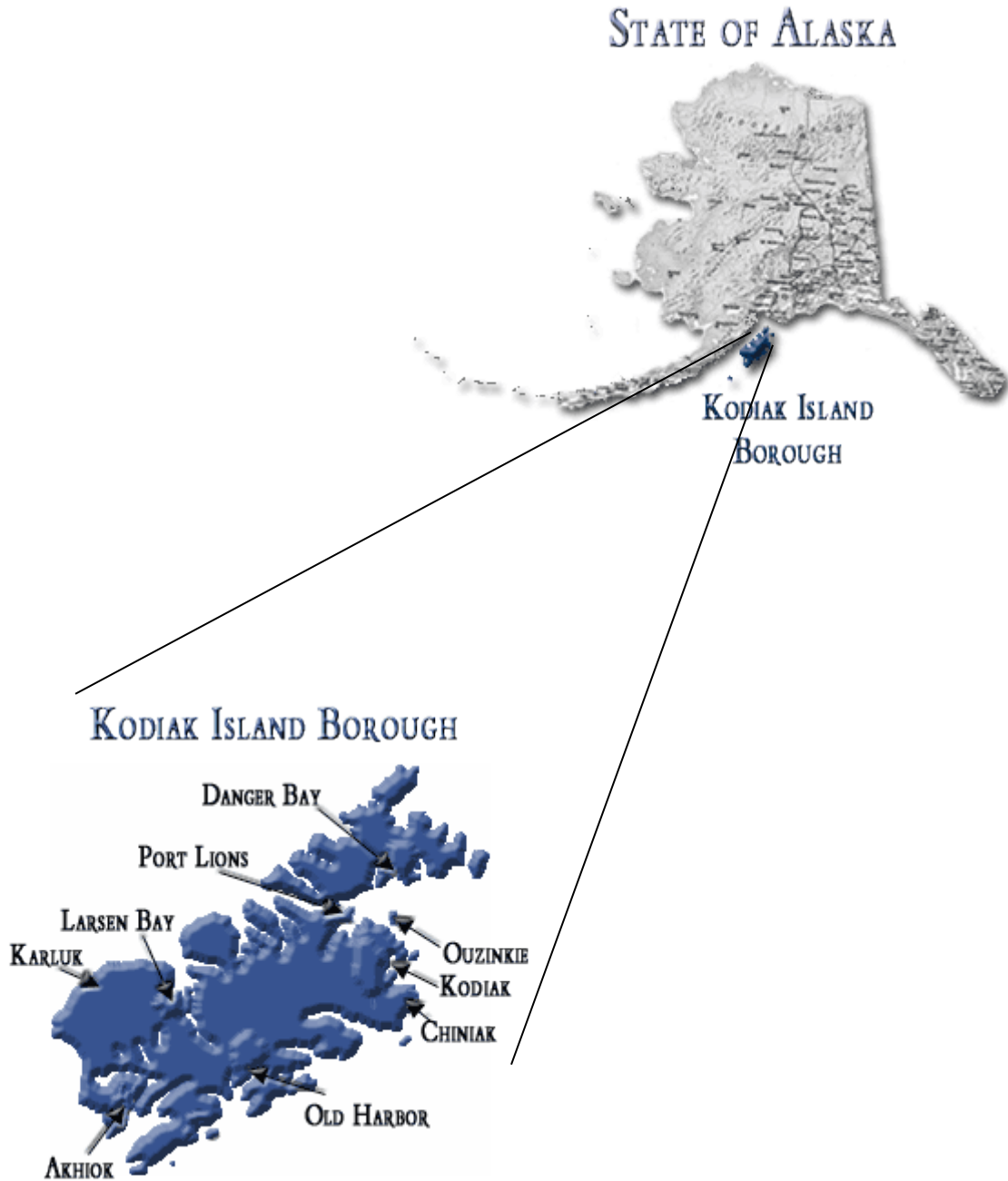


*Yugnet Ang'alluki:*  
**To Keep the Words**

**A Report on the Status, Strategies and Goals  
for the Revitalization of the Alutiiq Language**

Shauna Z Hegna  
December 12, 2004

# Kodiak Archipelago Map



Kodiak Island Borough School District. (n.d.). *State of Alaska and Kodiak Island Borough Maps*. Retrieved December 12, 2004, from the Kodiak Island Borough School District Web site: <http://www.kodiak.k12.ak.us/#>.

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# Introduction

*“Before I started teaching [Alutiiq] I just went to work everyday. I wasn’t happy because I didn’t do anything else. I thought, ‘Is this it? Is this all I’m going to do?’ Now I’m happy because I teach. It gives me something to look forward to.” Nick Alokli, Master*

This report examines the loss of Alutiiq language on Kodiak Island, evaluates current Kodiak Alutiiq language projects, surveys the communities’ attitudes about preserving and renewing Alutiiq, provides a synopsis of the language projects sponsored by other indigenous people, defines the development and implementation of the community based language project “Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit”, and outlines materials that will sustain language acquisition after the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project ends.

Over the course of ten months, as an Alutiiq Museum representative, I traveled to all six of the rural communities on Kodiak and Kodiak City where I conducted 36 presentations during Tribal Council and community meetings and sponsored 11 Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Planning Committee meetings. Over 800 people participated in the planning process. In addition, an Alutiiq Language Survey was developed and distributed in all seven communities on the Island. Of the 1,722 Alutiiq people living on Kodiak, 438 completed the survey, 25.4% of the total Kodiak Alutiiq population. In addition to collecting formal data concerning language loss and revitalization, I also held informal interviews and discussions with Alutiiq people across the Archipelago. Both the informal and formal data collected is included.

This report is a general overview of the rate of language loss within the Alutiiq region and communities on Kodiak. The report begins with a brief history of the erosion of the Alutiiq language from pre-contact to present. Next is a description of the benefits of saving traditional languages and bilingual education. Following, is a list of past and current Alutiiq language projects and successful programs sponsored by indigenous peoples’ across the world. An outline of the results from the Alutiiq Language Surveys is provided. Next is a list of the recommendations and strategies for language revitalization for the region, each community and the Alutiiq Museum. Lastly, this report describes the design of the three year Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Language Project and outlines materials that will sustain language acquisition after the project ends. The recommendations in this report are intended guide Tribal Councils, the Alutiiq Museum and other Alutiiq and educational organizations as they revitalize the Alutiiq language.

The following Tribal Councils and organizations formally adopted the recommendations and strategies for language revitalization for the communities they serve:

1. Alutiiq Museum & Archeological Repository
2. Akhiok Tribal Council
3. Kaguyak Tribal Council
4. Karluk IRA Traditional Council
5. Kodiak Tribal Council

6. Larsen Bay Tribal Council
7. Native Village of Afognak
8. Old Harbor Tribal Council
9. Ouzinkie Tribal Council
10. Port Lions Traditional Council
11. Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Planning Committee
12. Woody Island Tribal Council

# Alutiiq Language Loss and Value

*“In Alaska, where two generations ago there were some 23 native languages, only three are expected to survive the next decade, and only one is predicted to survive into the next generation.” – Krauss, 1992*

## Alutiiq Language Loss Pre-Contact to Present

The vast Alutiiq region stretches from Prince William Sound and the lower Kenai Peninsula to the Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak Archipelago. Linguistically similar to the Yup'ik of western Alaska and culturally similar to the Aleut, the maritime culture of the Aleutian Chain, the Alutiiq have inhabited the Kodiak Archipelago for well over 7,000 years.<sup>1</sup> Originally, the Alutiiq referred to themselves as Sugpiat (real people) however, as the Russians conquest of “untamed” lands and resources moved eastward, they did not distinguish between the Aleut of the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Unangan of the Aleutian Chain or the Sugpiat of the Kodiak Archipelago, referring to all groups as Aleut. Despite two hundred years and a cultural movement spanning two decades, this misnomer has stuck. Today, the indigenous people of the Aleutian Chain refer to themselves as both Unangan and Aleut whereas the indigenous people of the Alutiiq region refer to themselves as Alutiiq, Sugpiaq and Aleut, depending on personal preference. For the sake of this report, the author will use the term Alutiiq.

There are 10 federally recognized Alutiiq tribes in seven communities across the Archipelago (see Figure 1 for a map of the Kodiak Archipelago). Although there are thousands of Alutiiq people living outside of the Archipelago, the tribes provide various services to the 1722<sup>2</sup> Alutiiq people that reside in the Kodiak region.

The indigenous languages of Alaska's Native people are divided into two diverse “families” Esk-Aleut and Na Dene. The Alutiiq language or Alutiiq, is a member of the Esk-Aleut language family, and one of three Eskimoan languages spoken in Alaska (Inupiat, Yup'ik and Alutiiq). Dr. Michael Krauss, a leading linguist of Alaska's Native languages, states that “the split between Eskimo and Aleut is linguistically rather profound, the equivalent of at least 4,000 years of linguistic separation.”<sup>3</sup>

Within the greater Alutiiq region, there are two major Alutiiq sub-dialects - Kodiak Alutiiq, spoken in the Kodiak Archipelago and on the Alaska Peninsula, and Chugach Alutiiq, spoken in Prince William Sound and the lower Kenai Peninsula. The Kodiak Alutiiq dialect is further

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<sup>1</sup> Davis, Mary. *Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.

<sup>2</sup> As reported in the 2000 United States Census.

<sup>3</sup> Krauss, Michael. *Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present, and Future*. Alaska Native Language Center Research Papers, Number 4, Alaska Native Language Center, 1980.

divided by to two accents<sup>4</sup> which have variances in pronunciations and terms. The divisions in the Kodiak Alutiiq accents seem to follow traditional trade patterns and the barriers created by mountains (see figure 1). People of Ouzinkie, Port Lions, Larsen Bay, and Karluk speak with a Western accent while the people of Kodiak, Old Harbor and Akhiok speak with an Eastern accent.

Alutiiq was once the predominant language of Prince William Sound, the Kodiak Archipelago, and the Alaska Peninsula. Like many indigenous languages, the use of both dialects has declined dramatically since Western conquest. In order to best understand the profound effects that western contact had on Alaska's Indigenous people's and their languages, Linguist Michael Krauss divided the Russian (1741-1867) and the American (1867-present) periods into several shorter eras where he explains how changing governmental policies affected Alaska's Native languages.

The first Russian period identified by Krauss is 1745 to 1785. It was during this time that Russian promishleniki (fur traders), under no supervision from the Russian tsar, quickly decimated the Aleut and Sea Otter populations of the Aleutian Chain, reducing the Aleut population from roughly 16,000 to a mere 1,600.<sup>5</sup> After decades of battles and trade, in 1784 the promishleniki moved their commercial conquest eastward into Kodiak waters thereby initiating the erosion of the Kodiak Alutiiq dialect.

During the second Russian period (1785-1825), the treatment of Alaska's Native people "improved from outright atrocity and massacre to mere enslavement and exploitation".<sup>6</sup> In 1784, under the watchful eye of Grigorii Shelikov, the Russian-American Company developed the first permanent settlement in Kodiak at Three-Saints Bay, near the present day village of Old Harbor.<sup>7</sup> Although the Russian-American Company was monitored by the Tsar, Alutiiq people systematically lost their political sovereignty, faced chronic starvation, were devastated by epidemics brought by their western counterparts, and witnessed as their population quickly declined from approximately 10,000 spread across 65 villages to "a handful of villages in less than a hundred years".<sup>8</sup>

Krauss states that the "third Russian period in Alaska [1825-1865] was not only more beneficial in the history of Alaska Native languages and cultures than the earlier Russian periods, but also

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<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this report, the linguistic variances that are apparent within the Kodiak sub-dialect of the Alutiiq language (noticeable between villages and trade routes) will be referred to as "accents". Similar to the variances in pronunciation between individuals from the Northwest and Midwest United States, people in Kodiak Alutiiq villages speak the same language and can understand each other but often pronounce words differently (i.e. similar to "wash" verses "warsh" in English) or use different words for the same object (i.e. "sub sandwich" verses "Hoggie" in English). Whether these variances can be referred to as "accents" in the truest linguistic sense of the word, should be left to qualified linguists. However, for the purposes of this report and in the interest of time, the author will refer to these variances as "accents".

<sup>5</sup> Krauss, Michael. *Alaska Native Languages Past, Present and Future*, 1980. pp 14.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp 14.

<sup>7</sup> Davis, Mary. *Alutiiq*. Native America in the Twentieth Century, An Encyclopedia. Garland Publishing, Inc. New York, 1994. pp30.

<sup>8</sup> Dawson, Ruth Alice. *Bridging Traditions and Science*. Looking Both Ways: Heritage, Identity and of the Alutiiq People. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks. 2001. pp 89.

more beneficial than any of the following American periods.”<sup>9</sup> It was during this time that Russian Orthodox Priests, in an effort to gain more converts, began to work closely with Alaska’s indigenous people to translate various biblical texts into Native languages. In 1847 and 1848 Tyzhnov, Zyrianov and Uchilishchev, translated and published a catechism, a primer and the book of Matthew in Alutiiq.<sup>10</sup> Despite the loss of political sovereignty and a huge portion of the Alutiiq population during Russian reign of Kodiak, for the first time the Alutiiq language was preserved and shared in the written form.

In 1867 the United States purchased the occupational rights of Alaska from Russia. For twenty years, as the United States government was trying to figure out what to do with the frozen wasteland, Alaska Native languages enjoyed a period of peace. However, by the second period of American rule (1887-1910) indigenous languages would be known as a cancer on the Last Frontier and the American educational system would wage war on their very existence.

Sheldon Jackson, Alaska’s first Commissioner of Education, “epitomized the Victorian-era American educational and social philosophy of the ‘melting pot’ wherein all the diverse nationalities in American society were to assimilate into the Anglo-Saxon Protestant American Ideal”.<sup>11</sup> Only through complete spiritual and cultural conversion could Indians, and therefore Alaska Natives, hope to successfully survive in American society. By 1910, the Bureau of Education administered most schools within Alaska and upheld Jackson’s educational philosophy – Native languages were completely forbidden to be spoken in schools and their use at home was frowned upon.<sup>12</sup> Alutiiq students, who usually spoke Alutiiq at home and Russian in church, now had to learn English. Many of the villagers quickly became trilingual.

The third American era (1910-1960) wrought the most damage on Alaska Native languages. Administration of schools was transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs which continued to enforce the English Only education policy. Dozens of boarding schools dotted the Alaskan landscape, further devastating indigenous languages since students were pulled from their homes and completely immersed in American culture. Through physical and psychological punishment, children were shamed into abandoning their Native language and culture. Many indigenous languages would not recover from this period, being lost forever. Elders have shared emotional stories of growing up in Western society where the color of one’s skin dictated your rights and privileges. Some people still suffer from resentment and guilt associated with the use of the Alutiiq language. They speak of being ashamed of the color of their skin, the sounds of their voices, and their use of Alutiiq instead of English.

It was not until the civil rights movement of the 1960-1970’s that people began to recognize the value of multi-cultural diversity and other languages. Linguists again began to preserve Alaska’s Native languages through oral history recordings, orthographies and literature. In 1967 the Federal Bilingual Education Act was passed, permitting schools to utilize bilingual education in schools where children’s primary language was not English.<sup>13</sup> Krauss is quick to point out that

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<sup>9</sup> Krauss, Michael. *Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present and Future*. pp 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, pp 15.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp 22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, pp 28.



the act *permitted* but did not *require* bilingual education. BIA soon began experimental bilingual education programs in various regions in the state, but did not attempt to work with the Kodiak Alutiiq population. Despite the passage of two bills to develop bilingual education in Alaska, the use of Kodiak Alutiiq continued to decline.

The passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971 enabled Alaska Native's to realized their political power for the first time.<sup>14</sup> Empowered by their newfound political strength, many Alaska Native groups began to search their cultural histories, seeking pride in who they are as Native people. The first official actions supporting the statewide Native cultural movement in Kodiak occurred in 1984 when the Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) began developing and implementing activities and programs that encouraged people to learn and celebrate Alutiiq culture.<sup>15</sup> Over the last twenty years and through several cultural programs, the Kodiak Alutiiq people have begun to reclaim their cultural heritage (see the following past programs and projects for additional information).

In spite of the efforts of the Alutiiq cultural movement there has been an astronomical rate of language loss throughout the Alutiiq region. In 1982, the Alaska Native Language Center conducted a survey which identified 900 fluent Alutiiq speakers.<sup>16</sup> Twelve years later, the Alaska Native Language Center conducted the same survey and found only 450 speakers.<sup>17</sup> The rest had died. Of these 450 speakers, the majority lived in Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet and on the Alaska Peninsula – remote areas less influenced by Western culture.

Today, only Elders speak the Kodiak Alutiiq language. Generally, adults above child bearing age (approximately 40-60 years) can understand most or some of the language and can speak some words or phrases. Adults of childbearing age (approximately 19-39) and their children do not understand the language and can only speak a few words, such as, “hello”, “thank you”, “tea”, if any at all. School age children (approximately 5-18), generally, have a larger vocabulary than their adult parents and siblings, a result of the recent cultural resurgence that has begun in the Kodiak area and the many small Alutiiq language projects that were implemented in the last decade. All in all, less than one percent (.03%) of Alutiiq people fluently speak their language. The average age of fluent speakers is 72 years. If the trend continues, by 2015 there will be no more fluent Kodiak Alutiiq speakers.

Currently, there are less than 45 known fluent Alutiiq speakers in the Kodiak Archipelago (see the survey results section of this report), less than a quarter of those identified two decades ago. The majority of Alutiiq speakers only talk with other speakers in their homes and at senior centers where they enjoy comfortable, safe interactions without the threat of ridicule. Likewise, most speakers have not taught their children the language because of the stigma associated with being Native in Western society. Over the last decade, the Alutiiq Museum, the Kodiak Area

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<sup>14</sup> Mitchell, Donald Craig. *Take My Land, Take My Life: The Story of Congress's Historic Settlement of Alaska Native Land Claims, 1960-1971*. University of Alaska Press: Fairbanks. Pp 10.

<sup>15</sup> Pullar, Gordon. *Ethnic Identity, Cultural Pride, and Generations of Baggage: A Personal Experience*. Arctic Anthropology, Vol. 29., No. 2, 1992. pp 182.

<sup>16</sup> Krauss, M., *Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska Map*, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1982.

<sup>17</sup> Krauss, Michael. *Crossroads of the Continents*. Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1982.

Native Association and numerous tribal councils, have encouraged Alutiiq people to speak Alutiiq, participate in cultural activities and learn from Elders. Through these efforts, many Alutiiq speakers have shared language and cultural practices with school children. Additionally, Alutiiq people have increased the use of the language in community and ceremonial activities. However, the number of fluent Alutiiq speakers is not growing.

To investigate the status of the Alutiiq language, and assist with its revitalization, while working as the Alutiiq Language Coordinator for the Alutiiq Museum, I conducted a comprehensive Alutiiq Language Survey. The results of this project are summarized later in the report.

## **The Value of Saving Alutiiq**

Over the last thirty years, education specialists, tribal people, linguists and private researchers have conducted extensive research on the benefits of bilingual education, and for the purposes of this report, the value of teaching “heritage languages” or the indigenous language of the community, to children. The educational and professional advantages to bilingualism and multicultural knowledge are great. Fluency in two languages is associated with: higher test scores on standardized tests; improved understanding of and respect for different cultures; superior cognitive development; greater tolerance and appreciation of different cultures; and personal and economic advantages.<sup>18</sup>

Bilingualism, the ability to fluently speak two languages, “...is associated with more cognitive flexibility, stronger awareness, and mastery of literacy”.<sup>19</sup> Children and adults that can fluently speak more than one language demonstrate: 1) higher levels of performance on achievement tests;<sup>20</sup> 2) greater mental flexibility and superior concept formation;<sup>21</sup> 3) increased divergent thinking, pattern recognition and problem solving;<sup>22</sup> 4) higher salaries and increased employment opportunities;<sup>23</sup> and 5) less cultural stereotyping and have more favorable attitudes towards “minority languages” and their cultures.<sup>24</sup>

Although it is widely accepted by the scientific community that bilingualism is a valued trait, preserving and revitalizing an Indigenous language is a difficult prospect to many educators and Native people. During my recent travels to the seven communities on Kodiak Island I often heard local teachers and principals explain why they do not teach Alutiiq in the schools. Their excuses ranged from “the community doesn’t want it taught” to “nobody speaks it anymore”. I found these excuses odd since I had just conducted an Alutiiq language survey which demonstrated two very important points, 1) six of the seven communities on the Island are home to at least one fluent Alutiiq speaker and many more people that speak some and understand all of the language, and 2) 93 percent of Kodiak Alutiiq people strongly agree that the community should teach the

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<sup>18</sup> Kodiak Island Borough School District, *World Language Curriculum*, adopted May 1999

<sup>19</sup> Lindholm-leary, *Dual Language Education*, 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Lambert, *Bilingual Education for Majority English-Speaking Children*, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> Lanbert, *Bilingual Education for Majority English-Speaking Children*, 1993.

<sup>22</sup> Cloud, *Dual Language Instruction: A Handbook for Enriched Education*, 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Cloud, *Dual Language Instruction: A Handbook for Enriched Education*, 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Litcher, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1969.

Alutiiq language. Some teachers explained that they tried to incorporate Alutiiq language in their classrooms but that they were the “only person in the class” interested in learning Alutiiq and that their students “didn’t care about the language”. I was again amazed by these statements since annually Dig Afognak and KANA Summer Camps incorporate Alutiiq language instruction and they are usually overflowing with students interested in participating. Krauss explains that many educators think that the community does not want bilingual education when in reality the parents may not understand what bilingual education means or that it is available.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, Krauss states that many educators may sincerely believe that it is impossible to speak two languages well which he explains as “absolute nonsense”.<sup>26</sup> Some educator’s lack of support for Native languages could also be attributed to the fact that teachers are notoriously overworked, underpaid, and, with the recent passage of the No Child Left Behind Law, held accountable for the successes and failures of their students. Perhaps they believe that their students will not succeed in school if they are taught through the media of their language and cultural traditions. On the contrary, “children who are educated with a multicultural curriculum, especially one that meaningfully includes their *own heritage and language*, have stronger self-esteem with more tolerance for, and more interest in, other cultures”.<sup>27</sup>

Although a majority of Alutiiq people support the revitalization of their language, there are still those that do not support language instruction. For over a century the Alutiiq were told that their language and culture were bad and that it would “hold them back”. During a recent community meeting, an Elder woman shared her story of her Alutiiq identity with others.

“When I was young my mother hid the fact that she spoke Alutiiq and never told us much about our family or our identity. My father, a non-Native, told us that we were ‘white’ because otherwise we would get less status and benefits within the community. I didn’t understand what he meant. When I was older and I was married my husband forbade me, with threats of divorce, if I registered with a Native corporation because he said that he would not be married to a ‘Native’. My mother, thankfully, registered me. It was not until later, when I was no longer under the control of my father or husband, that I learned who I am and where I came from. You have to understand that the times were different then. Woman had no rights, Natives had less.”

