



IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 *New Arts Funding from FPCC Available for First Nations Youth in B.C.*
- 3 *New Resources Available for First Nations Languages in B.C.*
- 4 *FirstVoices Resources: Flash Card and Label Maker*
- 4 *Geek Alert! PC Keyboard Software Update*
- 5 *Seabird Island Language Nests is Engaging Young Language Learners*
- 6 *Mentor-Apprentice Teams Creating a New Generation of Speakers*
- 8 *In Conversation with AADA Recipient Kevin Loring*
- 9 *Upgrades to the FirstVoices Language Tutor Now Available to Communities*
- 10 *Community Success Story: SECWEPEMCTSÍN Language Tutor Lessons*
- 11 *FirstVoices Coordinator Peter Brand Retires...Or Does He?*

## New Museum Exhibition SHOWCASING B.C.'S LIVING FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES

Most people are unaware of the variety and richness of languages in this province. With 34 Indigenous languages and 61 dialects, B.C. is the most linguistically diverse region in Canada.

In an inspiring new partnership, the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) has been working with the Royal BC Museum to create the innovative *Our Living Languages* exhibition, which will provide an opportunity to celebrate these First Nations languages and the people who are working to preserve and revitalize them.

The exhibition will fuse traditional

approaches with contemporary storytelling. It will make use of audio and visual media, artwork and narrative text in English as well as First Nations languages. Most importantly, it will demonstrate the diversity and resilience of languages in B.C. by showcasing languages by region as well as individual efforts to rejuvenate languages through hard work and perseverance.

"This is exciting for us and a progressive move on behalf of the Royal BC Museum," says FPCC Chair Lorna Williams. "The museum is a wonderful venue in which to share the stories and perspectives of First

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*Our Living Languages: First Peoples' Voices in B.C. is set to open in June 2014*

# New Arts Funding from FPCC AVAILABLE FOR FIRST NATIONS YOUTH IN B.C.



The N'isga'a Spirit Lava Dancers' were funded in 2008.

A new pilot program is underway to provide funding to British Columbia First Nations and Aboriginal organizations for projects that engage Aboriginal youth in the arts, a vital aspect of defining and expressing identity.

The BC Arts Council is providing \$200,000 in funding to support the Aboriginal Youth Engaged in the Arts Program, which will be delivered by FPCC in 2014. "Although we have always supported multi-generational projects we are pleased to be able to offer communities this additional support, specifically for engaging our youth in the arts," says

Cathi Charles Wherry, FPCC Arts Program Manager.

The \$200,000 in new funding will be directed to projects that connect youth with established artists through residencies, community-based workshops and collaborations in any artistic discipline.

This pilot program is meant to encourage youth, aged 15–24, to participate in creative and artistic activity, support youth cultural identity and a sense of place, improve the quality of life for youth and contribute significantly to youth participation in local arts and cultural economies.

Priority is given to projects that implement new, targeted youth engagement arts activities, especially in underserved, often remote reserve communities.

The deadline for 2014 applications has now passed. Check back for ongoing details about the Aboriginal Youth Engaged in the Arts Program on the FPCC website: [www.fpcc.ca/arts/Programs/Youth-engagement-in-the-arts.aspx](http://www.fpcc.ca/arts/Programs/Youth-engagement-in-the-arts.aspx)

The Aboriginal Youth Engaged in the Arts program is one of three programs being offered under the umbrella of "Creative Youth Initiatives" funded by the B.C. Government. The BC Arts Council is delivering a \$1.6 million program; the BC Touring Council is delivering a \$200,000 program.

"The FPCC arts department has an excellent reputation for delivering meaningful and successful programs," says Tracey Herbert, Executive Director of FPCC. "We have been able to attract new partners and programs that complement the existing grant programs and services for Aboriginal artists in B.C."

For more information about BC Arts Council funding, visit [www.bcartscouncil.ca](http://www.bcartscouncil.ca)

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Nations people through their languages. We're pleased to be an equal partner in this initiative—this level of inclusivity shows a genuine respect for the people of this province who are working hard to keep their languages and cultures vital."

