

Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

29 March 2010

Re: Ta'an Kwäch'än Students Succeed in Education, Employment and Training Fields

Whitehorse, Yukon — Chief Brenda Sam of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, in conjunction with her Education Manager, Madeline Talyfer, announces that as of the end of February 2010 a total of 44 students had completed, or were in various stages of completing, courses in the post-secondary education and employment training fields.

"This is a significant number," says Chief Sam, "as it represents 10 per cent of our First Nation's population." Talyfer says that the number of people enrolled in post-secondary education or in shorter employment-related training is simply "a sign of the times". With the severe downturn in the economy last year and job availability running at an all-time low—and while competition in Alberta has become fierce—training was the best way to make things better. Once trained, Ta'an Kwäch'än citizens will be able to have a better choice of positions in the job market and be able to stay closer to home.

"We have a large number of people enrolled at Yukon College," Talyfer says. Cora Lee Johns, who worked for the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Lands, Resources and Heritage Department as a summer student, returned to college courses to move into the water and wildlife management sector. "It's great going to school and having a future to look forward to," she says. This semester, while juggling kids and a part time job, she is attending Lead Community Steward Technician courses at the University of Alaska Fairbanks one week per month until May. The Ta'an Kwäch'än Council is partnering this project with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council responsible for managing large stretches of traditional territory along the Yukon River. Johns wants to continue her studies in Fairbanks full time in the fall over the next two years.

Another Ta'an Kwäch'än citizen, Gabe Profeit, is completing his third year carpentry apprenticeship in Burnaby. "I didn't even know that this was available to me. I had worked for the last five years as a carpenter's helper. When I got in touch with Madeline's office last fall looking for job leads and spoke with her, she steered me into the apprenticeship program because of my work history. With my motivation, I've just completed my third year. After six more months on a job site, I can take my fourth year and then I'm a journeyman! I never thought it could happen to me."

"We've got a few more good ideas for projects to find entry-level jobs for our citizens", says Chief Sam. "We're partnering with as many of the local government agencies as we can to pull all the resources, trainers and ideas together. We'll be able to make more good-news announcements in the future."

Asked where she takes her enthusiasm and ideas from, Talyfer responds "I take a look at the overall picture and come up with the simplest plans to make it a win-win situation for everyone. As a sourdough born and bred in the Yukon, I believe I have the true entrepreneurial spirit that originates here. We have to forge ahead while everyone else tells us we can't do it. Now that the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Self-Government Agreement is in place, and after some time of adjustment, there are many opportunities to finally make a difference for everyone.

– 30 –

For more information contact:

Madeline Talyfer
Education Manager
Education Department
Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
Telephone: 867.668.3613

Government of the
Ta'an Kwäch'än Council