ENDANGERED LANGUAGE FUND AWARDS NINE NATIVE VOICES ENDOWMENT GRANTS FOR 2009

The Endangered Language Fund is pleased to announce the 2009 grant recipients of the Native Voices Endowment: A Lewis & Clark Expedition Bicentennial Legacy. The endowment was created for the revitalization and perpetuation of the languages of the American Indian Nations whose ancestors encountered the 1803–1806 Lewis & Clark Expedition. Each year, grants of $2,500–$10,000 are awarded (and matched by the recipient) to support projects, programs, and individuals dedicated to the study, documentation, and instruction of Native American languages used along the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail. ELF, in cooperation with the Oregon Community Foundation, administers the endowment on behalf of the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, the Circle of Tribal Advisors (COTA), and the Missouri Historical Society (MHS).

Grant proposals for the 2010 Native Voices Endowment awards must be submitted by October 15, 2010. For eligibility criteria, submission instructions, and additional information, please visit http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org/native_voices_RFP.html

ELF is proud to announce the nine recipients of the third annual Native Voices Endowment:

Angel Sobotta, Nez Perce Tribe, ID: Niimiipuu Language Documentation & Software Programming for the Nintendo DSI

Niimiipuu, the language of the Nez Perce Tribe, is spoken in parts of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. A recent survey found that only seven Nez Perce elders with high fluency in the language remain. Thirty-three more have some knowledge of the tribe’s language. In 2009, the tribe purchased twenty-six Nintendo DSi units to be utilized in its language program. These handheld game systems, familiar to many of the tribe’s youth, are being used to teach Niimiipuu to tribe members. The devices were loaded with language learning materials on dancing, drumming, and Nez Perce regalia and accessories, and the tribe’s youth enthusiastically used them during a 2009 culture summer camp. Users are able interactively to view a photo of a tribal item, learn the word for it in Niimiipuu, and hear it pronounced by an elder. The tribe’s language program has been working on making more materials available, including commonly used phrases and vocabulary relating to food, colors, numbers, clothing, body parts, animals, plants, and place names. This award will fund programming additional materials onto the game systems, including recorded stories, a mini-dictionary, hymns, and instructional materials currently used in preschool through college language courses.

[ISO 639-3 language code: nez]

Melissa Campobasso and Ted Moomaw, Colville Tribes, WA: Elder Speaker Project at Waterfalls School

The creation of the skwant ʔatayat (Waterfalls School) and language immersion programs is the primary project of the ʔaluspuʔís (Hearts Gathered) organization, whose mission is to revitalize the native languages of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, WA. The organization’s efforts are currently focused on nsałxciń, an Interior Salish
This project is dedicated to the language, culture, and history of the Lakota people from the Rosebud Reservation in southern South Dakota, where the Sicangu variety of Lakota is spoken. It is the western dialect of Sioux, which is spoken in northern Nebraska, southern Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and northeastern Montana. The majority of the remaining fluent speakers of Lakota are over the age of fifty. Don Moccasin, an elder Lakota speaker who passed away last year, had been instrumental in documenting Lakota language and culture. He left a collection of video recordings that will be the focus of this Mentor-Apprentice project. From the mid 1990s until his death in 2009, Moccasin recorded interviews, speeches, and community events on the Rosebud Reservation, producing more than 200 video tapes. Speakers discuss family histories, genealogies, and personal and community stories of the Sicangu people. This award will fund Mr. Antoine’s Lakota studies, which will include transcribing and translating Moccasin’s Lakota video recordings in collaboration with his mother, a native speaker of Lakota and Dakota, working with a Lakota male speaker on translations and conversation skills related to male-specific language use (Lakota men and women use slightly different versions of the language), reviewing materials with a linguist from the Lakota Documentaries Project, Great Plains Art Institute in Mission, SD, and field trips for the purpose of documenting the native sites of cultural and family significance.

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Gary Antoine and Lavina Milk, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, SD: Translating the Lakota Language Tapes of Don Moccasin

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It is estimated that thirty-four speakers of Bannock remain, the majority of whom are over seventy years of age.

The goal of the two-year Shawnee Language Enhancement program is to increase the number and fluency of Shawnee speakers. It is estimated that approximately 200 speakers of Shawnee remain; it is a Central Algonquian language spoken by tribe members in Shawnee, Miami, and Ottawa County, all in Oklahoma. The Eastern Shawnee Tribe has already begun offering basic Shawnee classes, taught by Janet Hansen. This award will fund Ms. Hansen’s continuing pedagogical training with Dr. Marcellino Berardo, a lecturer at the University of Kansas. Dr. Berardo is experienced in training second-language teachers and designing course materials and has worked with the Shawnee Tribe, among others, for the past fifteen years. Additional Shawnee teachers will be invited to join the classes, which will meet twenty times over a two-year period and take place at the Eastern Shawnee Annex on the Oklahoma side of Seneca, MO. The classes will cover the latest and most effective teaching techniques and methodologies. The award will also fund two fluent guest speakers in Ms. Hansen’s own classes; they will introduce her students to cultural materials and offer them the opportunity to hear fluent speakers other than their teacher.

[ISO 639-3 language code: sjw]
Native Voices Endowments Grants, continued:

elders will determine which phrases are to be recorded. The phrases will then be recorded, emphasizing the importance of word order and sentence structure.

[ISO 639-3 language code: dak]

Justin T. McBride and Dr. Linda Cumberland, Kaw Nation, OK: Producing Materials to Teach Kanza Literacy through Historical Texts

Kanza, also known as Kaw and Kansa, is the heritage language of the Kaw Nation, a tribe centered around Kaw City, OK; the tribe has a membership of approximately 3,000. The tribe is currently in the process of designing a reader and accompanying audio CD containing oral histories and traditions narrated in the 19th and 20th centuries by the tribe’s ancestors who were fluent Kanza speakers. Currently, these materials are inaccessible to virtually all tribe members due to a lack of literacy in the language. The reader will contain a total of twenty texts, including folk tales, migration narratives, descriptions of war customs, a lullaby, and a personal letter. English translations as well as grammatical exercises will also be provided, and selected recordings will be included on the accompanying audio CD.

[ISO 639-3 language code: ksk]