Content for the exhibition is currently in development under the direction of the First Peoples' Cultural Council, and will include contributions from First Nations cultural experts, artists, writers

and interns. The Royal B.C. Museum is responsible for organizational structure, management, design, construction, and is also actively fundraising for the project. The 3,000 square foot exhibition will open on the third floor at the entrance to the museum's Human History exhibits.

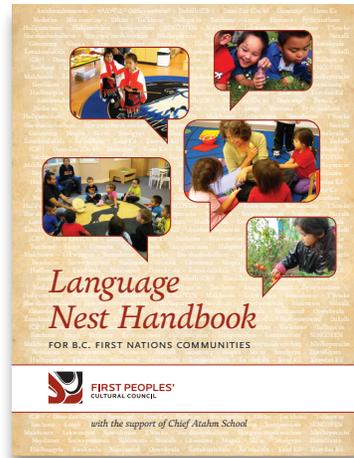
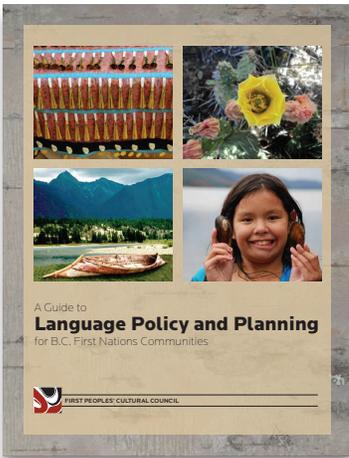
"Visitors will leave here knowing that B.C.'s First Nations are dynamic, living cultures, that there are many ways of being a Canadian, that language revival

and maintenance is essential to keeping culture, and that our shared history begins with First Peoples," says Royal B.C. Museum CEO Jack Lohman.

The opening date of June 21, 2014 coincides with National Aboriginal Day.

For up-to-date news and information about the exhibition, visit our website at: [www.fpcc.ca/language/Exhibition](http://www.fpcc.ca/language/Exhibition)

# New Learning Resources Available FOR FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES IN B.C.



*“Developing a language plan can bring people together to share knowledge and resources.”*

*—Suzanne Gessner, Project Lead*

For decades, many of B.C.’s First Nations communities have been working with governments, school boards, language authorities and concerned community members to revitalize their languages. Now, two new handbooks produced by FPCC will make these efforts a little easier.

The first, *A Guide to Language Policy and Planning for B.C. First Nations Communities*, was produced by a small team at FPCC last year. Suzanne Gessner, a language activist who has been working to support FPCC work for several years, led the project. She had assistance from co-author Scott Franks and the language team at FPCC. In addition, a review committee of eight First Nations community language experts from around the province provided guidance and feedback during the guide’s development. (Thanks to Maxine Baptiste, Peter Jacobs, Mandy Jimmie, George Kaliszewski, Freddie Louie, Sherry Stump, Tye Swallow and Judy Thompson!)

The new guide builds on the work of the FPCC Language Revitalization Planning Program that started in 2008 and shares success stories and models of language revitalization work already underway in

B.C. and around the world.

“A lot of good work has been done in communities for decades, but community members have often not had an opportunity to find out what other work has been done, even on their own language,” explains Suzanne. “Developing a language plan can bring people together to share knowledge and resources.”

Topics range from how to develop and implement an official language plan or start a language authority to certifying language teachers and creating policies for various aspects of language work. The guide also includes a number of practical tools and resources, such as surveys and templates that can be modified to suit a community’s specific needs.

“We know that communities are often challenged with limited financial resources and in some cases limited numbers of speakers,” says Suzanne. “Of course we want to do the best work possible with the resources available. Having a language plan helps identify what work should be done and builds on the experiences of other communities.”

The second handbook, entitled *Language Nest Handbook for B.C. First*

*Nations Communities*, has just been released. Based on the experiences of language nests in B.C. (including those funded by FPCC) as well as successful models internationally (in Hawaii, New Zealand), it is the first handbook of its kind that details the language nest model, providing practical solutions to common challenges in early immersion programs.

According to Aliana Parker at FPCC, “this handbook synthesizes local and international research on early immersion programs, providing easy-to-understand information about language acquisition and practical solutions for communities running language nests.”

