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Students put North Coast life under the microscope; [Final Edition]

Sarah Fox. Daily News. Prince Rupert, B.C.: Jul 6, 2006. pg. 2

Abstract (Summary)

Oralia Gomez, a masters student with the UBC department of anthropology produced an overview of services available for Aboriginal women in Prince Rupert. She did this by first studying what services were available in general and then studying whether Aboriginal women make use of those services.

Through her research, she came to the conclusion that, "there are services in Prince Rupert that have Kitkatla in their catchment area however there's a feeling of estrangement and a feeling of Kitkatla not being included, even though Kitkatla is included in funding initiatives."

Photo: Sarah Fox, The Daily News / Six UBC students carried out research studies during the month of June in Prince Rupert and Kitkatla. The students are from UBC's Ethnography Field School and currently studying to earn their Ph.D. or masters degrees in Anthropology. They worked with local service providers and the Kitkatla First Nation to complete the research studies.

Full Text (722 words)

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Six University of British Columbia (UBC) graduate students spent the month of June conducting research in Prince Rupert and Kitkatla.

The students are members of the UBC Department of Anthropology's Ethnographic Field School.

Previously conducted in collaboration with the Sto:lo Nation of the Fraser Valley, this year's field school involved collaboration with members of the Gitxaala Nation in Lach Klan, the T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation, School District 52 and other North Coast organizations.

The students gave public presentations on their research findings last week. In addition, written reports will be completed following the research component.

These reports will be given to each student's primary research partner and in some cases be turned into community education materials.

Robin O'Day, an anthropology Ph.D. student at UBC, studied selected profiles of Gitxaala elders and community leaders.

His main research goal was to create profiles of community leaders, highlighting their knowledge as present in the stories they tell for the benefit of the community. During his research he found that the Gitxaala people wanted to record the stories of their elders to create a more permanent record that could be passed down to generations.

O'Day asked them questions about their families, the paths their lives took and the changes they have seen in their communities. He says his research is, "just one more way of transferring and sharing knowledge in the community."

He hopes to produce something the community can use as educational material, perhaps in schools.

Oralia Gomez, a masters student with the UBC department of anthropology produced an overview of services available for Aboriginal women in Prince Rupert. She did this by first studying what services were available in general and then studying whether Aboriginal women make use of those services.

Among her findings was the phenomenon that Aboriginal women in Prince Rupert were more likely to receive services if they were mothers, wives or victims of violence or addiction.

She said these types of services were more visible and had higher profiles in the community.

"My findings speak to the possibilities [of creating services that more Aboriginal women will use] but in no way offer a solution," she said.

Kim Dertien, another Masters student at UBC, prepared profiles of First Nations families negotiating current economic transitions. She looked at how two-parent and single parent families are making a living by interviewing families about their occupations, income, local versus commercial foods, community involvement, education and housing.

Through her research, she came to the conclusion that, "there are services in Prince Rupert that have Kitkatla in their catchment area however there's a feeling of estrangement and a feeling of Kitkatla not being included, even though Kitkatla is included in funding initiatives."

She found that there is a lack of communication between Kitkatla's own services and the outreach services provided in Prince Rupert.

Erin Seldat a Ph.D. student in sociology studied the environmental movement in Prince Rupert and found that Rupertites were most concerned about the validity of fish farming in the region.

"The predominant thorns in everybody's side are fish farms," she said.

Jess Rogers, doing her Masters in resource management, examined the introduction of Forest Range Agreements (FRAs) in the industry.

Her goal was to see how FRAs were working at the ground level, asking the question: are they meeting their objectives. She determined they weren't.

Rachel Donkersloot a Ph.D. student in anthropology studied the socio-economic impacts of the implementation of fisheries quotas and found that quotas worked for halibut fisheries because the fisheries could be extended to 10 month seasons, unlike the salmon fisheries which can't be expanded like the halibut. Her conclusion was that quotas

aren't necessarily the right answer for salmon fisheries.

"Quotas aren't a conservation tool, they are an economic tool," she said.

Dr. Charles Menzies led the Ethnographic Field School in conjunction with Dr. Caroline Butler out of the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC.)

Related information can be found at www.ecoknow.ca and www.ecoknowblog.ca

[Illustration]

Photo: Sarah Fox, The Daily News / Six UBC students carried out research studies during the month of June in Prince Rupert and Kitkatla. The students are from UBC's Enthnography Field School and currently studying to earn their Ph.D. or masters degrees in Anthropology. They worked with local service providers and the Kitkatla First Nation to complete the research studies.

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