

# Stebbins hosts first annual Eskimo Dance Festival

On February 3-5th, Tukurngailnguq School in Stebbins was host to the First Annual Eskimo Dance Festival called Yurartek-egtaaraat Ernerat. These are the Yupik words for "Good Dancer's Day".

Students from Bering Strait and the Lower-Kuskokwim region attended. It was designed to be a sharing of the Eskimo cultures. Inupiat and Yupik dance groups entertained audiences Friday and Saturday nights to a standing room only crowd.

Two day workshops led by elders were attended by over 220 youths. The workshops included Native food preparation, storytelling, doll making, headdress design, pointer stick construction, and dance fans making. All stu-

dents were allowed to keep their items they made as mementos.

Bering Strait and Lower Kuskokwim dance groups shared their dancing skills during a special dance workshop. Enthusiastic dance groups from Tukurngailnguq School, Stebbins; Akula Elitnaurvik School, Kasigluk; Anthony A. Andrews School, St. Michael; Shaktoolik School, Shaktoolik; Martin L. Olson School, Golovin; and Unalakleet School, Unalakleet presented dances. The Tapramiut Dancers of Stebbins, an adult dance group, also entertained.

White Mountain sent students to participate in the workshops. Thanks to donations from the community, participants feasted on Native foods including agutak,

moose, caribou, reindeer and salmon. Donations were also received from Tapraq Inc., Tapramiut Dancers, and Stebbins Native Corporation.

The dream of a regional dance festival began with Rose Anna Dan-Waghiyi. As bi-lingual/bi-cultural LRE in Stebbins, Rose Anna wanted a way to bring young people closer to their own heritage. This year she found in Stebbins a supportive school staff who believed in her dream.

Under the direction of principal Gurley Maurin, members of their staff gave hours of time and energy to make this event an efficient, well-organized, and well-supervised learning and sharing activity. The dance festival workshops, supplies, and food for all

participants were totally financed by Tukurngailnguq School. Congratulations to the school and

community of Stebbins for sponsoring this educational and cultural event.