Download your free copy of the guides in PDF format from the FPCC website:

[www.fpcc.ca/about-us/Publications](http://www.fpcc.ca/about-us/Publications)

For print copies, call the office at: (250) 652-5952.

**Funding for the Language Policy and Planning guide was provided by the New Relationship Trust (NRT). Funding for the Language Nest Handbook was provided by the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation (FPCF).**

# FirstVoices Resources: FLASH CARD AND LABEL MAKER



The Flash Card and Label Makers are learning tools offered by FirstVoices to make language-learning fun.

Teachers and other language champions—we encourage you to use two resources available on the FirstVoices site: the Label Maker and Flash Card Maker!

Located in the “games” section of each language archive, these resources allow teachers and language learners to create and print labels and flash cards for use as easily identifiable, visual learning tools.

In the **Label Maker**, users can choose words from the archives to create labels in language along with their English translation. Printed labels can be affixed to items around the school, home or office to help people practice and remember the words for common, and not-so-common, objects they see every day.

The **Flash Card Maker** is particularly useful for teachers. There are several com-

binations available for creating 2-sided cards: print a word in a language on one side and English on the other, or use images to enhance or even replace the word on one or both sides. For the images, the Flash Card Maker draws on thousands of photographs and illustrations in the archive’s central databank.

“When I’m making flash cards, I like to print an image on one side and the corresponding word in language on the other,” says FirstVoices Manager, Alex Wadsworth. “By omitting the English word, you give a truly immersive learning experience.”

To access the Flash Card Maker and Label Maker on FirstVoices visit:

[www.firstvoices.com/en/games](http://www.firstvoices.com/en/games)

## Geek Alert! PC KEYBOARD SOFTWARE UPDATE



The new Keyman keyboards for PC are now available for free download at **FirstVoices.com**. Keyman 8.0.1 is the latest version of Tavultesoft’s custom keyboard software that allows users to type in virtually any one of the world’s languages, including B.C.’s First Nations languages.

The update is completely compliant

with Unicode 6.0, meaning access to an expanded range of Unicode characters from Emoji to Egyptian Hieroglyphics. In addition to a wider range of character possibilities, Keyman 8.0.1 runs equally well in 64-bit and 32-bit programs, so it supports every version of Windows XP, Vista, plus Windows 7 & 8. Use it to type in Microsoft

Office, Google Docs, Open Office, Adobe and hundreds of other applications.

Once Keyman has been installed, users can switch between the computer’s default keyboard and a custom keyboard with one simple click. With expanded program support and ease of use, Keyman is ideal for creating materials for print and web publishing, documents, emails—and for use with FirstVoices.

You can find the links for Keyman, as well as keyboards for use with Mac computers, at the bottom of the welcome page for each FirstVoices language archive. Visit [www.firstvoices.com](http://www.firstvoices.com), choose a language and then click “Learn Our Language” to access an archive’s welcome page.

# Seabird Island Language Nest is ENGAGING YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A few years ago, the Seabird Island Band's Chief and Council set an ambitious goal—to have 200 fluent Halq'emeylem language speakers living on reserve by 2020 (there are currently about six). Reaching this goal won't necessarily be easy, but the language nest program at Seabird Island is a critical first step in getting young learners engaged in learning their traditional language.

The pre-school language program at Seabird Island has been operating successfully for 30 years, and in that time it has supported hundreds of children in the first steps of their educational journey.

The language nest program, now in its sixth year, originally got off to a slow start. For the first two years, it operated out of a community hall and relied on parents to drop in. Given that most Seabird Island parents are working, there wasn't a lot of response in those early years. Then, four years ago, the language nest was moved to the pre-school and the existing three year-old curriculum was replaced. The impact was immediately noticeable.

"It's had a huge impact," says Early Childhood Programs Manager Carlene Brown. "Our language teacher was astonished at how much more language the [four year olds] have that had gone through the nest."

This year's class has 20, three-year-old preschoolers. For four days each week, they spend the day with the pre-school teacher, teaching assistant and two fluent language speakers from the community. Elder Donna Giroux and Johnny Williams, a non-Elder from a neighbouring community, provide the ideal balance in working with the children.