Language is engrained in who we are as a people. It is how we best describe our environment and our place within it. Our language links all of our being – mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual – together and to the world around us. It is only in the last decade that Alutiiq people have begun to reawaken this link to their world. They have become aware and proud of who they are, their traditions, history, struggles, victories, and future. They are taking control of their future by promoting, passing on and sharing their heritage and language.

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<sup>25</sup> Krauss, Michael. *Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present and Future*. pp 77.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pp 77.

<sup>27</sup> Derman-Sparks, *Challenging Diversity With Anti-Bias Curriculum*, 1989.

# Past and Current Alutiiq Language Projects

*“Learning your indigenous language is not just translation from English, it also means learning your way of life.” – unknown*

Following KANA’s 1984 decision to implement activities and programs that would foster appreciation and pride in Alutiiq culture, Kodiak became a flurry of cultural programming. In the past twenty years, a variety of Kodiak organizations have implemented programs designed to address the impending extinction of the Kodiak Alutiiq language. Each of these programs has benefited the Alutiiq people by strengthening cultural identity and knowledge. However, none has successfully reversed language loss, and the continuing programs will not be able to meaningfully assist with language revitalization unless they are paired with a larger program. Below are brief descriptions of the major past and current Alutiiq language projects and programs. Please keep in mind that it would difficult and cumbersome, if not impossible, to report on every Alutiiq language project and program.

Dr. Gordon Pullar, a former KANA President, explains that “the first formal activity of the Kodiak Island Alutiiq movement was the participation by local Native youth...in an archaeological project in the village of Karluk in 1984.”<sup>1</sup> Archaeologist Richard Jordan agreed to oversee the Native youth as well as make presentations in various villages explaining the projects findings.<sup>2</sup> The initial project was a success, resulting in annual archaeological activities combining the need for scientific research and local people’s interest in their cultural traditions.<sup>3</sup> In 1993 Afognak Native Corporation (ANC) addressed their shareholders need for cultural programming and their corporations monetary objectives by developing Dig Afognak.

Dig Afognak, located near the old village of Afognak, employed archeologists and Native shareholders. Tourists from across the world gathered at Dig Afognak to assist in excavation, participate in nightly lectures and enjoy the Kodiak outdoors. ANC included a Shareholders week where shareholders and their family members could visit the camp free of charge. Although Dig Afognak proved to be an invaluable cultural resource for ANC Shareholders and their descendants, it did not provide the monetary base the corporation needed to keep it up-and-running. In 1998, Afognak Native Corporation transferred all of the assets and name rights for Dig Afognak to a local Tribal Council, the Native Village of Afognak. ANC also established a five year land use lease agreement with the Native Village of Afognak for the Dig Afognak site and surrounding area.

Since 2000, the Native Village of Afognak has sponsored Lu’macirpet Camp, a summer culture camp that immerses Alutiiq you in “oral traditions, Alutiiq dance and language”.<sup>4</sup> Youth ages 10

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<sup>1</sup> Pullar, Gordon. *Ethnic Identity, Cultural Pride, and Generations of Baggage: A Personal Experience*. Arctic Anthropology. Vol 29, No 2. 1992. pp 183.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp 183.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp 183.

<sup>4</sup> Dig Afognak. Native Village of Afognak website. <http://afognak.org/dig-schedule.php>. 9/9/2004

to 18 join Elders and culture-bearers for an exploration of Alutiiq culture. Approximately 33 people participate each summer. Alutiiq language is integrated into the daily activities of the camp which teaches Alutiiq dance and song techniques. These camps are an excellent venue for language dissemination.

Since 1998, the Native Village of Afognak also has sponsored one-week Alutiiq Elders camps. Ten to fifteen Elders participate from across the Archipelago. Dr. Jeff Leer, a linguist that is fluent in Alutiiq, often joins the camp to interview Elders and record their memories. The Elders have shared Alutiiq place names of areas around Afognak and memories of the historic village of Afognak. Elders talk, in a relaxed setting, with Dr. Jeff Leer about the nuances of the Alutiiq language. The oral history tapes are currently stored at the Alaska Native Language Center in Fairbanks, Alaska. In 2004 the camp was expanded to join Elders and adults (30 years and older) in a cross-generational exchange.<sup>5</sup>

In 1998, the Kodiak Island Borough School District began one-week Academy of Elders/Science Camps. Up to 66 students, ages 10 - 18, Elders and teachers come together to work on science projects that blend traditional Native knowledge and Western science. The Elders teach Alutiiq language vocabulary relevant to the projects. Students work on their projects throughout the following school year and enter them in the Regional Rural Science Fair.

The Native Village of Afognak developed two new camps in the 2004 season. The Afognak People's Gathering camp is a one-week camp for people that grew up in the old village of Afognak and their descendants. Entire families are welcome to participate in traditional and modern activities as well as assist in an archaeological dig site.<sup>6</sup> Red Cedar Camp also premiered in 2004. Here youth "gain an understanding of Alutiiq culture and Afognak history, and come to understand the role of the environment in the culture."<sup>7</sup> The camp is open to youth in grades 4 through 7.

Dig Afognak camps are not the only summer camps provided for youth. Beginning in 1996, the Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) developed week-long, annual summer Spirit Camps. Modeled after other Alaska Native spirit camps, this program has been quite successful in instilling pride in Alutiiq youth. Approximately 100 youth, age 8 to 18, from across the Kodiak region, come together to explore cultural issues and participate in heritage activities.<sup>8</sup> They also learn and practice Alutiiq vocabulary throughout the course of the week. Camp activities include: making crafts, gathering food, telling stories, and creating tools. Counselors also use talking circles to make presentations about drug and alcohol use, family planning, water safety, and first aid. The camps are an excellent venue for language transmission.

There are several Alutiiq language resources available to the Kodiak Alutiiq community through scholarly studies conducted by the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Fairbanks. Dr. Jeff Leer, a linguist fluent in the Alutiiq language, published an Alutiiq dictionary and orthography (1978), as well as a grammar guidebook (1990). Since the first publication, he has

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> 1998 Spirit Camp Brings Native Culture to Alutiiq Youth. [www.codetalk.fed.us/planet/spirit.html](http://www.codetalk.fed.us/planet/spirit.html).

further revised the orthography and greatly expanded the dictionary. The Alaska Native Language Center is updating the 25-year-old dictionary, with assistance from the Alutiiq Museum. The new dictionary will be three times the size of the existing publication. The projected date of completion is 2006.

In 1990, Philomena Haulser-Knecht began working with local Alutiiq elders, learning their traditional language. Through her work, Philomena developed several language learning resources including curriculum that focused on nouns and conversational phrases. In 1990, the Shoonaq' Tribe of Kodiak partnered with the Kodiak Area Native Association, Department of Education Tribal Pilot Program (the precursor of the Alutiiq Museum) and implemented high school-level basic Alutiiq language classes where they could utilize Philomena's curriculum. The course was videoed for distribution as a multi-media learning tape. Unfortunately, the class, which was taught in lecture style, was not successful in fostering fluent speakers. Similarly, the video did not increase fluency, as it also lacked the hands-on immersion approach that best facilitates indigenous language acquisition.

In 1993, Philomena Haulser-Knecht, through a National Park Service Tribal Preservation, produced a Hypercard lesson and lesson plans in the Alutiiq language. The program was produced in conjunction with Port Graham and was never completed or released, and is therefore inaccessible to the public.

Since they opened their doors in 1995, the Alutiiq Museum has been active in the language revitalization effort, developing useful materials and resources for educators and learners. One of the most publicized programs the Museum has sponsored is the Alutiiq Word of the Week. In their sixth season, this program features an Alutiiq word and sentence paired with a short cultural lesson. The lessons are aired three times weekly on KMXT Public Radio (listening audience 12,000) and printed each Friday in the Kodiak Daily Mirror (circulation 3,400). Lessons are also added to the Museum's web site, distributed widely through fax and email broadcasts, and posted at community organizations. The Alutiiq Museum has published a collection of lessons, sold through the Museum store, and added an audio version of the program to their interactive computer kiosk. In 2000, this program received the National Award for Museum Service, an honor bestowed by the Federal Institute for Museum and Library Service and presented by the First Lady, Hillary Clinton. While valuable in promoting our culture and language, the Alutiiq Word of the Week is not designed to increase language fluency, but to increase language familiarity.

The Alutiiq Museum recently added Alutiiq Language Educational Boxes to its set of teacher resources. These boxes contain vocabulary flash cards, an alphabet lesson on overheads, language videos and workbooks, a board game in Alutiiq, a language learning doll (with velcro labels featuring Alutiiq words for different parts of the anatomy), and more. The boxes are available for loan to educators and communities. In addition, in response to enormous public demand for information on Alutiiq heritage, the Museum developed a set of free educational handouts. These handouts were compiled into an affordable, 40 page booklet called Alutiiq Traditions. The booklet includes a two-page handout on the Alutiiq language that discusses its structure, history and revitalization. Many of the other handouts also feature Alutiiq vocabulary.

Under the guidance of fluent speakers, the Alutiiq Museum also developed and produced the Sharing Words Project. Educational materials were created to assist adults and children in learning the Alutiiq language. These include an alphabet poster, a set of interactive electronic media (audio enhanced CD ROM, web page, and computer kiosk), a pair of educational boxes for loan to educators, and a Museum display. 300 copies of the Alutiiq alphabet poster and an interactive CD ROM (complete with an introduction to the Alutiiq language and 250 lessons from the Museum's popular *Alutiiq Word of the Week*) were distributed, free of charge, to all of the schools, educational organizations, libraries, and Native organizations in the Kodiak archipelago as well as all of the public libraries in the Alutiiq nation and the State of Alaska library system. The CD ROM contents was loaded onto the Museum's interactive computer kiosk for use by gallery patrons, and added to the Museum's website. The alphabet poster was mounted and displayed in the Museum's gallery with photos of Alutiiq speakers. This permanent display was placed by the computer kiosk featuring the interactive language lessons.

The Alutiiq Museum, in partnership with the University of Alaska Anchorage, is also developing an interactive Alutiiq Language Website. Included in the website is a map of Kodiak Island with buttons explaining the word variances or "accents" present on the Island, an opposites page where users can click on clip art and hear fluent Alutiiq speakers pronounce the object in Alutiiq, several pages dedicated to Kodiak villages, wildlife, and the weather (an integral component in Alutiiq culture), and a page with common words and phrases. The website project is due to be completed in 2005.

Lastly, the Museum recently secured a grant from the Endangered Language Fund to develop an Alutiiq language phrasebook. Accompanied by an audio CD, this book will contain hundreds of common words and phrases in the Alutiiq language. Language learners will be able to read the book while listening to a fluent Elder speaker recite common words and phrases. The Museum is currently seeking additional funds to pay for the production of the book and audio CD.

The Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region (NEAR) was founded through a partnership between the Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD), Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) and the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (ARSI). Primarily, NEAR pairs Alutiiq Elders and educators as they work to develop place-based curriculum and materials for the Kodiak region. Through these efforts, NEAR has produced indigenous plants and Alutiiq values posters. They have contributed to a CD ROM project through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN) recording geographic place names within the Kodiak Archipelago in Alutiiq. The educators association developed thematic curriculum units grounded in both Alaska State Content and Culturally Responsive Schools Standards. Currently, they are developing three units on edible plants, driftwood and sea lions. The Alutiiq language is integrated throughout these units. Politically, the group has been active in exploring solutions to issues concerning Alaska Native teachers, students and the status of the Alutiiq language.

The Native Village of Afognak, has been working closely with local Elders to develop a comprehensive map of the Kodiak Archipelago that identifies the names of geographical places and features that are integral to the traditional life ways of Kodiak's Alutiiq people. Although this map contain information on the entire Archipelago, it specifically addresses place and features close to Afognak Village and boasts the names for sites in the Afognak sub-dialect.

When complete, this map will assist Apprentices and children in learning the traditional names of places and features as well as pinpoint their importance in Alutiiq society.

In the early 1990's, schools throughout the Kodiak Archipelago began implementing an "Alutiiq Cultural Day" to provide students and teachers with the opportunity to explore Native heritage. These very popular events grew into "Alutiiq Cultural Week." During this special week, classes are dedicated to local place-based educational endeavors, apart from the normal academic day. Classes have included cold weather survival; subsistence gathering; local foods preservation and preparation; and craft classes, such as beading, basket weaving and carving. These hands-on classes are culturally significant and seek to unite the community, drawing heavily on family and volunteer Elder participation. Alutiiq vocabulary is integrated into the context of each activity. Participants range from kindergarteners to Elders and include people from all areas of the Archipelago. Alutiiq Week programs have greatly increased awareness of Alutiiq culture and the number of commonly used Alutiiq words. Alutiiq youth have also gained increased pride in their identity through understanding and sharing of their culture. While this program is an excellent supplement to the schools, one week of limited language training per year is not sufficient to building sustainable language acquisition.

In 1999, KANA, Native Village of Afognak and NEAR began working together to explore the possibility of implementing an immersion project in Alutiiq. The Kodiak Archipelago Apprenticeship Project was advertised through brochures and distributed to Elders. In an attempt to raise funds for the project, the Native Village of Afognak, in 2001, submitted an unsuccessful ANA Language Implementation Grant. In 2002 the Alutiiq Museum secured funding to hire an Alutiiq Language Coordinator dedicated to planning an Island-wide Alutiiq Language project. I took the position and spent a year-and-a-half working with Alutiiq and educational organizations planning a language program. In 2004 we successfully received funding for the three-year Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project. Based on the Master-Apprentice model and scheduled to begin in October 2004, this project will pair five fluent Elder speakers with ten adult Apprentices for ten hours a week. Through complete immersion, adults will learn Alutiiq and then pass their knowledge onto the next generation (for in-depth information see the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project section of this report).



# Other Indigenous Language Programs

*“...the loss of language is part of the loss of whole cultures and knowledge systems, including philosophical systems, oral literacy and musical traditions, environmental knowledge systems, medical knowledge, and important cultural practices and artistic skills.” – Leanne Hinton, *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, 2001*

Of the 187 Indigenous languages in the United States and Canada, 149 are no longer being learned by children.<sup>1</sup> There are hundreds of tribes, universities and linguists working to preserve and reawaken these sleeping languages. Below is a small sampling of the language programs utilized by tribal and educational organizations around the world.

The Alaska Native Language Center was established in 1972 to document and cultivate Alaska’s 20 indigenous languages. In the United States, the ANLC is recognized as the primary organization dedicated to the study of Eskimo and Northern Athabaskan languages. The center has published many of the dictionaries, articles and other resources regarding Alaska’s indigenous languages. It houses more than 10,000 items, most of them relating to Alaska Native languages. The ANLC is home to more than 500 documents and video and audio recordings pertaining to the Alutiiq language. In 2003, the Alutiiq Museum sent a staff member to review and create a comprehensive catalog on the Alutiiq language materials available at the center. The catalog is available at the Alaska Native Language Center, Alutiiq Museum and the ten tribal councils in the Kodiak area.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks sponsors many certificate and degrees for the Yup’ik language, including: certificate and Associates of Applied Science degree in Native Language Education, certificate and Associates degree in Yup’ik language proficiency, and a Type A Teachers Endorsement in Yup’ik. The University is currently developing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Yup’ik Language Education. Graduates of the Bachelor of Arts can apply for admission into the University’s Master of Education program. Students can focus their Master’s degree on teaching Yup’ik to a variety of age ranges or developing Yup’ik curriculum. The fundamental goal of the University of Alaska is to offer the courses and degree programs through their rural campus in Bethel, thereby, ensuring that local people can easily utilize the programs.

It is estimated that there are only 15 fluent speakers of Deg Xinag, the language of the Deg Hit’an, a small band of Athabaskan’s near the Athabaskan/Yup’ik boarder. The McGrath Center, through the University of Alaska Fairbanks, hosts a weekly course taught via teleconference where students learn about Deg Hit’an culture and history, through the medium of the Deg Xinag language, from several fluent Elders. The classes begin with students practicing how to introduce themselves in Deg Xinag. Introductions are followed by Elders sharing news with each other, telling stories and conversing solely in their language. The students are then allowed to ask the Elders question about their conversation, culture, history and language. Lastly, students are able

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<sup>1</sup> Hale, Kenneth, Krauss, Michael, et al. 1992. Endangered languages. *Language* 68(1):1-42. As quoted in Hinton, Leanne. *Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages*. Heyday books, Berkely, California. Pp. 221.

to present words and phrases that they would like to learn. The instructor records each session to save them for future students.

In 1997, the Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico, held a two-week summer language immersion camp where teams of fluent speakers immersed youth in the Acoma language. The following year the program was expanded. Over a six-week period, twelve Acoma speakers taught 90 youth, preschool through twelfth grade, the Acoma language and culture.

In 1992, recognizing the rapid extinction of the over 100 languages in their state, the Native California Network developed the Master-Apprentice Program Model. The Master-Apprentice Program pairs a fluent speaker (Master) with an adult (Apprentice) interested in learning the language. They spend 10 to 20 hours per week in complete immersion, speaking nothing but their indigenous language. Utilizing Total Physical Response (TPR), the Master conveys ideas through exaggerated gestures and actions. The five principals of the Master-Apprentice Model defined by Leanne Hinton in “The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice” (2001):

- 1) No English is allowed: the Master speaker must try to use his language at all times; the Apprentice must use the language to ask questions or respond to the Master (even if he or she can only say “I don’t understand”).
- 2) The Apprentice must be at least as active as the Master in deciding what is to be learned and in keeping communication going in the language.
- 3) The primary mode of transmission and learning is always oral, not written.
- 4) Learning takes place primarily in real-life situations, such as cooking, washing clothes, gardening, taking walks, doing crafts, going to traditional ceremonies, and so on.
- 5) The activities itself, along with other forms of nonverbal communication, will provide the context in which the language can be understood by the beginning learner.<sup>2</sup>

In the last seven years, the Advocate for Indigenous California Languages have worked to ensure that 65 language teams from various Californian tribes have completed the Master-Apprentice program. Applications from interested individuals are accepted from established Master-Apprentice teams – Masters and Apprentices must find each other before applying for the program. Masters are selected based on fluency and Apprentices, based on a demonstrated history of language learning. Teams are allowed to reapply for a total of three years. Repeat applicants are also assessed on their history of completing the necessary hours in previous years. The teams participate in training sessions to teach them how to maintain immersion. Teams are required to spend 360 hours in immersion. Some teams work intensively together for three to four months while others choose to spread their learning over a longer period. Along with learning their language, Apprentices are required to record their lessons to aid in their learning process and preserve the cultural knowledge of the Elders for future generations.

Students at the University of Alaska Fairbanks can enroll in Alaska Native Languages 401 or 402: Alaska Native Elder Apprenticeship (3 credits). Through this course, students are paired with a fluent speakers of their language. The student and speaker participant in regular training sessions with a faculty member. Over the course of a year, students must meet at least 10 hours a week with the speaker, maintaining complete immersion. Students are required to keep a daily

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<sup>2</sup> Hinton, Leanne. *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*. Academic Press: San Diego. 2001.

journal where they record the learning process as well as pass an oral exam to demonstrate their fluency. Students are permitted to enroll in ANL 402 after they have successfully completed ANL 401. Both classes can apply to a Native language education endorsement for type A certification or a bachelor of arts degree in Alaska Native Studies.

The Master Apprentice Team Project is sponsored by the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, Lawton, Oklahoma. A fluent Comanche speaker (Master) is paired with a family (Apprentice) interested in learning Comanche. Seven teams are selected. During the first week, the team undergoes an intensive three-day training where they learn how to maintain immersion in the Comanche language. Each team spends 20 hours a week for 20 weeks communicating only in Comanche. At the end of ten weeks a gathering is held where all seven teams can discuss their progress and the project. A final celebration is held at the end of the project period where families communicate only in Comanche. Recently, the Comanche expanded their program to include a new audience. Up to five young mothers are paired with a Master. The mothers, through immersion, learn functional language that they can use at home. They are encouraged to teach everything they learn to their children and use Comanche at home.

In the 1970's, facing the decline of their language, the Maori formed the Te Kohanga Reo or language nests. The fundamental goal of the Maori Language Nest is to immerse children in the Maori language and culture through culturally appropriate context, learning styles and teaching.<sup>3</sup> Similar to many daycare centers in the United States, Maori Language Nests serve children birth to six years old. All daily interaction and instruction is held only in the Maori language. To reflect the traditional Maori beliefs of whanau, where extended families raise children, Elders and teachers work with parents to educate the children. Parents are encouraged to learn Maori with their children. The Te Kohanga Reo National Trust has established an extensive, three-tiered teacher training program that increases teachers fluency and ability to teach in the Maori language. The Maori Language Nests has quickly become a worldwide model for language revitalization. By 1992, the Maori had established more than 700 Language Nests in New Zealand.

The University of California, Davis, developed the J.P. Herrington Database Project which is designed to increase researchers, scholars, linguists, and Native communities access to the notes taken by linguist J.P. Herrington in the turn of the century. Harrington recorded information about California tribal languages, many of which are now extinct. The University of California, Davis, is working to upload the over 500,000 pages of notes onto a searchable computer database where researchers and tribal members can easily access the information. The database will be printable into a variety of documents including word lists, orthographies, biographical information on consultants, cross-references with audio and digital recordings, and reference to relevant publications.

There are less than a dozen fluent speakers of Arikara, the language of the Arkara people of North Dakota. In an effort to help community members to develop basic conversational skills, the Arikara Multimedia Language Lessons were developed. There are a total of sixteen language lessons, targeted at high school and college students, and adults, however, they can be adapted

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<sup>3</sup> [www.kohanga.ac.nz](http://www.kohanga.ac.nz), 8/25/03

for younger ages. Lessons begin with an introduction to Arikara sounds and the alphabet. Students then listen to a fluent speaker say words and record themselves repeating the sounds which enables them to immediately compare and correct their pronunciation. Once students become proficient in making Arikara sounds, they learn vocabulary for everyday items and situations. As the students progress, they listen to and record themselves in basic conversations. Lastly, the students learn grammar and rules and sentence patterns. Each lesson also includes a cultural session which describes tribal history and traditional knowledge.

Twenty-five years ago, the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico began to band together to develop an educational system that is rooted in their community. Today, nineteen Pueblos own and operate the Santa Fe Indian School. The school utilizes Community-Based Education that merges western education and indigenous knowledge to ensure the educational and personal growth of all students. Through Community-Based Education, the Sante Fe Indian School has realized an increase in students motivation and performance in academics, particularly in environmental science and technology. Teachers work with their community to ensure their curriculum incorporates indigenous knowledge.

