

BACKGROUND



The trip ...

Sixteen students in the Nunavut Sivuniksavut (NS) program undertook a thirteen-day promotional tour of Japan in early May, 2001. The purpose of the trip was to share information about Inuit culture and Nunavut with the Japanese people in general, and with the Ainu indigenous peoples in particular. It was also to learn about Ainu and Japanese history and culture in return.

The tour was an unqualified success from the point of view of both the NS students and their Japanese and Ainu hosts. The people of Japan were intrigued by the Nunavut story, and enthralled by the students' cultural performances. In their two-week stay, the NS students achieved their goal of raising awareness and understanding about Nunavut.

"The tour was an unqualified success from the point of view of both the students and their Japanese and Ainu hosts."

The students ...

Dorcas Evalik, Cambridge Bay

Krista Zawadski, Rankin Inlet

Hannah Kingmiaqtuq, Gjoa Haven

Justin Merkosak, Pond Inlet

Lucy Tulugarjuk, Igloolik

Gloria Kowtak, Rankin Inlet

Lavenia Kowmuk, Rankin Inlet

Tracy Aqatsiaq, Igloolik

Aaron Pitseolak, Pond Inlet

George Henrie, Rankin Inlet

Becky Kilabuk, Iqaluit

Jeremiah Groves, Iqaluit

Becky Mearns, Pangnirtung

Gorretti Panika, Rankin Inlet

Alaana Kusugak, Iqaluit

Miali Pitsiulak, Kimmirut

The program ...

Nunavut Sivuniksavut (NS) is a unique eight-month college program based in Ottawa. It provides Inuit youth from Nunavut with a transition year experience between high school and the job market and/or further post-secondary education. Students study Inuit history, land claims and other issues essential to their future careers in Nunavut, while learning to live successfully on their own. The program was founded in 1985 and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1999. Its courses are accredited by Algonquin College in Ottawa.

OUTLINE



*In the distant past,
our grandfathers surely were friends.
Although this is our first time to actually meet
... we are overjoyed and feel as if we
are seeing long lost friends.*

— Rev. Seitaro Nakajima, Senior Priest,
Meiji Shrine, Tokyo

**The following pages
outline where we went,
what we did, and
who we met
in Japan**

An appendix includes a list of
sponsors and letters
of response

Day 1 — TOKYO

Saturday, April 28 AM



Briefing by Embassy Officials

We began our day with a briefing by officials from the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo. They walked us through the itinerary they had arranged for us, and gave us an orientation to Japanese culture and customs.

A Royal Welcome!

Our first event was a visit with their Royal Highnesses, Prince and Princess Takamado at their residence on the Aoyama Imperial Palace grounds. The imperial couple have had a longstanding interest in the Arctic; they have both been to Greenland and Nunavut, and they have an extensive collection of Inuit carvings. We had interesting conversations with them about the similarities between Inuit and Japanese customs and beliefs. They were very warm and gracious people, and left a lasting impression on us. We gave them a gift of an ulu and a private performance of songs for them and one of their daughters.



With Prince and Princess Takamado and their daughter

*Princess Takamado
making friends with
Lucy's son Damon*



"They were very welcoming and very open. It was amazing to see people from another country so interested in our culture."

— Lavenia Kowmuk, Rankin Inlet

Day 1 — TOKYO

Saturday, April 28 PM



Canadian Film Festival

In the afternoon of our first day in Japan, we attended a partial screening of *Atanarjuat*, the award-winning new film by Isuma Productions of Igloolik. It was shown as part of a Canadian Film Festival sponsored by the Canadian Embassy to promote awareness of Canadian culture. NS student Lucy Tulugarjuk was one of the stars of the film, and took part in a panel discussion about it afterwards with the audience. We closed the event with a group performance of songs, drumming, throat singing, and a demonstration of games and Inuit clothing.



Lucy Tulugarjuk speaking on a panel about the film Atanarjuat

Becky Mearns speaking with members of the audience afterwards



"It made it easier for me to do my presentation, because I knew you guys were there for me. Thanks a million guys!!"

