



Sharing Our Pathways

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Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Rural School and Community Trust

Pamyua, Let's Dance Again

by Mike Hull

Taiko drummers led the green dragon into the Global Village where we watched Japanese children bring it under control with their dances. We knew by watching the ceremony that it was safe to welcome a special visitor. Sandra Kozevnikoff, from Russian Mission, stepped forward to welcome Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Peace Prize winner from Kenya, as Maathai made her entry. Sandra and nine Yup'ik students greeted her while visiting the Global Village at EXPO 2005 in Aichi, Japan. "The world has a lot to learn from you," Maathai told the Yup'ik group. She went on to thanked them for keeping their traditions and the wisdom they have gained from nature.

The Russian Mission group arrived in Japan on March 15. During the next two weeks they shared their culture, dance and an educational program with EXPO visitors. As the Russian Mission School principal, I had the good fortune to tag along.

Russian Mission School was the

focus of a doctoral study by Takano Takako, a resident of Japan, who is instrumental in providing outdoor educational experiences and coordinating environmental projects for children from many nations. Takako's interest in the subsistence-based curriculum of Russian Mission led to nine

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Sandra Kozevnikoff welcomes Wangari Matthai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner from Kenya, to the Global Village at EXPO 2005.

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junior high students traveling to Japan in 2003 to present their culture and school program at an international symposium on the environment. The students' performance had such an impact on the symposium sponsors they sought to bring Russian Mission students to Japan for EXPO 2005, with the help of Japanese corporate sponsors. The EXPO theme is "Nature's Wisdom," and the focus is on exploring ways to build sustainable communities. This gathering of more than 80 nations and 45 international organizations runs from March through September and will host fifteen million visitors.

During the first few days, our stu-



Each dance presentation ended with audience members joining the students to learn Yup'ik dances. This was the highlight for the visitors and students.

dents presented their dances to corporate sponsors, organizers and government officials. These were formal ceremonies attended by a few hundred people, and the students provided the evening's entertainment. At each performance, it took them just a few minutes to get the audience to put aside protocol and join the dancing.

The official opening of the Global Village, the area that hosted us, took



Snow flurries fell on the opening ceremonies, but these Taiko drummers continued to perform.

place on March 25. A delegation of Ainu, the indigenous people of Japan, and our Yup'ik students were first to welcome visitors. Next the taiko drummers and a group of high profile Japanese entertainers took the stage for the first EXPO concert. Snow flurries throughout the day kept many

visitors away, and temperatures in the low thirties thinned the audience as the night progressed, but those who remained started dancing to keep warm. At the end of the last song by the Japanese performers, the audience started chanting *pamyua*, the Yup'ik demand to keep dancing. The band responded and kept playing. Other entertainers, including the taiko drummers, returned to the stage for a

spontaneous jam session. The Yup'ik student dancers took the stage as well, and the music went on and on. No one seemed to notice the cold any more.

The magic continued through the week as students performed twice a day in the Global Village. With the EXPO open to the public, daily crowds topped sixty thousand. The Japanese are proud of their ability to maintain a schedule, even with such numbers.

Yet once audiences were introduced to *pamyua*, the ending time got pushed back further and further. And as visitors put on headdresses and took up dance fans, they lost all sense of time.

The Japanese press got caught up in this Yup'ik invasion on orderliness. A national newspaper journalist spent half-an-hour photographing the students then he put down his camera and asked them to teach him to dance. Our students appeared in local and national newspapers, and the national news program featured their presentation and interviews.

Prior to the trip, students prepared DVD and PowerPoint presentations that showed the subsistence activities they participate in through their school curriculum. The Yup'ik lifestyle presented fascinated the Japanese and other visitors. "I think it is so cool," said Wazai, a high school student from Singapore. "You are able to live so close to nature, and that is something unimaginable for many of us." Another student from Kyoto told our students, "We envy the way you live and the things you do as part of your school."

We also received a cultural education. We stayed at a traditional Japanese guesthouse that has large rooms

covered by tatami mats made from rice straw. We left our shoes in a storage area near the entrance and wore slippers provided by the owners. When entering a room covered by tatami, we left the slippers by the door. Futons and quilts were provided for sleeping. Every night we unrolled these on the tatami and each morning rolled them back up and put them in the closet. We found this was a comfortable way to sleep.

Traditional Japanese meals were served in another tatami covered room. We sat on the floor and ate a variety of foods from many small dishes. I was told that eating 23 to 30 different kinds of food a day is considered a healthy diet. We became skilled at using chopsticks in a short time. Then there was the Japanese bath. The guesthouse has one bath for men and one for women. Each has a common shower



Irene Takumjenuk teaches a young visitor to dance and two EXPO workers take time off to follow along.

area where you sit on a plastic stool while you shower. When clean, you join friends or strangers in a pool that accommodates several people. You soak in hot water up to your chin, and spend an hour or longer unwinding

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Charlotte Alexie teaches Amanda, a Singapore student, to perform the friendship dance.



The Ainu performed a welcoming ceremony at the official opening of the Global Village.

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from the day. It did not take long to adjust to this; after the initial experience students would run home to get in the bath. They also raced to train stations and climbed thousands of stairs to cram into rush-hour trains. But whether we were commuters or guests, the Japanese were forever accommodating, gracious and interested in us.

There are many colorful and impressive presentations from the more than 125 countries and organizations at EXPO 2005. Yet the Yup'ik presentation was different. The impact our students had on the community that grew within the Global Village was beyond my comprehension. The students not only said, "This is who we are," they offered the opportunity to become involved by extending the invitation: "Come dance with us." Affection grew between the workers at the neighboring pavilions and our students. Our hosts took on the mischief behaviors of their Yup'ik guests, teasing and playing in ways that challenged Japanese protocol.



