

Generational Transitions

Maxine Sam

University of Arizona

During the past two years working as an intern with the American Indian Language Development Institute, I have experienced a sense of urgency from students attending the summer program to preserve their Native languages. Being a Native speaker of my Tohono O'odham language, I am able to identify with these concerns and hope to be able to assist in the preservation of Native languages. It is very visible within our Native communities that speaking our language is not consistent with generations; it is rare to hear a multi-generational family speaking their Native language. 'A:cim O'odham 'ac am nu:kud g t- ñeok cem hekid am ha we:hejed g t-hemajkam. I:da ñeok od s-has hachu am a we:hejed g Tohono O'odham. Hekaj 'ac ñe'e, c neñeok t-wem, c t-em t-hahajuñ.

T-'O:g

Hegai o'odham mo am dahă ki: ba:šo.
'o s-wagima, c ep s-ma:c g jewed.
Hegai o'odham 'at mu'i hacu 'a:ñ maşca.
Hegai ke:li o'odham 'o d t-'o:g.

Our Father

In front of the house sits a man who is industrious,
and one who knows the land.
This man has taught me many things.
He is an older man now, he is our father.

*This was written for our fathers, and our paternal male relatives,
who have shared their knowledge of the land, our Tohono O'odham homelands.*