



DAKWÄKÄDA DANCERS



Based in Haines Junction, Yukon, the **Dakwākāda Dancers** have an 18-year history of teaching young people in Southern Tutchone and Tlingit cultures through the tradition of song and dance.

The group was established by four sisters, all granddaughters of the late Annie Ned – a well-known and respected Southern Tutchone Elder. Annie Ned taught many people to dance, sing and become knowledgeable about the traditional way of life. Her songs and dances form the basis of the group's repertoire.

With a focus on youth, the sixty member strong Dakwākāda Dancers feature child performers who begin as young as two years of age. Audiences witness the older youth demonstrate leadership and the Southern Tutchone culture alive, vibrant, and being passed down to new generations – native and non-native.

Each song is introduced with its origin and story, thus the audience understands the importance of what is being shared. The Dakwākāda Dancers are ambassadors of their culture, their community, and the Yukon Territory. Establishing and achieving a performance goal is gratifying for the children and a source of pride for the community.

As an added feature, the Dakwākāda Dancers include a demonstration of Hand Games, a traditional game of chance, slight of hand, dance and drumming with a strong spiritual connection. The dancers have incorporated audience participation in this portion of their performance.

Performing as part of the Yukon First Nations 2010 event are Lisa Pauls, dance group leader; Andrew Pauls, lead drummer; Nigel Boyle, dancer and drummer; Natane Primozić, dancer; and Melanie Eckervogt-Brewster, dancer and drummer.