

**ACTIVITIES REPORT — JULY 2012**  
COVERING THE PERIOD JANUARY–JUNE 2012



## 2012 Graduation

A great many family and friends attended the Yukon College graduation ceremony on Saturday, May 12, held nearly a month earlier than in previous years. The keynote address was delivered by National Chief Shawn Atleo of the Assembly of First Nations. Many Yukon First Nations chiefs and other leaders were in attendance. YNLC held a reception for its graduates and their families immediately preceding the official ceremony, and we were fortunate that our friend and colleague Wayne Towriss could be with us to take some memorable photos. The cool breezy May weather contrasted with the warmth and enthusiasm of the reception at YNLC and the graduation ceremony at the Yukon Arts Centre.

YNLC recognizes and congratulates our four 2012 graduates. They include Diploma graduate Lena Smith-Tutin and Certificate Graduate Liza Jacobs, both Southern Tutchone instructors and members of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in Haines Junction. Upper Tanana instructor Ruth Johnny from White River First Nation, Beaver Creek, and Hän instructor Mary Henry from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, Dawson City, also received their Diplomas. CYFN Grand Chief Ruth Massie presented the Diplomas and Certificate, along with YNLC linguist Dr. André Bourcier and Urban Programs Coordinator Linda Harvey.



*2012 Graduates Liza Jacobs, Lena Smith-Tutin, Mary Henry, Ruth Johnny*

These teachers have worked with great dedication in their classrooms, their First Nations programs, their communities, and at YNLC to achieve their personal and educational goals. YNLC is very proud of their accomplishments!

## Winter and Spring at YNLC

YNLC staff and students were very busy during the winter and spring of 2012. Language sessions focused mainly on in-services to assist trainees and teachers in their individual language programs, working on literacy and teaching materials. A week-long combined Certificate/Diploma Training Session in April brought the various language trainees together to learn from the coordinators, mentors and each other on how to improve their professional skills as teachers.

As well, the Centre staff worked on language projects; made visits to school, First Nation and community language programs; provided support and materials; made formal and informal presentations and consultations; and met regularly with officials of the Council for Yukon First Nations, YNLC's parent organization. YNLC's Director John Ritter was present when the CYFN Leadership voted in January to establish a Chiefs Committee on Yukon FN languages. Also in January, the Minister of Education, Hon. Scott Kent, visited the Centre to meet the staff and learn more about YNLC's mandate and activities.

Discussions continued also in winter and spring with the Yukon College administration. Students and visitors arrived regularly with language requests and queries for information. At the end of this reporting period, several YNLC staff attended the CYFN General Assembly held in Burwash Landing. It was a busy and productive six-month period for YNLC staff and all those taking part in YNLC activities.



*S. Tutchone trainee Heather Jim preparing teaching materials*



## Teacher Training

### Certificate / Diploma Training Session Apr 16-20

Twenty trainees and instructors came from all over Yukon for this week-long Training Session. They practiced listening exercises, drills, language games and teaching lessons. Acting as learners for each other's languages deepened

*Trainee Lorraine Dewhurst teaches Tlingit Language at Teslin School*

their understanding of how their own students learn. They studied lesson planning, how to adapt lessons to different grade levels, discipline techniques, and preparing classroom materials. On the final day each trainee gave a demonstration lesson for peer review and evaluation. One highlight of this session was the visit by the Minister of Education, Hon. Scott Kent, who spoke encouragingly and expressed his appreciation of the work done by the instructors in their schools and communities. Founding Elder Margaret Workman presented the Minister with a gift on behalf of all the language instructors.



*Founding Elder Margaret Workman presents a gift to Hon. Scott Kent, Minister of Education*

## Language Training and Documentation Sessions

### Southern Tutchone and Upper Tanana In-Service Sessions

In January 2012 YNLC held two specialized in-service sessions for advanced students completing requirements in the Diploma Course for Native Language Instructors. The Diploma Course students undertake a special project to develop new teaching materials for their instructional programs. This component of the course gives them a chance to exercise their creativity with their languages, and to identify needs and resources to ensure the continued viability of their teaching programs.

The first in-service was held on January 10, when Lena Smith-Tuton traveled from Haines Junction to work with YNLC staff and Founding Elder Margaret Workman, her sister. Lena recorded all the sound files associated with a story she composed in Southern Tutchone based on a traditional autumn hunting camp. The work also involved proof-reading and editing her original text for accuracy and ease of reading by her students. The story will eventually be posted at [www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca).