"Donna is calm and spends a lot of one-on-one time with kids. She tells stories and brings a lot of traditional knowledge,"



A group of children learn to speak Halq'emeylem at the preschool language program at Seabird Island.

says Carlene. "Johnny has been practicing TPR—total physical response—with the kids. There's lots of action and they really pick up on it. We are so fortunate to have Johnny. The kids just love him and there are so few positive male role models in early childhood education."

To date, 80 children have gone through the pre-school language program at Seabird Island. The first group is now in grade two, and the early introduction to language they received in the language nest is evident.

"The grade twos are answering their teacher in language," says Carlene. "We have one child who has moved off reserve for school but is still speaking in language at home." With this level of success and enthusiasm, Seabird Island has a great chance of realizing its goal of more speakers by 2020.



The FPCC Language Nest Program is funded by the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation.

# Mentor-Apprentice Teams

## CREATING A NEW GENERATION OF SPEAKERS

In 2010, FPCC's groundbreaking Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages stated that only five percent of First Nations people in B.C. speak their first language fluently. Further, just over half of those speakers are over 65 years old. In addition to the passing of a loved family and community member, losing an Elder means losing a precious resource of stored cultural and linguistic knowledge.

The Mentor-Apprentice Program is one successful program offered by FPCC that is turning the tide for First Nations languages in B.C. Formerly called Master-Apprentice, the program was first launched in 2008. It pairs fluent speakers—typically Elders—with willing language learners in order to pass on knowledge and create a younger generation of fluent speakers.

As the 2010 teams wrap up their terms, we checked in with a few participants to hear about their experiences and the results of their efforts.

**The Mentor-Apprentice Program is funded by the New Relationship Trust and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.**

### AMBER EUSTACHE AND SARAH PETERSEN



Amber Eustache (left) was mentored by her grandmother, Sarah Petersen (right), in Nsyilxcən and is happy to have the opportunity to now teach the language to others.

Sarah Petersen, a Paul Creek First Nation Elder and fluent speaker, had been working on language revitalization for more than three decades. Her granddaughter Amber Eustache had been interested in learning her language for some time. Participating in Mentor-Apprentice gave the pair the necessary time and inspiration to spend together so that Amber could improve her fluency.

For Sarah, being a mentor to her granddaughter was an opportunity to pass on more than just language knowledge. “We would drive to Penticton and I’d tell her old stories about the road and the countryside while we were speaking in language. She learned a lot about the

culture. She learned to tan hides—the next step is sewing.”

As Amber and Sarah approach the end of their three-year term, Amber’s fluency has improved significantly. “I’m getting there,” Amber says. “According to the Mentor-Apprentice evaluation scale, fluent is a nine. I am at a six now.” A self-described victim of her own success, Amber is in demand to assist other community members. “I’m pulled in so many different directions. I’m teaching at the high school, some night classes and last summer I taught all of the camps.”

That said, she has no regrets and credits Mentor-Apprentice with giving her life new purpose. “It’s been amazing—a life changer for sure. It’s let me focus on what I’m doing with my life. I’m glad to be able to pass on what I’ve learned to my younger cousins.”

### JOHN AND LINDY ELLIOTT AND BEATRICE ELLIOTT



John (left) and Lindy (right) Elliott worked with mother Beatrice (not shown) to improve their fluency in SENĆOŦEN. Today both John and Lindy work in the W̱SÁNEĆ community to pass along what they have learned.

Language revitalization runs in the Elliott family. The late Dave Elliott was an early language advocate who created the SENĆOŦEN alphabet in 1978. He and his wife Beatrice always spoke in SENĆOŦEN at home, in an effort to set an example for their children.

It’s not surprising then, that both John and Lindy, two of Dave and Beatrice’s children, have been involved in language work for more than four decades. Both teach at the ŁÁU, WELNĒW Tribal School near Victoria, B.C. and promote language within the W̱SÁNEĆ community at large.

Yet, despite having a good level of comprehension, John and Lindy realized the

*“It's in your spirit...The need to know your native language is in your genes.”*

*—Barbara Sennott-Harris, Mentor*

window was closing to develop the level of fluency their parents' generation possessed. When the community lost several fluent Elders, John and Lindy decided to apply for the Mentor-Apprentice Program along with mother Beatrice, now 93.

