

# Unique Native language program at Madras High School

This past summer, inside the Culture and Heritage Department of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, seven Madras High School students, one language program developer, and three highly educated university interns worked more than 40 hours a week hunting and acquiring the Northern Paiute language, Numu.

What began as a small project has grown into its own phenomena in Madras High School teacher Becky Dudney's Culture of Warm Springs classroom.

## Magnificent 7

How did the seven high school students originally get selected for the summer internship?

Evan Gardner, developer of a unique language teaching system, specifically sought out cultural leaders in the high school.

He was directed to students who were known leaders and who had an interest in learning one of the three Warm Springs languages.

"The Magnificent 7" was born. This group of MHS youth went on a journey of self-discovery and language learning.

In the end, they all became teachers who brought the techniques of community development, leadership and language teaching back to the high school to share and strengthen their community.

## WAYK

MHS liaison Foster Kalama and teacher Becky Dudney first stumbled across a language revitalization system called "Where Are Your Keys?" or WAYK.

This happened while they were chaperoning and performing with the MHS Cultural Enrichment Club, during a spring field trip to the 2011 Oregon Indian Education Association gathering at Central Oregon Community College.

Dudney and Kalama were intrigued by what they saw during a WAYK language demonstra-



Teacher Becky Dudney's Culture of Warm Springs classroom at Madras High School.

Courtesy of Becky Dudney

tion hosted by Gardner and Portland State intern Sky Hopinka.

Both Dudney and Kalama were eager to help Gardner put together a team of students capable of building a stronger language and cultural presence at Madras high.

The WAYK system allows learners to construct carefully designed games in an environment of focused play that drives the acquisition process.

WAYK sessions are not classes, and not lessons—they reach their full potential when everyone involved thinks of them as games.

WAYK is a collection of techniques used for rapidly reaching proficiency in a target skill. More than just a single method, WAYK is a system for using any method that works.

There are no teachers or students, only players who fill both roles at the same time. There are no textbooks or worksheets, you only need the things you have in your pockets.

However, Evan had a little more help than just his pocket

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In addition to the Magnificent 7, he had help from the Warm Springs Culture and Heritage director Valerie Switzler, the Central Oregon Partnership to End Poverty, the Warm Springs Youth Workforce Development Program (WED), and language elders Shirley Tufti and Gerald Danzuka.

Gardner collaborated with three vibrant college interns, David Edwards, Sky Hopinka, and April Charlo.

Gardner, the original developer of WAYK, has been teaching languages and language revitalization to teachers and students using his "Where Are Your Keys?" fluency game since 1992, facilitating workshops lo-

cally and internationally.

He has taught Chinuk Wawa (chinook jargon) locally since 2002. He facilitates workshops and language programs for Native language communities as well as other spoken languages on the edge of extinction, like Latin. Evan calls himself and those he trains "language teacher makers."

David Edwards is an undergraduate student at Stanford University, working on an interdisciplinary major between the computer science, psychology, linguistics, and philosophy departments.

He got interested in languages in middle school when he tried inventing his own language for fun, which then led him to research other world languages and in turn fostered an interest in language revitalization in Native North American languages specifically.

He discovered "Where Are Your Keys?" in March of 2010 and quickly became addicted to "language hunting," sharing the system with friends in classrooms and workshops in Cali-

fornia, Colorado, and Mongolia.

Sky Hopinka is from the Hochunk Nation and Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians. He has been interning with Evan and "Where Are Your Keys?" since February, 2011.

Sky has become fluent in Chinuk Wawa, which he will use for his university B.A. "foreign" language requirement.

After graduating, he plans to work in filmmaking and with WAYK in learning and teaching the Hochunk and Luiseno languages.

April Charlo is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, located on the Flathead Reservation near Missoula, Mont. April's commitment to restoring her tribal language motivated her to pursue a Master's degree in Education Leadership from the University of Montana.

April intends to utilize her knowledge and experience to aid in the recovery and revitalization of Native Languages.

Teacher Becky Dudney was a volunteer one day a week during the summer and was amazed

at the learning and personal growth that was going on with MHS students.

She relates, "The biggest lesson I will take away from the summer is learning that introducing new ways of doing things in the education system takes a lot more time than sometimes anticipated. In order to propagate education reform through the use of revolutionary teaching methods, teachers must spend time un-polluting the waters. Say you have a healthy salmon but you put it into a dirty river to live. What will happen to the salmon? A teacher must create an environment of trust and teamwork for the class to be healthy and so the learners can flourish. The WAYK system allows for this to happen amongst its participants."

