COMMUNITY EVENTS

Yavapai-Apache Nation members participate in New Mexico conference

BY REBA FRANCO,
Yavapai culture department

This latest Language Workshop was one of the best that I have attended so far and the hands- on approach was most interesting. It was mostly based on an Immersion type of setting where no English is used and it would be very beneficial for us as teacher and learners. One project was to pick a subject and to make four phrases with action words and have participants repeat the words first (memorize the words); and then say memorize the phrases. Using props was very helpful in demonstrating what the teacher and instructors were trying to portray.

Each tribal group presented a model of their 'language teaching version' which the conference attendees rated us on. Our Yavbe group did a mock of "making a drum". The four words were: Aha te boome, e dt boome, sah-nah-vah, cah-mahdt. In putting the drum together a couple of phrases were: Sah-nah-vah gith gah-nahl-ii and m' swah-ddii. Our teacher then sang by imitating pounding the drum and our group danced a few steps.

This type of a Model Demonstration will be a helpful tool in helping learners to start building vocabulary using short everyday phrases. The subjects can be anything the teacher wishes to use as long as language immersion is being implemented. At the end of the conference each participant was asked to fill out an Assessment Form with questions on how we plan to use what we had learned and how we rated each presenter.

In our Yavapai Culture's Language Program, we have already been using this approach to revitalizing Yavbe Gwaawjah (Yavapai Language). For the past three years our "After School Program" began with Introductions, learning the basics: numbers, colors, animals, kinship, simple phrases, songs and dance. For the children who completed this program, it will be easier for them to grasp this type of Immersion setting, which our language program hopes to implement in the near future.

It is amazing to know that YAN Culture Departments, are not alone in this quest for Revitalization of our respective Languages. This Language Conference, sponsored by the Indigenous Language Institute of New Mexico, was attended by many different U.S. Tribes as well as Indigenous People from Canada. Wah, Hahn-ih-gm

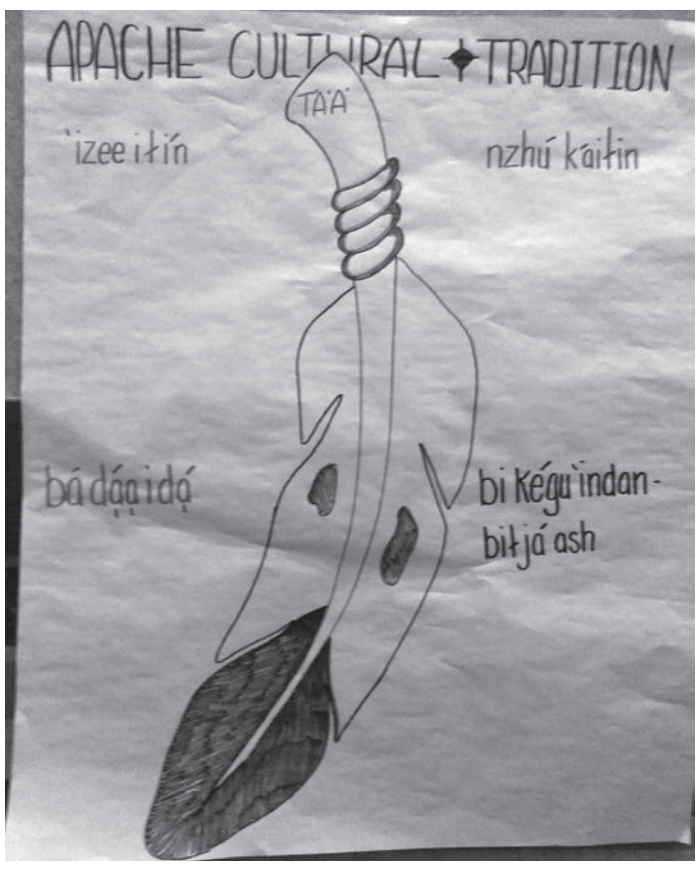
In my writing of Yavbe I use Phonetics so that people (who have never heard the sound of) can sound out the words and read what is written. In studying Yavbe Gwaawjah I have learned that, "There is no right or wrong way in how you speak our language. You speak by the way you were taught from your parents, grandparents etc."

Yavapai-Apache Nation members participating in the conference were Olivia McMahon, Nel Engle, Jordan Lewis, Olivia McMahon, Rachel Beauty, Gertie Smith and Reba Franco.

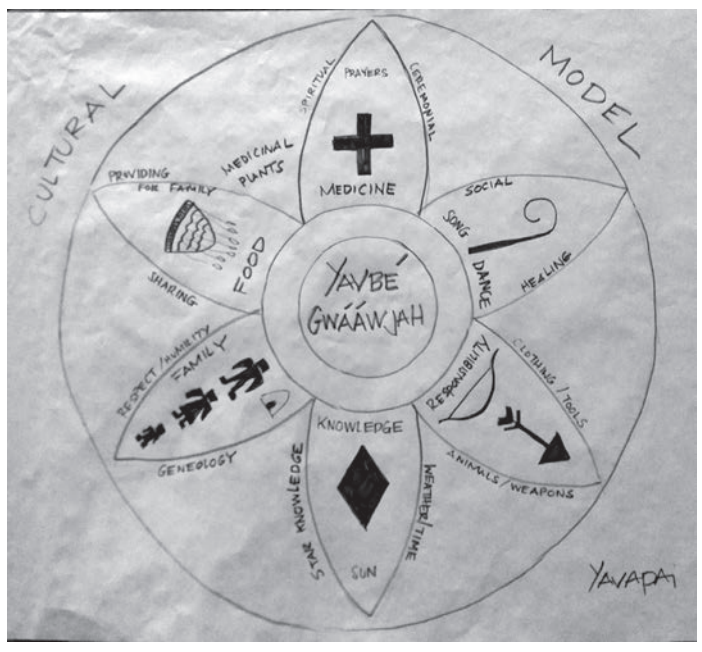
All of the participants received a certificate of achievement for "Developing Relevant Language Teaching Guides, Activities and Materials".

