New App Shares Alutiiq Language with Children

The Alutiiq Museum and Native Village of Afognak have released an app version of the Alutiiq language children’s books Yaaki. Written and narrated by Susan Malutin and illustrated by Hanna Sholl, Yaaki is a story about a girl and her dog. This is the third of a series of six Alutiiq language children’s app books which will be released over the next year. Kiagumuuq! and Uksumuuq!, the first two books, have been available since August. With financial support from the Afognak Native Corporation, the Administration for Native Americans, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Alutiiq Museum and Native Village of Afognak are partnering to develop the apps with the goal of providing fun, accessible books to Alutiiq language learners and speakers anywhere in the world.

“These interactive apps are a fantastic way for children and learners of all levels to practice Alutiiq” said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Counceller. “Now that there are Alutiiq language classes at the Kodiak College, Kodiak High School, and even an immersion preschool opening in January, electronic resources like this add to the body of work available to learners and teachers.”

Melissa Borton, Tribal Administrator at the Native Village of Afognak added, “These app books highlight one of the many ways Alutiiq language scholars and artists are continuing to learn, practice, and speak Alutiiq and pass that knowledge on to future generations.”

Yaaki is a free interactive app where readers can touch each word and letter to hear it spoken. Readers can also make their own recording of the book, if desired. The app is compatible with iPad, iPhone, and iPod Touch devices using iOS 8.0 or higher and can be downloaded from the iTunes store.

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the Alutiiq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.

The Native Village of Afognak is a federally recognized Tribe which not only serves their enrolled tribal members, but also has programs that benefit all Alaska Natives on Kodiak Island. NVA’s mission is to develop, and enhance Alutiiq culture, protect our traditional use areas and encourage unity among the Alutiiq of the Kodiak Archipelago.

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