The three met every day with Beatrice taking the lead to create learning opportunities. “She has a system,” explains John. “Sometimes she prepares subjects, such as local or family history. Other times we put the TV on without the sound and fill in the words in SENĆOŦEN.”

John and Lindy are applying the MA methods and principles in their teaching at the Tribal School, and John is also working with a cohort of young adults—a second tier of apprentices—to involve them in various aspects of language work, such as archiving, creating dictionaries and working on a book. “Our young apprentices are very excited about language work because they're so involved in projects,” John says. “We have five or six young adults in university, getting education degrees. They will be able to replace myself and my sister.”

#### CINDY FISK AND BARBARA SENNOTT-HARRIS



Cindy Jensen Fisk (right) was thrilled to work with her aunt Barbara Sennott-Harris (left) to learn the Gitx'sanimx language. She now helps Barbara teach the language at the Vancouver Native Education Centre (NEC).

Cindy Jensen Fisk and her aunt Barbara Sennott-Harris began Mentor-Apprentice work as a way to honour the memory of Cindy's mother and Barbara's sister, the late Doreen Jensen. An artist, author and lifelong activist, Doreen was passionate about protecting the language and culture of the Gitxsan people.

“Originally, I got into Mentor-Apprentice because I thought it was something my mom would have been proud of,” says Cindy. “Then, in the second year, it became something I wanted to do—for myself, my kids and my community.”

Cindy's fluency has improved dramatically in three years. “When we first started, I wasn't fluent at all. If somebody put writing in front of me that was in Gitx'sanimx, I could pronounce it but I didn't know

what it meant.” Today she helps out with Barbara's language class at the Vancouver Native Education Centre (NEC) and converses in Gitx'sanimx with her fluent-speaking aunts.

She credits Barbara's teaching style with much of her gained fluency. “I'm incredibly lucky to be working with my aunt, who has been working with language for so long. She's so good at defining what we're saying—some Gitxsan words are very complex.”

In addition to teaching at NEC, Barbara works with linguistics scholars at UBC and does dictionary work, along with Cindy. Her teaching approach emphasizes dedication and intention, but is infused with Barbara's own humour and positive energy. “I teach for the urban people because there are a lot of us down here and maybe we don't need [our language] every day, but it still feeds your soul. It doesn't have to feel like a big load of responsibility.”

Barbara feels that all Gitxsan people should have at least some knowledge of their first language. “It's in your spirit,” she explains. “The need to know your native language is in your genes.” And she's thrilled that her niece is interested in language. “I am so happy, for her mother and for herself.”

# In Conversation WITH AADA RECIPIENT KEVIN LORING



Kevin Loring and Nlakap'amux Elder Burt Seymour at the Songs of the Land event in Lytton, B.C. last summer.

A member of the N'laka'pamux (Thompson) First Nation in Lytton, Kevin Loring is an award-winning actor who has performed in numerous plays across Canada and starred in television and feature films. In addition to acting, he co-produced and co-hosted the documentary *Canyon War: The Untold Story about the 1858 Fraser Canyon War*. His original play, *Where the Blood Mixes*, won several awards, including the 2009 Governor General's Literary Award for Drama.

We had a chance to talk to Kevin about his multi-faceted theatre career, and some of the successes he's had over the last decade.

**Q. You received an Aboriginal Arts Development Award (AADA) from the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) in 2003. Where were you in your career at that time, and how did this grant contribute to your career advancement?**

A. This grant was to further develop a script I was working on that was previously

a solo piece titled *The Ballad of Floyd*. I turned the script into a one-act play for five actors. This was ultimately an early incarnation of the play that became my Governor General's Award-winning play *Where the Blood Mixes*, which has played across the country and has garnered me numerous awards and accolades.

I was only a couple years out of theatre school so this was a pivotal time in my career. The AADA support of my work has definitely helped to shape the kind of artist I am today.

**Q. What are you working on now? Can you tell us about your latest project?**

A. I am working on a couple of projects—the most exciting is a community project that involves 100-year-old wax cylinder recordings of N'laka'pamux songs. The project is called *Songs of the Land*. Sourcing these recordings, my company Savage Society is working with the N'laka'pamux people to create and present a showcase of our traditional songs and stories told

through a new piece that involves elements of choral work as well as storytelling, pantomime and song.