— Lucy Tulugarjuk, Igloolik

"Lucy was a great ambassador!!" — Krista Zawadski, Rankin Inlet

Day 2 — TOKYO

Sunday, April 29



Sightseeing in Tokyo

The second day of our stay was used to get adjusted to the 13-hour time difference and get acquainted with Tokyo. We learned how to use the subway, explored the city, and did our first shopping.



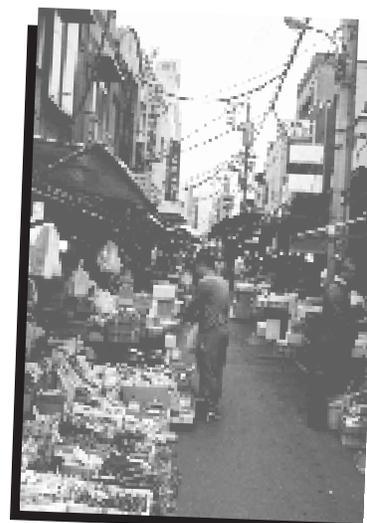
The Akasaka Prince hotel, one of Tokyo's finest, put us up for eight nights for free in exchange for our cultural performance on May 1st.



Tokyo, as it looked from the hotel.



In front of a busy temple



The Tokyo fish market is one of the biggest in the world

"It was amazing to see Tokyo with my own eyes, seeing such a big city with so many people around — also the very friendly people from the Akasaka Prince hotel."

— Lucy Tulugarjuk, Igloolik/Ottawa

"It was interesting to see all the Oriental things. It was really hard at first trying to adjust to the time; now in Canada, it's hard trying to adjust back."

— Tracy Aqatsiaq, Igloolik

Day 3 — TOKYO

Monday, April 30 AM



Meiji Shrine

Our entire third day was spent visiting the Meiji Shrine, one of the largest Shinto temples in Tokyo. It was very well organized by our hosts, who included local university students our own age.

When we arrived, we were welcomed by one of the most senior priests at the Shrine, and then led through a number of ceremonies to prepare us for our visit. These included signing a guest book that apparently they only let their most important guests sign. Our hosts then performed some traditional Japanese dances for us, as well as songs played on some very ancient instruments. (They let us try them afterwards). At lunch, we had our first experience of traditional Japanese foods, including sushi and using chopsticks. It was delicious!



One of the many buildings at the Meiji Shrine



Justin Merkosak and Jeremiah Groves with two Japanese dancers

Tracy Aqatsiaq trying out a Japanese drum while Alaana Kusugak looks on.



"Today, we were waiting expectantly, because you came to see us from Canada. I feel the reason is because there is Oriental blood in each of you too."

— Rev. Katsushi Toyama, Chief Priest, Meiji Shrine

Day 3 — TOKYO

Monday, April 30 PM



Meiji Shrine (cont'd)

In the afternoon, it was our turn to perform Inuit songs, drumming, and throat-singing, and to demonstrate our games and clothing. Afterwards, we interacted with the audience, and let them try out the games themselves, and try on our clothes.

The day ended with a sharing of Japanese games that were really fun. Each of us received a bag full of gifts from our hosts. We gave our hosts an original print from Pangnirtung as a token of our appreciation for a truly memorable day.



NS group performing



Playing Japanese games



With our hosts and new friends at the Meiji Shrine

"Our visit to the Meiji Shrine was one of the most amazing experiences I had while in Japan. The people we spent the day with were so nice to us, and very welcoming."