For example, in the Economics and Tribal Government course, high school students learn about the issues surrounding economic development in Indian Country. They develop a basic understanding of the tribal government system. They research and analyze economic development on their reservation. Students compare tribal and non-tribal economies and identify the role of tribal governments in economic development. Lastly, the students learn the various federal legislations impacting tribal economic development.

Seventh and eighth graders in the Sante Fe Indian School work with their teachers to develop a natural Native garden on the school premises. Student collect plants that were traditionally used by their people, learn the Keres names for the plans and classify them according to their uses. Some plants are then preserved in a portfolio for further study or planted in the garden for future use. The students also graph the growth of their plants and utilize measurement, estimations and charts in the construction of their garden.

The Harborview Elementary School, Juneau, began hosting “Tlingit Classrooms” in 2000. English and Tlingit languages are emphasized in these classrooms as well as Tlingit cultural values, traditions, beliefs, and practices. Teachers work with a cultural specialist and Elders to ensure that their materials, curriculum and activities meet, not only the Alaska State Standards, but the cultural values of the Tlingit people. A recent study showed that students enrolled in the Harborview Elementary School program generally perform as well as other students in the district and do better than Native students attending other schools in the district.

Over the last five years, the Chuckchi of Lorino, Russia, have increasingly incorporated culturally responsive curriculum and the Chuckchi language into their educational system. With each new class, students’ exposure to the language has steadily increased. In 2002, the first preschool class was taught in full immersion. Due to the lack of financial resources, the teachers make all of their materials, including books. They have created a number of books for children from construction paper, with hand drawn images and hand written text. Of particular interest is the fact that they devised their own writing system for Chukchi using the Cyrillic alphabet,

without any training in linguistics or any knowledge if a separate writing system for this language already exists. Elders are frequently brought into the classroom to teach children and assist in translating texts into Chuckchi. The school also houses a single room cultural center where students learn how to make and display traditional crafts and tools under the guidance of local Elders and their parents.

In order to gain public and parental support for the program, the teachers hold parent/teacher conferences on a monthly base. Parents are updated on their children's progress and work with the teachers to develop goals for their children during the coming months. Parents are also recruited to make materials for the school (i.e. books, dolls, toys, skin boats).

In the 1970's many schools in the Bethel region began to teach half-day lessons in Yup'ik. In the 1990's, parents began holding weekly meetings to plan a full-immersion program in Bethel, Alaska. In order to develop curriculum, immersion teachers were hired six months before the school year started. The Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, a full immersion school, opened its doors in 1995. Today, 150 students, ranging from kindergarten through sixth grade are taught solely in Yup'ik. English is slowly introduced and, by sixth grade, students are learning fifty percent in English and fifty percent in Yup'ik.

To ensure the success of their students, the school takes several steps to support the program. A materials developer is staffed year-round to develop materials for the following year that comply with the Alaska State Teaching Standards and to ensure they are culturally responsive to the region. Annually, they host a three-week summer institute to provide teachers with training in immersion strategies and materials development. The school and teachers regularly sponsor informational meetings where they teach parents strategies for reinforcing language use at home.

The 'Aha Punana Leo, Inc. was established in 1983 to address the revitalization of the Hawaiian language. Today, they oversee eleven Hawaiian immersion preschools. The preschools are open to children, two to four years old. The sliding tuition scale is based on income levels. Curriculum and materials are developed based on traditional Hawaiian knowledge and activities. Parents are required to volunteer in the school eight hours per month, per child. In order to reinforce the Hawaiian language at home, at least one member of a child's family must attend two hours of Hawaiian language classes a week.

There are 15 K-12 immersion schools in the state of Hawaii, twelve of which are "immersion streams" in public school, while the remaining three laboratory schools are administered through a partnership with the Department of Education, 'Aha Punana Leo and the University of Hawaii. For the purposes of this report, the following information will focus on the laboratory schools.

The Hawaiian schools merge traditional Hawaiian knowledge and western concepts to ensure their students can succeed in both the Hawaiian and American cultures. Teachers integrate traditional Hawaiian cultural practices and western science to provide students with culturally relevant lessons. In an effort to include the Hawaiian language in all aspects of learning, the Hawaiian's developed and maintain many computer programs in the Hawaiian language, including Netscape Navigator. English is introduced in the classroom in fifth grade, but taught through the Hawaiian language. Since one of the major goals of the laboratory schools is to

prepare students for college, all high school seniors are required to take college courses through the University of Hawaii. Approximately 80% of their graduates go onto college.

The College of Hawaiian Language, University of Hawaii, Hilo, is at the forefront of Hawaiian language revitalization. The University hosts both immersion and traditional-western based Hawaiian language courses. Students can receive degrees in Hawaiian language through a Masters of Arts, including a certificate to teach Hawaiian from grades K-12. The University foresees a doctoral program by the end of 2005. They provide internet-based language courses which reach students as far away as Switzerland. They developed and maintain Leoki, Hawaiian language software that boasts chat rooms, email, web browsing, and sound capabilities.

The University of Hawaii, Hilo, also sponsors a curriculum and materials development department that is dedicated to developing and producing Hawaiian language curriculum, books, posters, flash cards, games, CD ROMs, and other materials.

### **Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

The Alutiiq people can learn a great deal from the experiences of other indigenous language programs. First and foremost, the reason many indigenous language programs fail to start or succeed is the belief that learning an indigenous language inhibits children's ability to learn English and function in Euro-American society. As proven by such successful indigenous language programs as the Hawaiians, with 80% of their graduates going onto college, learning an indigenous language does not interfere with an individual's ability to learn and understand English. On the contrary, learning their indigenous language enhances youths' ability to understand and interact in their environment and "outside". Youth that learn their indigenous language benefit from increased self-esteem, sense of cultural identity and greater understanding of different cultures. Students that are fluent in two languages score higher on standardized tests and have increased ability to problem solve and greater employment opportunities. For indigenous people, knowing their indigenous language helps them to know themselves.

The fundamental issue facing indigenous language programs is that the language is no longer the primary language of the household. Children are no longer learning their language at home, nor is instruction from language programs being reinforced in the home. In order to ensure the continued vitality of the Alutiiq language, the Alutiiq people must reinforce language learning at home, encouraging families to learn the language together. By hosting family language clubs, adults teaching their children at home, and encouraging local organizations to include the language in daily activities, the Alutiiq people will reinforce language learning at home and in the community.

Secondly, although many of the programs develop and strengthen important skills and self-awareness among their students, such as self-esteem, cultural identity, and traditional knowledge, they do not grow fluent speakers. These programs include; place-based education, culture camps, partial immersion programs, and computer based instruction. These programs are important for developing two things that each indigenous group must have in order to sponsor successful language revitalization programs: 1) wide-spread community support for language revitalization

in all aspects of daily life, and 2) a growing desire and need for additional language instruction. The various Alutiiq language projects that have been sponsored in the last decade and the numerous community meetings I sponsored in 2003, have greatly increase people's support for language revitalization. With every Native corporation, tribal council, Native educational organization, and most Alutiiq people supporting the reawakening of the Alutiiq language, the Alutiiq Nation is poised to reclaim their language.

Another lesson learned from other Indigenous language programs is the urgent need to record and properly archive the cultural and linguistic knowledge shared by Elders. Many of the indigenous language programs have recorded the cultural knowledge of Elders that have since passed away. These recordings have enabled the tribes to preserve invaluable knowledge concerning traditional ways of life. The Alutiiq people recognize the importance of recordings and have already taken steps to ensure that all current and future audio and visual recordings and field notes are of archival quality and housed appropriately. Copies of each recording will be made and kept in a separate location to ensure the preservation of all materials in the case of natural disaster or other tragedy.

Although language preservation, through audio and visual recordings, is essential to preserve the cultural knowledge of the Elders, it does not awaken a language. It is recognized among linguist and tribal language specialist that the only way to reawaken a sleeping language is through complete immersion. Since the Alutiiq language is currently between stage 7 and 8 of language loss, the Alutiiq must develop, as quickly as possible, fluent speakers. With the average age of fluent speakers above seventy years old, the Alutiiq people should pair fluent speakers with younger adults who have the years and energy to devote to teaching children.

Finally, many tribes have encountered difficulty when incorporating their language into the western school system. With the lack of structured curriculum and higher education degree programs to build Tribal Language Specialists creditability, tribal languages have had difficulty establishing themselves in schools. The Alutiiq people must continue to work with their tribal councils and the local University to develop a certification or degree program which will provide language specialists with the credibility necessary for them to work successfully within the school system. Similarly, the Alutiiq must develop more curriculum and language-learning materials that merge their traditional values with Alaska State Standards. These materials, although not essential to language learning, will assist language specialist in the teaching process and students in the learning process.

# Alutiiq Language Survey Results

*“When I was younger we were beaten for speaking our language. I didn’t care, I spoke it anyway. My language is part of who I am, it is part of me.” – Mary Haakanson, Feb 2003*

This section of the report is the result of collaboration between the Alutiiq Museum’s Deputy Director, Amy Steffian, and Shauna Hegna.

## Methods

For six months, while working as the Alutiiq Language Coordinator for the Alutiiq Museum, I distributed Alutiiq Language Surveys in each of the communities in the Kodiak Archipelago to assess the degree of language loss, examine patterns of language exposure and use, explore attitudes towards the language, and study the relationships between the variables and demographic factors (age, gender, community of residence, length of residence, etc.). Over 1,000 surveys were mailed, emailed, faxed, given over the phone, enclosed in partnering organizations newsletters, distributed by Community Health Representatives and Alutiiq and educational institutions, and hand delivered.

I worked in conjunction with other indigenous language revitalization programs and conducted extensive research on the types of questions and information that should be included in the Alutiiq Language Survey. I consulted with many Indigenous nations during the Indigenous Language Institute’s Working Symposium in Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 2002. I also consulted many valuable resources on language studies including Jon Reyher’s (et. al.) book “Revitalizing Indigenous Languages”. Reyher is a nationally recognized authority on language revitalization. Particularly useful, was a step-by-step guide for language planning contained in “The Green Book of Language Revitalization In Practice” written by University of California Berkley Linguist Leanne Hinton. Hinton’s books provides many examples of questions programs can ask concerning language exposure and use and people’s attitude toward language revitalization.

An example Alutiiq Language Survey is enclosed in the appendix. The survey is divided into five sections. The survey begins with five demographic questions. These are followed by six questions designed to assess the rate of past and current language use within the participant’s household. The next section contains seven questions designed to assess the respondent’s attitudes toward the use of the Alutiiq language and their desires for language programming. The final three questions asked participants to rate their level of fluency in terms of speaking ability and understanding. They were also asked about their willingness to participant in an Alutiiq language program as teachers, learners and planners.

The surveys were tested for all possible variables. The responses for each variable were coded and entered into a spreadsheet with one line for every survey respondent and a column for every



question. The spreadsheet was then loaded into a statistical program for analysis. A total of 438 survey responses produced a database large enough for a meaningful statistical analysis. The results of this analysis are presented below.<sup>1</sup>

In distributing the survey, Amy Stephian and I attempted to conduct an unbiased sample, however, some factors introduced potential biases. These potential bias and their likely causes are discussed below in our review of the survey population.

## **Summary of Survey Findings**

The following review of the survey results is divided into three sections. The first section describes the population surveyed, examining the distribution of respondents by age, gender, community, and length of residency. It also identifies potential biases in the sample. The second section summarizes the patterns of language use documented by the survey and considers how these patters vary by age, gender and community. The final section is a brief conclusion that provides a general description of the results and identified issues for future study.

### Survey Population

Of the 1722 Alutiiq people living in the Kodiak Archipelago<sup>2</sup>, a total of 25.4 percent or 438 people completed the language survey. This included members from all seven of Kodiak’s major communities (see Figure 1 for a map of the Kodiak Archipelago). As estimated in the 2000 U.S. Census, between 20 and 73 percent of the Alutiiq population in each community participated in the survey (Table 2). As these percentages indicate, some communities had a higher response rate to the survey than others.

**Table 2. Alutiiq Population Surveyed**

Community	Population	Percent of Total Alutiiq Population	Number of People Surveyed	Percent of Community Surveyed
Akhiok	75	4.4%	23	31%
Karluk	26	1.5%	19	73%
Kodiak City Area	967	56.2%	196	20%
Larsen Bay	91	5.3%	30	33%
Ouzinkie	197	11.4%	41	21%
Old Harbor	203	11.8%	93	46%
Port Lions	163	9.5%	39	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1722</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>25%</b>

The survey response rates from Akhiok, Larsen Bay and Port Lions are roughly equivalent to the relative populations of these communities (Table 2). For example, Akhiok’s population makes up 4.4 percent of the total Kodiak Alutiiq population and accounts for 5.3 percent of the survey

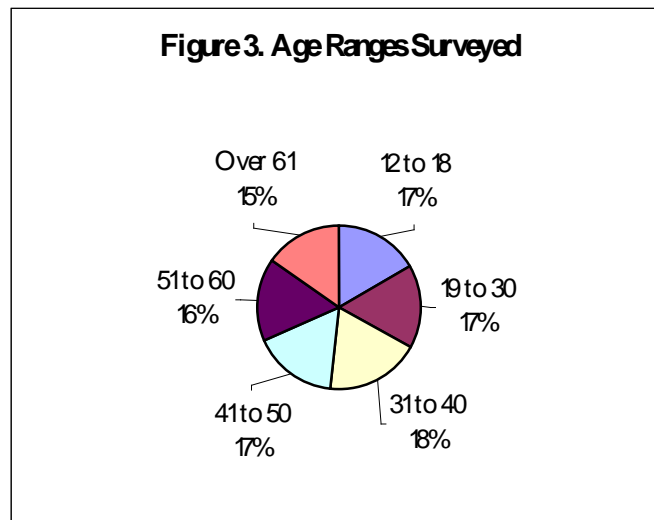
<sup>1</sup> We chose a .05 level of significance.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the 2000 United States Census.

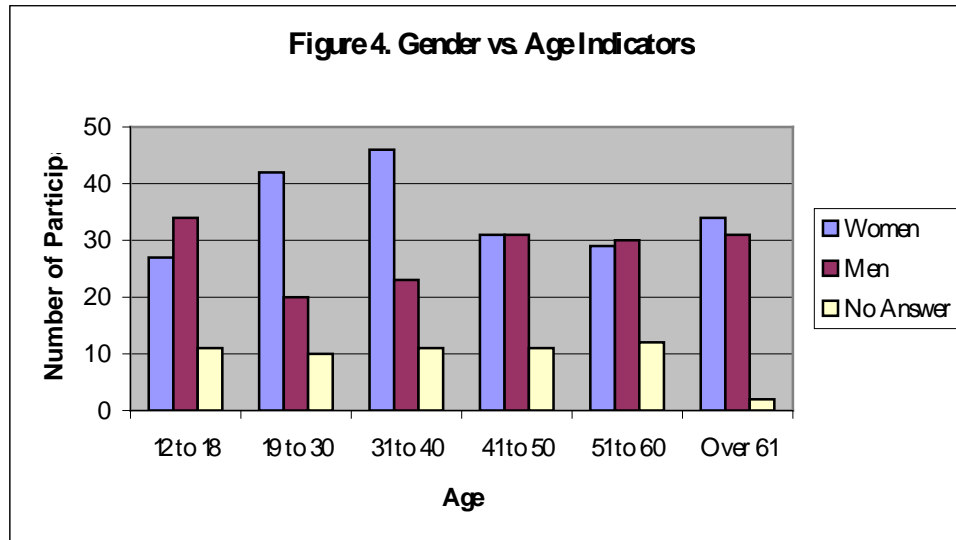
sample. In contrast, residents in Karluk and Old Harbor were surveyed at a higher rate than their population while the survey rate in Kodiak and Ouzinkie was lower than their relative populations. Old Harbor residents make up 11.8 of the total Kodiak Alutiiq population, but account for 20.8 percent of the survey population. Conversely, the City of Kodiak’s Alutiiq population is 56.2 percent of the total Alutiiq population, but only represents 44.7 percent of survey population.

A broader look at sampling rates by community indicates an under representation of urban Alutiiq people. When sampling rates are grouped by type of community (rural vs. urban), 55.3 percent of the survey respondents live in rural communities, while in actuality, only 43.8 percent of the total Kodiak Alutiiq population resides in rural communities. On the contrary, 44.7 percent of the survey respondents reside in urban communities, while in actuality, 56.2 percent of the Kodiak Alutiiq population lives in urban communities. Therefore, there is an 11.5 percent difference between the estimated size of the rural and urban populations and their representation in the survey sample. This disparity demonstrates an under representation of urban Alutiiq people in the survey sample. This gap reflects the large size of the Kodiak City area and the difficulty in distributing the surveys to a dispersed population. Likewise, the inability to knock door-to-door, a method I largely utilized in rural communities, is a major contributor to the disproportionate lack of survey participants from the Kodiak City area. In rural communities, a majority of residents are Alutiiq, which meant that I could simply walk door to door in the community. This was not possible in Kodiak.

Of the 438 people surveyed, 380 specified their gender. 45.5 percent of the survey participants were men (169) while 55.5 percent of the respondents were women (211). To assess generational differences in language knowledge, our survey included a wide range of ages. Survey respondents were asked to pick one of the following categories to specify their age: 12 to 18 years, 19 to 30 years, 31 to 40 years, 41 to 50 years, 51 to 60 years, or 61 years and over. It should be noted that although the survey targeted ages 12 and up, children, down to age 9, did complete the survey. The survey covered each age group relatively evenly – with between 15.4 and 18.4 percent of the survey population falling in each age range (Figure 3). As such, the responses represent a broad sample of each living Alutiiq generation.



Additionally, although women make up a larger portion of the survey population, consideration of age by gender indicate that both men and women are well represented in each age group (see Figure 4). This information is extremely important as it demonstrates that any patterns in language practices uncovered by this survey are likely to be an accurate reflection of the Alutiiq community and not a biased result caused by uneven survey coverage. However, it should be noted that the current age and gender structure of the Alutiiq population is unknown. Therefore, the population was not sampled proportionally to the actual distribution of people but, rather, by a general sampling.



When age and gender are compared by community type (rural vs. urban), potential biases emerge. Cross tabulation of gender (male vs. female) and community type (urban vs. rural) indicates that women occur with greater frequency in the urban sample than in the rural sample.<sup>3</sup> The converse is true of men, who are over represented in the rural sample and under represented in the urban sample. This potential bias is a result of the differing methods of survey distribution in urban and rural communities. In urban communities, a large number of the surveys were distributed through a collaborative effort of the Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak Area Native Association and the Kodiak Tribal Council. Most of the surveys were distributed through places where Alutiiq people were known to frequent (i.e. Native owned and operated organizations, tribal bingo). Additionally, Museum staff conducted surveys over the phone. Women seem to be the largest population that utilize these organizations and participate in the phone surveys. A majority of the surveys collected in rural communities were gathered through local schools and by knocking door-to-door. For an unknown reason, this resulted in a disproportionate number of male respondents in rural communities.

In addition, when the rural communities are considered alone, and separated by distance from Kodiak City (i.e. villages near Kodiak – Ouzinkie and Port Lions vs. villages far from Kodiak – Old Harbor, Larsen Bay, Akhiok and Karluk) a second pattern emerges. In this sub-sample,

<sup>3</sup>  $X^2=4.349$ ,  $p = .0370$ , 1df

women are over represented in communities near Kodiak and underrepresented in communities far from Kodiak. It is unclear whether this reflects surveying technique, gender profiles in these communities or a combination of factors. We know for example, that several villages have historically higher proportions of male residents than female residents, and these communities were both heavily sampled.<sup>4</sup>

Length of residence in a community was the final demographic addressed in the survey. 83.3 percent of the survey participants responded to the question, “How many years have you lived in your community?” The average length of residence reported was 28.1 years, but it ranges from less than 1 year to 78 years with a large standard deviation of 17.7 years. Not surprisingly, the length of residence is quite variable. This reflects the fact that people of many ages were included in the survey and age limits the total the number of years a person can live in a community.

In addition, residency values cluster between 12 – 15 years and again between 38 – 40 years.<sup>5</sup> Meaning that, survey participants tend to reside in communities between 12 and 15 years or 38 and 40 years. These residency lengths demonstrate that there is a large split between people that live for a short amount of time in their community, 12 to 15 years, and those that live for a long amount of time in their communities, 35 to 40 years. Neither gender nor home community type (rural vs. urban) affect the split in residency. The peak in length of residency at 35 to 40 years may also be a reflection of the forced relocation of many Alutiiq people in 1964 from the earthquake and subsequent tidal wave.

In summary, the language survey reached over a quarter of the Kodiak Alutiiq population. A broad sampling of men and women and people of all ages were included in the survey. While the survey population is broadly representative of the Alutiiq community, it is weighted toward the rural Alutiiq population. Within this population, there are a greater number of women that were surveyed in urban areas and villages close to Kodiak. In rural areas, men were surveyed more heavily than woman.

## Patterns in Language Use

### Language Proficiency

430 of the 438 survey participants answered the question “How well can you speak the Alutiiq language”. Results indicate that there are few speakers of the Alutiiq language. More than 29 percent of the survey participants do not know any of the Alutiiq language while an additional 51.4 percent “know some words but can’t speak in sentences.” Another 15.9 have a basic understanding and ability to communicate in the Alutiiq language.<sup>6</sup> Of the 438 people that participated in the Alutiiq Language Survey, a total of 14 participants professed to be fluent in

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<sup>4</sup> Befu, H. An Ethnographic Sketch of Old Harbor, Kodiak: An Eskimo Village. *Arctic Anthropology* VI(2): 29-42. Davis, N.Y. Contemporary Pacific Eskimo. In *Arctic*, edited by D. Damas, Handbook of North American Indians, general editor, W.T. Sturtevant. Vol 5, Pp. 198-204. Smithsonian Press, Washington, D.C.

