

# Student ideas for excellence

by Julie McCoy

My name is Julie McCoy, I'm in the 8th grade, and I am 14 years old. I attend Galena

City School District. My sponsoring teacher is Jenny Pelkola and her aide, Elanie Solomon. The principal is Mr. Steve Musser. I am learning Athabaskan and I speak English.

In my school, new pathways for excellence are opening up through the use of computers and access to the Internet. This gives students an opportunity to seek out more information.

Using the Internet to explore information will create opportunities to find ways which will help us share our Athabaskan culture, crafts, and language with other Native American students. This will help us develop critical thinking skills.

The school helps me by teaching me about the Athabaskan culture and by setting good rules (solving problems between people, being responsible, respecting time), and higher standards (making sure I do my work).

Families help students learn responsibilities at home by having chores. Families also help students by allowing us to travel and see new places and meet different people. Travel opens our eyes to new ideas and learning. We have to learn to take responsibility for ourselves like finding the places we are looking for, finding our way around and how to get a hold of people. We learn how to ask for directions or we just stay lost. If you get hurt, you need to know how to get help and traveling provides opportunities to think about problems before they happen. If you go with your family, they usually help you out.

Communities provide new pathways to excellence by providing youth programs through the churches. These programs give

youth positive places to go and activities to share. They provide guidance in developing moral values. Communities also provide cultural activities so that youth can hold to some of the local traditions such as memorial potlatches and the Yukon Jamboree. Communities also provide activities in the summer like baseball and going to fish camp.

I think schools could do a better job by having more activities for small groups to take trips at the junior high level, such as dancing in the villages and for sports. We would like opportunities to go to the Lower 48, Anchorage and Fairbanks to visit other schools and talk with students.

Families could do a better job of creating new pathways for excellence by learning how to help kids with their school work and activities at home. Families could visit the library in the evening with their kids just to learn whatever they are interested in. This would help kids learn more.

Communities could start up study halls at different homes. People could have a meeting and talk about ways to create more new pathways to excellence. Some parents are working or are not home to help students and students need a place to go. The community could provide access to computers so that students could get help. Communities could have volunteer tutors to help students.

There are more programs to help kids now than there used to be. Kids in the kindergarten and preschool have access to computers with programs especially for them. Middle schoolers have "Encarta", "Grolliers", and more books to help with research. "Encarta" is fun! Middle school and high school students have more programs to help them learn like "Think Quest" and the Internet. I think our school is making progress with students. We are making good choices!