The Upper Tanana language was the focus of the second in-service held January 31-February 1. Ruth Johnny, who serves as Upper Tanana language instructor at the Nelnah Bessie John School



*Chief David Johnny and Upper Tanana Instructor Ruth Johnny during the Diploma In-Service*



*Christine and Robert Hagar, old friends from Mayo*

in Beaver Creek, spent two days with YNLC staff to continue work on a book of listening exercises. Her husband, Chief David Johnny, accompanied her to provide specific information on the Scottie Creek dialect spoken by the Upper Tanana families living in Beaver Creek.

### **Northern Tutchone Literacy Session**

The Northern Tutchone Literacy Session was held over three days at the end of March and included a record number of participants from Mayo, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks, Beaver Creek, and Whitehorse. Special guests included Robert and Christine Hager from Mayo. Robert Hager served for many years as Chief of Na-Cho Nyäk First Nation and was very supportive of YNLC's efforts in its formative stages, with NND hosting many community-based literacy sessions in its administration building. Also attending the March session was an important contingent

from Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation: Chief Ed Skookum and several FN councilors took part very enthusiastically in the various training activities.

Several distinguished fluent speakers provided a wealth of language assistance throughout. Most senior among them were May Roberts of Carmacks, who has attended YNLC sessions since the 1980s; and Gertie Tom, originally from Big Salmon, and Margaret Workman from Aishihik, both retired YNLC founding Elders who continue to provide information, support, and encouragement to the classroom teachers and trainees.

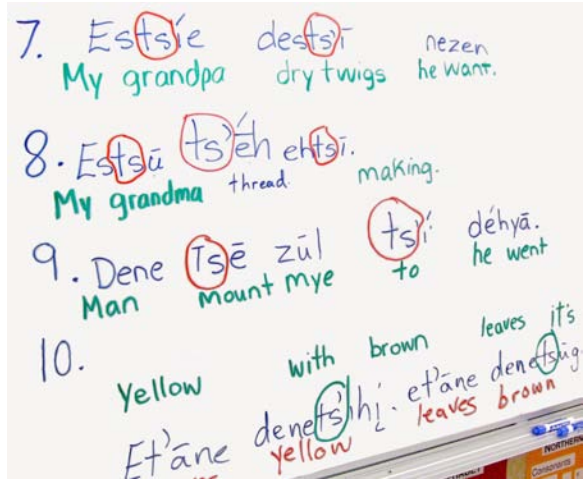
The session included three Northern Tutchone listening exercises, songs for classroom use, and the transcription of a story **Ihkún Zhát** (At Home) originally composed by Catherine Germaine of Mayo. Participants listened to the computer version recorded by Ms. Germaine then wrote their own versions of each sentence. This provided ample writing practice as well as the opportunity to note the slight differences in pronunciation of Northern Tutchone as it is spoken in each geographical region.



*N. Tutchone trainee Jocelyn Skookum with mentoring Elder Evelyn Skookum*

### Kaska Literacy In-Service

Two Kaska instructors, Linda Shorty and Nancy Sterriah, traveled from their home community of Ross River for this in-service which focused on their specific needs as Kaska instructors in the Ross River School. They practiced composing and teaching listening exercises and drills, reviewed various Kaska translations, and worked on instructional techniques for the several grade levels they teach.



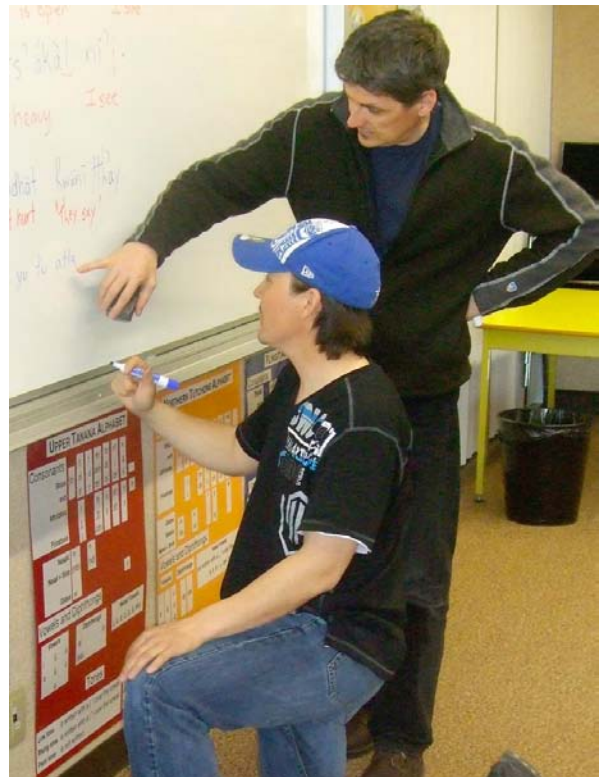
Kaska listening exercise by Linda Shorty and Nancy Sterriah



S. Tutchone Elders Margaret Workman, Rosalie Washington and Lena Johnson with gift bowls.

Junction, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing and Whitehorse. They prepared word lists and listening exercises to help students distinguish sounds differing in such features as voicing (th versus dh, for example) and glottalization (k versus k', t versus t', etc). They practiced classroom games to reinforce the learning of these contrasts that are so fundamental to Southern Tutchone.