This past summer was the first phase of this project and it was a huge success. We had over 50 community participants throughout the week, working with our artists to make this project a reality. We are now planning the second phase of this exciting and groundbreaking project.

**Q. Your recent FPCC grant supported the development of *Savage Society*. How do you expect this new endeavour to impact Aboriginal theatre in B.C.?**

A. *Savage Society* is breaking new ground with our projects. We are fully engaged in the community and are creating new inspiring work. We engage professional Aboriginal artists in the work we do and approach the work with a multi-disciplinary aesthetic. We believe that by sourcing our shared histories we can create stories that are relevant and powerful and that honour the depths of our relationship to the land and the modern realities we now face as Aboriginal people.

**Q. Do you have any advice to pass on to young aspiring and emerging First Nations artists?**

A. Visualize what you want. See it in your mind's eye. Then do everything you can to make it happen. The artist's life can be a rewarding life . . . but it takes time and perseverance. If you really want to work, create it yourself. Sometimes being a leader simply means choosing to walk the path, and the people that need to be on that journey with you will show up, one way or another.

# Upgrades to the FirstVoices Language Tutor NOW AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITIES

FirstVoices Language Tutor has undergone a major upgrade. Enlisting the expertise of local e-course management software company, Udotu, FirstVoices now offers a full “e-course authoring tool” complete with student tracking, assessments and reports. Training on the new system has already begun in communities around the province.

Numerous improvements come with the new system: increased control over design features, automatic image and video re-sizing, and support of Flash animation.

Teachers can create virtual classrooms and post courses in progressive modules for students based on grade, language level or topic. For example, courses can start with simple vocabulary-building exercises, and move to more complex tasks and assessments. Or, courses can be built around cultural themes such as fish preparation, basket weaving and hide tanning. Teachers have full control over

student access and can specify course prerequisites and how many times students can take assessments.

The authoring tool allows for lessons to be built using screen templates that are easy to use and don't require programming expertise. Basic screens consist of image and text, and advanced screens offer features like slide show, targets and roll-over hotspots.

Assessment screens offer a variety of options from traditional multiple choice to real-time voice recording and playback for pronunciation practice.

All screen templates have the option of including buttons that can take the learner anywhere on the learning path: a review section, additional information, a quiz and more. This variety of presentation techniques effectively targets three skills of language (reading, listening and speaking).

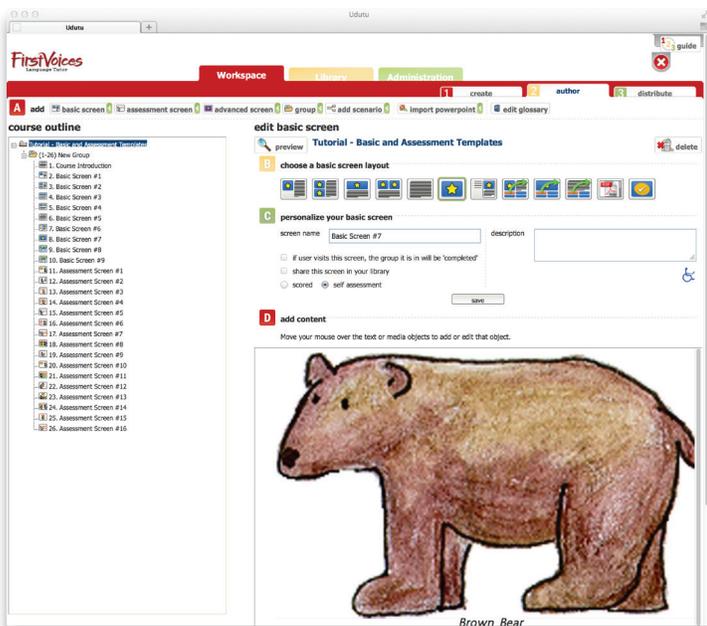
Reporting tools in the program allow teachers to track student progress and

course activity. Certificates of completion can be issued for each course, or at the end of a module.

