

# Teacher reflects on educating indigenous youth in village

by George Olanna, Sr.

You have the right to be here. You are the child of the universe. You have the right to the education.

Every student in your classroom have the right to the education. You cannot learn for anyone

else. No one can learn for you.

Trying to get this education is one of the hardest things to learn. Some students have no patience and get mad. We don't expect you to learn anything at first try. When a student is mad and think he/she can not learn, it is block. A block like a wall you can not penetrate.

Today, the world you live in is more complex than the world your parents grew up in. You have more blocks that will prevent you from learning. At the same time you have more opportunities than your parents had. Your teachers are better educated and your parents have more experiences. Trust them.

The culture you grew up in is old. It is older than anyone you know. It cares for you, and cherishes you as a person. If your parents did not think this culture is important the village you live in would not be here today. The way you live and do things is your culture. It fits your environment and time. The way you live now is different than the way your parents grew up

You are the child of the universe, you belong to this world in which you live. You have the right. You have the right to keep what is valuable to you and your parents. Let no one tell you it is wrong way of life.

You share this world with the animals around you. They have the right to be here. You depend on these animals. Without them, you will change your life. They depend on you to be here. Because they are here, your ancestors survived. Let no man tell you, the place you lived in is in the middle of nowhere. It has a place in the universe. Other people from other places in the universe may not understand it but you do. We do not understand why students in other places carry guns to school. We know what we use the guns for in our world.

Whatever you eat becomes part of your body. Whatever you throw on the land becomes part of this universe forever. The plants you eat grow from this and become part of you. The rivers are blood systems of this world. Without the rivers or if the river are polluted, the land and the animals that depends on this system will die.

You are the child of the universe. No one is superior than you. We are all equal. Our world must balance in order to survive.

The Values that kept this world alive, like the ten commandments in the Bible are The Unupiat Ilitqusiut: Knowledge of Language, Sharing, Respect for Others, Cooperation, Respect for Elders, Love for Children, Hard Work, Knowledge of Family Tree, Avoid Conflict, Respect for Nature, Spirituality, Humor, Family Role, Hunter Success (school success), Domestic Skills, Humility, Responsibility for Tribe (community). Learn these values and know why they were taught to all the members of the community. Know everyone is important as you are. Don't begin to think you are the only important being in this world. Share this universe with others around you.

Because you are here, the world you live in here, you are part of this universe. You make the difference.

You are the child of the Universe.

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