Fluent speakers included Elders Lena Johnson of Burwash, Rosalie Washington of Haines Junction, and YNLC Founding Elder Margaret Workman. All were early graduates of the YNLC



Trainee Luke Johnson and André Bourcier checking Southern Tutchone transcription

Certificate program at Yukon College and are now in retirement but continue to assist Southern Tutchone teaching and learning efforts.

### Arctic Winter Games

This major event took place in Whitehorse during March 2012 and attracted participants from many northern countries and regions. YNLC assisted the Games by providing its entryway and central work area for use as the coat-check for athletes and coaches coming daily to the College cafeteria for meals and snacks, leaving their coats and belongings at YNLC. Both the Arctic Winter Games Society and Yukon College staff did an excellent job of setting up and taking down the infrastructure. The volunteers who welcomed and assisted the visitors included YNLC's own Josephine Holloway.



*YNLC's Josephine Holloway volunteering at the Arctic Winter Games*

### Yukon College Program Support

YNLC staff give presentations and provide support to various programs when requested, including the Bachelor of Social Work program

this spring. Centre staff also provide information on Yukon FN languages and cultures to Yukon College visitors and to students in a number of programs.



*Tlingit trainee Gary Johnson and mentoring Elder Norman James*

### YNLC Programming at Yukon College

YNLC staff met in March and May of 2012 to continue discussions with senior administrators at Yukon College regarding the integration of YNLC programs within the academic and administrative structure of YC. YNLC had earlier provided updated course descriptions for all components of the three-year Certificate and two-year Diploma Courses for Native Language Instructors. Continued discussions will lead to the development of an updated Memorandum of Agreement between CYFN and Yukon College to replace the one signed in 1995 by the (now late) Grand Chief Harry Allen and others. That MOA confirmed YNLC as a programming unit within the overall

## Recorded Resources and Active Methods in Aboriginal Classroom

4<sup>th</sup> Annual Yukon First Nations Language Teachers In-Service  
First Nations Programs and Partnerships (DoEd)  
Yukon Inn (Whitehorse)  
March 20-22, 2012

André Bourcier  
Linda Harvey  
Jo-Anne Johnson  
Anne Ranigler



[www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca)

College structure. The updated document will reflect changes and developments during the intervening years.

## First Nations Programs and Partnerships In-Service

On March 22, YNLC's Linda Harvey and Dr. André Bourcier gave a well-received presentation for participants in a territory-wide in-service for native language instructors. The

Department of Education's First Nations Programs & Partnerships Unit organized the in-service training session and requested YNLC's help in demonstrating how existing materials for native language instruction could be adapted for use in the new Smartboard technology.

Linda and André developed a Southern Tutchone lesson based on sound recorded by Linda's (now late) mother, Irene Smith, who spoke a distinctive Lake Laberge dialect of the language. Linda presented an active and engaging lesson with these materials in a way that simulated their use with the Smartboard tools. Discussion ensued about how best to use the new technology to engage students and encourage their native language learning. The Government of Yukon had recently invested heavily in the purchase of this new technology, which is making its way into some of the native language classrooms.

## Distinguished Southern Tutchone Elder Marge Jackson

YNLC's Linda Harvey traveled to Haines Junction in late May to visit with Southern Tutchone Elder Marge Jackson and to present her with a Hudson Bay Blanket to acknowledge all the support and encouragement that she has provided to YNLC over the years. Marge is now approaching ninety-four and continues to keep active with her sewing and other interests. She attended YNLC's Southern Tutchone literacy sessions faithfully over the years to share her deep knowledge of the language. She also provided much assistance when YNLC Director John Ritter worked with the late Jimmy Kane in the 1970s, and subsequently in the 1990s when YNLC developed the Dákeyi CD-ROM and booklet of Southern Tutchone place-names.