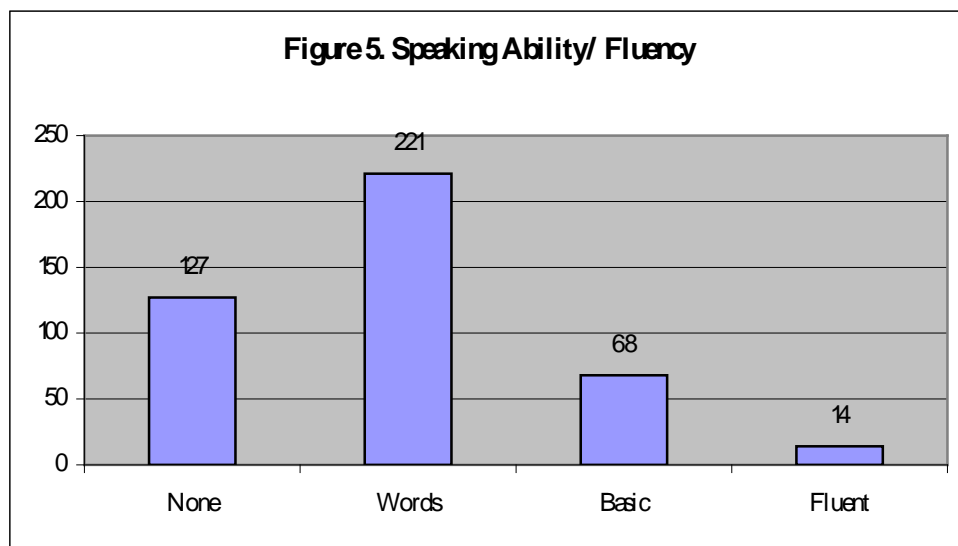
<sup>5</sup> Recoded to match the split between sample modes – moderate residency  $\leq 26$  years, and long residency  $\geq 27$  years

<sup>6</sup> Respondents choices were “Not very well: know some words but can’t speak in sentences” or “Somewhat well: can make myself understood but have problems with it”.

the Alutiiq language. All of these speakers are over 51 years old and ten (71.4 percent) of the respondents are over 61 years old.

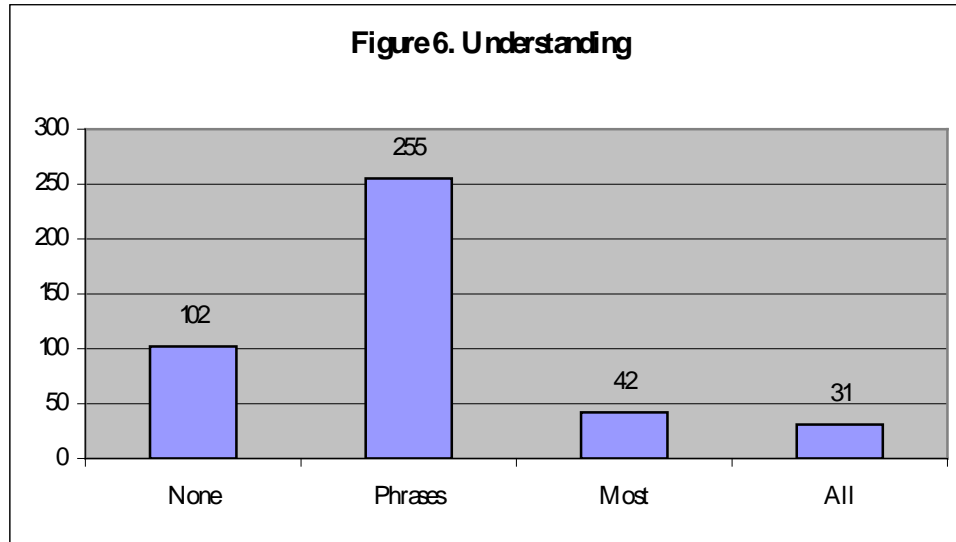
Length of community residency and gender do not seem to influence language proficiency. However, the age of survey participants directly relates to language proficiency. A majority of the 50 to 60 year old participants stated that they spoke Alutiiq “somewhat well” (can make themselves understood with some difficulty). However, the greatest number of respondents, ages 9 to 50, “know some Alutiiq words but can’t speak in sentences” or they do not know any Alutiiq words or phrases.

As indicated above, the most alarming statistic is the lack of fluent speakers under the age of 50. Figure 5 illustrates the rate of speaking ability/fluency among survey respondents.



Correlation matrixes demonstrate that language proficiency is more frequent in rural communities and less frequent in urban areas. This pattern is most likely somewhat overstated as the survey sample is weighted toward rural responses. Nevertheless, it is a significant finding. There is, however, no significant relationship between speaking ability and respondents’ distance from Kodiak city. For instance, when the proficiency of survey participants in Port Lions and Ouzinkie, two villages that are within 19 air miles of Kodiak city, is compared with the proficiency of the other villages, there is no difference in survey participants speaking ability.

Rates of language understanding are somewhat higher than speaking ability. As illustrated in Figure 6, 23.7 percent of the respondents do not understand any of the Alutiiq language. More than 59 percent of the survey participants understand “some words and phrases” while only 10 percent understand “mostly, but not completely” and only .07 percent understands “everything”. A higher rate of understanding is related to the age of survey participants. Older people (51 years and older), were statistically more likely to understand the Alutiiq language than younger people (9 to 30 years old).

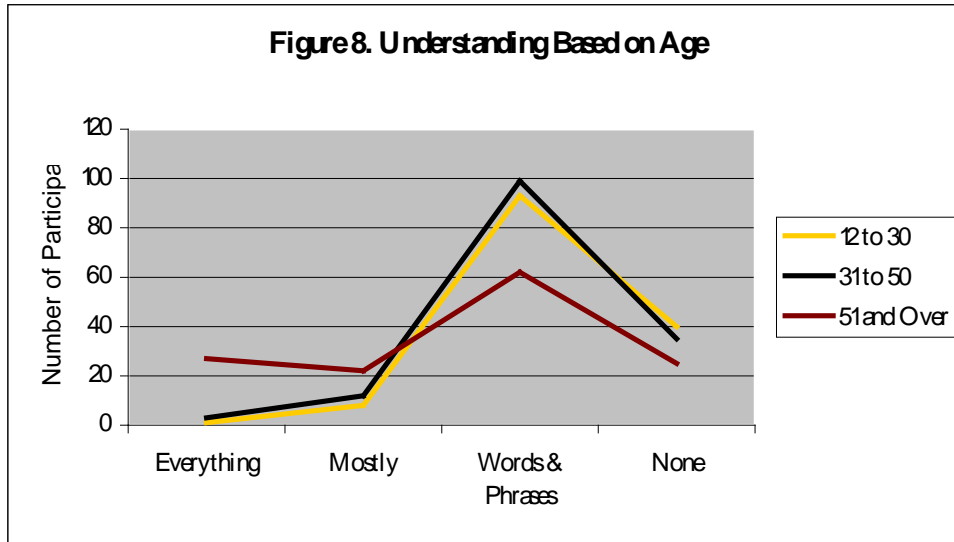


Statistically, there is a much higher rate of understanding than fluency in the Alutiiq language (see Table 7). Across the board, more people can understand the language more than they can speak it. Of the 430 survey participants that answered the questions relating to understanding and fluency, 246 respondents stated that they cannot speak any of the Alutiiq language but, surprisingly, they can still understand “everything” or “most” of the Alutiiq language. Only 82 of the survey respondents have any ability to speak *and* understand the language. This reflects a dramatic rise in the number of people that understand Alutiiq than can speak the language.

**Table 7. Speaking Ability and Language Understanding**

Ability	Good Understanding		No Understanding
	Fluent Speaker	Basic Understanding	
Fluent Speaker	14	29	102
Basic Speaker	39	226	
No Speaking Ability	20		

As reflected in Figure 8, the number of survey respondents that can understand the Alutiiq language corresponds to the survey participant’s age. When examining young (12 to 30 age range) and middle aged (31 to 50 age range) respondents, their rate of understanding is statistically similar, no matter what the level of understanding (i.e. “none”, “words and phrases”). However, when we examined the rate of understanding of those survey participants that are 51 years and older, there was a significant higher number of respondents that understand “most” or “everything” of the Alutiiq language.



This higher level of understanding, and lower level of speaking ability reflects the influence of the “English Only” education policy imposed on Alutiiq families by Western educators. During this time, many parents seem to have either quit speaking the Alutiiq language at home or encouraged their children to reply to them in English.

In addition, the rate of understanding seems to correspond to the type of community in which survey respondents reside. Survey respondents that live in rural communities seems to have a much greater rate of understanding than those that reside in urban areas. Of the 102 participants that could only understand “some words and phrases” or “none” of the Alutiiq language, 62.7 percent were from urban communities while 37.3 percent were from rural villages. This high rate for urban areas is particularly alarming since the ratio of urban and rural survey participants was skewed toward rural residents which suggests an even higher rate.

Likewise, of the 255 respondents that can understand “most” of the Alutiiq language, 43.1 percent are from urban areas while 56.9 percent are from rural communities.

Of the 73 survey participants that professed to “understand everything”, 72.6 percent reside in rural communities while only 27.4 are from urban areas. A high number of urban respondents can understand either “some words and phrases” or “none” of the Alutiiq language. A small percentage of rural residents report that they can understand “some words and phrases” or “none” of the Alutiiq language while a large percentage claim to “understand everything” in the Alutiiq language. In fact, there are two-and-a-half times the number of rural residents that “understand everything” than urban residents. This reflects a lower level of fluency and understanding in the urban areas of the Island.

### **History of Language Use and Exposure**

Today, people rarely use the Alutiiq language in their homes. Only 6.4% participants profess to speak Alutiiq on a daily basis. However over half of the people surveyed – 56.1 percent - use Alutiiq words “often” or “always”. Approximately, one-third of the survey participants state that when they were growing up they heard the Alutiiq language “often” at home. Therefore,

although survey participants seem to have regularly *heard* the Alutiiq language at home, only a small number of people actually *spoke* Alutiiq as a small child. Even fewer spoke the Alutiiq language as school aged children. The disparity between hearing and speaking again reflects the “English Only” education policy of the United States and the negative stigma’s associated with speaking the Alutiiq language during the mid-twentieth century. This could also be a result of the widely accepted practice of intergenerational bilingualism, when families in the throws of “English conversion” speak and reply to each other in different languages. Usually, the parents or grandparents speak their heritage language, while the children reply in English.

When the different usage variables, or the frequency in which people use the language, are cross tabulated with gender, age, community, community location, and length of residence some very interesting patterns emerge. First and foremost, gender does not affect the use of Alutiiq. Men and women have similar patterns of language exposure and use. This is an extraordinary finding since Alutiiq, like many Indigenous languages, is gender based – men and women have different vocabulary based on their roles within the family (i.e. women gather food and take care of the house, men hunt and protect the family).

Age is the single most defining factor affecting language exposure and use. Elders were statistically more likely to use Alutiiq at home when they were growing up, to have parents that spoke Alutiiq at home, to use the language both before school and when they were school aged, and Elders are also more likely to use some words now. Young people (12 to 30) often, though not always, know less of the language and use it less than other ages groups. Young people were less likely to have parents that spoke the language when they were growing up or to speak the language themselves.

When comparing language exposure and use to residency, some interesting points emerge. First, people in rural communities are more likely to have: 1) heard the language growing up, 2) parents that spoke Alutiiq, 3) spoke the language themselves before they attended school, and 4) to use some Alutiiq words in their homes now. This reflects a great history of exposure to and use of Alutiiq in the rural communities and less exposure to and use of the language in the urban communities. The lack of language use in urban areas is most likely the result of the higher non-Native population that resides in the urban areas of the Island – in order to converse with people you must use the language they understand. In addition, this again may reflect the negative stigma associated with Indigenous languages that were prevalent in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. Interestingly, the only variable that was not spilt by the urban/rural divide was the *current* use of the Alutiiq language. The use of the Alutiiq language in homes now is general low everywhere, despite the strong history of language use in the rural communities. This may reflect the recent out migration of Elders from rural villages to Kodiak City for health care. Since health care in six villages is limited to local clinics staffed by Community Health Aides and the harsh weather often keeps medivac’s from reaching the villages in emergency situations, many fluent Alutiiq Elders were forced to relocate to Kodiak City, home to the Providence Hospital and Kodiak Area Native Association.

Interestingly, when the rural communities are analyzed based on their distance from the urban center of Kodiak City, a new pattern prevails. Although, as stated previously, there does not seem to be a correlation between the use of the Alutiiq language in homes now and whether



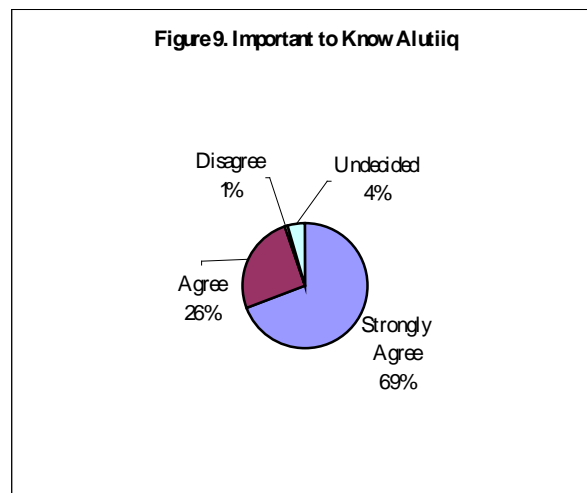
people live in rural or urban communities, there is a pattern when the villages are grouped by their distance from Kodiak City. Simply stated, the villages closer to Kodiak (Ouzinkie and Port Lions) are statistically *less likely* to use the Alutiiq language at home now, than other villages farther from Kodiak.

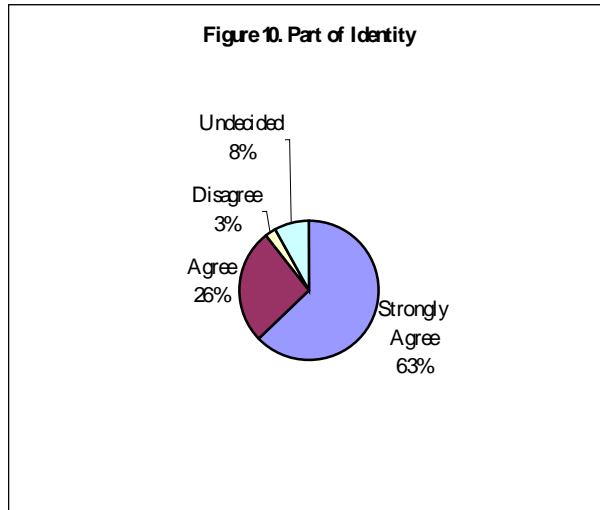
Length of residency in a community seems to also affect people’s exposure to and use of the Alutiiq language. People who remain in a community for 27 years or more are statistically more likely to have heard or use the Alutiiq language “always” or “often” where as the converse is true of people that have lived in a community for 26 years or less. For the most part, this is a reflection of people’s age; people that are older have lived longer, and therefore, lived in their communities longer. Likewise, by living longer, they have had greater exposure to the language. However, this may also demonstrate that those people with a greater exposure to and use of Alutiiq may tend not to leave their home communities than those people with less knowledge of the Alutiiq language. Finally, those people that have a long history of language exposure and use are statistically more likely to use the language at home now than those people without exposure to the language.

When the relationships between exposure and language use is examined, it is evident that people who heard the Alutiiq language “always” or “often” when they were growing up, were far more likely to use Alutiiq words in their households now. Similarly, those people who grew up in families that “rarely” or “never” spoke Alutiiq are statistically less likely to use Alutiiq words now.

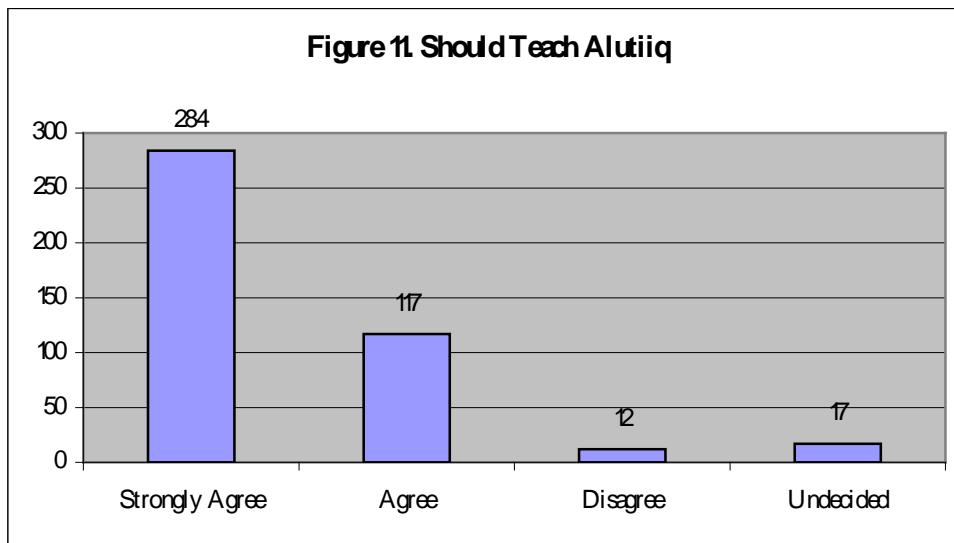
### **Attitudes Toward the Language**

When examining the attitudes toward the Alutiiq language the most striking finding is that responses to all the questions indicate strong, positive feelings about Alutiiq. As reflected in Figure 9, 95 percent of the respondents believe that it is important for Alutiiq people to “know their Native language”. Likewise Figure 10, illustrates that 89 percent of the survey participants agree or strongly agree that knowing how to speak Alutiiq is an “important part of being Alutiiq.” This indicates that a vast majority of Alutiiq people value the language.

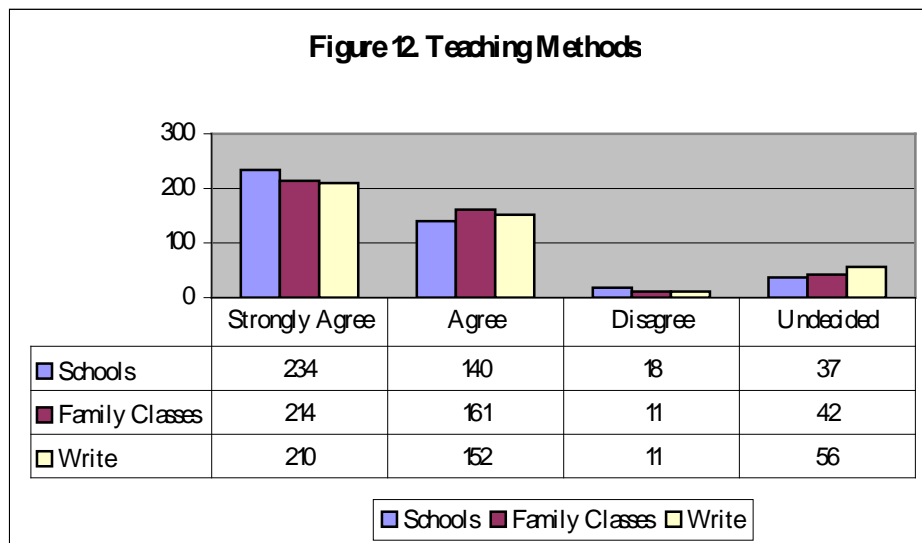




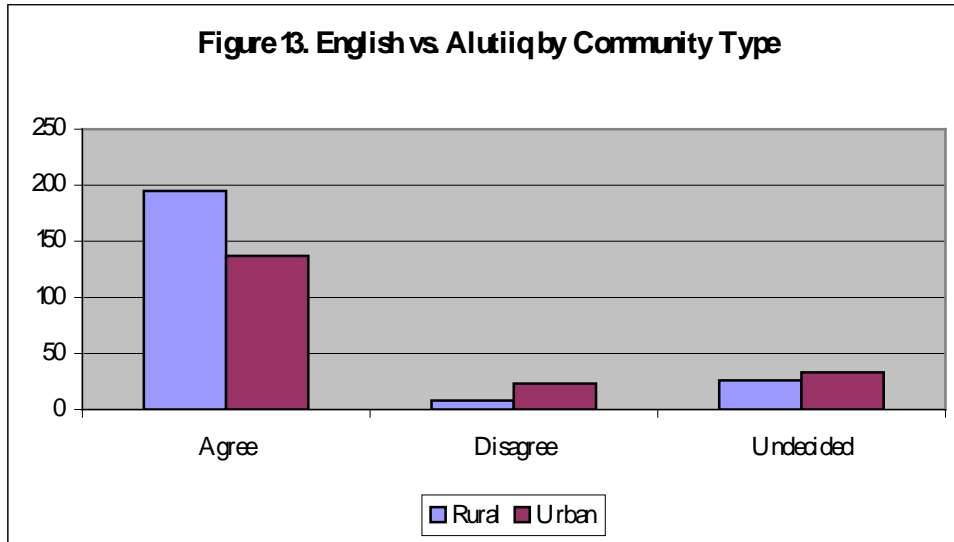
Similarly, Figure 11, illustrates that a vast majority, 93 percent, of the survey participants “agree” or “strongly agree” that their “community should make an effort to teach the Alutiiq language.”



As illustrated in Figure 12, a majority of the survey participants “agree” or “strongly agree” that the Alutiiq people should teach the language through schools and family classes. They also supported teaching how to write the Alutiiq language. The only question that seemed to solicit a somewhat different response from participants asks if they believe “learning the Alutiiq language is as important as learning English.” Nearly double the number of participants disagreed with this question than any other question. Likewise, of the 435 people that completed this section of questions, only 422 answered this question, far less than any of the other questions. This may demonstrate people’s unwillingness to show their disagreement with this statement – especially when they agreed with all other statements. It also may illustrate a lack of knowledge about the benefits of bilingualism, especially after many years of being taught that speaking Alutiiq was undesirable.



Surprisingly, attitudes toward language use and revitalization are not influenced by gender. Not surprising however, is that some attitudes toward language use and preservation change according to the respondent’s home community (rural vs. urban). First, people living in rural communities were more likely to “agree” or “strongly agree” that “speaking the language is an important part of being Alutiiq” than respondents living in urban communities. Survey participants living in the Kodiak City area were more likely to believe that speaking Alutiiq was not an important part of being Alutiiq. Similarly, people living in rural communities felt more strongly that “learning Alutiiq is as important as learning English”. Whereas 195 rural respondents agreed with the statement that Alutiiq is as important as English, only 137 urban respondents agreed (see Figure 13). Cross tabulation of all seven attitude questions and the residents proximity to an urban center (i.e. villages located closer to Kodiak City), did not produce significant associations. It seems that attitudes toward language use and preservation are not influenced by the proximity of a person’s community to Kodiak. Although, for the most part, there is a strong positive attitude in all communities toward the use and revitalization of the Alutiiq language, there is a greater negative stigma associated with the Alutiiq language in the urban communities. This may be due to a longer and more pervasive exposure to western attitudes in the more racially mixed urban center of Kodiak.



Age influences four of the seven attitude variables: teach Alutiiq in the schools, Alutiiq is as important as English, provide family classes, and teach people how to write in Alutiiq. When addressing the statement “our community should make an effort to teach the Alutiiq language” Elders (51 or older) leaned toward “undecided” or “disagree” more than expected. Middle aged people (31 to 50) “disagreed” with greater frequency than other groups when responding to the statement that their “community should sponsor family language clubs”. Both Elders and Middle aged people “disagreed” or were “undecided” with greater frequency when responding to the statement that “it would be a good idea to teach people how to write the Alutiiq language”. This suggests some resistance to language education, perhaps as a result of past educational organizations trying to eradicate the Alutiiq language and the negative stigmas associated with fluent speakers. It may also reflect people’s support for language learning as long as they are not required to participate themselves – the “support but won’t volunteer” mentality.

