ENDANGERED LANGUAGE FUND THANKS ITS DONORS FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

This year has seen another advance in the scope of the Endangered Language Fund’s activities, thanks mostly to the generosity of our donors. (However, see page 2 for work supported by the National Science Foundation.) The work of the Fund is performed by the dedicated community members and academic linguists who do the recording, analysis, and teaching necessary to document and maintain endangered languages. None of this would be possible without the donations supplied by those who entrust the Fund with the means to make this possible.

We invite you to make a donation to ELF to help us continue our mission of promoting the description and revitalization of languages on the brink of going silent. Checks from US bank accounts can be mailed to us (ELF, 300 George St., Suite 900, New Haven, CT 06511, USA). Those with US credit cards can use our online donation service via NetworkForGood.org (use the button on our website: www.endangeredlanguagefund.org). Foreign credit card charges can be made by faxing the information to +1-203-865-8963. We appreciate every donation!

As detailed in the previous two issues of Language Legacies, both of our grant programs had a successful year. The main grant program in particular had its highest submission rate ever (123 proposals). There was a similar upswing at both the Volkswagen Foundation (DoBeS project) and the National Science Foundation (Documenting Endangered Languages), showing the sustained and indeed growing interest in work on endangered languages. We hope to be able to expand our own offerings as donations increase.

New name for grant program

Our two grant programs will continue into the foreseeable future, and we have found that having a name for each is handy (just as having a word for something helps make a language special). The Native Voices Endowment grants are already named. We are now naming our world-wide grant program “Language Legacies Grants.” The size, scope and frequency of the grants will not change; we now simply have a new way of referring to them.

New Charles R. Isenberg award focused on the former Soviet Union

We are pleased to announce a special emphasis grant, the Charles R. Isenberg Award for the Documentation of Languages of the Former Soviet Union, named for the late Charles R. Isenberg (1944-1997), a professor of Russian literature at Wesleyan University and Reed College. The award will support documentation and maintenance of languages spoken in the former Soviet Union. We also encourage young people to find creative new ways to use their traditional languages, including incorporating them into arts projects including fiction, playwriting, music composition, and performance art. All proposals for work on languages in the former Soviet Union will automatically be considered for this award.
Documentary linguistics has flourished recently as the quantity and quality of material produced and preserved has grown exponentially and the practice of documentation has become increasingly rigorous. Linguists who gather and use documentation are responding with growing enthusiasm to the question of for what (and whom) documentation is created and preserved. The Breath of Life Archival Institute for Indigenous Languages is one answer to this question — documentation can be used for language learning and revitalization. Breath of Life brings language learners and linguists together for this purpose, challenging the dominant assumption that language decline cannot be reversed.

Breath of Life helps Native Americans involved in language revitalization find and make use of materials in archives and libraries. In June 2011, approximately 30 teams of participants (Native American heritage language learners, teachers and activists) paired with mentors (experts in linguistics who guide the participants’ work) will explore language resources in the archives in the District of Columbia area.

The activities of the Institute will be organized into three types: group lessons, tours of archival facilities, and individual research with mentors.

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Applications are requested both from community members working on their heritage language and from linguists wanting to help with those efforts.

The Breath of Life Archival Institute for Indigenous Languages will take place in Washington, DC, June 13-24, 2011. The registration fee is $500, with scholarships available. Housing and some meals will be provided, and partial travel assistance is available.

Applications are being solicited for participants and for mentors. Participants are expected to be involved in community language programs. Mentors are expected to have linguistic training (though a Ph.D. is not required). Specialization in North American languages is helpful but not necessary. Applicants must be able to attend and actively participate in the entire two-week Institute and demonstrate a commitment to language learning from documentary sources.

For more information and to apply, please go to:
http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org/BOL/
Applications are due March 1, 2011.

——— Further Reading ———


AILDI Summer Workshop Scheduled

The American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) is back to four (4) weeks this coming summer. There will be a General Morning class for all participants with guest lectures each week. Already scheduled for one of the lectures is Dr. Gregory Cajete (Santa Clara Pueblo) of the University of New Mexico. The afternoon courses will be a selection of courses on linguistics, language pedagogy, and other related topics.

If you are considering attending, this year the deadlines will be more closely followed than in previous years. All forms will be available on-line on the AILDI website shortly. Financial information is still up for last summer’s workshop; the figures will be updated soon. If you need more information, you can email Maxine Sam (mrs1@email.arizona.edu), or call the AILDI Office at 520-621-1068.

Updates will be posted at:
http://www.u.arizona.edu/~aildi/

Annual Meeting of ELF, 9 January, 2011, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The annual meeting of the Endangered Language Fund will take place at the Grand Pittsburgh Downtown Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA, on Sunday, 9 January 2011, from 8 to 9 in the morning. It will be held in the Duquesne Room of the hotel. All are invited to attend. We will have a review of recent activity, discussion of new projects, and a brief introduction of all those attending. Previous awardees of ELF grants who are at the meeting are also invited to give informal updates. We look forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh.

Mother Language Day in Connecticut

Central Connecticut State University (New Britain, CT) will celebrate International Mother Language Day (February 21) with various events. From February 21 to March 4, 2011, the “Endangered Alphabets” exhibition by Tim Brookes will be on display in the Elihu Burritt library. Mr. Brookes will give a talk in the special collection room, 2 pm, Feb. 21. On February 25, 2011, a workshop will be held in Torp Theatre at CCSU from 12:30 pm. Douglas H. Whalen (Endangered Language Fund), Stephanie Fielding (Mohegan Tribe), Brad Montgomery-Anderson (Northeastern State University, Oklahoma) and Akinbiyi Akinlabi (Rutgers University) will speak. There will also be a screening of a short film about endangered languages. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, please contact Seunghun Lee (seunghunlee@ccsu.edu).

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