*Marge Jackson, Southern Tutchone Elder and long serving YNLC resource person*

## Listening Exercises Game for Hand-held Devices

All of the programming and art work for the Northern Tutchone on-line language training game is now completed. Staff members Sheila Maissan and Doug Hitch can now turn to assembling the sound, text, programming and images into a web product that can play on hand-held devices like the iPhone as well as on computers. All the colour illustrations by artist Susan McCallum are now complete, edited and formatted ready for programming.

## Travels to the Alseck

In 1890 and 1891 Edward James Glave made two trips into the southwest Yukon with his now more famous assistant, Jack Dalton. Glave published articles about these travels in New York City newspapers shortly afterwards.

Glave was a careful observer who took extensive notes about the people and places he encountered including some material in the Tlingit and Southern Tutchone languages. Fortunately, the notes and hand-drawn maps from the 1891 trip have survived and are kept in the archives at UAF. The YNLC publication on Glave's travels, based on articles and unpublished materials, has uncovered much new information and is in the final stages of preparation.

## Publications

Print reports from all our spring literacy sessions will be ready shortly. These reports include the new language documentation produced by the participants as well as the classroom materials presented at the sessions for training and practice. Most reports include a selection of photos taken at the sessions.

Lena Johnson's book of Southern Tutchone language lessons has been revised and reprinted, and the accompanying sound files are now available on CD as well as cassette

tape. Other language lesson books have been reprinted due to steady demand.

All our publications now have 13-digit ISBN numbers instead of the old 10-digit numbers. Library and Archives Canada has changed its numbering system, but will still be able to track publications using the old system.

The YNLC Publications Catalogue, listing all YNLC's publications, is available at our website [www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca). You can download a pdf version.



*Linda Harvey drumming the procession into the Yukon Arts Centre for Yukon College Graduation*



## Upcoming Events

The Yukon Native Language Centre and individual teachers are busy planning for the fall sessions. Please contact YNLC for updates on scheduling.

## How To Reach Us

If you would like more information on the Centre's programs, or would like to order our publications, please consult our website, [ynlc.ca](http://ynlc.ca), or contact us by:

- local telephone (867) 668-8820
- toll-free 1-877-414-9652
- fax at (867) 668-8825
- email at [info@ynlc.ca](mailto:info@ynlc.ca)
- mail at Yukon Native Language Centre,  
Yukon College, Box 2799,  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 5K4



*Southern Tutchone Elder Paddy Jim and grandson visiting YNLC*

## YNLC Training Sessions and Presentations

S. Tutchone In-Service	Classroom Literacy	Jan 10
Upper Tanana In-Service	Classroom Literacy	Jan 31-Feb 1
First Nations Programs & Partnerships	YNLC Presentation	Mar 22
N. Tutchone Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Mar 28-30
Certificate / Diploma Course	Teacher Training	Apr 16-20
Kaska In-Service	Classroom Literacy	Apr 26-27
S. Tutchone In-Service	Classroom Literacy	May 3-4
Yukon College Graduation	YNLC Participation	May 12
Yukon College Bachelor of Social Work program	YNLC Presentation	May 17
Arctic Council Research Development Workshop on Arctic Indigenous Languages, Ottawa, ON	YNLC Participation	June 18-20
CYFN Annual General Assembly, Burwash Landing	YNLC Participation and Materials Display	June 26-28



## Program Consultations

Whitehorse Elementary School	S. Tutchone Program	Jan 25
Little Salmon Carmacks FN	N. Tutchone Program	Feb 1
Tantalus School, Carmacks	N. Tutchone Program	Feb 2
Robert Service School, Dawson City	Hän Program	Feb 6-8
Jack Hulland Elementary, Whitehorse	S. Tutchone Program	Feb 15
Kluane Lake School, Destruction Bay	S. Tutchone Program	Feb 15
St Elias Community School, Haines Junction	S. Tutchone Program	Feb 16
Gùch Tlâ Community School, Carcross	Tlingit Program	Feb 17
Haines Junction Community Program	S. Tutchone Program	Feb 20-21
Teslin School	Tlingit Program	Feb 21
Teslin School	Tlingit Program	Mar 28
Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, Old Crow	Gwich'in Program	Apr 3-5
Ross River School	Kaska Program	May 1-2
Robert Service School, Dawson City	Hän Program	May 7-9
Gùch Tlâ Community School, Carcross	Tlingit Program	May 8
Whitehorse Elementary School	S. Tutchone Program	May 9
Hidden Valley School, Whitehorse	S. Tutchone Program	May 15
Hidden Valley School, Whitehorse	S. Tutchone Program	May 23



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

**COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS**

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