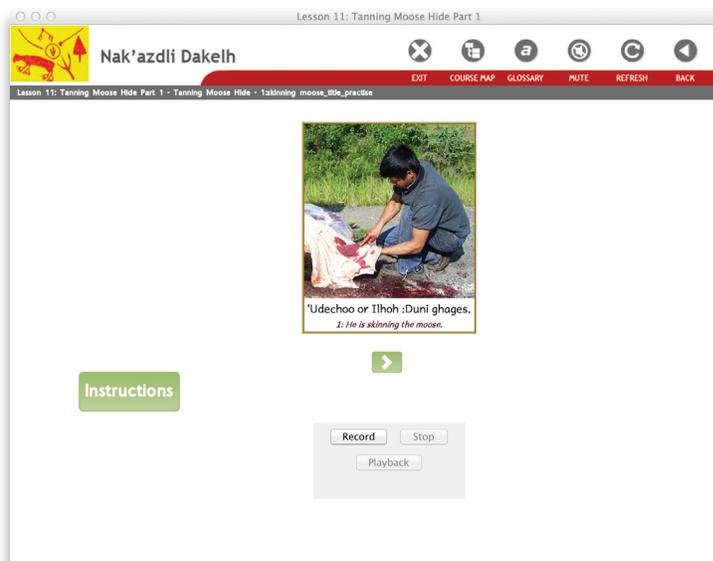
The new Language Tutor allows teachers to integrate lessons with existing curriculum and learning outcomes. And, teachers can share lesson templates with each other through a shared courses website online.

To access the FirstVoices Language Tutor visit: [tutor.firstvoices.com](http://tutor.firstvoices.com). For more information, or to get your community involved, contact Alex Wadsworth, FirstVoices Manager: [alex@fpcc.ca](mailto:alex@fpcc.ca).

**Upgrades to FVLT were made possible thanks to the generous support of Udotu and the Department of Canadian Heritage Canada Interactive Fund.**



A look at the new Language Tutor website.



# Community Success Story: SECWPEMCTSÍN LANGUAGE TUTOR LESSONS

According to the *2010 Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages*, which was published by FPCC, the Secwepemctsín language is severely endangered, with 249 speakers remaining. However, as with other First Nations languages in the province, the desire to keep it alive is strong. At the Secwepemctsín's FirstVoices language archive, for example, the progress on the language to date is clear—there's an online dictionary, a phrase book, songs, stories, games and a free dictionary app for mobile use.

Now, the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society in Kamloops, B.C. is taking the delivery of their language lessons to the next level by using the latest tool from FirstVoices – the FirstVoices Language Tutor. Back in 2013, they hosted a week-long Language Tutor workshop with FPCC's FirstVoices trainers Alex Wadsworth and Pauline Edwards. There, Kathy Manuel, Language Coordinator at the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, and several representatives from neighbouring

languages and dialects learned to create interactive multi-media language lessons to be delivered in e-course format.

Drawing on Kathy's experience in second-language teaching, the group created lessons that teach vocabulary and simple grammar points. Starting with classroom objects, the lessons cover the basics needed to start using language in an authentic way: counting, colours, body parts, animals, food and drinks. With many audio examples, learners will be able to become familiar with the many phonemes (distinctive sounds of a language) in Secwepemctsín that aren't used in English.

"The Secwepemc people consider the language to be tied to the land and acknowledge that within the language, a wealth of information about the culture, history and ecology of the region exists," says Kathy. "This traditional viewpoint can be seen in the lessons we offer, right from the beginner level."

The first counting lesson, for example,

begins with an explanation of how counting words can change depending on the characteristics of the items being counted (round, pointy, flat, human, etc.). More advanced lessons will go into further detail about the subtle and unique traits of the language. Kathy has been working closely with the Elders and fluent speakers in her community to assure the accuracy of the lessons.

Future plans are also being made for a workshop that will show teachers how the courses can be used both in the classroom and as a supplementary resource for home-use. The courses will also be incorporated into the evening language classes already being offered at the Sk'elep School of Excellence where beginner, intermediate and advanced Secwepemctsín classes are held.

