

**ATHABASCAN** word of the week

### **Revitalizing language through storytelling**

I spent a portion of this week in Tanana to share strategies for language revitalization classes, courtesy of the Tanana Tribal Council. I worked with 30 students at the Maudrey Sommer School during the day and in the evening at the after-school program.

My associate, Patty Elias, and I visited with elder Josephine Roberts. She shared these names with us regarding Tanana: Bugh netaagheedelenee: It means “hill where the two rivers meet.” It is an important landmark for the area. It is also known as Mission Hill. It is the original Native village.

Hohudodetlaa! Denh: “Place where the area is chopped out” — present day Tanana.

Noochuhgholoyet: noo chu — big island; gholoyet — the point of it.

“The point created by the meeting of the two rivers.” It is the general area of the peninsula created by the meeting of the two rivers (Yukon and Tanana).

I had a nice stay at the Tanana Elder’s Center. A poster there poignantly described their mission: Hoozoonh ts’e neef’ekk’o naanuhletoyh — “take care of each other.”



Photo courtesy Susan Paskvan

**The village of Tanana with Bugh netaagheedelenee (Mission Hill) in the middle left and the general area of Noochuhgholoyet on the river.**

**The Athabascan Word of the Week appears every Saturday on page [A3](#) of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. The words are provided by Susan “K’etsoo” Paskvan of Yukon-Koyukuk School District. She is originally from the village of Koyukuk on the Yukon River in Interior Alaska. She is Tleeyegge Hut’aane, which is Koyukon Athabascan. She seeks stories and phrases from both Denaakk’e (Koyukon Athabascan) and Denak’a (Lower Tanana Athabascan), which are languages spoken in the Yukon-Koyukuk School District region. Yukon-Koyukuk School District serves the villages of Allakaket, Hughes, Huslia, Koyukuk, Nulato, Kaltag, Ruby, Manley Hot Springs and Minto. The Board of Education places a priority on teaching the Native languages within the district.**