Tantiana Changsak explains to visitors at the Global Village how she catches eels at Russian Mission.

When I questioned Ohmae Junichi, the principal sponsor for our group, about the dynamics of this relationship he responded, "Your students planted some sort of seeds of friend-



The students from Momoyama Junior High in Kyoto and the students from Singapore gather with the Russian Mission students for a group photo after their dance lessons.

ship in our community, although the community might be a very virtual one. They are so innocent and pure toward the world. We know these days younger generations are so influenced by what they see on screens. Violence, monetary richness, selfishness or opinions based on any real experiences. Your students are really rooted into their own land, nature and tradition. That is why they are so deeply welcomed by our villagers who are mostly living in very artificial world."

As our last performance in the Global Village came to an end, representatives from each of the pavilions came forward to thank the students for their contribution to the spirit of EXPO 2005. There was an outpouring of gifts and many exchanged teasing stories about their shared experiences during the two weeks. Each group

insisted that we visit their pavilion before we departed. Goodbyes were long and tears were shed as we left the Global Village.

Later I began to understand that when the Japanese look to their ancestors for guidance and wisdom they recall rice farmers. Hunters and gatherers lie in that shadow world of pre-history and myth. To the Japanese our Yup'ik students represented a people older than their cultural memory. Because our students' lives do not lie within the scope of human activity familiar to the Japanese, our students were like creatures of myth. Their presence reached beyond that of mere human beings; in Yup'ik beliefs the people share a kinship with the bear, the caribou and the other creatures of the land. By their presence, the students showed the residents of the Global Village that the myth lives now by saying, "Come dance with us." And for a few days in Japan some of the world came together to learn from each other, and our children taught them well. ✨

ANKN Curriculum Corner

Holding Our Ground

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/HoldingOurGround/>

Holding Our Ground is a 15-part series of half-hour radio documentaries that features the voices of Alaska Natives as they struggle for more control over their lives. This series aired during the fall of 1985. Jim Sykes recorded the hearings of the Alaska Native Review Commission (ANRC) on location in Alaska's remote villages. The Canadian Judge Thomas R. Berger served as commissioner for the review and traveled throughout Alaska to find out how Alaska Native people feel about their most basic values and how the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act affects them. *Holding Our Ground* and Judge Berger's book, *Village Journey*, are the results of the hearings. Land, subsistence and sovereignty are the main themes that weave the people and their cultures together in a timeless continuum. These themes are illustrated throughout the series. This resource includes audio recordings and transcripts.



Geophysical Institute Library

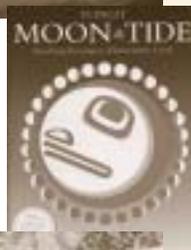
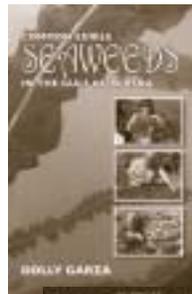
Education materials and resources are available at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Geophysical Institute Library for K-12 classrooms. Their collection focuses on general science, geology, space physics and Alaska Native cultures. Any teacher can check out three items for two weeks at a time.

For more information, contact:
Geophysical Institute Library
University of Alaska Fairbanks
611 Elvey Building
P.O. Box 757320
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The Corporate Whale: ANCSA, The First 10 Years

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/TheCorporateWhale/>

The title and content of this series offer an analogy between the role of the whale in certain Alaska Native subsistence lifestyles and the roles and responsibilities of the corporations created under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The 10-part series provides audio recordings and the transcription of the events leading to the ANCSA and the mechanisms employed to manage the act. Hear how leaders assess the first 10 years and future predictions.



Alaska Sea Grant Resources

Alaska Sea Grant's 2005 bookstore catalog features 130 books, videos, posters and brochures designed to educate people about Alaska's marine resources. Our newest book is *Common Edible Seaweeds in the Gulf of Alaska*, by Dolly Garza, a Haida-Tlingit Indian and fisheries professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Garza also wrote *Tlingit Moon and Tide Teaching Resource*, a curriculum guide that brings Native understanding of science and ecology to the elementary classroom; and an instructor manual and student manual, which teach kids skills to help them survive in an emergency.

Our video *Sharing the Sea: Alaska's CDQ Program* describes the fisheries quota-sharing program, showing footage of the new and old ways in Bering Sea coastal villages. The book *The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands* is a richly illustrated volume that tells about the science of the Bering Sea and the people who have lived in the region. From elementary grade curriculum guides on marine science to cutting edge fisheries research books, the Alaska Sea Grant has a wealth of educational materials for all ages. The Alaska Sea Grant/Marine Advisory Program, at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, is part of a nationwide, federal- and state-supported program dedicated to strengthening the long-term value of marine resources through research, education and extension. ✨

Mentoring Program Helps New Teachers

by Mary Johnsen

Beginning teachers want to make a positive difference in the lives of their students, but sometimes the challenges of teaching are overwhelming. New teachers often feel frustrated, inadequate and hopeless. A new mentoring program, the Alaska Statewide Teacher Mentor Project (ASTMP), helps new teachers make the transition from being a student to being in charge of a classroom.

As Lorrie Scoles, the ASTMP program director puts it, “When I was a beginning teacher, I knew what I wanted my classroom to look like, feel like and sound like, but it just wasn’t coming together. In many cases I knew what was ‘right’ but I didn’t know how to make it right. Self discovery is painful!” During her first five years of teaching, Scoles spent her own time and money on books, workshops and conferences. Slowly she began to develop into the kind of teacher she wanted to be.

