

## *YUKON NATIVE LANGUAGE CENTRE* ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR FALL 1999

Greetings from the Yukon Native Language Centre! This is the first of what we hope will be a regular series of reports on the activities of the Centre.

This fall we have continued to see a steadily increasing demand for our services, including additional training sessions and presentations by YNLC staff. Because of unusually high enrollment, the Centre offered two Certificate training sessions for native language instructors in September.



### ***Native Language Teacher Training***

The first session, held from September 13 to 17, was attended by eleven participants representing six Athapaskan languages and Tlingit. The second session, held from September 27 to October 1, was also attended by eleven participants, representing eight Athapaskan languages.

Three new instructor trainees attended these sessions. All are working in Whitehorse schools with experienced instructors. Ann-Marie Miller is in training at Elijah Smith Elementary School with Vera Brown. Linda Harvey is working at Takhini Elementary School with Bertha Moose. And Dorothy Bellerose teaches at both Porter Creek Secondary School and F.H. Collins Secondary School with Lorraine Allen.

Another native language instructor, Agnes Winzer, is in her first year of teaching Northern Tutchone at Beaver Creek School. Two teachers in the Head Start program for pre-schoolers also attended: Lucy Stewart from Upper Liard, and Hazel Campen from Kwanlin Dun in Whitehorse. Mr. Clayton Long, a fluent Navajo speaker from Utah, was a visitor at both sessions.

The Centre also offered a Diploma training session for native language teachers from October 12 to 15. Fourteen participants attended, representing seven languages, including two Inuvialuktun speakers from Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik.

All the training sessions focused on methodology, language structure, and professionalism, with a variety of activities being demonstrated and practiced. During the sharing sessions the participants gave short presentations on a variety of materials and methods they use or could use in their native language programs.

The Certificate course requires three years of training and teaching experience to complete, while the Diploma course requires an additional two years of advanced work. These courses are accredited by Yukon College, and graduates of these programs receive Yukon College certificates and diplomas.

## ***In-service***

On November 8 to 10, a Tlingit In-Service workshop for four native language instructors was held. The visiting instructor was Dr. Jeff Leer from the Alaska Native Language Centre, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Participants produced a variety of teaching materials, developed listening exercises, and discussed how to teach to older students.

## ***Literacy Training***

A Gwich'in literacy session was held from November 24 to 26. The workshop was attended by twenty people, including fluent speakers, students, and beginning learners. Activities included listening exercises, conversation lessons, and reading and translation practice.

## ***School Program Visits***

Regular program visits to the communities continued during the fall. Jo-Anne Johnson, Rural Programs Coordinator, visited Beaver Creek, Destruction Bay, and Haines Junction Oct. 18 to 20, Watson Lake Oct. 25 to 28, and Mayo, Pelly, and Carmacks Nov. 29 to Dec. 1.

Urban Programs Coordinator and Southern Tutchone Language Specialist Margaret Workman visited schools in Whitehorse, including Elijah Smith Elementary, Whitehorse Elementary, Takhini Elementary, Porter Creek Secondary and F.H. Collins Secondary.

## ***Special Gwich'in Project***

In 1896, the Oblate priest Émile Petitot published a mammoth dictionary in French on Gwich'in and two other Athapaskan languages, Hare (Slavey) and Chipewyan (*Dictionnaire de la langue déné-dinjié*). The Centre has been hosting a pilot project this past fall to make the information in this dictionary more accessible. André Bourcier, a PhD candidate in Linguistics from Université Laval in Quebec City, has been working with Gwich'in specialist, Mary-Jane Kunnizzi. André and Mary-Jane have been able to decipher most of Petitot's unique writing system and have discovered a wealth of information on how the Gwich'in language was spoken over a century ago. The Centre hopes that the success of this pilot project will lead to the much longer and larger project, the complete analysis of this dictionary. Then, this valuable material can be used by the Gwich'in people as well as scholars to deepen our understanding of the history of Gwich'in as well as the history of all Athapaskan Languages.



Elder Mary Decker and Linda Netro, Gwich'in Literacy Workshop, November 24-26, 1999

## ***New Materials***

The Centre has also been active in producing new teaching materials, including a colourful wall map of the Yukon featuring many of its original native place names. The map depicts the geographical boundaries of Yukon's ten native languages, as well as providing the traditional names for some of the territory's geographical features. Cost of the map is \$10, or \$7.50 for a smaller student version. If you would like a copy of the map, please contact the Centre at the address below.

Margaret Workman is completing a book called Kwädäy Kwädür (*Traditional Stories*) which contains stories told by several Southern Tutchone elders. These were originally recorded by Mrs. Agnes MacDonald and Mr. Daniel Tlen from 1970 to 1986. Mrs. Workman has carefully translated the stories into English. As she writes in the introduction, "It is important for the young people of today to learn from these stories to understand the importance of the relationship between people and animals, to learn proper behavior, and to show respect for all living things. The stories are told as a guide." The book will be available sometime in the new year.

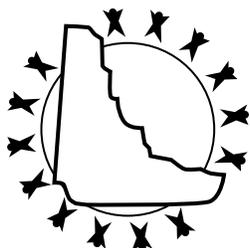
A variety of native language multimedia projects have been developed including 22 titles in the four talking books series *The Moose Hunt*, *Drying Fish*, *At Home*, and *Camping*. A special project: *Tsēzūl Tué' Gáh Ts'édāne Kédzēhdī (Teaching the Kids at Simpson Creek)* was made with Barbara Morris, Kaska Language teacher at Johnson Elementary school in Watson Lake. A talking version of the new place names map is in progress. The more recent multimedia titles work on both Macintosh and Windows. The Centre is now able to distribute titles on CD.

The Centre's publications catalogue is currently being updated with a listing of thirty new publications, and will be available early in 2000. The catalogue is also available on the Centre's website at <<http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/language>>

## ***More***

Upcoming activities in the New Year include a course on native languages for students in the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program and a Certificate training session to be held in March. Literacy sessions for Han, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, and Kaska will also be held in the spring.

If you would like more information on the Centre's programs or publications, please write us at Yukon Native Language Centre, Yukon College, Box 2799, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 5K4. We can also be reached by telephone (867) 668-8820, fax (867)668-8825, and email [ynlc@yukoncollege.yk.ca](mailto:ynlc@yukoncollege.yk.ca).



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

## **COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS**

11 NISUTLIN DRIVE

WHITEHORSE, YUKON  
Y1A 3S4

TEL: (867) 667-7631  
FAX: (867) 668-6577