



Rita Stevens and Andrew Ponchene, both of the Kodiak Area Native Association, display the plaques awarded recently.

JOM Program in Kodiak gets national, state honors

by Mike Rostad
for the Tundra Times

KODIAK — The Johnson O'Malley Program of the Kodiak Area Native Association received national and statewide recognition recently for introducing a new component to the Fine Arts Summer Camp for Kids, sponsored by the Kodiak Arts Council.

Plaques commending JOM for coming up with the idea of including Native arts and crafts classes in the four week camp were given by the National Indian Education Association and the Alaska Native Education Council.

KANA was honored for bringing agencies together in fulfilling the concept and providing children with elders as role models. KANA was one out of eight nationwide recipients of the NIEA awards. The Cook Inlet Tribal Council was the other Alaskan recipient.

Rita Stevens, former education administrator at KANA, worked with Gerald Wilson, executive director of KAC; Kathy Roberts, coordinator of the Fine Arts Program; Robbie Ward, Indian Education Act administrator for the school district; Irene Coyle, president of the IEA parent committee; and from the Kodiak Tribal Council, Margaret Roberts, president, and Connie Chya to implement the component.

With the objective of promoting cultural awareness, the group planned

classes on Alutiiq beading and grass basket weaving, which were taught by Annie Myers, and Alutiiq songs and dances and dance costume making, taught by Denise Malutin, Connie Chya and Margaret Roberts.

Scholarships covering tuition were given by KANA and IEA to Native children in the Kodiak Island area. The Kodiak Island Borough donated the use of the auditorium for the classes, and KAC donated the use of its administration staff for directing the program. KANA provided all of the supplies for the classes.

In evaluating the new component to the summer camp, Wilson said, "It was an exceedingly rewarding experience for the kids, their parents, their teachers and for us.

"We all benefit as we better know and understand the diversity of cultures that inhabit the island."

Wilson expressed hopes that the program will continue.

Stevens, who currently is director of personnel at KANA, traveled to the NIEA annual conference in San Diego to receive the plaque on behalf of KANA's education department.

Andrew Ponchene, the current education administrator, was not able to attend the conference. The ANEC plaque was presented to Gary Arenson, president of KANA, at the Alaska Federation of Natives convention in Anchorage.