

Beehiiv Newsletter

Neek - The YNLC Newsletter

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Secret berry picking spot. Photo by Abi Billy-Freeman.

Word of the Season

It's low-bush cranberry season! How do you say 'low-bush cranberry' in all eight of the Yukon's First Nation Languages?

Tàgish – ɪtl'èt

Nee'aaneek – nihtl'ăt

Dän K'è – ńtl'ăt

Dän K'í – nintl'ăt

Łingit – itl'át

Gwich'in – natl'át

Denezǎgi – itl'ét

Hän – nëtl'át



Ye zhùr ch'ǎw yǎn? Ntl'át ch'e. What berry is this? This is a low-bush cranberry. (Dän K'è)

YNLC at the 2026 CYFN AGA



Top to bottom: Elder Alyce Johnson and Elder Lena Johnson looking at YNLC resources.

The YNLC team had a great week with Kluane First Nation for the CYFN General Assembly at Duke Meadow Jedäli T'läw Käy outside Burwash Landing.

Sharing language resources with the community helps support language revitalization.



Left to right: Abi Billy-Freeman and Nints'ia Murphy

Summer Language Drop-in Sessions

YNLC hosted Language Drop-in sessions in July including Łingít Language Coffee Time with Skaydu.û Autum Jules and Dän K'í Language Storytime with Natthits'än'ę Abi Billy-Freeman.

Language Drop-in sessions are opportunities to engage with language at a beginner-level in Łingít and Dän K'í.

Káaxwei hoon daakahídide nax̄too.aat! - Let's go to the coffee shop! (Łingít)

COFFEE BREAK KÁAXWEI ALSÁA



Káaxwei ax̱ x'ei yak'ei.
My mouth likes coffee.

Káaxwei yis̱ xat shaawakúx.
I am thirsty for coffee.

Káaxwei hoon daakahíididé na̱too.aat!
Let's go to the coffee shop!

Ax̱ káaxweyí een sakwnéin waḵkawóol
ax̱ tuwáa sigóo!
I like donuts with my coffee!

X'éigaa xat wudixwétl,
káaxwei eetéenáx̱ xat yatee!
I'm tired, I need coffee!



Created by Danielle Van Bibber and Leah Smarch

Dän K'í Intensive Language Program

YNLC is excited to announce the Dän K'í (Northern Tutchone) Intensive Language Program. The program is a multi-year program aimed at raising adult language speaking and comprehension proficiency in Dän K'í and strengthening cultural proficiency through hands-on, land-based language applications. This three-year program began on September 22, 2026 and runs to March 2029. Thirteen participants from the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations are now confirmed.

YNLC is pleased to share that Abi Billy-Freeman, a member of Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, is the Northern Tutchone - Dän K'í Program Coordinator/Teacher. The funding is provided through a grant from the Indigenous Languages Component (ILC), a sub-program under the broader Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage.



Left to right: Lauren McGinty, Azraella Oliverio, Abi Billy-Freeman, and Elder Alyce Joe scraping moose hide.

Dákeyi “Our Country” Interactive Place Names and Maps



Exciting news! The Dákeyi (Our Country) Athapaskan Language Course: Southern Tutchone Place Names, including a teaching guide, is now featured on the Government of Canada's website.

Dákeyi (Our Country) was originally published on CD in 1996, and was dedicated in memory of Mr. Sam Williams, Andatà - 1908-1996. Dákeyi is available on this website. *Dákeyi — "Our Country" Interactive Place Names and Maps*. Dákeyi (Our Country) was developed specifically to meet the needs of high school students and others studying Dän K'è language and culture. The CD, and new web format, allows text, sound, colour pictures, and even movies to be combined to present information in an interesting and effective way.

The ability to use sound is especially important. Students have diminishing opportunity to hear Dän K'è spoken. Dákeyi Teaching Guide features Dän K'è place names and the rich background stories on those place names from around the Whitehorse area through to North Kluane. The language teaching resource also includes audio files with pronunciations for the place names, stories and a song from Jessie Joe.

The Elder Consultants were Mr. Sam Williams, Mr. and Mrs. John Adamson, Ms. Stella Boss, Ms. Bessie Crow, Ms. Marge Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. Paddy Jim and Ms. Jessie Joe. Sound is by Margaret Workman and the classroom testing was done by Margaret Workman, Lorraine Allen and Pat Moore. We are grateful to have this amazing and wonderful language resource to help language teachers and learners today and tomorrow.