Key to her progress was finding a mentor teacher to help her ask the right questions and build on what was working. “As I became more successful as a teacher, my students became more successful,” Scoles explained, “I figured out how to create a community where kids wanted to be, where they felt safe and respected. I developed a variety of structures to keep kids challenged and accountable for their work. It wasn’t easy!”

“That’s why I’m thrilled about the mentor project,” said Scoles. “Mentoring helps new teachers advance more quickly in their profession and helps everyone feel better about what is happening in the classroom.”

The Alaska Teacher Mentor Project models its program after the nationally acclaimed New Teacher Project, a program developed in California. In this model, mentor teachers are released from their classroom duties so they can work full time on mentoring and they participate in eight, week-long training programs to learn how to help teachers analyze and improve their teaching practices. The goal is to develop reflective teachers who are responsive to the diverse cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds of all students.

The project is in its first year of a two-year pilot project sponsored by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) and the University of Alaska. EED plans to evaluate the success of the project on improvements in student achievement and increases in teacher retention. The department will seek ongoing funding based on the results.

This year 37 of the 54 Alaska school districts participated in the project. Out of a pool of 150 Alaska teachers, 22 mentors were selected for their excellence in teaching, interpersonal skills and experience working in urban and rural schools. They have a combined total of 413 years of classroom teaching experience!



New teacher Robyn Lamley and her class at Chief Ivan Blunka School, New Stuyahok. Photo taken by Mentor Carol VanDerWege.

Each mentor works with 12 to 19 beginning teachers. The mentor meets regularly in person, on the phone and through e-mail with individual teachers. Mentor Jan Littlebear explains, “I model lessons for beginning teachers, release them for observing other teachers, bring them resources, assist in the arrangement of a classroom or in securing supplies and resources. Together we collaborate on planning, lessons, instruction and all areas of the profession.”

“Jan has done so much to reduce my stress in this first year of teaching in Alaska,” said Ann Anspach, one of Jan’s beginning teachers at Joann A. Alexie Memorial School in the Lower Kuskokwim School District. “She maintained a sense of humor and helped me to do the same, even in tough times.” Ann is grateful for the opportunity to be mentored. “We have an experienced teacher to model teaching strategies. We have someone to bounce ideas off of. We have someone to help us find resources and answers. Most importantly, we have a friend who stays in regular contact with us, and who cares about our teaching success and recognizes that we have to be cared for as whole people, not just as teachers.”

It has been a challenge for Director Lorrie Scoles to take the New Teacher Center mentoring mode that was designed in California and make it fit Alaska. One problem is travel in Alaska—weather gets in the way.

Another issue is helping new teachers adjust to rural Alaska. For instance, sometimes help in the classroom takes a back seat to helping a beginning teacher with food and housing concerns, such as a broken hot water heater or a frozen pipe.

One central issue, however, is mentoring new teachers about cultural differences. “How do you teach someone to have an open mind?” asks mentor Eric Waltenbaugh. “I would never presume to teach about Alaska Native culture. What I can do is help teachers look inward. Until new teachers are able to recognize their own cultural lenses they bring to their teaching, very little movement can be made toward adapting their teaching practice to meet the needs of all their students. If they don’t recognize that different forms of communication, beliefs, values and attitudes are legitimate, they won’t see that modifying their teaching practice to fit these differences will be helpful to both the students and themselves.”

“Teachers have expectations regarding where they think students should be academically, how they think students should act, what students should value, the best way to deliver instruction, the most efficient way to give directions, etc.,” said Eric. “It is very easy for a beginning teacher, given the fragility of their first job and their need to feel successful, to judge and blame instead of examining their own faults, misperceptions and personal beliefs. Having a mentor helps them work out some of these thoughts and provides positive support for professional growth.”

“For instance,” Eric explains, “New teachers often get caught up in English literacy issues. I have been working with a social studies teacher who was scoring his student’s written work based on English language standards. As part of the mentoring process, I helped him examine his students’ work, and he began to real-

Excerpt: Mentoring the Mentor

by Jan Littlebear

First year Yupiit instructor Elena Miller, with the assistance of a local fish trapping expert named Henry White, arranged for her middle school students to make, set and check fish traps in the Lower Kuskokwim; and for her third graders to check for fish trapped in nets that had been sewn and set under the ice near the school; and finally for the high schoolers to sew the nets, make their own fish traps, set them and later check their traps for fish. All of these wonderful traditional, cultural experiences were taking place over the course of several weeks, ending the first week of December. Enter the mentor! I arrived the week when all three classes were snowmobiling out to their sites to check the nets and traps for fish. Lucky me, I got to go along for the ride. I watched as the high school students attached floater and lead-weight cables to fishing nets, and I went with all three grade levels onto the frozen tundra to check set fish traps and nets. I traveled to Napakiak to mentor my teachers, and I received the education!



Henry White, local expert, teaches third-graders from Wm. Miller Memorial School about fish trapping in Napakiak. Photo taken by Mentor Jan Littlebear.

ize that the concepts he was teaching were getting across. We were able to identify a high level of student thinking that was going on. This teacher was thrilled, and empowered because he had mistaken lack of specific language skills for lack of thinking. This led to a discussion of whether it is fair to grade on something you haven’t taught. The conclusion we drew was to teach specific language skills in small chunks along with the content and evaluate student work on these aspects alone.”

Eric tells another story that illustrates how a mentor can bridge cultural differences. He had dinner with several teachers that were new to a village. He learned the teachers wanted to be involved in the community, but were frustrated since they weren’t invited to events or to people’s houses. Then he met with the Elders

in the community and asked them what their greatest concerns were for the teachers in their village. The Elders replied, “The teachers get holed up by themselves, and they need to get more involved in the community. They need to drop by and visit with us, take part in our activities.” Eric became a link to a better understanding between the teachers and the community. The new teachers learned that “dropping by” isn’t rude; it is expected.