When rural communities are paired based on their history of intermarriage, trade relations, and fluid movement, some disparities are produced between different parts of the Island. These community pairs – Karluk and Larsen Bay, Old Harbor and Akhiok, and Port Lions and Ouzinkie, have been in place for centuries and still maintain frequent contact. These long-standing relationships are evident in their exposure to and use of Alutiiq. For instance, the rates of fluency and understanding in Karluk and Larsen Bay, as reflected in Figure 13 and 14, are substantially lower than any other community. Survey participants from these communities were less likely to have parents that spoke the Alutiiq language, to speak Alutiiq once they started going to school or to use some words now. These findings suggest that there is a weaker history of language exposure and use in Larsen Bay and Karluk. This may be a result of the long-standing presence of the fishing industry in each of these communities, specifically, canneries.

Karluk and Larsen Bay were home to the largest salmon fishing centers on the Island and the world throughout the ninetieth and twentieth centuries. Until recently, these communities were the economic hubs for the Kodiak Archipelago. In 1879 Karluk’s long history with the salmon industry began. By 1882, Karluk was home to the first salmon cannery in the Archipelago. By 1897 there were three canneries in operation on the Karluk spit employing a wide range of ethnic

groups, including people of Caucasian, Alutiiq, and Chinese decent.<sup>7</sup> The Arctic Packing Company had operated a cannery in Larsen Bay for 5 years at the end of the 1800's but had closed it down. Then in 1911, a cannery was reopened in Larsen Bay when the Alaska Packing Association moved their operation from Karluk to Larsen Bay.<sup>8</sup> Like the Karluk cannery, the Larsen Bay cannery was considered "a model for that part of Alaska" with large crews arriving each spring from San Francisco made up of mainly Asians and Italians.<sup>9</sup> For instance, in 1913 the cannery workforce was made up of 10% white, 25% Chinese, 55% Mexican and Phillipino, and 10% mixed races.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Karluk and Larsen Bay are the only villages in the Archipelago that actually had canneries located in their communities. All other communities had canneries near their villages but not located directly in the village. This annual increase in non-Native population in the communities most likely caused immense social and racial pressures on the Alutiiq residents and their traditional language.

The highest rates of fluency and understanding are in the villages of Old Harbor and Akhiok. Survey participants from these villages were more likely to state that they "often" or "always" spoke Alutiiq at home before school age and at home now. This demonstrates a stronger recent history of language exposure and use. The recent language use may indicate the increased number of fluent speakers present in these two communities. Specifically, in the village of Old Harbor, it may indicate that the large number of Alutiiq language programs that they have begun in their community in the last decade (see previous "Past and Current Language Projects" section for additional information) are encouraging community members to use the language at home.

The villages of Port Lions and Ouzinkie are statistically less likely to use the language at home now. Possibly, the lack of current use maybe a reflection of the higher non-Native populations that reside in these communities and their close proximity to Kodiak City. Since all three communities have higher non-Native populations, it would require that the Alutiiq people, in order to communicate with these people, would have to speak English. Eventually, when a population is forced to use another language outside of the home, the new language, in this case English, infiltrates the home, thereby replacing the traditional language.

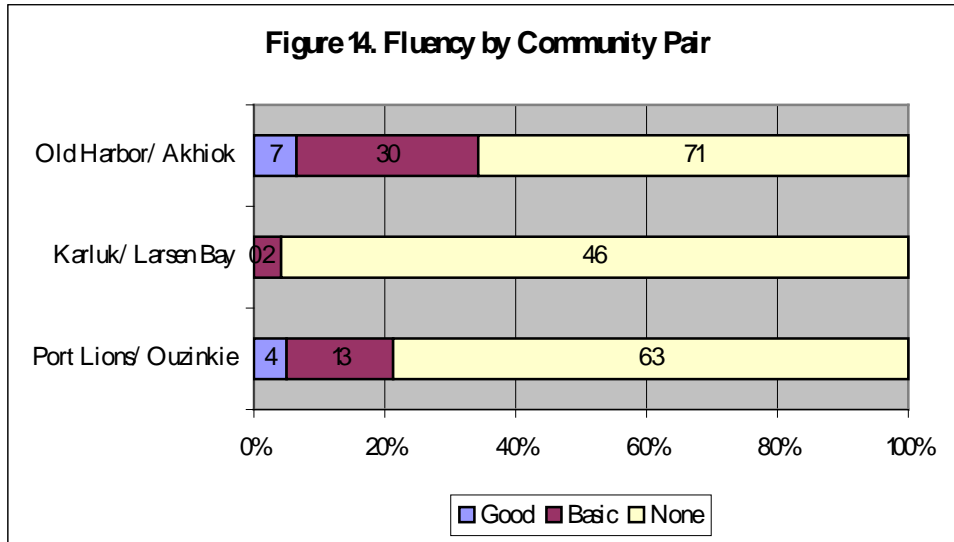
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<sup>7</sup> Roppel, P. Salmon from Kodiak. Page 139

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pg 213.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



Comparison of attitudes and village pairs did not produce any differences. As stated previously, when negative attitudes exist concerning language revitalization emerge, it occurs in the urban areas, not the rural communities.

**Program Participation**

Of the 438 survey participants, 331 or 75.6 percent, answered the question “Would you be willing to teach or learn the Alutiiq language or help plan a language program”. An overwhelming 84 percent of the respondents stated that they would like to “learn the Alutiiq language”. More than 12 percent of the respondents said that they would like to “help plan a language program” while 3.3 percent said that they would like to “teach the Alutiiq language”. When these responses are broken down according to age, almost 90 percent of the young (12 to 30 year olds) participants are interested in learning the Alutiiq language.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, 87.5 percent of the middle age (31 to 50 year olds) respondents wanted to learn the Alutiiq language. Nine of the people 51 years old or older were interested in teaching the Alutiiq language.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, no middle aged (31 to 50 years old) people want to teach. This lack of willingness to teach is a reflection of their lack of confidence in their fluency. In addition, this was this generation of Alutiiq that were shipped outside of their communities to boarding schools located across Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. This forced relocation caused the separation of children from their parents, communities, culture, and language, making them participate in the Western world. Interesting, many of the current leaders of the corporations formed through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act attended these boarding schools.

Neither gender nor community type have an influence on peoples’ willingness to participate in the program. However, willingness to either teach or learn the language directly corresponds to past exposure to the language. This means that those people that were raised by parents who spoke the Alutiiq language have a greater appreciation for the language and are more likely to want to teach or learn the Alutiiq language. It should be noted that the converse of this statement

<sup>11</sup> 116 of the young people or 89.2% of the respondents in the 12 to 30 age range.

<sup>12</sup> This does not state that all 9 individuals were fluent in the Alutiiq language and wanted to teach, like all age groups people 51 years and older have a variety of fluency in the Alutiiq language.

is not true – people that grew up in households where their parents did not speak Alutiiq still value learning and teaching Alutiiq.

Cross tabulation of attitudes and program participation demonstrated no significant patterns. Attitudes about the language are not apparently influencing people’s willingness to help with the program. For example, the small numbers of people who do not believe that speaking Alutiiq is an integral component of Alutiiq identity, are still willing to learn the language. This is an interesting result; it suggests that, as a whole, the Alutiiq Nation understands the benefits to heritage language learning, such as strengthened cultural identity and personal wellness. It is fascinating that this knowledge outweighs the negative or ambiguous feelings that some people have about reawakening the Alutiiq language.

When village pairs are cross tabulated with program participation (teaching, learning or planning), there seems to be no correlation. The willingness to teach and learn the Alutiiq language and help plan a language program are similar across the rural communities despite the difference in the current degree of language use and exposure in these communities.

## Conclusion

Of the 438 people that participated in the Alutiiq Language Survey, a total of 14 participants professed to be fluent in the Alutiiq language. Correlation matrixes demonstrate that language proficiency is more frequent in rural communities and less frequent in urban areas. Rates of language understanding are somewhat higher than speaking ability. This higher level of understanding, and lower level of speaking ability reflects the influence of the “English Only” education policy imposed on Alutiiq families by Western educators.

Only 6.4% participants profess to speak Alutiiq on a daily basis. Gender does not affect the current or past use of Alutiiq. There are two-and-a-half times the number of rural residents that “understand everything” than urban residents. This reflects a lower level of fluency and understanding in the urban areas of the Island. People in rural communities are more likely to have: 1) heard the language growing up, 2) parents that spoke Alutiiq, 3) spoke the language themselves before they attended school, and 4) to use some Alutiiq words in their homes now. Interestingly, the only variable that was not spilt by the urban/rural divide was the *current* use of the Alutiiq language. People who heard the Alutiiq language “always” or “often” when they were growing up, were far more likely to use Alutiiq words in their households now.

When examining the attitudes toward the Alutiiq language the most striking finding is that responses to all the questions indicate strong, positive feelings about Alutiiq. A vast majority, 93 percent, of the survey participants “agree” or “strongly agree” that their “community should make an effort to teach the Alutiiq language.” The only question that seemed to solicit a somewhat different response from participants asks if they believe “learning the Alutiiq language is as important as learning English.” Nearly double the number of participants disagreed with this question than any other question.

Some attitudes toward language use and preservation change according to the respondent’s home community (rural vs. urban). Although, for the most part, there is a strong positive attitude in all

communities toward the use and revitalization of the Alutiiq language, there is a greater negative stigma associated with the Alutiiq language in the urban communities. The rates of fluency and understanding in Karluk and Larsen Bay are substantially lower than any other community. The highest rates of fluency and understanding are in the villages of Old Harbor and Akhiok. The villages of Port Lions and Ouzinkie are statistically less likely to use the language at home now.

Willingness to either teach or learn the language directly corresponds to past exposure to the language. This means that those people that were raised by parents who spoke the Alutiiq language have a greater appreciation for the language and are more likely to want to teach or learn the Alutiiq language. It should be noted that the converse of this statement is not true – people that grew up in households where their parents did not speak Alutiiq still value learning and teaching the language.

## Informal Data Collected

In addition to the formal data collected through the Alutiiq language surveys, I conducted informal interviews with Alutiiq people in each community. From these visits and surveys, I identified 45 fluent speakers of the Kodiak Alutiiq dialect residing in the Archipelago. This indicates that *less than 0.03% of the Kodiak Alutiiq population speaks their language fluently*. A woman from Old Harbor is the youngest fluent speaker at age 55 years, while the oldest fluent speaker is a 95 year-old woman from Ouzinkie. The average age of fluent Kodiak Alutiiq speakers is 72. If no new fluent speakers are developed, Alutiiq will cease to be a living language by 2015.

Of the 45 identified fluent Kodiak Alutiiq speakers, 32 learned Alutiiq as their first language while 13 learned Alutiiq as their second language. Alarmingly, 19 of the speakers are women and 26 are men. As with many indigenous societies, the vocabulary of men is vastly different from that of women. Traditionally, women cared for children, gathered plant foods, prepared foods, created clothing and acted as healers. In contrast, men were responsible for hunting, fishing, carpentry, long distance travel, and political and spiritual leadership. As such, the traditional vocabularies preserved in male and female speakers are unique and reflect traditional cultural practices.

Like the survey findings suggest, differences between communities was evident in the discussion and research I had during visits with residents in each community. 40% of the identified fluent speakers live in the village of Old Harbor, home to primarily speakers of the Eastern sub-dialect of Kodiak Alutiiq. 35% speakers reside in Kodiak City and are largely from the six other communities in the Kodiak archipelago and have moved to Kodiak for health or personal reasons. The remaining 25% of the speakers reside in Ouzinkie, Port Lions, Akhiok, and Larsen Bay with, regrettably, no speakers living in the village of Karluk. The Northern half of the Island (Ouzinkie and Port Lions) has a higher percentage of Alutiicized English and Russian words than the people of the southern communities.



# Community & Regional Strategies & Recommendations

*With tears in her eyes an Elder proclaimed, “When I was young I was beaten for speaking my language. I was raised to be ashamed of the way I talked and who I was. Now you want us to teach it to our children?”*

*A young adult replied, “Auntie, the way that you felt then, ashamed because you spoke Alutiiq, that is the way that people in my generation feel when we attend conferences and all the other Native people from the other regions in our state can give their speeches in their language and all we can say is ‘hello’. We are ashamed because we can’t speak our language.” – Community Meeting, Jan 2003*

**T**his section of the report is the outcome of 19 community planning meetings held in the seven communities in the Kodiak Archipelago. I worked closely with local Tribal Councils in each community to, whenever possible, sponsor presentations in conjunction with community events to maximize community participation and attendance. Over 800 people attended the community meetings and were included in the planning process. In addition to the planning meetings held in each community, I hosted 11 Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Planning Committee Meetings. A detailed chart of the Community and Regional Meeting Schedule is enclosed in the appendix. When community presentations were not possible, I walked door-to-door to acquire a greater sense of the community’s ideas of language revitalization.

## **Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee**

This section of the report is the outcome of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Planning Committee Strategic Planning session held **December 18, 2002** at the Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) Wellness Center. The Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Planning Committee is an **Island wide** Committee comprised of representatives from all 10 tribes, village Corporations, Koniag, Inc., KANA, Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region, Alutiiq people interested in language preservation, and Elders. There is a standing invitation for all Alutiiq organizations and people to participate in the Planning Committee. The Committee meets on a monthly basis.

The purpose of the Committee is to: discuss the progress of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Planning Project; give direction to I as they design and implement the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project; ensure that the design of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project meets the needs of each community; and provide tribal councils, Native corporations and other interested organizations and individuals of the Kodiak Archipelago the opportunity to share their input in the planning and implementation of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project.

The recommendations listed in this section of the report were formally adopted by the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Planning Committee during the committee meeting held February 18, 2003 in the Natives of Kodiak conference room.

### **Regional Committee Recommendations:**

- All Alutiiq people must support language programs to strengthen cultural pride, improve self-esteem, strengthen cultural identity, and ensure the survival of our language.
- The following people and organizations should be involved in the revitalization of our language: all interested Alutiiq people, parents, children, teachers (Native and non-Native), Elders, young adults, schools, Koniag Inc., Tribal Councils, Kodiak Area Native Association, college students, Alutiiq people living outside of Kodiak, and the Alutiiq Museum.
- Native organizations should support language revitalization by helping Elders get involved in the program and financially supporting the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Program.

### **Regional Strategic Plan**

- Expand opportunities for learning our language.
- Revive Alutiiq as a living language (used daily at work, home and school).
- Raise awareness of language revitalization efforts.

### **Regional Short Term Strategies**

- Continue to sponsor Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Planning Committee meetings on a monthly basis.
- Develop a master and apprentice program based on the California model (master and apprentice should have the support of their communities, including that of other fluent speakers).
- Include cultural and linguistic aspects in language learning to ensure well-rounded learning.
- Develop curriculum and other materials to strengthen peoples’ ability to teach and learn our language.

### **Regional Long Term Strategies**

- Sponsor adult language clubs and encourage elder involvement in the classroom to encourage parents to speak our language at home with their children.
- Support the development of immersion preschools where students can learn our traditions, way of life and language, in interested communities.
- Develop curriculum and other learning materials to “grow” with the children to ensure that language and cultural learning follows the children through their schooling.
- Sponsor college level Alutiiq language classes to share our language and cultural knowledge with current students.

# Akhiok

## Introduction

Akhiok is the second smallest village on Kodiak Island. The Alutiiq Museum, in conjunction with the Akhiok Tribal Council, sponsored a community-wide meeting on March 18, 2003. I gave a presentation in the school library followed by a strategic planning session. Five community members attended the meeting. I also walked door-to-door in the community to talk with residents about the language program and to get their feedback on reawakening the Alutiiq language. Based on the community meeting and home visits, below are the recommendations and strategies for language revitalization in Akhiok.

The following recommendations and strategies were formally adopted by the Akhiok Tribal Council (resolution 01-03) on June 16, 2003 and the Kaguyak Tribal Council (resolution 03-01) on June 3, 2003.

## Recommendations

- Akhiok needs to work in conjunction with the Alutiiq Museum to revive the Alutiiq language to ensure that the language and youth is not lost, foster cultural pride in our people, bridge the gap between Elders and children, and to better understand our culture and environment since Alutiiq is the best way to express ourselves.
- The Akhiok and Kaguyak Tribal Councils, Alutiiq Museum, Akhiok School, the School Board, Elders, Native corporations, parents, children, families, and the whole community should be involved in the planning and implementation of the language program.

## Short Term Strategies

- Akhiok needs to work in conjunction with the Alutiiq Museum to revive the Alutiiq language to ensure that the language and culture is not lost, foster cultural pride in our people and to bridge the gap between Elders and children.
- The Akhiok and Kaguyak Tribal Councils, Alutiiq Museum, Akhiok School, School Board, Elders, Native corporations, parents, children, families, and the whole community needs to be involved in the planning and implementation of the language program.

## Long Term Strategies

- Sponsor one-hour adult and family language clubs to encourage parents to speak our language at home with their children.
- Sponsor short (15 minute) immersion sessions in the school so the children and youth can get a basic understanding of our language.

- Develop language-learning resources (Audio and video tapes, flash cards) to strengthen peoples' ability to learn our language.

## **Notes**

- There are currently two fluent speakers that reside full-time in the village.
- Two adults are interested in apprenticing.

# **Karluk**

## **Introduction**

Karluk is the smallest village in Kodiak Island. The Alutiiq Museum, in conjunction with the Karluk IRA Council, sponsored a community-wide potluck and meeting. On February 25 2003, I gave a presentation during the community-wide potluck in the community hall. 13 community members or 48% of the Alutiiq population attended the meeting. Based on the community meeting, below are the recommendations and strategies for language revitalization in Karluk.

The following recommendations and strategies were formally adopted by the Karluk IRA Council (resolution 03-13) on September 11, 2003.

## **Recommendations**

- Karluk needs to work in conjunction with the Alutiiq Museum to revive the Alutiiq language to ensure that the language is not completely lost, foster cultural pride, bridge the generational gap, and because it is relaxing to hear.
- The Karluk IRA Council, children, Alutiiq Museum, and all interested adults should be involved in the planning and implementation of a language program.

## **Short Term Strategies**

- Support the Alutiiq Museum Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program to grow, as quickly as possible, fluent adult speakers.
- Provide copies of the digital recordings of the immersion sessions between a Master/Apprentice in another community in order to give adults in Karluk the opportunity to learn our language.
- Travel to other communities or culture camps to learn and speak with other Apprentices.

## **Long Term Strategies**

- Sponsor adult and family language clubs to encourage parents to speak our language at home with their children.
- Develop language-learning resources (Audio and video tapes, DVDs) to strengthen peoples' ability to learn our language.
- Teach our language in the school (K-12) so children can acquire a basic understanding of our language.

## Notes

- There are no fluent speakers in Karluk. It is imperative that Karluk is not excluded from the opportunity to 'grow' fluent speakers through the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project. The Museum should take steps to make copies of the immersion sessions between a Master/Apprentice team available. Adults interested in learning our language could create a system to check out the DVDs and CDs from the Museum ensuring that they have the opportunity to learn the language.
- The Museum will need to provide the Karluk IRA Council with copies of all language learning/teaching resources developed for the Apprentices and the program so that the Council can ensure that their members have access to the resources.

# Kodiak

## Introduction

Kodiak City is the largest community in the Kodiak archipelago. In order to reach as many community members as possible, The Alutiiq Museum sponsored several community and tribal meetings. On December 17, 2002, I conducted a presentation during the Shoonaq' (Kodiak) Tribal Council meeting. 13 community members and Tribal Council members attended the meeting. On March 12, 2003 I conducted a community presentation at the Bay Side Fire Station. A total of 18 community members attended the meeting. On March 15, 2003, I gave a presentation on the status of the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project to the Native Village of Afognak Tribal Council. Due to time constraints, a Strategic Planning Session could not be held. Based on the community and tribal meetings, below is an outline of recommendations and strategies for language revitalization in the Kodiak City area.

The following recommendations and strategies were formally adopted by the Shoonaq Tribal Council (resolution 2003-12) on June 24, 2003, the Woody Island Tribal Council (resolution 2003-13) on August 22, 2003, and the Native Village of Afognak (resolution 2003-11) on September 6, 2003.

## Recommendations

- Kodiak needs to work in conjunction with the Alutiiq Museum to revive the Alutiiq language to ensure that the language is not completely lost, foster cultural pride, strengthen our identity, bridge the generational gap, because it is the best language that explains our environment, and to develop jobs and tourism in our communities.
- Kodiak needs to foster the revitalization of the Alutiiq language because we are no longer ashamed to speak or fear being punished for speaking our language.
- The Alutiiq Museum, parents, children, local Native Corporations (for and non-profit), local Tribal Councils, Elders (fluent speakers), linguists, schools, educators, Kodiak College, the preschool, JOM, IEA, seminary, church, media (cable television, local radio stations), and all interested individuals should be involved in the planning and implementation of a language program.
- Kodiak should encourage the use of our language in all aspects of life (including meetings), inform public to respect all dialects and accent of our language.

## Short Term Strategies

- Support the Alutiiq Museum Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program and beyond to grow, as quickly as possible, fluent adult speakers/teachers.



- Sponsor adult and family language clubs to encourage parents to speak our language at home with their children.
- Teach the purest form of our language and accommodate different learning styles.
- Develop language-learning resources (audio and video tapes, alphabet posters, children's books, curriculum) to strengthen peoples' ability to learn our language.
- Develop relationships and work with other language programs in the state to create a comprehensive Alutiiq language program.

## **Long Term Strategies**

- Sponsor a full Alutiiq language immersion preschool and tribal school (K-12) where students can learn our traditions, way of life and language.
- “Grow” language curriculum with the children to ensure that language and cultural learning follows the children through their schooling.
- Continue to develop language-learning resources to strengthen peoples' ability to teach and learn our language.
- Offer as a ‘foreign language’ credit for High School and Middle School students, write a novel in our language, translate the bible into Alutiiq, and open all Alutiiq meetings in our language.
- Unite to ensure that Alutiiq is taught in the Kodiak Island Borough School District because it may not be a global language but it is one of the world's languages.

## **Notes**

- Fill any Master/Apprentice positions that haven't been filled in other communities in Kodiak.
- Each Apprentice could do one of the following: sponsor adult language clubs in KANA once a week (during work hours), sponsor family language clubs once a week at the KANA Wellness Center (after work hours), sponsor short immersion sessions during the Even Start Group Socials each month, assist Even Start home visitors when they go to Alutiiq homes with language once a month.

# Old Harbor

## Introduction

On March 5, I traveled to Old Harbor to host a strategic planning session with the community. 13 community and Tribal members attended the meeting. With the permission of the Tribal Council, I also walked door-to-door within the community talking with Elders, adults and local organizations about the language program and delivering surveys. Community and tribal members identified the following recommendations and strategies for language revitalization in Old Harbor:

The following recommendations and strategies were formally adopted by the Old Harbor Tribal Council (resolution 23-03) on September 9, 2003.