Olivia McMahon said she and Rachel Beauty are now equipped to enter the 6th grade classes toward the end of May for a two to teach various culture activities that was learned from the New Mexico classes.

Conferees pose for a group photo. Courtesy photos.



Apache culture activity with Rachel Beauty and Olivia McMahon with a Mescalero Apache lady.



The Yavapai from YAN came up with a culture value chart.

Language conferees enjoy a meal together

Well known Newark Boys Choir sings in Middle Verde at Montessori School

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

The Newark Boys Choir are a noted singing group that attend the Newark Boys Chorus School in Newark, New Jersey. Newark is just across from New York City.

Donald Morris, the choir director said that the choir arrived Wednesday, March 14 and sang in Tucson at a church and then stopped in Phoenix as well.

This brief stop in Middle Verde gave the choir an opportunity to sing for the Montessori students who were about ready to leave for home that day. There was a brief delay in Phoenix that morning.

Background

At the beginning of March, Margie Campos, public relations assistant received a call and spoke with the school's trip coordinator who was inquiring about the choral group's interest in visiting an Indian reservation and singing at the local "Camp Verde school". Ms. Campos said that the only school in the community for Yavapai-Apache Nation was the Montessori School.

Ms. Campos contacted Ms. Lettie, manager of the Montessori School who took on the task of making the choir's visit a reality.

Ms. Lettie said the Newark school wanted to really make an effort in having the choir sing on an Indian reservation but the only Indian reservation they could find was hours off of the main highway to Grand Canyon from Phoenix. Conveniently, the Yavapai-Apache Nation popped into view for the school since the choir was planning a visit to the Grand Canyon. This short stop along the way gave the boys about 15 minutes to visit with the Montessori students (and their parents) who waited patiently for them.

Richard Morris of Newark Boys Choir directs the boys in a few songs for the Montessori students.

Singing some traditional folks songs and welcoming songs of friendship in full harmony, the boys became very informal as they walked toward the students sitting on the ground and sang to them.

Before long, this festive mood created for good communication and greetings from the boys and their touring counselors and choir directors. Choir director of the Newark school, Donald Morris is a well-noted choral director.

Montessori students enjoy choral music by the Newark Boys Choir.

Finally, it was time to go and the songs had to end. The boys took the time to give their 'high-fives' to the students for their good byes.

The Newark Boys Choir has traveled extensively world-wide in European countries as well as Japan and the continental United States.

The have also appeared on major TV networks especially during the Christmas holidays.

INDIGENOUS

From page 5

Dancing & Singing. From Cree Nation of Saskatchewan, Canada; Another Medicine Wheel with Traditional Values/Cultural Spirituality/Our People/ Relatives making up the four quadrants from the Dakota people of Iapi; Cultural Model for Yavapai's included Medicine, Song & Dance, Responsibility, Knowledge, Family, and Food in the form of a basket flower design; and Apache spirituality and the importance of the Eagle Feather was our poster, and how Apaches do things in fours. Very Impressive all around!

The second day was spent working in our groups. This time, our objective was to put together an activity lesson that we were to use to teaching something of value or cultural significance to our learners using the 5-step process. The 5-step process to oral language immersion is 1) Set the environment 2) Introduce the language 3) Provide visuals for understanding 4) Language learning activity 5) Communicate in the language. The trick was "staying in the Language", that means NO ENGLISH.

It was time to immerse ourselves! The third day was amazing, to say the least. All the groups came up with very creative ways to teach some of the simplest things like a baby's moods. "The baby is happy", "the baby is crying", "the baby is laughing" etc.

My group taught about the drum, our key words were "Aspen", "Clouds", "Rain", "Lightening", "Heartbeat", and "Drum." We demonstrated how the drum is created and brings the community together as the heart of the people, and as we taught the language, such as, "Aspen", which is pronounced Ha-oo-ti (In Pueblo, because us Apaches were outnumbered in our group), the drum was struck for each syllable making it a very fun interactive learning experience.

I would love to return to this workshop again after a year to show them (ILI-Indigenous Language Institute) how the Yavapai-Apache Nation has implemented the techniques that were taught at this workshop.

It was a great experience and kind of weird that language is taught in a way that learners can't really use in daily life. I mean, think about it, we are taught numbers, colors, animals, days of the week etc. and we should be learning how to communicate with others, where we are totally immersed in the language so that it is everywhere. And stay in the language!

- Iye yeh, Thank you in Apache