



Creating Futures

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cree Storybooks go Digital

First Nations Storybook: Bush Cree - a new app to strengthen the language

Fort Smith, NT - Available now on the App Store for the iPad is a new app developed in partnership with the South Slave Divisional Education Council and Education Culture and Employment division of the Government of NWT. The app, titled *First Nations Storybook: Bush Cree* contains dozens of stories written in Cree and published by both the SSDEC and the Cree Language program of the NWT Metis Nation. The app includes stories with full audio support so newcomers to the language, or those not yet able to read in the language, can have the stories read to them. The collection includes legends, children books and tales of a rich past as told by local elders. Many of the books were written by community members and still others feature the colourful illustrations of student artists.

Brent Kaulback, Assistant Superintendent of the South Slave Divisional Education Council, is responsible for Aboriginal Language programming in South Slave schools and helped develop this app. “We saw this app as another opportunity to promote and celebrate our aboriginal languages here in the South Slave. The app makes our growing collection of books and stories accessible to all. Now parents and children can read a bedtime story together or enjoy a local legend as told by an elder.”

The local dialect of Cree, sometimes called Bush Cree, is spoken across the northern and western provinces. It is closely linked to the more predominant dialect of Plains Cree. Plans for adding other languages to the First Nations Storybook collection are in the works.

Kaulback adds, “Our goal this year in aboriginal language programming is to push the languages out of the school and back into the home and community. This is one small step along that path. We have lots of students learning the languages and becoming excited by them but they need to start hearing and using the languages at home and on the playground as well. Then, the languages will grow and flourish.”

Local writers, adult and student alike, are invited to add to the collection and submit their own illustrated stories. These can be added to the Bush Cree library for others to read and enjoy. The app is connected to popular forms of social media and the books can be shared through Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.

To promote the release of the app, the South Slave Divisional Education Council will be holding a contest during NWT Literacy Week. Details of the contest can be found on the South Slave Divisional Council's Facebook page. This free app is available for download now through the Apple App store. Search for *First Nations Storybook: Bush Cree* and begin reading today.

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