



## Melody Kalmakoff

Melody spent her first three years of life in Chignik Lagoon, Alaska. Her family moved to Anchorage after that and lived with her grandparents. Melody has moved a few more times since then with family, and eventually settled back here in Anchorage. She currently is a junior at South Anchorage High School. She is a leader in the school's multicultural club, and is part of the Gab Girls Luncheon, and the YWCA

Young Women's Leadership Council.

Melody's most challenging obstacle was when her mother and her mother's boyfriend of fourteen years separated. She had a very hard time accepting the fact that they weren't together anymore. Throughout many challenges related to her family life, her family and friends have also been a source of support for her. Melody writes, "without them, I wouldn't be the person I am today." These obstacles and frequent moves also threatened to endanger Melody's academic career, but it has been her spirit of openness, along with her families understanding efforts, that have helped her keep her sights focused as she has worked to not only get back on track, but also become a leader amongst her peers.

Melody helps fulfill the mission of the YWCA through promoting multiculturalism at her school. She writes, "my fellow leaders and I do our best to show the beauty of other cultures through events like our multicultural dance assembly." Through Melody's involvement in the Gab Girls Luncheon meetings, they discuss how they can all do their part in getting rid of hurtful things people say, and how to get past hurtful things that are said. Additionally, Melody has volunteered often to lead activities during the YWCA Young Women's Leadership Council meetings, and always makes sure that her activities have a larger lesson, such as the importance of having a positive self-image.