Dudney reports that the class has drawn a lot of attention from students.

The classroom is transformed into a language learning lab every Tuesday and Thursday.

Paiute Language teachers Shirley Tufti and Gerald Danzuka are present to ensure accuracy of the Numu language while it is being spoken, and are available for students to pull more language from these elders.

Many students stop by before and after class to express interest in the activities and find themselves getting sucked into playing a language game without realizing it.

Other students say they have taught their friends and family members the system and some Numu language.

"The most exciting thing about it all is to see young people building a community while linking to their cultural heritage. They are having fun while they learn so many skills, both academic and social, all at the same time. They want to be in class!"

(This article is courtesy of Becky Dudney and Evan Gardner.)

## News from Indian Country

### Mohegan Sun reports Sept. slots revenue up

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Connecticut's Mohegan Sun Casino says revenue from slot machines jumped in September, while Foxwoods Resort Casino said revenue fell 5 percent.

Mohegan Sun said Monday that revenue was \$59.8 million, up by nearly 4 percent from September 2010.

It was welcome news to the Indian-run casino, which reported declining revenue every month since March due to the weak economy and competition from other casinos in the North-

east.

Jeffrey E. Hartmann, president and chief executive, credited an extra Friday in September, better weather and effective marketing.

Foxwoods said slot revenue was \$53.2 million, down from \$56.1 million in September 2010. Scott Butera, president and chief executive at Foxwoods, said in a statement that despite the persistently weak economy, the casino is generating slot revenue at about the same pace as it did last year.

### High court won't hear Oneidas' land claim

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court has turned down an appeal from the Oneida Indian Nation claiming that it was underpaid for over 250,000 acres in onetime tribal lands in upstate New York that changed hands more than 150 years ago.

The justices on Monday left in place a federal appeals court ruling that threw out the Oneidas' land claims.

The Oneidas say the state illegally purchased land in upstate New York in a series of transactions in the 18th and 19th centuries.

They claim New York underpaid for the land in Madison and Oneida counties by about \$500,000, a sum now worth \$500 million with interest compounded.

The lawsuit was filed in 1974 by Oneidas in New York, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada.

### Navajo calls out Urban Outfitters for its products

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Urban Outfitters' line of Navajo-branded clothing and accessories has set off a firestorm online and within the Navajo Nation government, with allegations of trademark violations and criticism of the products — particularly underwear and a liquor flask — that many tribal members consider disrespectful.

Native American-inspired prints have shown up on runways for years, and it's common

for designers to borrow from other cultures.

But the Navajo government's issue with Urban Outfitters is the clothing chain's use of the name "Navajo" on its products and in marketing. The tribe holds at least 10 trademarks on the name that cover clothing, footwear, online retail sales, household products and textiles.

The tribe's Department of Justice sent Urban Outfitters CEO Glen Senka a cease-and-

desist letter in June, demanding that the company pull the Navajo name from its products. The tribe has received no response but says it remains "cautiously optimistic" it can persuade Urban Outfitters to adopt another name and trademark.

"When products that have absolutely no connection to the Navajo Nation, its entities, its people, and their products are marketed and retailed under the guise that they are Navajo in

origin, the Navajo Nation does not regard this as benign or trivial," said Brian Lewis, an attorney for the tribe. "It takes appropriate action to maintain distinctiveness and clarity of valid name association in the market and society."

Urban Outfitters, which has stores across the country and overseas, said it has not heard from the Navajo Nation and has no plans to alter its products.

### Wasco Chieftainship meeting scheduled

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, October 26, 2011 at the Agency Longhouse. A light dinner will be served at 6 p.m. and the meeting will start at 7 p.m.

The six candidates for the Wasco chieftainship are Garland Brunoe, George Clements, Grant Clements Sr., John Katchia Sr., Alfred Smith Jr. and Derek Tasymp.

They are invited to participate. Each candidate will be given the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Agency District and Wasco people and present the reasons why they should be selected as the next Wasco Chief.

After the candidates have made their statements, audience mem-

bers will be given the opportunity to direct questions to individual candidates.

An effort will be made to ensure that as many audience members as possible will be able to have their questions asked and answered.

Perhaps the most troublesome aspect of the Wasco chieftainship succession process is the lack of consensus among the Agency District and Wasco members regarding the selection process for the next Wasco Chief. During the meeting a plan to conduct an election will be circulated among those present.

A follow-up meeting has tentatively been scheduled for Wednesday, November 16, 2011.

