

Alisha Drabek, PhD – “Agisaq”
Artist / Author Biography

Alisha Drabek is a author, artist and Indigenous advocate, born and raised in Kodiak, Alaska to Alaska Native, French-Canadian, Nordic, Celtic and Slavic parents. She graduated from University of Arizona in Tucson with her BA in English, American Literature (1994) and her MFA in Creative Writing, Fiction (1996); from University of Alaska Fairbanks with her PhD in Indigenous Studies, Education (2012); from Kodiak College with her Occupational Endorsement Certificate in the Alutiiq Language (2015); and from Alaska Pacific University with an Alaska Native Executive Leadership Program (ANELP) Certificate toward an MBA (2017). She served as an Alutiiq Language Apprentice with the Alutiiq Museum from 2004-2007, and continues her studies as a second language Alutiiq speaker.

Currently completing her first novel exploring shamanic awakening in a modern Kodiak Alutiiq village in Alaska, and an autobiographical collection of poetry—**Casting Offshore**, Alisha also has numerous nonfiction works and children’s and young adult books in progress.

Author of **Iqsani’s Trout Hook** and co-author of the **Red Cedar of Afognak: A Driftwood Journey** children’s books, Alisha won the *Honoring Alaska’s Indigenous Literature (HAIL) Award* (2004) and the *American Book Award* (2005) from the *Before Columbus Foundation*. She was recognized with an Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Educator of the Year Award (2012), and more recently with an Alutiiq Cultural Guardian Award at the Old Harbor Alutiiq Dance Festival (2017). She spoke on **PBS Worldview with Jerome McDonnell**, WBEZ Radio in Chicago; KNBA Radio in Anchorage; and numerous KMXT Radio broadcasts in Kodiak, Alaska.

Alisha appears in the award-winning, full-length documentary **Keep Talking: Language is Life** as an Alutiiq Ethnographer and Teacher and created the film’s viewer discussion guide for *Vision Makers Media*. Her dissertation **Liitukut Sugpiat’sstun: Exploring Kodiak Alutiiq Literature Through Core Values** is published online through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN). She researched, wrote and designed an **Alutiiq Picture Dictionary**, published by the Alutiiq Museum in 2007, with its second edition in 2012. She also developed the Alutiiqlanguage.org and Alutiiqeducation.org clearinghouse websites, which serve as the platforms for accessing Kodiak Island Alaska Native education resources. Her essays and articles appear in the [Alaska Journal of Anthropology](#), [Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues](#), [Center for Humans and Nature Blog](#), [Sierra Magazine](#), [Kodiak Daily Mirror](#), and [Sharing Our Pathways](#) (a statewide Alaska Native education newsletter), as well as a recent chapter “[Symbolism in Alutiiq Graphic Arts](#)” in the [Igaruacirpet—Our Way of Making Designs](#) book (2018). She has produced a wide variety of public relations brochures, annual reports and newsletters, as well as wrote \$40M in funded grant proposals. She is the co-founder of accredited Alutiiq Language high school and college programs, and the *Niuwawik Alutiiq Language Nest* for preschoolers and their families on Kodiak Island.

Alisha has delivered presentations at the [National Museum of American Indian \(NMAI\) Mother Languages Festival](#) (2018), [Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Convention](#) (2016), [Alaska Center for the Book Poetry Reading Series](#) in Anchorage, AK (2013), the *Institute of Library Museum Services (ILMS) Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums Conference (ATALM)* in Portland, OR (2009), [Worlds Indigenous People’s Conference on Education](#) (WIPCE New Zealand 2005 & Australia 2008), [Crow Canyon Archaeological Center Annual Meeting](#) in Cortez, CO (2000), and the **First Annual Writing Center Conference** in New Orleans (1994), as well as at numerous venues on Kodiak Island, Alaska.

Alisha Drabek served four years as English Department Chair and Assistant Professor, and as Alaska Native Studies Project Director at Kodiak College—University of Alaska Anchorage; three years as Tribal Administrator for the Native Village of Afognak; two years as Executive Director of the Alutiiq Museum; and four years as Executive Vice President of Afognak Native Corporation (One of the Top-10 largest-revenue producing corporation in Alaska, according to *Alaska Business Monthly*); six years on the Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute (KALI); four years as the Governor-appointed Commissioner on the Alaska Historical Commission; and six years on the Board of the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage. She has been an active member of the Alutiiq Museum’s *Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Language Revitalization Committee* for over 20 years. She also served as Managing Editor for the **Sonora Review literary journal** in 1995-1996. Alisha worked as an independent consultant from 1998-2021 for many Alaska Native organizations in public relations materials production, research, facilitation and grant writing. She currently lives on Kaua’i with her two youngest sons and her husband Helm Johnson.

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