

# Cultural awareness program started

By Walter L. Hays  
For the Tundra Times

Alaska Children's Services, Inc. (ACS), the state's largest private child and family service agency, will establish a cultural awareness project to serve the needs of Alaska Native Children placed in its network of emergency shelters, community-based group homes and residential treatment center.

Esther M. Combs, Deputy Director for Programs at Cook Inlet Native Association and an ACS board member, stated that "The purpose of the project will be to strengthen the ACS programs of care as they serve Alaska Native children. One third of the 800 children served annually by ACS are Aleut, Indian and Eskimo children placed with the agency from throughout the state."

Combs, who will serve as board contact to the project, added "The goals of the project are four-fold: to assist the agency in recruiting and hiring Native staff; to establish links between the children served and the Anchorage Native Community; to create a positive environment within ACS projects that will affirm the cultural heritage of Alaska Native children; and to help Native children in care and staff to come to a working understanding of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971."

Combs continued, "I feel one of the great strengths of the project is that Rosita Worl, noted Alaskan Anthropologist and Senior Research Analyst at the University of Alaska Arctic Environmental and Data Center, will serve as the consultant and professional evaluator for this pilot program.

"ACS is committed to develop a model program to serve the needs of minority children in institutional care. To the best of my knowledge this will be the only program of its kind among Native American children in private institutional care in the entire western region of the nation."

Thomas H. Dahl, Anchorage attorney and President of the ACS board of directors, said that the pilot project was being funded primarily by grants from the Public Welfare Foundation of Washington D.C. (\$25,000) and the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church (\$20,000).

The United Methodist grant was from the 1981 "Call to Prayer And Self Denial" offering of United Methodist Women. Each year United Methodist Women raise about \$1,000,000 in this offering for some 60 to 100 foreign and domestic projects.

The focus of the 1981 offering was to assist projects serving children in the area of advocacy and ministry. ACS received the largest of the seventeen domestic grants for our new program.

A state-wide search is being conducted by ACS to secure a director for the project. Dr. John C. Garvin, ACS Executive Director, said "We are looking for a person familiar with Alaska Native Cultures and who has good rapport with Alaska Native organizations and groups. This person should possess demonstrated administrative, programmatic and communication skills."

A bachelor's degree and/or experience in residential child care or work with an ANSCA profit or non-profit corporation.  
(Continued on Page Four)



PHOTO BY MERRILL E. GRUBE

Julie, age 11, (l), Dick Lynch, director of The Jesse Lee Home, the residential treatment center related to ACS (C), review a lesson in beadwork from Pearl Goodhope. Visits to ACS projects by resource persons in the broad area of Alaska Native Cultures (games, arts/crafts, dance, history and story-telling) are an important part of the cultural awareness project.



PHOTO BY WALT HAYS

Rosita Worl, Alaskan Anthropologist (l), Thomas H. Dahl, President of the Alaska Children's Services (ACS) board of directors, and Esther Combs, Deputy Director of Programs of CINA and ACS board member, discuss plans for the new cultural awareness project at ACS.

# Cultural awareness program for children

(Continued from Page Three)  
tion would be helpful. Persons interested in this position should write to Alaska Chil-

dren's Services, 1200 East 27th Ave. Anchorage, Ak. 99504 for an application packet or call Thomas Gunderson, Di-

rector of Clinical and Program Services at (907) 276-4515.

Founded in 1970, ACS is a joint project of American Baptist, American Lutheran and United Methodist Churches. In 1981 ACS became an affiliate of the National Benevolent Association, the Division of Social and Health Services of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

ACS is licensed to serve 90 children through three emergency shelters, four community-based group homes, and a residential treatment center and school (The Jesse Lee Home).

The three programs provide both short-term and "crisis-care" and longer term treatment for children and young people with moderate to severe

emotional and behavior problems.

ACS is a member of the United Way of Anchorage and the only agency in Alaska to have earned full membership in the Child Welfare League of America, the recognized standard setting and accrediting body for child serving institutions in the United States and Canada.