“Making the mentoring program more culturally responsive is an ongoing project,” said Lorrie Scoles. “Collaborating with Native educators to develop ways to help beginning teachers reflect on culture—both the culture of their students and their own—is important work. While we have begun the dialog, there is still much more work to be done.”

Researching Vitamin C in Native Plants

by Candace Kruger

In 1741 Vitus Bering and his crew landed in North America on an island in Southeast Alaska, where he exchanged goods with the Native people living there. After setting sail for home, he found that his men were beginning to suffer from scurvy. Scurvy is caused from lack of vitamin C. Some of its symptoms are bleeding gums, loss of teeth, aching joints, muscle depletion and spiraling of the hairs on legs and arms. Bering and most of his men died from scurvy that year. They died trying to get home from Alaska, when all they had to do was eat some of Alaska's native plants to survive. Alaska has so much natural vitamin C in its vegetation.

This year in science class students were assigned to do a project and enter it in the school science fair. My partner, Erik Grundberg, and I did a project on the amount of vitamin C in the plants around our village of Anvik and in Galena, where we attend high school. We thought the information we would learn could be useful for future reference—in case we got sick with a cold, we would know which plants provide the most vitamin C. According to Dr. Jerry Gordon, on the website “How Stuff Works,” studies indicate that a high dose of vitamin C at the beginning of a cold reduces its symptoms in some cases. However, vitamin C does not prevent the common cold.

First we chose the plants to test: cranberries, blueberries, rosehips, stinkweed, fireweed, spruce and yar-

row. Then we made a hypothesis: we guessed that rosehips would have the most vitamin C. We remembered hear-



Candace Kruger and Erik Grundberg examine results of vitamin C experiments.

ing this somewhere, but we were not sure from where.

To perform the test, we followed a procedure designed by scientists that uses cornstarch, water and iodine.

We boiled the plants individually and extracted the juices. We mixed an iodine and cornstarch solution, which was a dark blue-purple color. Then we added the iodine to the juice hoping that the iodine would turn clear as it mixed. The faster the solution turned clear would indicate the more vitamin C in the plant.

Dr. Gordon states that the recommended dietary allowance is 60–190 milligrams of vitamin C daily to prevent a range of ailments. He goes on to say, “Men should consume more vitamin C than women and individuals who smoke cigarettes are encouraged to consume 35 mg more of vitamin C than the average adults. This is due to the fact that smoking depletes vitamin C levels in the body and is a catalyst for biological processes which damage cells.”

Gordon explains that vitamin C is essential because it helps produce collagen. Collagen is all over the human body. It is in cartilage, the connective tissue of skin, bones, teeth, ligaments, the liver, spleen and kidneys and the separating layers in cell systems such as the nervous system. Americans get an average of 72 mg a day. Studies show that if the body has too high of a daily intake of vitamin C, the worst result would be diarrhea.

To our surprise stinkweed had the most vitamin C, with rose hips coming in second. Our teacher, Shane Hughes, said that oranges have little vitamin C compared to stinkweed, regardless of the advertising that orange juice is high in vitamin C.

Although orange juice may taste a lot better, stinkweed is best when you need vitamin C. You can make a tea out of it. ✨

Youth Reminds Leaders of Past Chiefs

A speech to 2005 Tanana Chiefs Conference adapted for print

by youth delegate Tina Thomas

This is my first year as a youth delegate, but I have always come to these meetings. I have wondered why they never honored the first chiefs that came to Fairbanks (Alaska) almost 90 years ago.

When you walk into the Tanana Chiefs Building, in the entryway there is a picture up on the wall. A picture of the first chiefs and when I look at that picture I feel pride in my heart, I feel proud to be Native.

As I stand up here I have the jitters and I can feel my heart pounding, but I cannot begin to imagine how the chiefs of the Tanana River felt, knowing that they would be talking to the white man about our land for the very first time.

Here are a few words, according to the archives.

The words from Chief Ivan of Crossjacket:

"You must remember that I am making this statements in the name of the Natives, all the Natives that are in this district here. I am making this statements because I consider that all these Natives that I represent I am sure do not want to be put on a reservation. They don't want to have one and therefore I am making this statement for the Natives I am here to represent."

The words from Chief Thomas of Wood River:

"I wish to especially state that when I talk to you now, I wish to show you are touching my heart and at the same time I wish to touch your heart."

Judge Wickersham arose and asked the Indians:

"What do you want the United States to do for the Indians?"

Chief Charlie of Minto replied:

"What can the United States do for us? Alaska is our home, we do not know where our people come from, but we are the first people here."

Words from Chief William of Tanana:

"To give them a reservation big enough for them to live on like they do at present would mean several hundred miles and I don't think that the government can afford to give much ground."

Replying to the chiefs, an Alaska engineer commissioner said:

"As far as I can make out, from what the chiefs have said the Indians want certain thing, and I want to know if I have understood it rightly. They want freedom to come and go as they want to, fishing and hunting, and if they take up their allotments, they don't want to have to live them perhaps all the time that the law demands, but if they do take up allotments they will build cabins and call them their homes. Is that the opinion of the assembled Chiefs?"

Unanimous answer from the Indians:

"Yes."

The words of Paul Williams:

"Therefore, I wish you to take this in mind, that about this reservation, I think it is a fake."