## Recommendations

- Old Harbor needs to work in conjunction with the Alutiiq Museum to revive the Alutiiq language to keep our language alive, foster cultural pride in our people, and strengthen our cultural identity.
- All interested Alutiiq people, Elders, local school, Old Harbor Tribal Council, Old Harbor Native Corporation, the State of Alaska, and Kodiak Island Borough should be involved in the planning and implementation of a language program.

## Short Term Strategies

- Support the Alutiiq Museum Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program to grow, as quickly as possible, fluent adult speakers.
- Sponsor adult and family language clubs to encourage parents to speak our language at home with their children.
- Develop language-learning resources (audio and video tapes of Elders, CD ROM, alphabet posters, children's books, songs, flash cards that depict 'village life') and make them available to people in Old Harbor to strengthen peoples' ability to learn our language.
- Create environments within our community that foster language learning and encourage young parents to learn and teach our language to their children.

## Long Term Strategies

- Sponsor a full Alutiiq language immersion preschool where students can learn our traditions, way of life and language from Kindergarten to grade 1.

- “Grow” language curriculum with the children to ensure that language and cultural learning follows the children through grade 12.
- Develop an entire generation of fluent Alutiiq speakers so all daily and special community events can be held in our language including, meetings, school and bingo.

## **Notes**

- I received Statement of Interest forms from two fluent speaking Elders and three adults interested in learning. Old Harbor is home to the greatest number of fluent Alutiiq speakers and demonstrated immense community support for language revitalization.
- In Old Harbor the Apprentices can easily focus on teaching pre-school children, as they are a large village.
- The K-12 school is very welcoming and responsive to their community.

# Ouzinkie

## Introduction

December 13, 2002, I traveled to Ouzinkie to give a presentation during the Annual Tribal Council meeting. 34 community members and Tribal Council members attended the meeting. With the permission of the Tribal Administrator, I also walked door-to-door within the community talking with Elders, adults and local organizations about the language program and delivering surveys. Community and tribal members identified the following recommendations and strategies for language revitalization in Ouzinkie:

The following recommendations and strategies were formally adopted by the Ouzinkie Tribal Council (resolution 03-12) on July 16, 2003.

## Recommendations

- Ouzinkie needs to work in conjunction with the Alutiiq Museum to revive the Alutiiq language to ensure that the language is not completely lost and to preserve our cultural pride and identity.
- All interested Alutiiq people, Ouzinkie School, parents, Ouzinkie Native Corporation, Ouzinkie Tribal Council, and the preschool should be involved in the planning and implementation of a language program.

## Short Term Strategies

- Support the Alutiiq Museum Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Program to grow, as quickly as possible, fluent adult speakers and to preserve the Ouzinkie dialect.
- Hold half-hour Alutiiq language immersion sessions each day in the preschool to strengthen our children’s cultural identity and knowledge of our language.
- Sponsor adult and family language clubs in the Tribal Council Culture Center to encourage parents to speak our language at home with their children.

## Long Term Strategies

- Hire full-time Alutiiq teachers to work within the school (K-12) teaching our language and culture classes to all students.
- Encourage all Alutiiq people to have pride in their heritage and learn our language.
- “Grow” language curriculum with the children to ensure that language and cultural learning follows the children through their schooling.

- Develop language-learning resources to strengthen peoples' ability to learn our language.

## Notes

- I received a Statement of Interest form from one adult in the community. During the site visit I called and made home visits to many of the elders in the community. One elder showed interest in participating in the program. I mailed information to all of the elders in the community that community members had identified as possible speakers.
- One elder has shown interest but it seems that two elders team-teaching one to two adults in the community may be a better fit for Ouzinkie since the interested elder professed to have some health problems. By identifying two elders that could work together to teach some of the pressure put on the elders would be alleviated. If one elder became ill, the other could work with the adult(s) until the other recovered.
- In Ouzinkie the program can easily be focused on preschool children, as Ouzinkie is a growing community with many young children.
- The new culture center will be a perfect location for adult and family language classes.

# Larsen Bay

## Introduction

January 14 – 16, 2003, I traveled to Larsen Bay to give a presentation during the Tribal Council meeting. The Tribal Council meeting was canceled since a majority of the Tribal Council members were weather bound in Kodiak. With the permission of the Tribal Administrator, I walked door to door in the community discussing one-on-one with community members about the language program the Alutiiq Museum is planning, distributing language surveys and getting a feel for what type of language program the community would support. I surveyed 30 people or roughly 50% of the population. Below is a listing of the recommendations community members shared with I.

The following recommendations and strategies were formally adopted by the Larsen Bay Tribal Council (resolution 09-03) on August 25, 2003.

## Recommendations

- Larsen Bay needs to work in conjunction with the Alutiiq Museum to revive the Alutiiq language to ensure that the language is not completely lost and preserve our culture.
- Fluent speakers, High School, parents, Tribal Council and Preschool should be involved in the planning and implementation of a language program.

## Short Term Strategies

- Support the Alutiiq Museum Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program to grow, as quickly as possible, fluent adult speakers.
- Sponsor adult and family language clubs to encourage parents to speak our language at home with their children.
- Target teaching our language to the younger generation by sponsoring short (30 minute to one hour), daily immersion sessions in the Preschool and elementary class to strengthen our children's cultural identity and knowledge of our language.

## Long Term Strategies

- Sponsor daily immersions sessions in school (K-12) to strengthen our children's cultural identity and knowledge of our language.
- Provide community members with learning resources (i.e. cassette tapes, dictionary) to strengthen peoples' ability to learn our language.
- Develop fluent speakers to increase our community's ability to pass on our language.

## Notes

- I received Statement of Interest forms from three adults in the community and one elder.
- The greatest concern is identifying an elder that will be able to stay in Larsen Bay for the three years of the program. All three fluent speakers in Larsen Bay are regularly out of the community due to health reasons. It seems that elders leave the community mainly in the winter months.
- If the Museum is able to identify committed participants in Larsen Bay the program will need to be tailored to the community. Mainly, the program will need to take into consideration the mobility of the speakers in the community, possible solutions are: 1) putting the apprentices on an accelerated program of more intense immersion or, 2) recruiting two elders in the community that can team teach the apprentices so that there is always a teacher present in the village. The program will also need to consider the fact that there are only two children in the preschool. In order to target a greater audience, the Apprentices may need to provide immersion instruction in both the elementary class (K-5) and preschool.

# Port Lions

## Introduction

January 16 – 18, 2003, I gave presentations during the Tribal Council meeting and sponsored a community meeting. A total of 22 people attended the Strategic Planning Sessions. I also met individually with community members and Elders that were unable to attend the meeting to acquire a general idea of how the community felt about implementing a language program. The recommendations and strategies for language revitalization that were identified by community members are listed below.

The following recommendations and strategies were formally adopted by the Port Lions Traditional Council (resolution 2003-18R) on June 3, 2003.

## Recommendations

- Port Lions needs to work in conjunction with the Alutiiq Museum to revive the Alutiiq language to bring our people together, create a stronger community and cultural identity within our people and specifically our children, tie our children to their culture and family history, and help our adults to remember the language.
- Fluent speakers, parents, Kodiak College, Port Lions School, Port Lions Traditional Council, the City of Port Lions, KANA, Even Start, and the preschool should be involved in the planning and implementation of a language program.

## Short Term Strategies

- Announce Alutiiq words daily over the school intercom to increase all children's appreciation for and understanding of our language and culture.
- Support the Alutiiq Museum Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program to grow, as quickly as possible, fluent adult speakers and preserve the Port Lions/Afognak dialect.
- Sponsor adult and family language clubs in the Tribal Council Cultural Center to encourage parents to speak our language at home with their children.
- Target teaching our language to the younger generation by sponsoring short (30 minute), daily immersion sessions in the preschool.

## Long Term Strategies

- Offer the Alutiiq language as an elective every year for credit in the High School to strengthen our children's cultural pride and knowledge.



- Develop a generation of fluent Alutiiq speakers to increase our ability to pass on our language.
- Sponsor short, daily immersion sessions in school (K-12) to strengthen our children's cultural identity and knowledge of our language.
- Create learning resources (i.e. cassette tapes, CD ROM, dictionary) to strengthen peoples' ability to learn our language.

## **Notes**

- I received Statement of Interest forms from two elders and three adults in the community.
- If the Museum is able to identify committed participants in Port Lions the program can easily be focused on the pre-school children, as Port Lions has many young children.
- The new culture center will be a perfect location for adult and family language classes.

# **Alutiiq Museum Guidelines & Strategies**

## **Introduction**

Five Alutiiq Museum staff members that are involved in the Alutiiq Museum Alutiiq language programs and projects, met to develop recommendations and strategies for language revitalization.

The following recommendations and strategies were formally adopted by the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation (resolution 2003-02) during the annual board meeting on July 10, 2003.

## **Recommendations**

- The Alutiiq Museum should help each community realize the individual recommendations and strategies outlined by their tribal and community members in this report.
- The Alutiiq Museum should work with all Indigenous and educational organization in the Kodiak Archipelago to ensure that all parties have the opportunity to participate in the revitalization of the Alutiiq language.
- The Alutiiq Museum should encourage the daily use and value of the Alutiiq language through public relation campaigns.

## **Short Term Strategies**

- The Alutiiq Museum should continue and expand existing Alutiiq language programs in order to foster cultural knowledge and the revitalization of the Alutiiq language.
- The Alutiiq Museum should sponsor the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program to grow, as quickly as possible, fluent Alutiiq speakers.
- The Alutiiq Museum should work to prevent the attrition of Masters and Apprentices in the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program.
- The Alutiiq Museum should develop Alutiiq language resources and materials to aid students in learning the Alutiiq language.
- The Alutiiq Museum should support and encourage individuals in their efforts to learn the Alutiiq language.

## **Long Term Strategies**

- The Alutiiq Museum should encourage people to support and respect all dialects of the Alutiiq language.
- The Alutiiq Museum should continue to support Tribes and communities in their grassroots efforts to revitalize the Alutiiq language.
- The Alutiiq Museum should develop Island-wide, self-sustaining Alutiiq language projects and programs.
- The Alutiiq Museum should maintain and make accessible the Alutiiq language archives.
- The Alutiiq Museum should develop relationships with the school district and other educational organizations in the Kodiak Archipelago to promote bilingual/heritage education.

# Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project

*“Though Alutiit is not a global language, it is one of the world’s languages. To our Elders and other fluent speakers, it is the language that expresses the values and knowledge of our people and best describes our place in the world.” – Teri Schneider, Kodiak Community Meeting, Feb 2003*

As explained earlier, several language education projects have been implemented in the Kodiak region. Although these projects have stimulated interest in the traditional language and way of life, they have not revitalized the language. With the Alutiit language now at the highest level of endangerment, the Alutiit people recognize the urgency of implementing an effective revitalization program. If they do not, Alutiit will cease to be a living language in less than twenty years.

Other Native American communities facing this same dilemma have turned to Master-Apprentice programs. Through total immersion sessions with fluent Elder speakers, young adults have learned their Native languages and gone on to teach it to others. Research indicates that this is an ideal method for reawakening a language on the verge of extinction (e.g., between stage 7 and stage 8 of language loss). The Kodiak Alutiit community has chosen this approach to revitalize Alutiit. In order to guarantee the successful revitalization of the Alutiit language, the Alutiit Nation has replicated and enhanced existing program models that have demonstrated success (see the *Other Indigenous Language Programs* section of this report) while meeting the needs of individual communities by addressing the recommendations and strategies defined in the *Community Recommendations* section of this report.

The unity of the Kodiak Alutiit community behind this approach is evidenced by their full participation in the planning process and their continued commitment to assisting with and evaluating the effectiveness of the project. The Alutiit Elders are passing their knowledge onto the next generation. Native organizations are instrumental in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project.

The Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project, funded through a grant from the Administration for Native Americans and generous support for local Native and educational organizations, began October 1, 2004. Although still in the infant stages of implementation, this project merges several successful indigenous language revitalization programs and current Alutiit language projects. There are seven fundamental goals of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project. First and foremost, the project will sustain Alutiit as a living language by creating a younger generation of speakers. Second, it will strengthen pride in Native identity through the revitalization of the heritage language, promoting the Alutiit way of life and fostering social well-being in all seven communities on the Island. Third, it will create an environment that promotes revitalization of the Alutiit language throughout the greater Kodiak community, so that all people value and honor Alutiit language and heritage. Next, it will build an intergenerational bridge between Alutiit youth and Elders to maintain the transmission of traditional knowledge and skills. It will

increase the accessibility of Alutiiq language learning by creating effective educational resources. It will unify the Alutiiq Nation behind the shared goals of language revitalization. And lastly, it will create increased opportunities for personal achievement among community members.

To achieve the goals listed above, the Alutiiq Nation has designed the three-year Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project with six distinct but related objectives. These objectives are outlined below with a description of associated activities and methods of implementation.

### Learn the Alutiiq Language

Over a three-year period, ten adults will apprentice under five fluent Alutiiq Elder speakers (Masters) to learn the Alutiiq language. Each Master and Apprentice Team, consisting of one speaker and two learners, will meet ten hours a week for total immersion language training. Every session will be digitally recorded. Apprentices will be required to keep journals documenting their experiences and to participate in monthly teleconferences with the Alutiiq Language Manager. By the end of the first year, the Apprentices will have a *novice high fluency* of the Alutiiq language as defined by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines. In year two the Apprentices will reach *intermediate high fluency*, and in year three, *advanced fluency*. Ten Masters and five Apprentices will be selected through a competitive, island-wide hiring process based on their dedication to Alutiiq cultural integrity, their willingness to learn and teach the language, and their professional qualifications (e.g., prior teaching experience).

### Digital Recordings

Each Master and Apprentice Team will be equipped with a digital camera and voice recorder to record their weekly immersion session during the duration of the project. During the three year project the teams will collect over 7,800 hours of cultural knowledge in the Alutiiq language. These recordings will serve as a permanent record of the language and an invaluable linguistic and cultural database. The digital tapes will be mailed to the Language Manager and transferred to CD ROM for addition to the Alutiiq Museum’s permanent collection. A second set of copies will be mailed to the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska Native Language Center, for safekeeping. Finally, the Museum will develop and distribute a comprehensive master catalog of the information contained in the recordings. This will increase people’s access to the archive and assist the Museum in utilizing the recordings in the development of educational resources.

### Language Resources

In the second and third year of the project, the Alutiiq Museum, in partnership with other community organizations (e.g., the Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region, Even Start Program, Alaska Native Knowledge Network, and Kodiak Area Native Association), will develop language resources designed to sustain the Alutiiq language beyond the life of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project. These resources will include a preschool curriculum, children’s books translated into Alutiiq, and language stickers for household objects. These materials will be distributed to Native organizations and educational institutions throughout the Kodiak Archipelago.

### Teach the Alutiiq Language

In the second year of the project, all ten Apprentices will spend at least one hour a week teaching the Alutiiq language to families, children and/or students in their communities. Each Apprentice will choose a teaching format based on personal interests and the strategies outlined by their community (see the *Community Recommendations* section in this report). Possible activities that Apprentices could do include: weekly immersion sessions in local preschools, announcing Alutiiq words over local school intercoms, and hosting one-hour family language clubs.

### Plan to Sustain and Expand Language Learning

In the third year of the project, the Alutiiq Nation will develop a plan for sustained language acquisition. In this plan, the Alutiiq Museum will assess the feasibility of sponsoring immersion preschools in the Kodiak region and consider the training necessary to continue teaching the Alutiiq language and expand the domains of its use. The plan will also outline ways to utilize and distribute the cultural knowledge contained in the digital archive of Master/Apprentice immersion sessions.

### Public Relations Campaign

During the first year of the project, the Alutiiq Museum will inform the public about the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project through press releases and interviews with the Kodiak Daily Mirror and KMXT Public Radio, articles in the Alutiiq Museum newsletter and website ([www.alutiiqmuseum.com](http://www.alutiiqmuseum.com)), public presentations and community contacts. The community will learn about the benefits of learning a second language, and the Museum will work with organizations to incorporate the Alutiiq language materials into local classrooms. By the end of the first year, there will be wide spread community knowledge of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project and support for its elements including a plan to incorporate Alutiiq language materials into classrooms.

The multi-facet approach of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Program will ensure the survival and continued vitality of the Alutiiq language. Each year, the focus of the project will shift, enhancing its effectiveness and the prospect of revitalizing the Alutiiq language.

The first year of the project will focus on language learning, preservation and gaining public support. The Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project will ensure the preservation of the Alutiiq language by digitally recording each of the Master/Apprentice immersion sessions resulting in 2,600 hours of cultural knowledge and Alutiiq language being recorded annually, and over 7,800 hours of recordings during the life of the project. The Alutiiq Museum will copy and archive the materials in the Alutiiq Museum and Alaska Native Language Center, making them accessible to the Alutiiq people. Ten Apprentices will reach novice high fluency in the Alutiiq language and the project will continue to gain public support through a comprehensive public relations campaign. During the second year, although language learning and preservation are still a fundamental component of the project, developing language learning resources is also a focus. The Alutiiq Museum and Apprentices will work with project partners to develop multiple language learning/teaching resources that will increase the use of Alutiiq in classrooms and homes. During the final year of the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project, the Apprentices continue to learn and preserve the language but they are also charged with sharing their newfound knowledge with their

community while the Museum concentrates on developing long-range plans for language sustainability.

The comprehensive method of the three-year Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project will have a lasting effect on language revitalization in the Kodiak Archipelago and will bring the Alutiiq people closer to accomplishing their long-range goals.

In addition to accomplishing the regional goals for language revitalization, the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project will address and accomplish many of the goals and strategies outlined by the individual communities on the Island by continuing to work with the local Tribal Councils and communities to tailor the project to their specific needs. For instance, the community of Larsen Bay is small with roughly 50 year-round residents. There are currently two children enrolled in preschool. In order to ensure that the younger generation is able to learn the language, the community would like short immersion sessions taught in the preschool and kindergarten to fifth grades. If a Master/Apprentice team is identified in Larsen Bay, the Museum will work closely with the Tribal Council and school to incorporate these specifications into the language project in this community.

Accomplishing the communities' goals for language revitalization and cultural preservation will also greatly increase the Alutiiq people's capacity for self-determination. The Alutiiq Nation has a long-standing history of anthropologists, botanists, ethnohistorians, linguists, and other researchers coming into their communities, studying the people, with little results realized by the Alutiiq. By taking an active lead in research, the Alutiiq Museum is ensuring that the information remains in the communities. Likewise, by teaching the Alutiiq language to Alutiiq people, the Museum will guarantee that the language and cultural values and traditions live within the people. The Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project will help to bring the Alutiiq nation closer to realizing their ultimate goal: *to grow an entire generation of fluent Alutiiq speakers that will be able to utilize the Alutiiq language in their daily lives.*

# Sustaining Language Acquisition

*“When I was growing up my parents used to speak the language when they didn’t want me to understand what they were saying. It was sort of a secret language. It wasn’t until I was older that I realized that they were keeping it a secret from us kids because they were afraid for us when we were in school. Now, all I want is for my children to learn to speak it.” – Parent from Port Lions, Jan 2003*

**A**lthough developing fluent adult speakers is the only way to ensure that the Alutiiq language does not continue to fade away with the passing of Elders, additional materials, projects and programs must be developed in order to ensure the continued vitality of the language. Below are a few materials and projects and programs that will need to be completed or implemented in the Kodiak Alutiiq region to augment language learning and ensure future fluent speakers have the tools to share their knowledge. In the

## Materials

The Kodiak Alutiiq people recognize that hands-on materials are valuable when learning and teaching a language. Although, through the various past and current Alutiiq language projects and programs the Alutiiq people have begun to preserve and reawaken their language, additional language learning materials are needed in order to effectively support the revitalization of Alutiiq. Below is a small sampling of the possible materials that could support individuals in learning the Alutiiq language.

As the Apprentices begin to teach Alutiiq in the local preschools, it will quickly become apparent that the Alutiiq people need language-learning materials and curriculum to grow with the preschool children. Eventually, the Alutiiq nation will need to develop complete K-8 curriculum that is culturally relevant but meets the Alaska State Standards. The Alutiiq people will need to write curriculum that incorporates important Alutiiq cultural values and ways of life while simultaneously preparing Alutiiq youth for success in modern American society. Included in this curriculum should be thematic units based on traditional cultural values, principals and practices. Units could include such essential cultural values and ideals as sharing, subsistence, genealogy, the relationship of people and land, and creation stories.

Additionally, materials to support subject-specific learning need to be developed. For example, Everyday Mathematics, the adopted mathematics curriculum for most of the Anchorage School District, has easy to use math games and instructional tools and lessons that engage students and teachers. The Alutiiq people should adopt and adapt curriculum that has already been developed instead of ‘reinventing the wheel’. Many insightful and useful curriculums and materials can be found on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network. Further study of the curriculum utilized by other successful indigenous immersion schools such as the Native Hawaiians and Yup’ik should be conducted and adapted as necessary.



Perhaps one of the most widely used materials that should be produced in the near future are culturally relevant Alutiiq language books, books on tape and flashcards. These materials can be tailored to different age groups and widely distributed. Books accompanied with tapes will greatly help children in proper pronunciations and teachers as they read books out loud to their students. Likewise, books on tape will assist adults in the learning process. Another beneficial tool in the language-learning process are simple flashcards that focus on everyday activities such as; dining out, common words and phrases, and talking on the phone. These flashcards assist individuals in the fundamentals of language – how to function in everyday society. Like books, tapes that accompany flashcards ensure that language learners correctly pronounce words.

A future project that would greatly benefit Alutiiq language learners, is the creation of Alutiiq Place Names Maps for the entire Island. As stated previously, the Native Village of Afognak has been working closely with local Elders to develop a comprehensive map that identifies the names of geographical places and features that are integral to the traditional life ways of Kodiak's Alutiiq people. However, this map is tailored to the Afognak region and places are listed by their Afognak name. Eventually, a place names map should be created that features the names of different places in both sub-dialects. Sections surrounding traditional sites/villages should be blown up so that as much information can be put on the map as possible. These maps could be uploaded onto the internet and even written into CD ROM format. When complete, this map will assist Apprentices and children in learning the traditional names of places and features as well as pinpoint their importance in Alutiiq society.

## **Projects and Programs**

Below is a small sampling of the possible projects and program that could assist in the revitalization of Alutiiq.

First and foremost, the Alutiiq Nation must grow new fluent speakers. The Master/Apprentice Program Model is the most successful and culturally relevant model available. As reviewed previously, the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project will grow ten fluent speakers and provide them with the training necessary to teach Alutiiq to others in their community and the finances needed to develop materials. See the *Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project* section of this report.