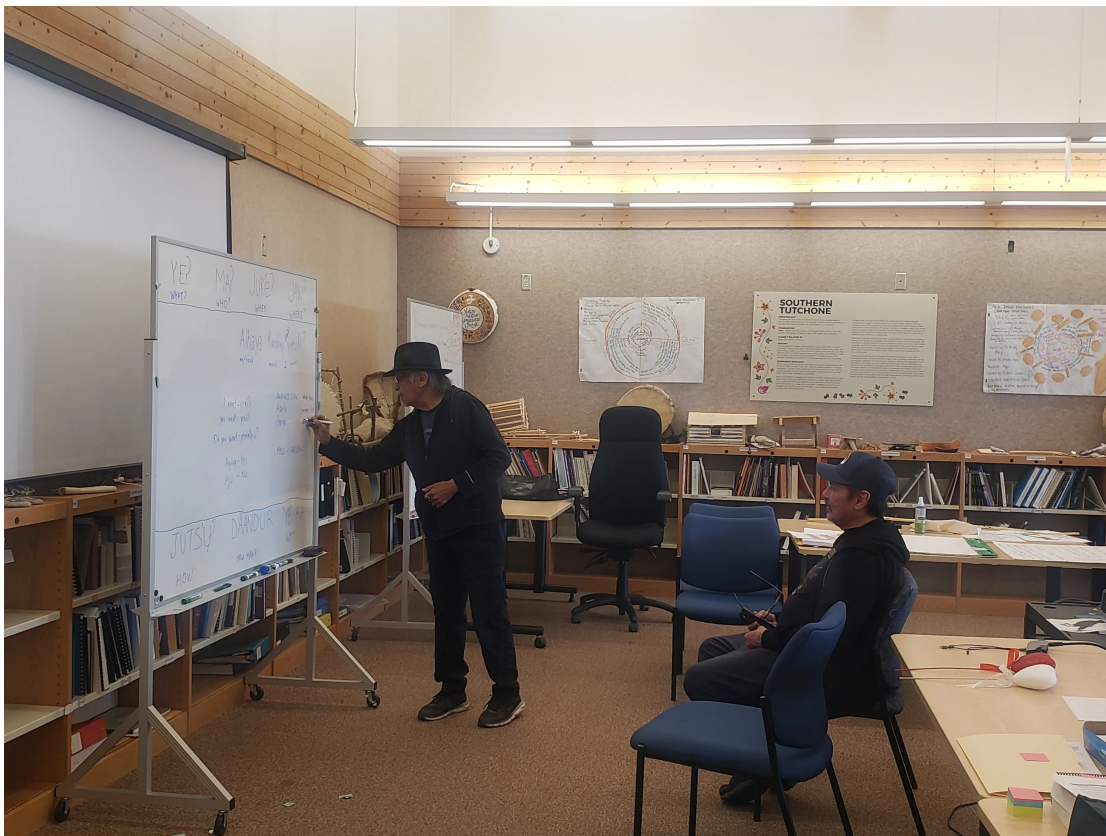


Elder Jessie Joe.



Elder Sam Williams.

Pilot Summer Teaching Institute



Left to right: Eddy Shorty and Ralph Blanchard participating in the YFN Language Institute.

YNLC partnered with Kwanlin Dün First Nation to pilot a five-week Yukon First Nation Language Teacher Institute to build capacity and inform the development of a Yukon First Nation Language Teacher Training Program. The pilot ran with a small cohort throughout the month of August with the hopes of having future institutes run in partnership with Yukon First Nations to support language teachers.

Over the course of the pilot summer teaching institute, students had the opportunity to learn about language revitalization history and developments; language acquisition and learning; using the draft Yukon First Nations Languages and Cultures Curriculum Framework; developing and delivering lessons using the framework; teaching methods, approaches and programs and language proficiency assessments.

Students received YNLC certificates for each of the six courses. The funding for this program is from the Future Generations Foundation, which distributes funding from the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement to support education, language revitalization, cultural learning and community healing.

Tḻ Ch'äw Sòthän Kíndän! -You Teach Really Good! (Dän K'è)



Left to right: Roxanne Jackson and Eddy Shorty participating in the YFN Language Institute



Left to right: Students - Eddy Shorty, Roxanne Jackson, and Ralph Blanchard. Instructor

- Janessa Tlen Missing: Student - Abi Billy-Freeman. Instructors - Kelsey Jaggard, Connie Jules, and Krista Dempster.

Robert Munsch Project

YNLC Manager of Language Training Programs, Kelsey Jaggard, spoke with CBC about an exciting project.

For generations, Robert Munsch stories have been a staple in Yukon households. Now, 20 of his beloved titles are being translated into Yukon First Nation languages.

Take a look at CBC's coverage to learn more about this important initiative.

[

www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.7222867

](https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.7222867?utm_source=neek.beehiiv.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=neek-the-ynlc-newsletter)



Clockwise from top left: Tlingit, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, and Northern Tutchone.

Once completed, complimentary copies will be provided to each Yukon First Nation, the translators and trainees, with the remainder to be used for language learning. The Munsch books are at an advanced level of language proficiency and will be used within

teaching and learning programs designed for this stage of language development, as well as for instilling a joy in hearing the stories told in the language. Once completed and printed, YNLC will collaborate with a group of advanced speakers and teachers to create accompanying teacher guides, along with a training session to support educators in using these new resources effectively.

At the outset, priority will be given to supporting Yukon First Nations language programs operating at the community level. While current publisher limitations have restricted the number of copies that can be produced, discussions will be held with the publishers to explore opportunities for increased print runs.

Funding for this initiative was originally provided through a grant from the Government of Yukon, Community Development Fund.

YNLC Staff Update

We welcomed Natthits'än'ę Abi Billy-Freeman and Brett Fillmore to the team!