— Becky Mearns, Pangnirtung

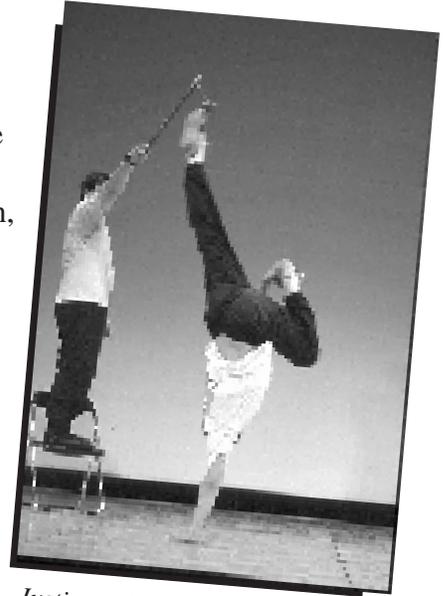
Day 4 — TOKYO

Tuesday, May 1 AM



Amway Corporation

On the morning of our fourth day, we performed for over 300 elementary students from a Japanese school and three international schools in Tokyo. The event was organized by the Amway Corporation, which sponsors a Masters of the Arctic exhibit in Japan to promote awareness of the Arctic in Japan. The show ended with a question-and-answer session, with the kids asking lots of questions. They even lined up for our autographs!



Justin performing the Alaskan high kick!



The audience was very enthusiastic



Meeting students afterwards

"I learned a lot about the Inuit traditional culture, such as games, clothes and throat singing. It was fantastic!!!!!!"

— Caleb Earnshaw, student

"It was clear to see the children looked up to the students of Nunavut Sivuniksavut as leaders, they admired their strength, humour, and strong cultural identity. Thank you for this wonderful experience."

— Margaret Carrico, Coordinator, AMWAY "Masters of the Arctic"



Day 4 — TOKYO

Tuesday, May 1 PM

Gala performance, Akasaka Prince Hotel

In the evening of our fourth day, we put on a 1-hour gala performance in the ballroom of the Akasaka Prince hotel, one of Tokyo's most expensive hotels. We were the main attraction for the evening, which was held to promote Canadian culture. The guests paid \$200 to see the performance, and it was well received. In exchange for this performance, the hotel gave us free accommodation and meals for eight nights in Tokyo - an amazing offer that went a long way to making the trip financially possible.



Performing a juggling song for the audience



Audience members paid \$200 each to watch our performance on May 1st.



Becky Mearns (l) and Gorretti Panika throat singing

"This was the 'BIG' performance for us, so we did our best. "

— Dorcas Evalik, Cambridge Bay

"The event was a great success with both the hotel management and the people who paid to participate in the event. "

— Bruce Barnett, Counsellor and Consul, Canadian Embassy

Day 5 — MORIOKA

Wednesday, May 2



Morioka

On the fifth day, we travelled on Japan's famous "bullet" trains to a city called Morioka, about 200 miles north of Tokyo. We were welcomed by officials from the Morioka International Association and taken to the local radio station where some of us did an interview on the radio, and the rest of us were welcomed and given gifts.

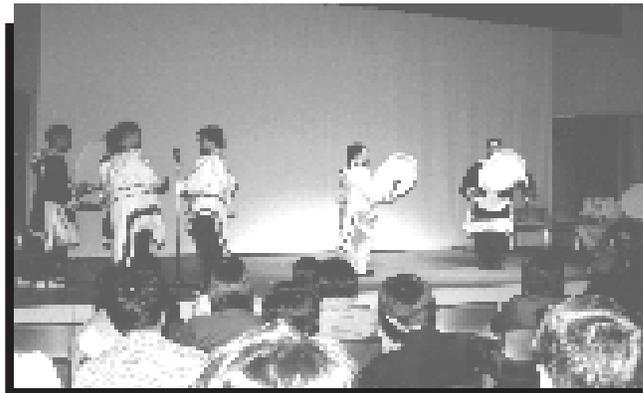


Japan's famous bullet train



Morioka with mountain in background

In the evening, we gave a public performance in the town's auditorium. It included Inuit songs, drumming throat-singing and demonstrations of Inuit games and clothing. The audience really enjoyed it. Afterwards, we were taken out to a restaurant where we experienced more wonderful Japanese food.



Group performance

"The people in Morioka were the best of all! We got spoiled so much by them and they did so much for us it was great."

