

AILDI: My Family, My Friends

Sandra Warlie

Manahuu, I-na-nia-ni Sandra Warlie. Bishop awae nüü agimana. Hello, my name is Sandra Warlie. I come from Bishop. I am a member of the Bishop Paiute Tribe, the fifth largest American Indian tribe of California with 1712 enrolled members. The official Native language of our tribe is Owens Valley Paiute. According to UNESCO my language is in the critically endangered stage of language loss, meaning that the language is used mostly by very few speakers, of great-grandparental generation and is only one step away from becoming extinct.

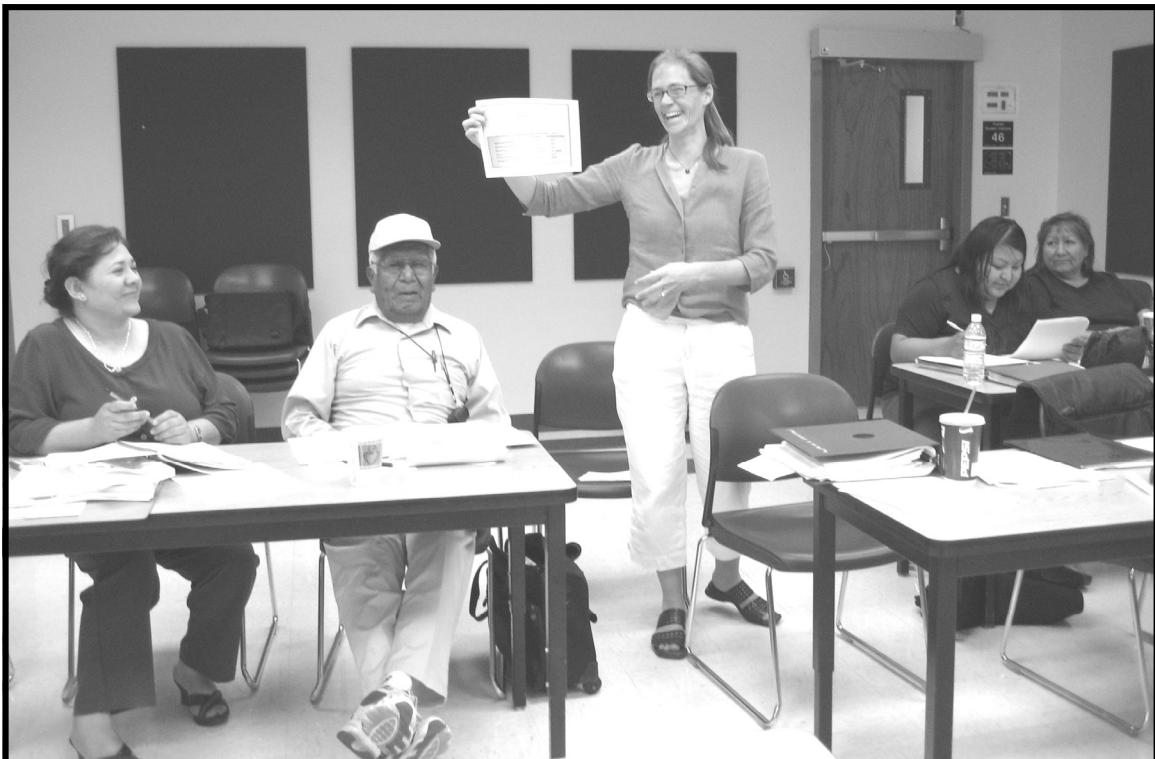
Summer 2009 was my third time I have returned to AILDI to participate in their efforts in helping language learners and teachers in their own language revitalization and maintenance efforts. Here I have met many good friends that I stay in touch with. In 2003, the first year I attended AILDI, I met Doris Pratt from Manitoba, Canada who right away became my grandmother (Kunshi) and her family has become my family. I also met that year, Akira and Kimiko Yamamoto who I have adopted as my father and mother and Lucille Watahomigie as my adopted sister. I have come to love them all very much and appreciate their guidance and encouragement. If it wasn't for AILDI I would have never met my new family and friends.

A few years ago one of my language team members passed away and I have not found the strength to continue my work in language since then. I came here to AILDI 2009 carrying a heavy burden upon my heart that I need to get back to my work I had started in my language. My experiences here have always been very rewarding and encouraging. Being here with my new and old friends who have the same passion I have for my language has given me a renewed strength to go on. We all help each other to carry the load we feel to do something to help our languages. Our languages have brought us together to this place to help one another through the struggles we share as language activists. When we leave to go home from here, our load will not seem so heavy when we carry them all together.

I-AILDI-dübua
Tsañu-naama-dü mahuña
Nishuwei-düa-dü tu'ihani
Tu'ihiibü nishuwei-na mani-dü
I-büdü-dibüa-na i-baba-nishuwei-gü-dü
A-kama-ti.
Tu'ihani-dü i-dübua-mü.
AILDI 2009

My AILDI Friends
They are always happy.
Ready to laugh at anything.
Everything is funny to them.
My new friends make me laugh too much.
It hurts.
Forever my friends.
AILDI 2009

"[AILDI] revives my spirit to know other Natives are doing similar work and struggling with the same issues. [AILDI] gives me better skills for teaching."



AILDI instructor Leisy Wyman with students from the *Curriculum & Instruction in Bilingual & Second Language Settings* course. (L-R) Angelica Pineda, Danny Lopez, Kathy Wallen & Lenora Shendo (2007)

"AILDI gives American Indians involved in education a strong backbone to continue in their language learning. AILDI also gives them support in their communities by providing direction, foundation ideas, and encouragement."