



Travel Academy instructor Alfred R. McKay teaches student Ella Peterson travel codes for the computer during a class.

50 Lower Yukon students get a taste of Anchorage life

Riding a bus, finding a lost suitcase or ordering a meal wouldn't seem like a big deal to the seasoned traveler.

But for some rural Alaskans, it's the difference between survival or defeat in Anchorage.

It's also the focus of two sessions offered during June and July through the Lower Yukon School District's Summer Education Enhancement — SEE — Program and held in conjunction with the University of Alaska-Anchorage.

Fifty students from the Lower Yukon School District are getting a taste of life in Anchorage, looking at different career opportunities and learning valuable life skills this summer.

Classes cover many subjects, including resumes and interviews, personal safety and crime prevention, reading a bus schedule and budgeting and personal finance.

"These may seem like simple things, but to most of these kids, city life is very foreign," said Leo Holler, the program's principal.

"This program gives rural kids the opportunity and confidence to do or be whatever they choose in life."

The program began last year in response to parents' and Lower Yukon area school administrators' concern about the high drop-out rate in village schools. They felt students weren't seeing how school was relevant to their lives.

SEE students take part in classroom discussions and complete assignments centering around math and language skills. They also enjoy field trips including a hike up Flat Top Mountain, digging for clams in Ninilchik and tours to Portage Glacier and the Anchorage Zoo.

Local businesses conduct seminars and offer the older students an opportunity to do some on-the-job training.

"We're able to give the students an idea of how to manage their lives while they're away from home," said Randy Pollock of the Travel Academy. "We also give them new career directions after high school."

The students range in age from 13 to 18 and come from schools in Alakanuk, Emmonak, Hooper Bay, Kotlik, Marshall, Mountain Village, Pilot Station, Pitka's Point, Russian Mission, Scammon Bay and Sheldon Point.