— Krista Zawadski, Rankin Inlet

Day 6 — MORIOKA

Thursday, May 3



Morioka

In the morning of our sixth day, we were given a bus tour of the Morioka area by our hosts. This included a visit to a local museum, and a chance to walk among the cherry blossoms that Japan is famous for. For lunch, we visited a restaurant that is famous for its special noodle dish, which requires that you eat as many small bowls of noodles as possible. Aaron Pitseolak was our champion, eating over 60 bowls! Later in the afternoon, there was a party held in our honour at a local restaurant, hosted by the Morioka International Association. It allowed us to meet people individually and have many interesting conversations. We finished by performing some songs for them, and giving them gifts from Nunavut. The generosity of the people of Morioka was something we will always remember!



Alaana Kusugak holding her own in the noodle-eating competition



Among the cherry blossoms



Lucy Tulugarjuk and son Damon (left) with new friends in Morioka

"They are such a nice people that it hurts." — Tracy Aqatsiaq, Igloolik

"The historical museum was a really good place to learn about how the Ainu people used to live." — Lucy Tulugarjuk, Igloolik

Day 7 — SHIRAOI

Friday, May 4



We travelled by train for much of the day to the small town of Shiraoi on the northern island of Hokkaido. Shiraoi is the site of the Ainui Museum, one of the focal points for our trip.

When we arrived, we were immediately taken to a reception organized by the Shiraoi International Association. It involved a feast, performances of traditional Japanese dances and songs, and then a cultural performance by us of our own songs and games.



Becky Kilabuk explaining our clothing



Japanese dancers



Group with Japanese dancers

"I loved all the Japanese dances. The women were very elegant in the way they danced. My favourite though was the young boy."

— Becky Mearns, Pangnirtung



Day 8 — SHIRAOI

Saturday, May 5

Ainu Museum

We spent the whole day at the Ainu Museum. The first thing we did was tour the museum itself. It showed the history of the Ainu and a lot about their culture. It included a display case showing how they are related to Inuit!



Touring the museum



Dorcas Evalik explaining the Nunavut flag

After the tour, we gave an hour-and-a-half presentation about Inuit and Nunavut. It included a slide show, a review of the different stages of Inuit history, an explanation of the Nunavut flag, a presentation about our language, and finally a fashion show about our traditional clothing.

At lunch, we were treated to a feast in one of their traditional buildings which had fire pits in the middle. We ate delicious Ainu foods like smoked salmon. It was a wonderful meal!



Enjoying a great traditional feast

"The day with the people from the Ainu Museum was great — great food, and great experiences"

— Krista Zawadski, Rankin Inlet

"Their presentation at the Ainu Museum was very informative and we learned a lot about Inuit history, culture, clothes and language. I was impressed by how quickly they prepared their presentation — that proves they know their history by heart."

— Kikue Kanao, Public Affairs Officer, Canadian Embassy, Tokyo

Day 8 — SHIRAOI

Saturday, May 5



Ainu Museum (cont'd)

In the afternoon we were given a presentation on traditional Ainu music, including how to make their favourite instrument, the mukuri.



Lucy playing her instrument



Dancing with the Ainu

Afterwards, we were invited to perform outside for the public. We watched traditional Ainu dancers perform, and then joined with them to dance together. It was an awesome and unforgettable experience to share our culture with these people.

At the end of the day, we left Shiraoi and travelled to Sapporo by train. We were sorry we didn't have more time to visit with our Ainu hosts.

*Alaana Kusugak presenting an
Nunavut t-shirt to Ainu Museum curator,
Mr. Masahiro Nomoto*



"Here, our young people don't have any program that can teach them about their past. Your [NS] program is good because it does this, but it also looks to the future. We would like something like that here."

— Mr. Masahiro Nomoto, Curator, Ainu Museum
<http://www.ainu-museum.or.jp/>



Day 9 — SAPPORO

Sunday, May 6

Historical Museum of Hokkaido

We spent our first morning in Sapporo visiting the large Historical Museum of Hokkaido. We were met by the museum's curator, Mr. Koji Deriha, who gave us an orientation. During our tour, we learned more about Ainu history and culture.