As the Apprentices increase in fluency, they can begin to share their newfound knowledge with others in their communities through adult and family language clubs. These clubs will serve several purposes: 1) provide Apprentices with a teaching avenue where they will be able to refine their teaching skills; 2) give community members a structured opportunity to learn the Alutiiq language and cultural history; and 3) allow Apprentices to assess the Alutiiq language materials developed through the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project and the Alutiiq Museum.

By utilizing the Maori Language Nests Model or immersion preschools, the Alutiiq people can revitalize their language (see *Other Indigenous Language Programs*). Only through regular, total immersion can young children become fluent in Alutiiq. Through the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project, Apprentices will develop comprehensive Alutiiq preschool curriculum which can be implemented in the preschools currently serving the Kodiak Archipelago. By coupling

immersion preschools with family language clubs, and materials development, parents will be able to reinforce at home the language their children receive in school. To ensure continued successful growth of children's learning, the Alutiiq Nation will need to sustain a full-time curriculum development position whose sole responsibility will be to develop curriculum and materials for teachers to implement the following year. This position, although costly, will be integral to the success of the program. As the students reach Kindergarten, the Alutiiq people will need to decide what type of school they will develop for their children. The pros and cons of bilingual streams within public schools, regional public schools, private schools, and charter schools, will need to be evaluated. It is too early in the revitalization efforts to make a clear and concise recommendation in this report. Intensive study will need to be conducted during the first years of the immersion preschool.

One of the most important facets of language revitalization is to incorporate the language into as many different aspects of life, by as many different people, as possible. High school students and young adults (college age) are often overlooked by indigenous language programs. They are seen as too old to quickly learn a language and not dedicated enough to become fluent. On the contrary, through college and high school "foreign" language classes, a teacher has the added benefit of not only class time but study time. It is through this avenue that Apprentices can begin to grow a number of qualified and certified teaching professionals that are "school fluent" - familiar with the structure of the language but may not understand the cultural context that first language speakers understand. By developing an interactive satellite and Internet delivered college course that is cross-referenced with high school, the Alutiiq Nation can provide hundreds of people with the opportunity to learn Alutiiq with minimal effort on the part of the teacher. Benefits of the course, include: 1) satellite and internet delivered courses can easily be accessed by rural high school and college students (even working parents can record the classes to watch them later); 2) Alutiiq people living outside of the Kodiak area can learn Alutiiq; 3) Elders can share their knowledge with many people without feeling overwhelmed; 4) the courses can be taped and archived for future use; and 5) it will meet the foreign language requirement of many high school and colleges.

In the near future, the Alutiiq people need to work with their tribal councils and a University to develop a certification or degree program which will provide language specialists with the credibility necessary for them to work successfully within the school system. Many indigenous language programs, such as the Yup'ik and Hawaiians, have effectively developed these programs. Some programs have incorporated such valuable courses as language proficiency and how to teach specific classes through the indigenous language. Ideally, the program will be linked to Associate of Early Childhood Development (required for preschool teachers) and Teachers Endorsement (required for K-12 teachers) degree programs.

In the past, Dig Afognak Camps have been instrumental in fostering cultural pride in the Alutiiq people. As Apprentices become more fluent, Dig Afognak should provide longer and more comprehensive language camps. During these camps, fluent speakers could work closely with Apprentices to teach camp participants the Alutiiq language. Apprentices and Masters could utilize immersion in the camp, where participants could be required to speak *Alutiitstun-K'siin*, only in Alutiiq, for set time periods in the day. As participant's knowledge increases, the allotted time for immersion can increase. Although this approach alone cannot grow fluent speakers,

when paired with family language classes, immersion preschools, and materials development, immersion language camps could have a lasting affect on people's ability to retain the Alutiiq language.

With the growing need for materials, projects and programs to revitalize the Alutiiq language, the Alutiiq Nation will have to face their greatest difficulty – the creation of a separate entity to administer the development and implementation of Alutiiq language programs and materials. Although the Alutiiq Museum currently has the capacity to oversee the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program and small materials development projects, it does not have the space or personnel to administer large-scale, multi-faceted programs such as immersion preschools and post-secondary certification programs. By creating a separate non-profit solely dedicated to language revitalization, the Alutiiq people will ensure that their revitalization efforts can continue to grow unabated by space or personnel.

# Conclusion

*“It is estimated that by 2015 there will no longer be any fluent Alutiiq speakers. We don’t have a choice, we have to save our language now, before it’s too late.” – Shauna Hegna, Old Harbor Community Meeting, Feb 2003*

**S**ince 1784, when the Russians first settled in Kodiak, the Alutiiq language has steadily declined. It is through this decline that the Alutiiq Nation has lost many of the cultural traditions and know how unique to their people. During the 1960’s and 1970’s, several linguists traveled to Kodiak to save as much of this cultural knowledge on audio recordings. These recordings have long-since left the Archipelago.

It was not until the 1980’s that the Alutiiq people awoke from their sense of shame to reclaim what had been taken from their parents and their grandparents – their language and much of their culture. For the last twenty years the Alutiiq Nation has slowly begun to take back their sense of pride and language. They have sponsored numerous cultural revitalization projects and programs but have not been able to grow new, younger fluent speakers. Their need for a new generation of fluent speakers is urgent. With less than 50 known Elderly fluent speakers residing in the Kodiak area and more passing away each year, they must grow new speakers or their language will only be spoken in archives.

The Alutiiq people understand this urgency and have taken great strides to not only develop comprehensive programs to breath life into their language but to do so in a manner that meets the needs of the individual communities on the Island. In the tail end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003, I, as an Alutiiq Museum representative, worked closely with the ten tribal councils and other Alutiiq organizations, to conduct strategic planning sessions in each community on the Island. Through these meetings, communities voiced their concerns about the loss of the language, identified recommendations and strategies for the revitalization of the language in their community, and defined the organizations that should address the need. It is through these recommendations and strategies and research of other indigenous language programs, that the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee was able to develop short and long-term recommendations and strategies for the region and develop a comprehensive language revitalization program.

The Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project will grow ten fluent speakers, preserve the knowledge of five Elders in digital format, provide adults with teacher training, and develop materials that will sustain language acquisition beyond the funding period. This project alone will greatly enhance the likelihood of the Alutiiq language surviving into the next generation. However, it is only the beginning. The various materials, projects and programs listed in this report will greatly aid language teachers and students in the learning process. Many of the materials are already thoroughly planned or underway, such as the materials produced through the Sharing Words Project, the Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Project, the revised and updated Alutiiq Language Dictionary, the Alutiiq Language Website, The Alutiiq Phrasebook, and the Afognak Place Names Map.

Still, many more materials are in the fundamental planning stages and the Alutiiq people will need a lot of hard work, funds and dedication to see them through. Such possible projects and materials include: a place names map for the entire Archipelago, K-8 curriculum, printed books, flashcards, immersion preschools, college and high school classes, university certificate and/or degree programs, and intensive summer immersion camps.

Over the last twenty years, the Alutiiq people have worked diligently to see various projects unfold. Recently, they have taken their revitalization efforts further and begun to develop long-range plans for the rebirth of their language. Eventually, they will need to create a separate entity solely dedicated to the revitalization of their language. The question is not whether they have the dedication or wear with all to witness the revitalization of their language, it is whether they will secure enough funding to keep up with their drive.

# Appendix

*“Language embodies the world view of a culture and is unique to the culture that created it. It reflects values and concepts that are deemed to be the most important by a culture. A language describes the culture it comes from.” – Noam Chomsky*

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# Alutiiq Language Survey

Distributed by the Alutiiq Museum



Please complete this survey if you are of Alutiiq Descent

How old are you?

- 12 to 18       31 to 40       50 to 60  
 19 to 30       41 to 50       Over 61

Gender:

- Male  
 Female

What community do you live in?

- Ahkiok                       Larsen Bay                       Port Lions  
 Karluk                       Ouzinkie                       Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Kodiak City                       Old Harbor

How many years have you lived in your community? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know anyone in your community that speaks the Alutiiq language? If so, who?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
To what extent do you and your family speak the Alutiiq Language at home at the present time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When you were growing up, how often did you hear the Alutiiq language in your home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did or do your parents speak the Alutiiq language at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When you were a small child (before school age), how often did you speak the Alutiiq language at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did or does your family use some Alutiiq words at home such as: chai, awa'i, cama'i, quyanaa, futii etc?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once you started going to school, how often did you speak the Alutiiq language at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Is it important for Native members of your community to know their Native language?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is knowing how to speak the language an important part of being Alutiiq?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*(Survey Continues on the Back of this Sheet)*

Strongly  
Agree    Agree    Undecided    Disagree

Our community should make an effort to teach the Alutiiq language.                       

Alutiiq language should be taught in our schools.                       

Learning the Alutiiq language is as important as learning English.                       

It would be a good idea to provide classes for families on how to keep the Alutiiq language spoken at home.                       

It would be a good idea to teach people how to write the Alutiiq Language.                       

---

How well can you speak the Alutiiq language? (*check one*)

- Fluently
- Somewhat well: can make myself understood but have problems with it
- Not very well: know a lot of words and phrases but have a hard time communicating
- Know some words but can't speak in sentences
- Not at all

How well do you understand the Alutiiq language? (*check one*)

- Understand everything people say to me
- Understand mostly, but not completely
- Understand some words and phrases
- Not at all

Would you be willing to: (*check one*)

- Teach the Alutiiq language to adults
  - Learn the Alutiiq language
  - Help plan a language program
- 

If you do not currently speak the Alutiiq language, how do you think you could learn the language best?

If your family does not currently speak the Alutiiq language at home, why do they not speak the language?

*Optional:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Program  
Public Relations / Community Meeting Schedule  
November - August 2003**

Date	Organization	Community	Held During / In conjunction With	Location	Advertisement	Topic	Attendance	Staff
11/7/2002	Indigenous Language Institute	Albuquerque	National Language Working Symposium	Hyatt Hotel, Albuquerque, NM	Conference Agenda	Program Introduction	70	Hegna
11/21/2002	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak/Tele.	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Introductory Letters, Mailout	Program Introduction	14	Hegna
11/23/2002	Koniag Kodiak Shareholder Committee	Kodiak	Koniag Shareholder Committee Meeting	Buskin River Inn	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	9	Hegna
12/13/2002	Ouzinkie Tribal Council	Ouzinkie	Tribal Council Annual Meeting	Ouzinkie Community Hall	Meeting Agenda, bingo announcement	Program Introduction	34	Hegna
12/17/2002	Kodiak Tribal Council	Kodiak	Tribal Council Meeting	Kodiak Tribal Council Offices	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	13	Hegna
12/18/2002	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak/Tele.	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	KANA Wellness Center	Committee Member Mailout	Program Update	31	Hegna
1/15/2003	Larsen Bay Tribal Council	Larsen Bay	Tribal Council Meeting	Tribal Council Building	Flyers	Program Introduction	0*	Hegna
1/16/2003	Port Lions Tribal Council	Port Lions	Tribal Council Meeting	Tribal Council Building	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	7	Hegna
1/17/2003	Port Lions Tribal Council	Port Lions	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Tribal Council Building	Flyers, Phone Calls	Program Introduction	15	Hegna
1/20/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Logo Sub-Committee	Kodiak	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Finalize Logo	5	Hegna
1/28/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Name Sub-Committee	Kodiak	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Finalize Program Name	5	Hegna
1/29/2003	Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region	Kodiak	NEAR Meeting	School District Conference Room	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	10	Haakanson
2/18/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak/Tele.	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Program Update	14	Hegna
2/25/2003	Karluk IRA Council	Karluk	Community Potluck	Karluk School Room	Flyers	Program Introduction	13	Hegna
2/28/2003	Kodiak Area Native Association	Kodiak	Board Meeting	KANA Board Meeting	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	10	Hegna
3/6/2003	Old Harbor Tribal Council	Old Harbor	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Old Harbor School Commons	Flyers, announcements during bingo	Program Introduction	14	Hegna
3/12/2003	Alutiiq Museum	Kodiak	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Bay Side Fire station	Flyers, Radio Announcements	Program Introduction	18	Hegna
3/15/2003	Native Village of Afognak	Kodiak	Tribal Council Meeting	KANA Conference Room	Meeting Agenda	Program Update	7	Hegna
3/18/2003	Akhiok Tribal Council	Akhiok	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Akhiok School Library	Flyers	Program Introduction	5	Hegna
4/8/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak/Tele.	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Program Update	16	Hegna
5/2/2003	Enguhlaku Takuka'aq Education Summit	Kodiak	Esgahluku Takuka'aq	Kodiak Community College	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	100	Hegna
5/19/2003	Natives of Kodiak	Kodiak	Board Meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Meeting Agenda	Program Update	12	Hegna
5/20/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak/Tele.	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Program Update	19	Hegna
5/22/2003	Koniag Kodiak Shareholder Committee	Kodiak	Koniag Shareholder Committee Meeting	Buskin River Inn	Meeting Agenda	Program Update	18	Hegna
6/17/2003	Akhiok Tribal Council	Akhiok	Tribal Council Meeting	Tribal Council Building	Meeting Agenda	Program Update	0*	Hegna
6/17/2003	Kaguyak Tribal Council	Akhiok	Tribal Council Meeting	Tribal Council Building	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	0*	Hegna
6/24/2003	Kodiak Tribal Council	Kodiak	Tribal Council Meeting	Kodiak Tribal Council Offices	Meeting Agenda	Program Update	26	Hegna
6/24/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak/Tele.	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Program Update	22	Hegna
6/26/2003	Native Village of Eyak	Cordova	Alutiiq Language Workshop	Community Hall	Conference Agenda	Program Introduction	20	Hegna
7/8/2003	Kodiak Area Native Association	Ouzinkie	Spirit Camp	Spirit Camp	Camp Agenda	Teach Language	32	Counciller
7/10/2003	Alutiiq Museum Board Meeting	Kodiak	Annual Board Meeting	Alutiiq Museum	Agenda	Program Update	16	Hegna
7/11/2003	Kodiak College	Kodiak	Teacher Training	Kodiak Community College	Meeting Agenda	US Education Policy	9	Hegna
7/15/2003	Larsen Bay Tribal Council	Larsen Bay	Tribal Council Meeting	Tribal Council Building	Flyers, Phone Calls	Program Update	4	Hegna
7/15/2003	Kodiak Area Native Association	Ouzinkie	Spirit Camp	Spirit Camp	Camp Agenda	Teach Language	34	Hegna
7/16/2003	Ouzinkie Tribal Council	Ouzinkie	Tribal Council Meeting	Ouzinkie Cultural Center	Meeting Agenda, bingo announcement	Program Update	8	Hegna
7/19/2003	Koniag Seattle Shareholder Committee	Seattle	Koniag Shareholder Committee Meeting	Doubletree Hotel, Seattle, WA	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	19	Hegna
7/22/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak/Tele.	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Program Update	7	Counciller
7/22/2003	Native Village of Afognak	Dig Afognak	Elders Camp	Dig Afognak	Camp Agenda	Record Language	14	Hegna
7/23/2003	Native Village of Afognak	Dig Afognak	Elders Camp	Dig Afognak	Camp Agenda	Record Language	8	Hegna
8/20/2003	Kodiak Island Borough School District	Kodiak	New and Rural Teachers Dinner	High School Commons	Meeting Agenda	Program Introduction	40	Hegna/Counciller
8/26/2003	Alutiiq Museum Board Meeting	Kodiak	Regular Board Meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Meeting Agenda	Program Update	12	Hegna/Haakanson
8/26/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak/Tele.	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Program Update	17	Hegna
9/4/2003	Karluk IRA Council	Karluk	Karluk Tribal Council Meeting	Community Hall	Flyers	Program Update	5	Hegna
9/14/2003	Koniag and KANA	Kodiak	Koniag/KANA Roundtable	Buskin River Inn	Meeting Agenda	Program Update	52	Hegna
9/18/2003	Old Harbor Tribal Council	Old Harbor	Community Potluck	Community/Bingo Hall	Flyers	Program Update	10	Hegna
9/20/2003	Natives of Kodiak Board Meeting	Kodiak	Regular Board Meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Meeting Agenda	Program Update	**	Hegna
9/23/2003	Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee	Kodiak	n/a - Museum sponsored meeting	Natives of Kodiak Conference Room	Committee Member Mailout	Program Update	**	Hegna

Total Presentations: 47

Total Attendance:

814

\* The meeting was cancelled because a quorum could not be reached. Staff walked door-to-door in the community sharing information about the program with community and tribal members.

\*\* The numbers for these meetings were not obtained prior to the printing of this report. For the attendance of these meetings contact Shauna Hegna at the Alutiiq Museum (907) 486-7004.

# Developing a Community Based Language Program

*“In Alaska, where two generations ago there were some 23 native languages, only three are expected to survive the next decade, and only one is predicted to survive into the next generation.” – Krauss, 1992*

## A Step-By-Step Guide

The traditional languages of Alaska’s Native people are in trouble. With English being spoken at school, on television and radio, and in many cases, in homes, people are losing their Native languages. Many indigenous people have experimented with various language projects and programs in hopes of ‘saving’ their language. Often these attempts are not successful, resulting in lost hope and sometimes, the loss of the language itself. This simple step-by-step guide is designed to assist Indigenous people as they begin the difficult task of developing a community based language program. This pamphlet will not guarantee that your language program will be successful in revitalizing your language, but it will help to ensure that all members of your community are included in the design process and therefore, vested in the program. The more people that support your program, the more likely it is that it will succeed.

You will need to follow five steps to develop your community based language program. Below is a short description of each step.

### 1.) Research

First and foremost, in order to better understand the different types of language programs available and their rates of success, you must research other programs. Probably the easiest way to conduct this research is by using the internet. You will be able to quickly learn about programs across the world. If you do not have access to the internet, you can go to your local library or contact one of the many organizations committed to revitalizing indigenous languages. A number of books have been published that address

indigenous language revitalization. Leanne Hinton and John Reyhner each have published a wealth of books that explain various methods of language-learning and are a great place to start. Below is a small sampling of organizations that may be able to answer some questions.

*Alaska Native Language Center*

Fairbanks, Alaska (907) 474-7874

*Indigenous Language Institute*

Santa Fe, New Mexico (505) 820-0311

*Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival*

Fresno, California (559) 237-9813

Be sure to take notes on the programs and begin to think about what programs may work in your community.

### 2.) Planning Committee

The second step in developing a community based language program is to recruit community members to help plan the program. Think about the organizations and people that you want involved in the planning process. What organizations should be represented on the committee (i.e. tribal council, native educators association, school, parent teacher association, village corporation, regional corporation, regional native health organization)? Remember that these are the organizations that may donate funds to the program later so get their participation as early in as possible. The more they feel vested in the program, the more likely they are to fund it later! Next, decide what individuals you would like on the committee (i.e. elders, interested youth, an adult that has a history of working with youth)? Choose individuals that will contribute to the committee but also those in the community that you feel will be most apprehensive. Getting those people that are likely to voice their concerns the loudest insures that you address all of their concerns early in the process and you get their support. Remember, those that yell the loudest, yell no matter if they support or oppose a project. It is also a good idea to develop a standing invitation to all community members and organizations to ensure that everyone that wants to be involved will have the chance.

You will then need to decide how best to contact each of these organizations. The rule of thumb is that you can never remind someone too much! Send a letter, follow up with a call, and, if you are in the same community, drop by to remind the person. Hang flyers at the post office, store, library, tribal offices, and don’t be afraid to announce the meeting at a community function (i.e. potluck, senior dinner) or on the local radio station. Remember that Elders need special consideration – they are the ones that have the knowledge to share! Offer to give them a ride to the meeting, or if they would prefer, have to meeting at their home/senior center. You want them to comfortable! Pick a time and place to meet. It is a good idea to contact those that you want to attend the meeting the most (i.e. Elders) and ask if there is a time or place that they would prefer. Show up to the meeting place early and be sure to have snacks and drinks available.

Start the meeting on time even if others are late, you can catch them up when they arrive. Have everyone introduce themselves and then share a little about what you are trying to do. Talk about the different programs available and share about the different programs you feel may work in your community. Ask for the Committees feedback. Don’t try to go into too much detail with your first meeting. Just get the Committee members excited about language revitalization and the possible programs you can begin in your community. Remind them that the program must be community based. In order to understand the state of your language and get feedback from the community you will need to conduct a language survey (see section 3). Ask Committee members to assist in the survey by completing one themselves and helping to get their families, co-workers, and other community members to fill it out. Set a date for your next meeting.

### 3.) Community Planning

Every good community based language program begins with a community wide survey. By developing and distributing a survey you 1) let everyone know that you are starting a language program, 2) discover your community’s attitudes toward language, 3) assess the rate of language loss,

and 4) inform your community about the urgency to start a language program.

Develop a survey. Several of John Reynher's books discuss how to develop a language survey. Part III of Leanne Hinton's book "The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice" is dedicated to planning language programs and developing surveys. Review these and other sources and create a short (one to two page) survey. Distribute the survey to as many people as possible. Ask committee members, the local Community Health Representative, the school, and even your local churches to hand out the survey. Drop off copies at local businesses and offer to pick them up the following day. Ask people the questions over the phone. Walk door-to-door and fill out the surveys for people. Try to get at least twenty percent of the population to complete a survey. Tally the results and be prepared to share the findings with your Planning Committee.

After you have researched other programs, compiled data on the status of the language, and formed a language committee, you will need to share your findings with the larger community. Plan to host several community meetings where you can talk about your survey, community members can ask questions, and you can have them define their ideas and expectations for the program. The best way to get large numbers of participants is to 'tack' your presentation/meeting onto another gathering in the community. Ask if the tribal council, school board, or city council can add your presentation to their agenda. Host a community wide potluck and give your presentation while everyone eats. Offer door prizes or refreshments. There are a million little ways that you get more people to come to your meetings – your limited only by your imagination!

Be sure to set your meeting up early so that you will have time if you need to make a last minute run for refreshments or to pick up an Elder. Language revitalization is an emotional subject that often is difficult for individuals to discuss. Some get excited, other get angry, be prepared to address all of these reactions. Whatever happens remember that the work that you are doing is important and it often takes several discussions to get people to support a new program. Keep it up!

During the meeting you should accomplish two things. First, share the findings from your survey: the status of the language (number and age of speakers etc.) and peoples attitudes about the language (do people want to learn it etc).

Second, you will need to have your community define their recommendations and strategies for language revitalization. Ask your community questions that will get them thinking about language. Such as, should we have a language program and why? Who (people and organizations) should be involved in the program? What should be the goal of the program (i.e. fluent speakers, appreciation of culture)? What type of program should we have? What are our short-term (2 years) goals for language? What are our long-term (10 years) goals for language? Write people's answers on a large piece of paper so everyone can see. There are no right or wrong answers! Remember that your community may have different ideas about what will work for them and you need to respect that. Lead discussion, don't direct it!