With those powerful words said, I think that with the opening of the TCC convention, we should also honor our first chiefs, because without them



Charles Sheldon collection, accession number 75-146-03, Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

we would not be strong, sovereign and self-sufficient. And I will be honored to thank the chiefs who were so courageous and brave, for in those days it was very hard to stand up to the white man.

The following Indians were present at the said council:

Chief Joe of Sakchaket

Chief John of Chena

My great, great grandfather Chief

Thomas of Wood River

Julius Pilot of Nenana

Chief Charlie of Minto

Chief Alexander of Tolovana

Titus Alexander of Tolovana

Chief Ivan of Cross jacket

Alexander William, of Ft. Gibbon

William of Ft. Gibbon

Albert of Ft. Gibbon

Jacob Starr of Ft. Gibbon

Johny Folger of Ft. Gibbon

Paul Willams of Ft. Gibbon

To these men: *Basee cho* (thank you). ✨

Tina Thomas is from Toghotili (Nenana), Alaska located on the Tanana River and the Parks Highway in Interior Alaska. She is Bedzeyhli Xut'ana, which means the Caribou Clan. Her grandmother is Norma George and her grandfather is Charlie Thomas.

The Making of Red Cedar of Afognak

by Alisha Drabek

In August 2004, the Native Village of Afognak Tribal Council (NVA) produced a children's book titled *Red Cedar of Afognak: A Driftwood Journey*. The book was created through a collaboration between Elders, Western scientists, tribal members, tribal artists and writers.

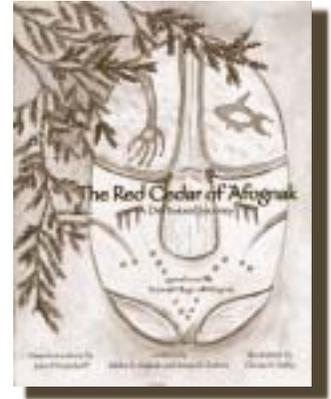
The book's production, in fact, tells a unique story itself of how diverse groups can come together to produce a text based on oral tradition, with rich cultural information, in partnership with Western science. Rooted in our Native ways of knowing, the book is intended to be a model for

tribe's Dig Afognak: Elders' Camp where Alutiiq Elders and culture-bearers have gathered each summer for a week to share their knowledge of Alutiiq language, history and cultural traditions.

One of the Elders who attended this camp was John Pestrikoff, "JP," now of Port Lions but originally from Afognak. JP shared a story his Elders told him about a driftwood log washed a mile inland behind the old Afognak village. His Elders told him it was thrown there during a tsunami centuries before. He raised questions about the long history of tsunamis in the region and their impact on the tribe.

Among the camp participants were geologist Dr. Gary Carver and archaeobotanist Dr. Karen Adams. Dr. Carver's core sample research on Afognak validated Elders' stories of previous tsunamis. In turn, Dr. Adams explored the origin of driftwood varieties and the currents on

which they traveled to arrive on Afognak's shores. She also studied the many uses of driftwood by the Alutiiq, who 1,000 years ago did not have trees. Dr. Adams saw JP's story as an excellent opportunity to demonstrate just what the tribe's cultural camps were trying to prove—science concepts can be taught effectively



through traditional Native knowledge. Perhaps better said, Native knowledge *is* scientific.

One of the main benefits of the book project was that combining two world perspectives—Western science and our Native ways of knowing—is mutually validating. The chief outcomes of combining the two is that for Native students it helps build self-esteem in having their Elders' wisdom acknowledged, and makes difficult concepts easier to grasp as they are made relevant to personal and cultural experiences.

By acknowledging our Elders' knowledge we can further honor their importance in our lives as being our first teachers. Scientific concepts taught in school are inherently present in traditional Native knowledge systems. Often, though, students are unaware of the deep environmental knowledge long-existent within their culture and families.

After Dr. Karen Adams returned home to Tucson, Arizona, she wrote the tribe with an outline of her ideas for this book project. The tribal council and staff pursued the project, combining additional oral history research they had conducted with Elders.

At the time, I served as tribal administrator for NVA. With my background in creative writing I developed the outline into a full story. Working with Elders and the Alutiiq Museum, Alutiiq language

(continued on next page)



Left to right: Alisha Drabek, Red Cedar of Afognak co-author; John "JP" Pestrikoff, a Port Lions Elder; and Gloria Selby, artist and illustrator share a hug at the Port Lions Celebration of Culture gathering to honor the book's publication.

sharing traditional storytelling that incorporates scientific knowledge, with the purpose of educating our youth in a place-based way.

The Red Cedar of Afognak was written primarily for elementary and middle school classroom usage, as well as within a cultural camp context. In fact, the book project grew out of the

Use of Relevant Materials Strengthens Ch'eghutsen' Project

by Hanna Carter, Cheryl Mayo-Kriska, Sarah McConnell, Paula McQuestion and Cecelia Nation

The Ch'eghutsen' Project is a family-driven, culturally-appropriate and strength-based behavioral health service for children, families and communities. The project philosophy is founded on "ch'eghutsen'," an Athabascan belief from the village of Minto, Alaska that has a broad meaning that includes "children are precious." To fulfill this mission, the project integrates cultural traditions, guidance from Elders, mental health training and university credentialing. Culturally-relevant materials shared by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN) are used in the project. These materials have a significant impact on the Ch'eghutsen's training program, which influences the delivery of our services to children, family and communities.

Fairbanks Native Association (FNA), Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) collaborate on this

"System of Care" project funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. A Circles of Care grant, which brought

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vocabulary was further incorporated into the project, as well as graphics to demonstrate science concepts. Local tribal artist Gloria Selby was brought in on the project after the written text was completed. She created original watercolor artwork to accompany the story.