The first set of courses is available online now, and Kathy is eager to get feedback from the community on the lessons. New users can sign up at: [tutor.firstvoices.com](http://tutor.firstvoices.com).



Language Tutor participants: Kathy Manuel, Cody Williams, Alex Wadsworth, Kwimtsxn (background), Lemya7, Ivy Chelsea (seated)

# FirstVoices Coordinator Peter Brand Retires ...OR DOES HE?

It was 12 years ago that Peter Brand took a leave of absence from his position as teacher and head of the I.T. department at ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School to join forces with the First Peoples' Cultural Council. The purpose: to develop a web-based language archiving prototype based on the one that he and fellow teacher STOLŹEŁ (John Elliott) had been experimenting with for the tribal school's SENĆOFEN language program. The rest, as they say, is history.

Today, the comprehensive and ever-expanding suite of online and mobile tools that we know as FirstVoices is a testament to Peter and John's original vision, as well as to the faith that the FPCC Board entrusted in that vision and the countless hours of hard work by Peter and his many collaborators.

The FirstVoices archive now hosts 24 of B.C.'s 34 First Nations languages and 38 of 61 dialects, each with its own dictionary, alphabet and corresponding keyboard application. Tens of thousands of words and phrases are represented in images, audio and video recordings, and multiple online games and mobile apps are available for language teachers and learners. By combining cutting-edge technologies with more traditional learning methods, FirstVoices has truly broken ground in the arena of language revitalization.

Both originator of FirstVoices concept and its coordinator for the past 12 years, Peter retired from his position at the First Peoples' Cultural Council in October 2013. Ever humble, he shares the credit for FirstVoices with the myriad people who supported and contributed to the initiative over the years. "I've been fortunate to work with an incredible network of brilliant minds and willing hands throughout this journey," says Peter. "It simply



Peter Brand with Tracey Herbert, Executive Director of the First Peoples' Cultural Council (left) and Lorna Williams, Chair.

couldn't have been achieved without the ongoing support I received—from the First Peoples' Board and executive and also from my wife Penny and sons Josh and Aidan."

"Peter is the life force behind FirstVoices. Without his tireless enthusiasm—everything from fundraising to idea generating—FirstVoices would not have enjoyed the success it has today," says FPCC's Executive Director Tracey Herbert. "We will always be grateful for the work he began and hope to find creative ways to engage with Peter's talent in years to come."

In fact, Peter's own lifelong interest in and commitment to Indigenous languages dates back to the early 1970s, when he was a young teacher working in Australia's Northern Territory. "I had a wonderful opportunity to act as teacher-in-charge of Banka Banka School in the traditional

territory of the Warumungu people," says Peter. "Teaching those 30 delightful Aboriginal children left an indelible mark on me, and perhaps set the course for my career working with Indigenous language learners."

As for FirstVoices, the legacy that Peter started will continue to benefit B.C. communities for years to come. "We have set a goal of archiving all 34 of B.C.'s First Nations languages," says Tracey. "With the language team at FPCC, we will continue to build on the important work that Peter started more than a decade ago."

**Long-time FPCC staff members Shaylene Boechler and Alex Wadsworth will be working together to deliver continued support and training to FirstVoices users. Both Alex and Shaylene have been FirstVoices trainers and Alex has been the lead programmer on the project for 10 years.**



Board and Advisory members gather together for a photo at the 2013 Annual General Meeting in Kelowna.

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**2013/14 ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- Terry Badine, ᑎᑦᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ (Nēhiyawēwin) (Cree)  
 Marlene Erickson, Dakelh (Cᑲᑲ)  
 Laura Webb, Dane-Zaa (Cᑲᑲ)  
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 həhđəmiñəm  
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 Lena Collins, Oowekyala  
 YAAHLDAAJII Gary P. Russ, Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil  
 (Haida)

**VACANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE POSITIONS  
 (BY LANGUAGE GROUP)**

- Anishnaubemowin  
 Dene K'e  
 Ktunaxa  
 She shashishalhem  
 Gitsenimx  
 Ski:xs  
 Xenaksialakala / Xa''islaakala  
 Secwepemctsin

Advisory Committee members are listed with the language group they represent (list current as of February 2014).

**FIRST PEOPLES'**  
**news**

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