

Rescue — Anirturluku

Taugum anirtuqiinga aq'alaqaacama.—That person rescued me after I fell overboard.



Photo: Elder rescues girl from an angry chicken,
Larsen Bay, 2020, AM905

There are two different Alutiiq words for rescue. *Qaiwarlluni* specifically means to pull or lift something out of the water, to rescue from the ocean. This word can be used for a person or an object like a net or a boat. In contrast, *anirturluku* is a broader term that means to save someone from a sticky situation. It can also mean to lend a hand, like helping a neighbor. The root of this word, *anirtur-*, can also be used to make the word *anirtuutaq*—which means something handy or useful.

Helping others is an Alutiiq cultural value—through sharing resources, helping in the community, or assisting family members. There are many Alutiiq stories about people who assist those in need. Sven Haakanson, Sr. told a story about a shaman in Eagle Harbor who rescued an injured girl. The girl was out collecting gull eggs when she fell off a bluff and landed on the rocks below. She was very badly injured and screamed loudly as she was carried back to the village. Her family summoned the shaman, who hiked up a nearby hill and came back with some roots. He boiled the roots to make a calming tea and fed it to the hysterical girl. She calmed down immediately, and was even laughing, as the people straightened her limbs so she could heal correctly.