University of Alaska, Fairbanks
Kuskokwim Campus
Bethel, Alaska

Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center
Strong Cultures Build
Strong Futures
Kuskokwim River at dawn
Strong Cultures Build Strong Futures
Yupiit Picirayait Cultural Center
Advisory Board

- Joan Hamilton, Jill Hoffman, Carrie Longpre, Elias Venes, Nita Rearden, Reyne Athanas
Yukon Kuskokwim Region includes 56 village and is the size of Indiana with no roads connecting any villages.
Goal One

- To preserve and promote at least nine Yup’ik cultural activities: 1) Native foods; 2) Native medicines and herbs; 3) storytelling; 4) traditional and nontraditional arts; 5) games; 6) traditional and nontraditional crafts; 7) dance; 8) toys; and 9) tools, also to propagate them into micro businesses via training and mentoring; preserved digitally.
First class: Students made a crooked knife (melgar) and ulu (uluaq).

Second class: Students used tools they made to make wooden spoons (ipuun).

Tools – Bobby Johnson
Melgar-Crooked Knife
Used to carve ivory, bone and wood into ceremonial pieces and utilitarian tools.

Ulu –Knife
Used to cut meat, fish and other food items.

Average Price:
$45-$150
Grass Collecting – Elizabeth Smith

- First Class: Students collected, dried, and braided sea grass for baskets.
- Second Class: Students used grass they collected to weave a split grass piece.
Traditional Grass Baskets

Teresa Frank at Saturday Market selling her unique grass baskets. Lidded sea grass basket with traditional design.
Liz Smith is from Kipnuk, and taught two styles of beaver hats, (malaggaiyaq).

One is all beaver outside & ear flaps with cloth lining, the warmest for blizzards.

The other is beaver front, ear flaps, and back, with cloth covering inside and out, for average weather.
For really cold (-20) or just normal weather (zero and above)

- All beaver malaggaiyaq
- Beaver and cloth hat
Georgiana Waska pieces together her ‘malaggaiyaq’, beaver hat, coldest weather hat.

Each student learned the traditional ‘up river’ style of beaver hat making, and took home a finished one.
This is the traditional style ‘qaspeq’ worn by both men and women. The first “hoodie” with pockets.

Several students now make qaspeqs as gifts and for sale at Saturday Markets.
Qaspeq are very popular in Alaska
Goal Two

- To succor 50 established and starting entrepreneurs with technological and business training utilizing intensives, workshops and mentors, using the YPCC as an incubator facility for economic growth.
Planning Your Own Business

Workshops included:

- Business plan development
- Excel spreadsheet
- Local bankers panel
- B & B presentation
- Alaska host certificate
- Meeting mentor
- Completed Bus. Plans received State Bus. License.
Villages sites visited

- Bethel
- Emmonak
- Toksook Bay
- Chevak
- Kongiganak
- Mountain Village
- Scammon Bay
- Kongiginak
- Kwigillinok
Small Business Follow-up

Participants' from past workshops invited to attend a three day follow-up training. Alaska Host training, Native arts marketing, Excel spreadsheet, Tips on taxes, Finding a mentor, Banking panel, Web design and blogging
Saturday Markets

Open to small businesses as a venue to advance exposure, sales and networking with clients.

Every other week, June - August, weekly Thanksgiving-Christmas, monthly the remainder of the year totaling 17 markets annually.
Saturday Markets offer a steady and dependable venue for small businesses

- Average number of vendors 45 to 60
- Holidays average number of vendors 60 - 75
Alaska Marketplace Winners

- John Pingayak, traditional dance DVDs, with mentor Terry Reeve
- Mark Leary, exporting firewood
Barb Ramos, Long arm quilting machine, with mentor Jovan Dull

Martin Kelly, bottled birch water, and Patrick Tall, building work sleds
YPCC and local partners developed a fund based competition for start-up YK region businesses.

Partners: Bethel Community Services Foundation, Donlin Creek Ltd., Orutsararmuit Native Council, Coastal Village Region Fund and KuC/YPCC HUD grant.

- Seven first round applicants, five selected for second round.
- Four completed final selection and presentations.
- Two awarded start-up funds.
Marie Alfred was born and raised in the village of Kwethluk, Alaska. She was raised by her grandparents who passed down their teachings and artistic skills. Her success in the Best in West competition allows her to pursue a small carving business, hopefully leading to economic independence.
Jasmine Polk was born and raised in Bethel and has a beautiful 2 year-old son. Phantastic Plastic will be a small business offering unique, handmade bags and gifts made from recycled materials and fancy embellishments.
Loren Peterson was born and raised in Mountain Village, Alaska. Alaska Native Adventures – an eco-tourism and cultural experience in Mountain Village. Loren and his family will use their Native Allotment land as base camps for travelling up some of the most beautiful “Wild & Scenic” waterways in Alaska. Judges encouraged Loren to simplify his business plan.
Joe Andrews was born and raised in the YK Delta. Joe aspires to support himself with his passion – cooking. Joe’s Place for Breakfast, orders can be placed by phone and breakfasts will be delivered as a start-up. Once the breakfast delivery is up and running, he plans to look for a restaurant of his own. Judges encouraged Joe to fine tune his plan for next years competition.
Goal Three

- Utilizing Village Training Centers and workshops, assist 50 entrepreneurs to become proficient in e-commerce, allowing them access to global markets.
- The company was sold and the new owners declined to assist with the training or facility use.
www.bethelculturalcenter.com

- Highlights Cultural Center events
- Calendar of events community wide
- Regional Artist and Small Business Cooperative
  - Spotlight on artisans or small businesses
Web Design & Blogger Class

- Chris Ho, Web Design Instructor
- “We had fun at our business workshop with our instructor, Chris. We are hopeful future small business owners.” student Marjorie said.
- Check out our blog, Bizzis.blogspot.com
Addresses

- Alaskanthings.bloggers.com
- Kaganakshunttingsupply.blogspot.com
- ypcc.blogspot.com
- Buyalaska.com (Bethel Saturday markets)
- Phantasticpurses.com
Summer Youth Art Camp

Building strong communities with positive activities for the Youth, ages 7 – 12.

Focus areas:
Community mural and paper mache’ creatures
Making beach ball creatures. Community pot luck during show and tell time with parents and friends.
Building strong communities with pet bonding and bragging rights. Dogs are a way of life here, from spoiled peak-a-poodles to hard working husky dog sled teams. Cat lovers are lobbying for a Cat Show too.
Bethel Dog Show
Best Costume and Best Sniffers
Yupiit Piciryarait
Cultural Center  April 14, 2010