New Apps Share Alutiiq Language with Children

The Alutiiq Museum and Native Village of Afognak have released app versions of three Alutiiq language children’s books: *Naken taitaartat alagnat?*, *Cestun Ila et’a?*, and *Ikuwitii*. All three books were written and illustrated by Kodiak authors and artists. Gayla Pedersen wrote *Naken taitaartat alagnat?* – Where do berries come from? with illustrations by Gloria Selby, and *Cestun Ila et’a?* – How is the weather? Illustrated by Sandee Drabek. Both books explore Kodiak’s natural environment through the eyes of a child. *Ikuwitii*—Golden Crown Sparrow, comes from a story told by the later Elder John (JP) Pestrikoff. It is about spring time and the return of salmon to Kodiak streams. Kathy Nelson wrote *Ikuwitii* and illustrated it with drawings created by Port Lions students during the 2012–2013 school year.

These books are the latest installments in a series of eight Alutiiq language children’s app books designed to promote Alutiiq language literacy. Last fall, the museum and the Native Village of Afognak released the first three titles, *Kiagumuuq!*—It is Summer!; *Uksumuuq!*—It is Winter!, and *Yaaki*, a story about a girl and her dog. The book series is designed to provide fun, accessible resources for all Alutiiq language learners and speakers. Financial support for the project comes from the Afognak Native Corporation, the Administration for Native Americans, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

“We are excited to continue expanding the selection of Alutiiq language children’s books to include app books,” said Native Village of Afognak Tribal Administrator Melissa Borton. “These apps can be downloaded and used anywhere in the world, by speakers and learners of any level.”

Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Counceller added, “Now that our community has Alutiiq language classes at both the high school and college level, as well as a language nest for preschoolers, it is important to continue broadening the resources available to speakers and learners.”

*Naken taitaartat alagnat, Cestun Ila et’a, and Ikuwitii* are free interactive apps. Readers can touch each word and letter in the digital books to hear spoken versions and practice their own pronunciation. Readers can also make their own recording of each book. The apps are 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 (NVA) is a federally recognized Tribe which not only serves their enrolled tribal members, but has programs that benefit all of Kodiak’s Alaska Native people. 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.

Image: Cover of the digital book *Cestun Ila et’a?* Illustration by Sandee Drabek.