Abi is our Northern Tutchone- Dän K'í Language Coordinator/Instructor. She is a citizen of Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and is from the Hänjet(Crow) Clan. Abi was one of five Northern Tutchone cohort graduates graduating with a certificate in language proficiency from Simon Fraser University this summer. She will be leading the Dän K'í Intensive Language Program this fall.

Brett is our new Curriculum and Resource Development Manager. Brett grew up in central Alberta and lived in Calgary for a large portion of his life. He moved to Whitehorse in the winter of 2021, and is excited to be part of the YNLC team. As Curriculum and Resource Manager at YNLC, he'll be involved in the Yukon First Nations Languages and Cultures Curriculum Framework project, working alongside the Language Technician Team to finalize the framework and begin supporting its implementation at the local level.

Brett's ancestry is primarily British, with Cree lineage connected to Mistawasis Nêhiyawak (Treaty 6) and Métis heritage. Although Indigenous family history was not a significant part of his upbringing, he has become increasingly interested in exploring this part of his background as he gets older.



Natthits'än'ę Abi Billy-Freeman



Brett Fillmore

Khàganê Connie Jules and Skaydu.û Autum Jules have moved on to new ventures.

Khàganê is now teaching Łlingit at F.H. Collins Secondary School.

Skaydu.û is dedicating herself to increasing her Łingit fluency and completing her Masters Degree.

We are forever grateful for the incredible work they did at YNLC and their commitment to language revitalization. We wish them all the best!

Contact Us



Roxanne Jackson participating in the YFN Language Institute.

If you have any questions or feedback, we'd be happy to hear from you.

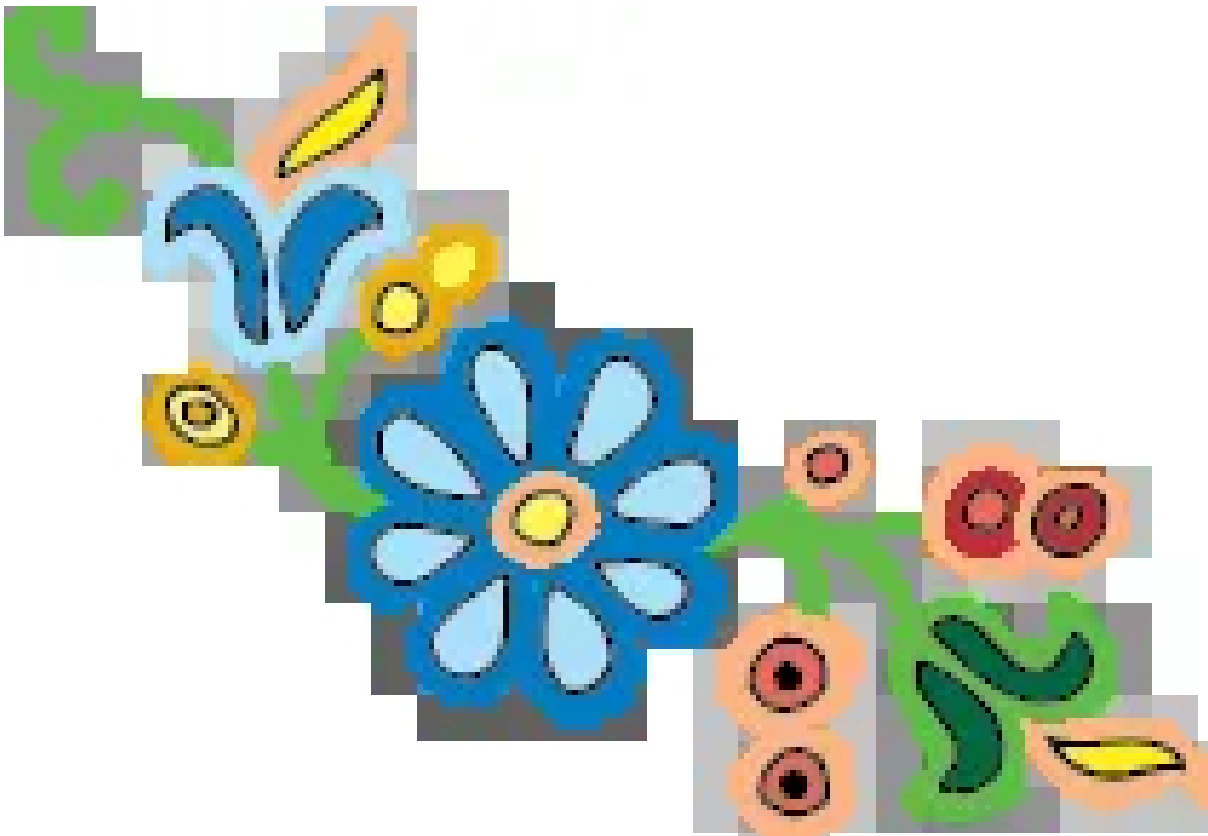
Email: [](/cdn-cgi/l/email-protection#046d6a626b447d6a68672a6765)

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Drop in for a visit!

Located in Yukon University (next to the library).

Visit our website www.ynlc.ca.



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