In addition to the production of the book, the Native Village of Afognak has created a companion curriculum unit. The curriculum outlines the potential teaching opportunities that the book supports. They also have created a week-long culture camp to explore the story and its concepts with youth, Elders and Native educators.

The book has received two Honoring Alaska's Indigenous Literature

(HAIL) awards. In February 2004 JP Pestrikoff was given a HAIL award for his role as the contributing culture-bearer to the book. Then, in February 2005, I received a HAIL award as the tribal author of the book.

Copies of the book are available directly from the Native Village of Afognak for \$14.00. Contact the Native Village of Afognak at 907-486-6357 or email vera@afognak.org.

Alisha Drabek is an assistant professor of English at Kodiak College, a member of the Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region (NEAR) and an Alutiiq language apprentice through the Alutiiq Museum. She is an Afognak tribal member and co-author of *The Red Cedar of Afognak*. ✕

The Ch'eghutsen' Project says "Thank you!" to the Alaska Native Knowledge Network for your generosity and collaboration in "sharing your pathways" with us.

together Native people from Interior Alaska, guided the development of the project's vision, training and service components.

Project planners identified training as an essential component for several reasons. They hoped to develop culturally competent and credentialed children's mental health providers to serve Fairbanks and the surrounding Interior villages of Nenana, Stevens Village, Huslia, Allakaket, Nulato and Koyukuk. They hoped to decrease turnover by hiring and training local residents in these communities. To decrease potential burnout of these mental health workers, they would participate in intensive skill-based training in order to face the challenges related to children experiencing a serious disharmony at home, school or in the community.

The Ch'eghutsen' Project planners hoped to stimulate changes in the behavioral health service system by training and encouraging Alaska Natives to earn credentials that prepare them to thrive in behavioral health leadership and supervisory positions. Most of all, the planners wanted their efforts to result in culturally-appropriate mental health services that would better meet the needs of Alaska

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Native children and their families in Interior Alaska.

Staff positions created within the Ch'eghutsen' Project included care coordinators, a family advocate and a youth coordinator. Ch'eghutsen' staff first worked through the UA Rural Human Services Certificate Program (RHS) for training; then they pursued the associate of applied sciences degree in Human Service. We are thankful for the positive relationships with these programs. Each academic program helped us meet student and project needs with flexibility, responsiveness and cultural respect. The Ch'eghutsen' training program partnered with RHS and the Human Services program to develop new UAF courses and adapt existing ones, which integrated cultural appropriateness while maintaining academic rigor. In the development and adaptation of courses, the ANKN materials have been highly important.

The Ch'eghutsen' staff, who are students, identified cultural relevance as the essential power of the training program. Courses integrate community cultural traditions with mainstream knowledge, which in turn, are valued by community members. Community support is critical to the success of our students. Communities share in the investment a student makes when they send an active human resource to town for weeks of training, allowing time to study, do homework and attend teleconference classes. In turn, Ch'eghutsen students give back to the community by sharing ANKN materials, using these materials to stimulate community discussion, spark collaboration with local schools and celebrate the strengths of their culture.

Here are a few brief examples of how we have used ANKN materials:

My Own Trail authored by Howard Luke, was one of our main textbooks for a Ch'eghutsen' adapted course on rural counseling. As part of our stud-



Left to right: Eliza Ned, Allakaket; Cecelia Nation, Fairbanks; Mary Pilot, Koyukuk; Mona Perdue Jones, Fairbanks; and Sophie Ellen Peters, Huslia.

ies we made a day trip to Howard's Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp on the Tanana River. Howard Luke and Elizabeth Fleagle were our Elder mentors for the weeklong class, bringing the book to life. Course assignments included keeping a daily journal that had a "trail" theme, an essay describing the

" We don't understand the Western way of healing and it will not work for us. We have to go back to our Native ways of healing ..."

student's "own trail" to becoming a counselor and an essay reflecting community interviews about local descriptions and expectations of a counselor.

The ANKN cultural values posters and cultural standards books were key resources for the Ch'eghutsen' developed course "Alaska Native Healing in Human Services," taught by Kenneth Frank and a terrific Elder team that included Howard Luke from the Chena-Fairbanks area, Lincoln Tritt from Arctic Village, Catherine Attla from Huslia, Pauline Peter from Nulato and Ida Ross who is originally

from Kobuk, Alaska. Students used these materials to explore personal and community values, discover local dormant values and develop ways to apply cultural values and standards to their work with children and families. The excellent resources of the Alaska Native Language Center were also critical to the success of this course, as students learned more about traditional stories and the applications of those stories.

Harold Napoleon's *Yuuyaraq: The Way of the Human Being* was a primary text in the curriculum. It is now a book our care coordinators recommend and talk about with Ch'eghutsen' clients to help them understand the powerful effects of intergenerational trauma and to share hope with those experiencing challenging times. As one care coordinator describes it, "I explain to them about how our people used the old way of teaching and since we have lost those ways, we don't have anything to fall back on. We don't understand the Western way of healing and it will not work for us. We have to go back to our Native ways of healing, which is off the land, nature and seasons of living ... We can learn from books like Harold Napoleon's, because

we as Native people all have similar beliefs and customs.”

The Gospel According to Peter John is another book that makes an impact beyond the classroom. Information from the book is shared with clients and the book is made available to encourage healing that makes sense within the culture. A care coordinator said, “I suggest that (clients) journal their thoughts and ideas and life experiences in order to heal and put things down on paper just like these famous authors have done. It could be a source of healing for them and they could be authors like Harold and Peter.”