#### **4.) Designing the Program**

Once you have completed your community meetings, type up the recommendations and strategies from all of the meetings and report back to your planning committee. These are the recommendations and strategies that will guide your entire program – look back on them often! Design your program based on your community's recommendations and strategies. A program that does not follow the community's wishes will not succeed or have support! If you envisioned that your community would sponsor a full-immersion preschool but people would rather hold 15 minute immersion sessions in the preschool, you must honor their wishes. Continue to advocate for your ideas but remember that sometimes it take a while for a community to get on board. You may have to start with immersion sessions, prove that it's working, and gradually move towards full immersion. Just remember not to give up!

Work with your planning committee to design a program that reflects your community's ideas. Once you and the committee have refined the design of the

program, ask your committee members to report back to their families and organizations. Host more community meetings. Keep as many people informed on the programs progress as possible – don't let them forget about it!

#### **6.) Starting the Program**

Now that you have planned your program, you will need to get it started. Many programs can simply get started without funds. Ask Elders to volunteer to share their knowledge. Ask the preschool teacher if you can bring someone in to teach language during the day. Ask school teachers if students can visit Elders as extra-credit. Offer to do chores for Elders in exchange for them teaching your language for an hour a week at the community center. There are many ways to get a program started if funding is an issue. Be creative!

If you would like to host a more structured and comprehensive program, you may need some funding. First, begin by asking for support from village and regional organizations. Non-profits, corporations, local businesses, and statewide businesses that operate in your community are always looking for programs to support. Get members of your planning committee to advocate for your program. Ask for donations and host raffles and bake sales. You'll be amazed how much money these events can raise!

If your program is on a larger scale, research statewide and national funders. Although limited, there are organizations dedicated to preserving endangered languages. Below is a sampling of some of the organizations that fund Native language programs.

*Administration for Native Americans*  
Department of Health and Human Services  
(202) 690-5780

*Annenberg Foundation*  
(610) 341-9066

*The Educational Foundation of America*  
(203) 226-6498

Remember, even after your program is in full-swing, you will need to keep your community informed of its progress. Good luck!

The History, Evolution, Methodology,  
Results, Outcomes, and Lessons Learned from

YUGNET ANG' ALLUKI:  
TO KEEP THE WORDS

A Senior Project

Submitted by  
Shauna Zenita Hegna

October 2004  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Rural Development

## **PROJECT HISTORY & EVOLUTION**

From the first permanent Russian settlement on Kodiak Island to the 1970's, a period spanning two centuries, the indigenous people across the last-frontier faced poverty, political isolation and cultural shame. The discovery of oil on the North Slope and the subsequent passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) brought Alaska Native issues to the forefront of national news, forever changing the face of Alaska Native politics and cultures.

The 1971 passage of ANCSA empowered Alaska Natives with newfound political strength. No longer plagued with cultural shame, many Alaska Native groups began to search their cultural histories, seeking pride in their cultures. Beginning in 1984 and continuing over the last twenty years, the Kodiak Alutiiq people have begun to reclaim their cultural heritage. Core to this cultural resurgence, is the revitalization of the Alutiiq language.

In an effort to curb the impending extinction of Alutiiq, dozens of Alutiiq and educational organizations have implemented various forms of language programming (i.e. summer culture camps, Elder's retreats, materials development, audio recordings). Although these programs have developed an appreciation for the language, they have failed to grow new speakers. Beginning in 1999, KANA, the Native Village of Afognak (NVA), and the Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region (NEAR), partnered to create an immersion program. Based on the successful Master-Apprentice Programs in the Lower 48, they planned to pair fluent Elder speakers with adult learners. Through total immersion sessions spanning a two to three year period, they hoped develop a new generation of fluent speakers. In 2001, NVA submitted a proposal to the Administration

for Native Americans (ANA) to sponsor the immersion program. Unfortunately, their application was denied under the auspice of the need for additional planning. In 2002, recognizing that the Alutiiq Museum could develop a language program that could serve all ten tribes in the Kodiak Archipelago, NVA fostered a partnership with them. Under the capable leadership of the Alutiiq Museum's Executive Director, Dr. Sven Haakanson Jr., and NVA's Tribal Administrator, Alisha Drabek, the Alutiiq Museum was awarded a one-year ANA planning grant to plan a comprehensive Alutiiq language revitalization program.

In October 2002, I was hired as the Alutiiq Language Coordinator. As the Alutiiq Language Coordinator I had three major goals: 1) to unite all 10 tribes and seven communities behind a single Alutiiq language program, a feat never before accomplished; 2) to assess the rate of language loss and identify/unify all remaining fluent Alutiiq speakers behind the Alutiiq language program; and 3) to develop a community-based language program that would breath life into our dying language. I like to think that I successfully accomplished all three goals.

## **METHODOLOGY & RESULTS**

In order to assess language loss and develop an appropriate Alutiiq program, I began by researching other indigenous language programs around the world. Using the internet and various books (see bibliography), I learned about various types of immersion programs, summer camps and college classes. In November 2002, I attended the Indigenous Language Institute Working Symposium in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where I learned about programs in the Lower 48. I attended workshops on immersion

preschools, community planning, and language teaching. In February 2003 I attended the Bilingual and Multicultural Equity and Native Educator's Conference in Anchorage, Alaska. I heard about the impacts of the No Child Left Behind law on indigenous language instruction, the success of the Bethel immersion schools, and the Master-Apprentice program sponsored through the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In May 2003, I visited Hawaii with two other Museum staff. I was awed by the Native Hawaiians comprehensive approach to language learning. After two decades they have preschool-12 grades taught in Hawaiian, a Master's degree in Hawaiian, a warehouse filled with Hawaiian materials, and a generation of Hawaiian speakers.

Through this research, I learned that all truly successful programs have in-depth knowledge of the rate of language loss in their communities. In 2000 and 2001, NVA had conducted a rudimentary language survey over the phone, identify a couple dozen fluent speakers, but in truth, Kodiak Alutiiq's had no idea how many Alutiiq speakers were still alive, if anyone was interested in teaching or learning the language, and if the greater community would support a language program. During the latter part of 2002, based on the survey examples in Jon Reyner's and Leanne Hinton's publications, I developed a multifaceted survey. The survey is divided into five sections: demographics, past and current language use, attitudes regarding Alutiiq and interest in programming, fluency levels, and program participation. Over a six month period, with the help of volunteers, I distributed surveys in all six villages on the Island and Kodiak City. Community Health Representatives in the villages gave the surveys to co-workers, school children and Elders. Teachers distributed the survey to their students. The Museum receptionist called people on the phone and asked them the questions. I walked door-to-door delivering the

surveys and returned when people had filled them out. I faxed and emailed the surveys to individuals and enclosed them in the newsletters of partnering organizations. Tribal councils encouraged Tribal members to fill out the survey. All in all, we distributed over 1,000 surveys in seven communities on the Island. Of the 1722 Alutiiq people that currently reside on Kodiak Island, a total of 25.4% or 438 people completed the survey. Between 20 and 73 percent of the Alutiiq population in each community participated in the survey. Once all surveys were received, I created an excel spreadsheet with a row for each survey respondent and a column for each survey question. I meticulously entered all responses into the spreadsheet. I then worked closely with Amy Steffian, Alutiiq Museum Deputy Director, to pour over the data collected. Amy downloaded the spreadsheet into a statistical program to analyze the data. I shared my hypothesis's with Amy and she calibrated the program to search out the data. We were often pleased to see that our hypothesis's were supported by the data and equally surprised when previously unknown relationships were discovered.

It is through the analysis of the statistical data that my hypothesis that rural residents understand more Alutiiq than urban residents, in fact two and a half times the number of urban residents', was substantiated. We were surprised to discover that residents of the villages of Larsen Bay and Karluk, the only villages on the Island with canneries located directly in the community, heard Alutiiq less often than people of other villages and therefore, speak less Alutiiq now. We were also pleased to discover that 93 percent of the survey respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that their "community should make an effort to teach Alutiiq". For detailed information on the survey findings please see the "Summary of Survey Findings" section of my report.



In addition to developing and distributing a language survey, I also collected informal data. I often walked door-to-door visiting with Elders over *chai* (tea) or called them on the phone to ask them about the Alutiiq language. They shared stories of going to school and not being allowed to speak their language and how ashamed they felt. They talked about growing up in the villages and how different life was then. Most of all, they talked about how much they miss hearing Alutiiq. It was through this process that I identified less than 45 fluent speakers that currently reside in the archipelago. Less than 0.3 percent of the Kodiak Alutiiq population can fluently speak our language. The average age of fluent speakers is 72 years. 40 percent of the fluent speakers live in the village of Old Harbor, 35 percent live in Kodiak city, and the remaining 25 percent live in the villages of Port Lions, Ouzinkie, Akhiok, and Larsen Bay. Sadly, there are no fluent speakers that live in the village of Karluk. For additional information on the informal data collected, please see the “Informal Data Collected” section of my report.

Simultaneously while distributing surveys and collecting informal data, I began to work with the local educational and Alutiiq organizations to sponsor community planning meetings. Targeting local Tribal Councils, I sent letters, called, and in some cases begged, to be added to agendas. Over a one year period, I sponsored 19 community planning meetings in seven communities. Over 800 people participated in the planning process. Whenever possible, I tacked my community presentations onto other community meetings or events. I leached onto tribal council meetings and community potlucks – anything that would draw a larger crowd. I would fly to the community on the early morning flight or, in some cases, the day before the meeting, so I could walk door-to-door to let people know about the meeting. Sometimes I would open the phone book and

call every person listed to personally invite them. I would fax or mail flyers to the Tribal Council weeks before the meeting to encourage participation. When meetings were canceled because of weather or a lack of quorum, I would walk door-to-door to solicit feedback from community members.

During planning sessions and when I walked door-to-door, I asked a series of questions that were meant to encourage community members to think about language and what type of programming they would like their community. As they answered the questions, I would write their responses on a large sheet of paper.

The first question I asked participants “Do you want a language program? Why or why not?” This question got participants to start thinking about whether they would like a language program and if so why. What good would the program do? What did they plan to get out of the program? Answers ranged from reclaiming our cultural identity to developing jobs in the villages.

The second question I asked was “Who should be involved in the program?” This question encouraged participants to begin to think about who should plan and implement the program. Interestingly, every session resulted in community members believing that everyone and every organization should be involved in revitalizing Alutiiq. This helped participants take ownership over the program and encouraged them to realize that they have a stake in saving our language.

The next question I asked participants was something to the effect of “if you had two fluent adult Alutiiq speakers living in your community today, what would you want them to do?” This is the interesting question that re-shaped the Alutiiq language program. Originally, the Alutiiq language program was designed with the intent of growing fluent

adult speakers who would then develop full immersion preschools in each community on the Island. I quickly learned that not everyone wanted full immersion preschools. Some communities wanted Alutiiq offered as a foreign language in high school while others wanted to provide family language clubs. In fact, Kodiak City was the only community in all seven communities on the Island that actually wanted a full immersion preschool. The ultimate goal of the entire program had changed. Had we tried to implement immersion preschools in the villages without conducting community planning the program would not have been well received and probably would have failed.

Once participants had answered all questions I input their answers into the Community Strategies section of the report and returned to the community to report on the findings. I mailed a copy of the report to the local tribal council and asked them to pass a resolution officially adopting the recommendations and strategies for their tribal council. All ten tribes on the Island supported and adopted the recommendations and strategies thereby, giving the Alutiiq Museum and Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee the authorization to begin working *with* their communities to enact the recommendations and strategies. Because of the community-based planning, all of the communities fully support the Alutiiq Museum and the language program.

It was during this time that I also established the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Planning Committee. The Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Planning Committee is an Island wide Committee comprised of representatives from the regions 10 tribes and village Corporations, Koniag, Inc., KANA, Native Educators of the Alutiiq Region, Alutiiq people interested in language preservation, and Elders. There is a standing invitation for

all Alutiiq organizations and people to participate in the Planning Committee. The Committee meets on a monthly basis.

The purpose of the Committee is to: 1) discuss the progress of the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Planning Project; 2) give direction as I designed and implemented the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project; and 3) ensure that the design of the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project meets the needs of each community.

Ultimately, the design of the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Project is the result of hundreds of hours of pouring over survey results, talking with community members, and hosting community meetings. It is based on the Master-Apprentice Program Model, a language model utilized by many tribes in the lower 48, however, it is designed to be flexible. If an Elder is only in a community for six months out of the year for health reasons, the Apprentice can spend 20 hours a week for six months working with the Elder instead of 10 hours a week for a year. If one community wants an apprentice to teach family language clubs and another to teach Alutiiq songs to the Alutiiq dance team, than they can. The program is inherently designed to meet the various needs of the seven communities on the Island.

The final section of the report outlines my personal recommendations for sustaining language acquisition. Only through the dedication of the ten Apprentices, consistent materials development, and the continual expansion of various projects and programs, can the Alutiiq language hope to survive into the next generation. It is in this section that I define a number of materials and projects and programs that I feel will have to be developed in order to sustain the Alutiiq language. Many of these materials and

projects and programs have already been successfully implemented by other indigenous groups including the Yup'ik, Native Hawaiians, and Maori.

## **OUTCOMES**

When I look back I see many outcomes and accomplishments from this project. The most obvious outcome is the design of a comprehensive Alutiiq language program. But it is not just the development of the program but the fact that it is community based and driven. Alutiiq people and their communities developed this program. They had a stake in its design and implementation and therefore, its successes and failures.

I believe one of the greatest outcomes of this project was the unification of all ten tribes, KANA, NEAR, village corporations, Koniag, and the Museum behind the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Language Program. To get all of the Native organizations in one region behind a single program is a grand feat. Their financial and in-kind support of the program during the 2002-2003 year, when we did not receive outside funding for the program, demonstrates their support.

I also view the first comprehensive assessment of the language loss in the Kodiak archipelago as an outcome of the project. The University of Alaska Fairbanks Alaska Native Language Center has estimated the number of remaining Alutiiq speakers on a couple of occasions. But never has an organization assessed the rate of language loss, the past and current language use, attitude regarding Alutiiq and interest in programming, and fluency levels. All of this information was gathered for the first time through the language survey. Most importantly, through the distribution of the attached report to

various Alutiiq organizations, the information will stay in the region so that the Alutiiq people will have continual access to the information.

Another outcome of the project was that two young girls, myself and April, were able to learn Alutiiq from two Elders, Nick and Florence. Not only did it fulfill each of our life dreams, but it instilled hope in the Elders and others. April and I performed humorous plays in Alutiiq at the monthly Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Committee meetings and at various community functions. Through laughter, we were able to touch the hearts of the Elders, encouraging them to teach Alutiiq in their communities. We demonstrated to other adults that it is possible to learn Alutiiq. The most memorable play we did was during Dennis Knagin's surprise 74<sup>th</sup> birthday party. The audience roared and April and I enjoyed depicting two of our favorite Elders – Dennis and his wife, Julie, complete with full costumes. Of course, I must have made a hilarious Julie being that she's in her early seventies and I was seven months pregnant at the time.

The final outcome of the project was the ability of community members to express their emotions regarding language loss. Many Elders shared emotional stories during community meetings about being punished for speaking their language. They cried. They shouted. Some walked out on me. Many, for the first time ever, were able to work through the hardships they faced in the United States Educational system and come to terms with their mistreatment. Adults that were ashamed because they could not speak their language gained hope that one day their children will be able to. This project not only provided closure in my search for my own Alutiiq identity but many others as well.

## **LOOKING FOR MYSELF**

Like many indigenous people whose cultures are being swallowed up by mainstream America, I have consistently searched for my identity. Key to unlocking the mystery of my Alutiiq heritage has always been my language. My grandparents fluently spoke Alutiiq. Like most people his age, my father can understand almost everything that people say in Alutiiq but he can't speak it. Growing up, I never heard my father use Alutiiq words. My aunts use words here and there and some of my great-aunts and uncles would use a word here and there but like many Alutiiq's from the North end of Koidak Island, I could not distinguish between what was Alutiiq and what was Russian. I longed to learn my language. So much so, that when I was in high school my principal distributed the foreign language class list for the following year. He asked students to sign up for a foreign language by the end of the day. I stopped him in the hallway and told him that I wanted to take Alutiiq. He laughed and said, "there's nobody that speaks that language anymore. You can take Spanish, Russian or Japanese." I couldn't believe his response. I thought about my great-aunt Julia and great-uncle John, both of them in their eighties at the time. Both of them were fluent in Alutiiq. They had grown up in Afognak and remembered hunting bear, living in Ciqlliaq (semi-subterranean sod houses), and traveling by kayak.

## **TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

It was then that I realized that western educators rarely appreciate indigenous languages and value the traditional knowledge of our Elders even less. In response, I pushed my chin up in the air, looked at my principal in the eyes and said, "I will learn

Alutiiq some day.” That semester I struggled through Spanish. I sat next to all the other Alutiiq students as we stared up at the television mounted on the wall in our classroom watching our teacher that lived thousands of miles away. We learned about Spanish culture and traditions, about the linguistic structure of their language. We learned about a lot of things but I can’t remember any of them. I just remember sitting there everyday thinking, “there is so much about myself and my people that I want to know and here I am learning about a people that live thousands of miles away.” I was frustrated and uninterested. I skated by that semester with a D, the worst grade I have ever gotten in over 20 years in academia.

### **LEARNING THE WAYS OF THE ELDERS**

When I returned home to plan the Alutiiq language program, the Museum provided me and my co-worker, April “Isiik” Counciller, with an amazing opportunity. For ten hours a week, everyday at 10:00 AM, we were allowed to meet with Elders to record them speaking Alutiiq and learn it ourselves. We loved it! Over the course of a year and a half, April and I came to love our Elders too.

Nick “Nickoli k’siin” Alokli grew up in Akhiok, a small village on the south end of Kodiak. He often tells hilarious stories of his “wild years” but also shares insightful stories of running a trap line with his father from their *Ciqlliaq*. He tells of the time he saw an *arluaq* (similar to Bigfoot) and the importance of the Russian Orthodox church in daily life. Having no grandchildren of his own, Nick became our adopted *Apaq* or grandfather.



Florence “Kukuula” Pestrikoff grew up in Akhiok and Old Harbor. She is the only fluent speaker that also knows how to write Alutiiq. She is an extremely knowledgeable woman, who has led an interesting life. Surviving two husbands, Florence raised ten children and now basks in the accomplishments of her dozens of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She tirelessly helped April and I as we struggled with pronunciation, never allowing us to skate by. I remember many a day when I would want to give up but she would push me, push me so much that my cheeks would turn red and my eyes would tear up. Why could I not pronounce the Alutiiq G? What is so hard about it? She wouldn’t let me give up. I still struggle with the G, perhaps I always will, but it was Florence’s determination and will for perfection, that makes me keep trying. Florence kindly opened her heart and home to two more grandchildren, becoming our *Emaa* or grandmother.

### **PROJECT LESSONS LEARNED**

As you can imagine, I learned a great deal during this project. First and foremost, I learned that you cannot superimpose a program on a community and expect it to work. A community *must* be involved in all stages of planning and implementation in order for a program to be successful. If you do not have community input than you will not have community ownership. A program will never be self-sustaining if the community does not take ownership and see that it becomes self-sustaining.

I also learned that you must gather and maintain comprehensive statistics on the status of your language. Not only does it verify your need to outside funders, it also highlights the need to the community. It is easy for people to always believe that Elders will be there. People often believe that if one Elder passes that there are others in another

community. When you actually have the numbers, right there for everyone to see, they cannot tell themselves anything but the truth. There are no more Elders. Something has to be done now.

I also learned that language is very emotional. It is connected to all aspects of our being – mental, physical and spiritual. Without our language we lose a part of ourselves, our culture. The more of my language that I learned, the more I understood the world around me and the way in which the Elders see the world. Now, sometimes when I speak in English, I see the words in my mind arranged in the way that they would be if I spoke them in Alutiiq. The meaning changes and I realize how integral language is to our culture. We cannot lose the knowledge of our Elders. I can only hope that this project will help to reawaken the knowledge of our Elders in the voices of our young.

### **RURAL DEVELOPMENT LESSONS LEARNED**

As I near the end of my three-year journey in the Rural Development master's degree program, I realize how much that I have learned. Not only have I gained invaluable insights into the status of the Alutiiq language, but also into the greater methodologies of rural development. When I first entered the University of Alaska Fairbanks Rural Development master's degree program I felt as though I had let myself down – that I was not living up to my potential. You see, my older sister attended Stanford University in her undergraduate years. My family pushed for me to do the same but I instead chose to remain in-state with the expectation that I would attend an Ivy League school during my graduate years. It was not long after I completed my undergraduate work that I found a job I liked, a man that I loved, and realized that I could

not bring myself to leave either. I cried the day that I submitted my application to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I knew that I could not put my graduate school off any longer but I was devastated that I would not explore my full potential by applying for an Ivy League school.

As the semesters wore on, I began to realize that I truly enjoyed the Rural Development program. I was not just learning about abstract theories and principals like most graduate programs, but I was also learning how to apply those theories and principals in rural Alaska. Every evening I listened to professors, guest speakers and other students recount real-life situations facing Alaska Natives, rural Alaskans and indigenous people across the circumpolar North. We problem-solved, discussed and developed methods to address rural development issues. The next day at work I would apply and/or implement the methods we discussed the evening before. I was even able to travel to Russia where I could further apply the rural development principals and practices that we had learned in class. These experiences were invaluable!

As I near the last two weeks of the Rural Development program, I realize that there is no other program that is more practical or applicable to rural Alaska and Alaska Native issues. I doubt that I could have received a better education anywhere else. I have learned the theories, implemented the practices, developed lasting relationships with professors and fellow students, and most of all, learned that it does not matter where you went to school but what you take from it. As an Alaska Native woman who plans to spend the rest of my life working for my people, I cannot imagine a better education to prepare me for the challenges and rewards of working in and with rural Alaska.

## FINDING MYSELF

Although I am no longer in Kodiak, learning Alutiiq from Nick and Florence. There are many days when I look up at the clock at 10:00 AM and think about my family. I wonder what ridiculous sentences April is trying to make with our puppets and what picture book they are looking at. I wonder how fluent April has gotten, how busy Florence probably is, and how Nick's health is doing. I miss them and think about all that learned from them. I think about my journey to find myself and how that led me to Apsaa, Emaa and Isiik. I remember our daily lessons and how many different ways I learned to talk about the weather. I think about all these things and feel good that I now can share them with my son, Kailer "Ing'ingcuk" Hegna. I bask in the knowledge that he will not have to undergo the same search that I did. He will always know who he is, what it means to be Alutiiq, and the great people that shared their knowledge with me everyday. And, when he reaches high school and has to take a foreign language, he will enjoy learning about another culture because he will know who he is and where he comes from.

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