Yup'ik/Cup'ik Culture Try-It

Level: Brownie
Requirements: Complete 4 of the following activities

1. Map it! Find the Yup'ik region and the two Cup'ik villages of Chevak and Mekoryuk on a map of Alaska. Label the main rivers and as many villages in this area as you can find.

2. Got the Beat? An important part of Yup'ik and Cup'ik dances is the drumming. Watch a Yup'ik or Cup'ik dance performance (live or on video), paying special attention to the rhythm of the drumming. Traditionally, what occasions are cause for dancing and drumming?

3. Making Connections Invite a Yup'ik or Cup'ik elder to visit your troop. Find out what life was like when she/he was young. How has today's lifestyle changed from traditional times? Learn a few phrases in Yup'ik/Cup'ik.

4. Plants and Animals Traditionally, Yup'ik and Cup'ik use seasonal camps for fishing, hunting, and gathering. What plants or animals are used in this area?

5. What's up? Review a current copy of The Bristol Bay Times, The Delta Discovery or The Tundra Drums to see what people/events are making the news today. Make a list of Alaska Native words you find in the newspaper.

6. Native Legends / Story Time! Ask a Yup'ik or Cup'ik elder or tradition bearer to tell you legends (or listen to a legend from Akiugnert Ciuliamta – Echoes From the Past edited by Susan Henry, or a story from Yup’ik Lore: Oral Traditions of an Eskimo People – Yuut Qanemciiit: Yupiit Cayaraita Qanrutkumallrít edited by Edward A. Tennant and Joseph N. Bitar). Or listen to books about life in this area of Alaska. Examples are Dance on a Sealskin by Barbara Winslow; The Eye of the Needle and The Hungry Giant of the Tundra, retold by Teri Sloat; How the Crane Got Its Blue Eyes: a Yup’ik Legend, as told by Jean Cook, written by Elsie Jimmy (CD-ROM presents it in both Yup'ik Eskimo and English); Kitaq Goes Ice Fishing, by Margaret Nicolai; and What Girls Should Do When Eskimo Dancing, by Rosalie Lincoln.

7. Native Games Learn about Native youth games in the state of Alaska and World Eskimo-Indian Olympics (www.weio.org). How are these competitions an important part of skill development? Watch a competition (live or on video), and practice one event until you improve your performance.

"Waqaa" (Greetings) – Yup'ik & Cup'ik
See Yup'ik/Cup'ik Culture Badge for additional resources.

Gratitude is expressed to the Alaska Native Heritage Center for recommendations in the development of this project and for permission to use the cultural symbols for badge and try-it designs.