Another participant in the Ch’eghutsen’ training program said, “These are very critical strengthening reading materials for me and my classmates. I would recommend sources such as these for them to get a new meaning for our old way of life that has pretty much disappeared from our modern day life.” There is a true healing quality in the materials available through ANKN.

Ch’eghutsen’ now has thirteen Alaska Native students from Fairbanks and Interior villages who have participated in our training program. They began their studies in the fall of 2002. Six will receive their AAS degree in Human Service in May 2005. Four others only need three more credits to complete their degree. Others individuals are working towards their bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Two have chosen to attend UAF fulltime and are making excellent progress toward psychology degrees.

Thank you to the Elders and community members who have supported our training program in so many ways. Thank you to the Alaska Native Knowledge Network for making so many helpful, culturally-relevant materials available. We appreciate your support. It has been important in our learning journey. ✨

Technical Assistance for Schools in Alaska

by Ray Barnhardt

The following article contains excerpts from the final report of the Northwest Regional Advisory Committee submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) on March 31, 2005.

When Congress passed the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, they directed the U.S. DOE to establish 20 technical assistance centers to help regional, state and local educational agencies and schools implement the No Child Left Behind goals and programs, and apply the use of scientifically valid teaching methods and assessment tools in:

- core academic subjects of mathematics, science and reading or language arts;
- English language acquisition; and
- education technology.

The centers will also be responsible for:

- facilitating communication between education experts, school officials, teachers, parents and librarians;
- disseminating information to schools, educators, parents and policymakers for improving academic achievement, closing achievement gaps and encouraging and sustaining school improvement; and
- developing teacher and school leader in-service and pre-service training models that illustrate best practices in the use of technology in different content areas.

They will coordinate with the regional education labs, the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, the Office of the Secretary of Education, state service agencies and other technical assistance providers in the region.

DOE appointed a committee to provide input from the Northwest region, which includes the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. Karen Rehfeld, from Early Education and Development, Marilyn Davidson a Kodiak principal and Ray Barnhardt from the University of Alaska Fairbanks were the Alaska representatives on the Northwest Regional Advisory Committee (NW RAC). Input to the committee was sought from educators and the general public throughout the state, including a two-day educational needs assessment forum held in Anchorage in January that brought together all the technical assistance providers serving Alaska schools. The Alaskan Federation of Natives and the Southeast Regional Resource Center co-sponsored the forum, which included representatives from the regional Native educator associations.

Educational Challenges Within the Region

NW RAC identified needs and developed recommendations in four priority areas: leadership, language-culture-diversity, closing the achievement gap and effective use of technology. In the area of leadership, technical assistance in using research that improves school leadership holds tremendous potential to help schools bolster student academic performance, particularly for low-income and

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minority students.

The second area for technical assistance is to address issues associated with language, culture and diversity among our students. There is a growing body of evidence that indicates the way language and culture are addressed in the education system can have a significant impact on the performance of students, and especially those from particular cultural communities. Culturally-responsive curricula and teaching practices that are tailored to the diverse populations requires a shift in emphasis from the one-size-fits-all composite approach that has been typical of past responses to “diversity” in the schools.

A third area to be addressed has to do with assisting schools in developing strategies to engage the entire community and establish a two-way dialogue for facilitating the achievement of all students. Technical assistance efforts should be focused on educating and supporting teachers and building administrators in using best practices in engaging parents as productive partners and in defining meaningful roles for parents.

Finally, technical assistance needs to provide support for the effective use of technology in a school setting. The use of technology can also expand the reach of technical assistance centers. It can help administrators and teachers create databases to analyze

student performance data to inform instructional decisions and effect instructional improvements for the region’s diverse student populations. In school districts where release time for teachers is difficult to obtain, the use of web-based technologies can improve their access to center services. Technology permits greater access by participants and its continuous availability enables access to content for even the most hard-to-reach educators. Whether a function of geography, resource restrictions, time or knowledge, local constraints in addressing the challenge of developing or identifying effective research-based practices to close the achievement gap can be impacted through knowledgeable applications of technology.

While the needs for technical assistance in the Northwest region are similar to those of the rest of the country, the delivery of technical assistance is made more challenging by the region’s geographic vastness and subsequent population isolation. These factors, unique to the Northwest (including Alaska), make it difficult to create a coordinated systemic professional development model to build local capacity to address the academic needs of the region’s diverse student population. The need for well-trained and qualified educators and effective schools within the Northwest Region must become a priority if achievement gap disparities are to be reduced.

Other Recommendations

The United States DOE will be soliciting proposals from technical assistance providers outlining how they will address the needs identified above. In addition to a region-wide technical assistance center, the NW RAC also recommended that a second technical assistance center continue to be based in Alaska to specifically deal with issues involving Alaskan

Native and American Indian students throughout the Northwest region (with a satellite office in Montana.)

Priorities for this center would include:

- developing and identifying culturally-appropriate research-based materials for curriculum, learning and assessment relevant to particular diverse populations in order to close the achievement gap and provide access to higher level learning opportunities for all students;
- developing culturally-appropriate curriculum materials, teaching and assessment practices for American Indians and Alaskan Native students;
- identifying and disseminating research-based practices that address the unique challenges associated with low socioeconomic conditions;
- identifying and developing strategies for engaging families and communities in partnership with schools to support success for all; and
- developing and preparing a highly effective workforce for the culturally diverse, multi-graded, high-poverty and rural schools of the region.

The U.S. DOE Request for Proposals is targeted for release in May 2005. Proposals will be submitted by early summer and the new technical assistance centers are expected to be open this fall. For further information about the NW RAC process or recommendations, contact:

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The full report of NW RAC is available online at:

<http://www.rac-ed.org/> ✨

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Iñupiaq Immersion Students Learn Language and Culture

by Martha Stackhouse

The Iñupiaq immersion classes at the Ipalook Elementary School in Barrow are busy learning the language and culture this year. There are classes for three- and four-year-old children and kindergarten and first-grade immersion classes.

