Ekwok – while Honerlaw has lived and worked in Glennallen since 2004.

In 2014, Alaska Native males that died by suicide was 50.9 suicides per 100,000, nearly four times the national average, according to information provided by the [Statewide Suicide Prevention Council](#). Alaska's rate was 22.3 suicides per 100,000 people that year, nearly twice the rate of the entire country. Young people who are exposed to suicide or suicidal behaviors are more at-risk for attempting suicide, according to the American Association of Suicidology.

Hildebrand, Simeon, and Akelkok are armed with personal stories of how suicide touched their lives growing up in a village. Hildebrand's father committed suicide when he was 4-years old while Simeon's friend took his life while he was a young man living in Aniak. The goal is to make sure people know to reach out to someone and talk about their problems – whether it's a friend, a parent, grandparent, teacher or even troopers. It's a message that the wildlife troopers have carried with them during outreach trips for the past [six years](#) – starting in conjunction with the [Iron Dog Suicide Prevention Campaigns](#). Then, [four years ago](#), the three troopers started braving subzero temperatures and blowing winds to snowmachine to the different communities in rural Alaska to tell school children and adults about making good choices in life. Along the way they hand out [Alaska Suicide Prevention CARELINE information](#).

877-266-HELP
WWW.CARELINEALASKA.COM
SUICIDE PREVENTION

2016 Tour



National Park Service
Park Ranger Brad Honerlaw

Alaska Wildlife Trooper
Jon Simeon

Alaska Wildlife Trooper
Thomas Akelkok

Alaska Wildlife Trooper
Darrell Hildebrand