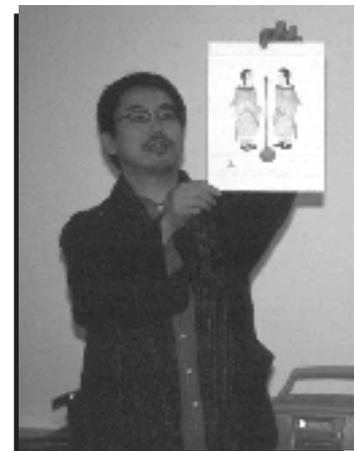


Touring the Hokkaido museum

In the afternoon, we took part in a major cross-cultural exchange with members of the Sapporo Koukin Gathering, a group of people who are interested in traditional forms of music, especially throat singing. We heard recordings of Siberian throat singers that were made almost a century ago. We performed our songs and throat singing for them, and watched them perform their songs as well. It was a great exchange!



Lucy Tulugarjuk with Ainu performers



Presenting an original print to our hosts

"It was amazing to see so many similarities between Ainu and Inuit!"

— Lucy Tulugarjuk, Igloodik

"We wanted to know Nunavut people, and to document the similarities between Ainu and Inuit. This experience has been amazing – like Alice in Wonderland. Nunavut people are very pure, their songs are very deep, they're amazing!"

— Prof. Yamamoto Katsura, Sapporo

Day 10 — SAPPORO

Monday, May 7



Utari (Ainu) Association

In the morning we visited the offices of the Sapporo Utari Association, the main Ainu political organization in Hokkaido. They showed us a film about Ainu history and their political struggle to have their rights recognized. It was followed by a question and answer session with the Utari officials. The Ainu have a program to support their youth going abroad to meet other indigenous people, and we talked about the possibility of them coming to Nunavut some day. We then toured their offices, where they had more displays about Ainu history and culture.



Meeting with Utari officials



Historical display at the Utari Association

The rest of the day was spent travelling to Hakodate, the last city we would visit in Hokkaido. Upon our arrival, we were met by officials from Hakodate's International Affairs Division, who provided us with a tour bus, and a team of interpreters and guides. Our first visit was to the local Anthropology Museum, which provided yet another presentation of Ainu history and culture. Later in the evening, they took us to the top of a local mountain on a cable car to see the lights of the city.



Becky Kilabuk being interviewed by the media

Day 11 — HAKODATE

Tuesday, May 8



Future University

We spent the morning and afternoon visiting Future University, a new state-of-the-art institution that is trying to develop new approaches to higher education in Japan. The first hour was spent in workshops organized by the Future University students. These were intended to introduce us to various aspects of Japanese culture, including their foods, writing systems, and games.



Overlooking activity circles



Performing our songs for the FUN students

After lunch, we did similar presentations and workshops on Inuit culture, including songs, throat singing, clothing and games. There were lots of opportunities for interaction, and we had lots of fun sharing our culture with the students.

The last part of the day was spent travelling back to Tokyo by train.



Media coverage was extensive

"Seeing these young people knowing their own culture so well made me want to know my own [Japanese] culture better. It was inspiring."