When school started in the fall, we took a field trip to the tundra to pick plants. We picked yellow daisies, lichen, willows, tundra leaves and tall red grass that grows along the creek. We got to chase a lemming. Every year we go on a field trip to the beach but polar bears roamed the beach this year so we canceled the trip.

During the holidays, we went to the senior center to sing Christmas carols. The students liked going there; some had an *amau* or “great grandparent” in the audience. After singing, they would go to their *amau* and give him or her a big hug. The senior citizens enjoyed seeing the children in their building.

We performed for the combined North Slope and Northwest Arctic Boroughs’ Economic Summit, which happened prior to the Kivgiq festivities. The students welcomed the audience in Iñupiaq, sang songs then danced *sayuutit* or “motion dances,” while one of the students drummed.

In the future, we plan to go to the Iñupiaq Heritage Center Museum to look at artifacts and hunting tools. In the past few months, our children have witnessed whaling preparations in their own homes and in the homes of their relatives. The whaling season is always looked forward to with anticipation.

The children are learning to count in Iñupiaq. They can count by 10s up to 100. They are learning the Kaktovik

numeral system. The students do well in math; maybe using the Kaktovik numeral system gives them the chance to exercise their minds and to concentrate.

The children are learning to count in Iñupiaq. They can count by 10s up to 100. They are learning the Kaktovik numeral system.

Our children are learning Iñupiaq despite the limits with the mandated No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) we limit Iñupiaq language learning to 50 percent. Nevertheless, students are learning Iñupiaq. Our teaching techniques include using Total Physical Response. For instance, if a teacher asks a student to close the door, the student has to say they are walking to the door and that he or she is closing the door while doing the command. When it is snack time, students know that they will not get juice or crackers unless they ask for it in Iñupiaq. When students say they are done with their work and ask to play in Iñupiaq then they get to play.

In January we held a North Slope Education Summit. Two people from New Zealand, Hinekahukura Tuti Aranui and Roimata Wipiki, were the guest speakers. They met with the language teachers, community mem-

We would like to thank the Maori Elders for coming to our cold climate to help us put our priorities into perspective.

bers and Elders. On the first day they gave the historical background about their indigenous people and the impact that contact had in their country, culture and language. In the 1980s they realized their language was at risk. They started teaching their grandchildren in their garages. They applied for grants and eventually moved into larger buildings. As their efforts continued, the public schools gave the hard-to-handle Maori children to the private Maori schools. These children achieved success by graduating from high school. Many went on to attend universities. The sense of belonging and self-esteem moved them to a higher level. The government noticed the success of the private Maori schools and began to fund the schools. Today Maori language is taught through the university level.

The next day Tuti and Roimata separated the Iñupiaq language teachers while Jana Harcharek from the North Slope Borough School District met with the community. Each group came up with strategies to keep our Iñupiaq language alive. Tuti let the teachers vent and then asked us to dream of a perfect Iñupiaq language school as if we were the administrators and in charge of the changes. We decided that a private Iñupiaq Immersion school would be best.

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With No Child Left Behind, we can no longer teach total Iñupiaq immersion. At best, we teach 50 percent Iñupiaq and 50 percent English. English is required because they want our schools to meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which is measured by testing in English. Therefore, English is being pushed in the United States. If we are to start a private Iñupiaq Immersion school, we would no longer be tied to NCLB.

It may be helpful for parents to know that students taking Iñupiaq immersion classes often do better in testing in their middle- and high-school years. They may not do well during their elementary school years due to not knowing English well. However, they grasp English rapidly and later will do as well as peers who have not taken immersion classes. In fact, most of them exceed beyond their peers. This year former Iñupiaq immersion students won in the middle school math competition, science fairs and the Bilingual Multicultural Education and Equity Conference writing competition. Their self-esteem is apparent and they are setting high expectations for themselves.

We talked about children learning the language from the time they are babies. The community people vowed to start teaching Iñupiaq to their children and grandchildren as much as possible. The young parents, who may understand Iñupiaq but not speak it, committed to taking Saturday classes to learn Iñupiaq.

The daycare center has shut down due to budget cuts. We discussed the possibility of reopening it and teaching only in Iñupiaq. This may be the starting place. Eventually it could expand. The Paisavut Working Committee, which is a group of Iñupiaq language teachers, has started meeting with the Paisavut (Our Heritage) leaders to help make this dream a reality. ✨

A Tribute to a Yup'ik Elder

by Esther Ilutsik

As a young girl, Helen Toyukak remembers sitting in the grass near the abandoned village of Kulukak, which was wiped out during the 1930's flu epidemic. She faces Qayassig or Walrus Island, in Southwestern Alaska's Bristol Bay region, and watches a group of older children sitting in a circle with an Elder. The Elder is juggling grass woven balls and chanting "*Qayassiq kan'a, Imutuq kan'ai ...*" in the Yup'ik language. The chant ends and she continues to juggle until she makes a mistake. A child takes the Elder's place in the game until each one has had a chance at this rhythmic play.

I would like to recognize Elder Helen "Mauvaq" Toyukak of Manokotak for her contributions and dedication to the documentation of traditional Yup'ik knowledge. Helen willingly and unselfishly shared her knowledge about grass baskets, the

raiding of mouse food caches and the traditional fancy squirrel parka. The knowledge base that she shared is used by many of our Bristol Bay area teachers and instructors in the classroom and at the university. *Quyana cakneq!* ✨



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