— Ms. Yuko Muranoto, Assistant Professor,
Future University, Hakodate

Day 12 — TOKYO

Wednesday, May 9

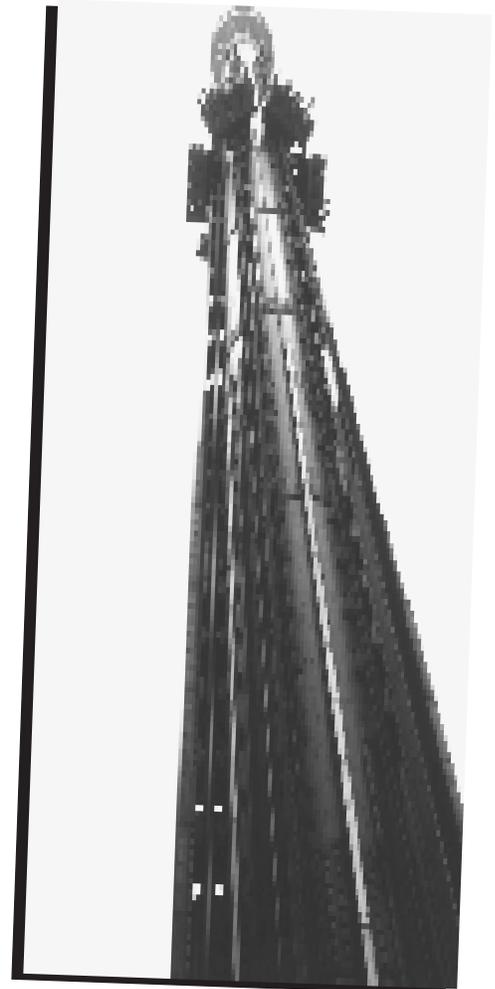


A day of rest and recreation

This was our first full day off in a week-and-a-half. We spent it resting and shopping. Some of us went to a large amusement park and tested our courage on the scariest rides.



Survivors of the Drop of Doom!



Drop of Doom ride - a free fall from 200 ft.



Lucy Tulugarjuk's son, Damon, celebrated his first birthday in Japan

Day 13 — TOKYO

Thursday, May 10



Final performance at Canada's Embassy

We had most of this day off, but at lunch hour, we went out and tried performing our songs and drumming at a small outdoor plaza near the hotel. Various passers-by stopped to enjoy our show.

*Sharing our songs
with passers-by
in Tokyo*



Our last show ended with O Canada in Inuktitut

In the evening, we gave our final performance at the Canadian Embassy for about 150 invited guests. We closed the evening, and our trip, by singing O Canada in Inuktitut. Afterwards, we met people from the audience, and we gave gifts to the embassy officials who helped to make the trip such a success.

"The Sivuniksavut performance at the embassy was one of the very few events we had here that catered to children as well as to adults, to Japanese as well as Canadians! It was a big hit!"

— Stephane-Enric Beaulieu
Culture Projects Manager
Canadian Embassy in Tokyo



*Gorretti Panika giving a gift to Bruce Barnett
of the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo*

A special thanks ...



While in Japan, a number of individuals played a particularly helpful role in making our tour a success. These included:



Hizuki Isogai

A 20-year old university student with a strong interest in Nunvut, Hizuki travelled with the group at his own expense for the entire two weeks. He was our informal guide and interpreter, and quickly became a valued friend. He was made an honorary member of the NS program.



Bruce Barnett

The Cultural Counsellor at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, Bruce was responsible for developing much of the itinerary that we followed. His guidance and advice was indispensable throughout our stay.



Kikue Kanao

A Public Affairs officer with the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, Kikue accompanied us on our visit to Hokkaido. Her presence gave us great comfort, and her friendship was greatly valued by us all.



Stephane-Enric Beaulieu

A Culture Projects Manager with the Canadian Embassy, Stephane was responsible for organizing the performance at the Embassy on our final night in Tokyo. In addition, he devoted considerable personal time to showing us around Tokyo.



Kazuo Mizuguchi

As Director of International Relations for the City of Morioka, Mr. Mizuguchi led a team that treated us like royalty. His delivery of food to us as we passed quickly through Morioka on our way back to Tokyo was a gesture that we will ever forget.



The Akasaka Prince Hotel

The hotel's generous offer of accommodation and meals during our eight days in Tokyo was an extraordinary gift, and one which made the trip affordable. The hotel's resident manager, Mr. Hideo Matsumoto, and his staff made us feel very extremely welcomed throughout our stay.

Qujannamiik!

APPENDIX 1

SPONSORS



The following individuals, organizations and businesses provided the financial support that made our trip possible. The trip would not have happened without you!

Nunavut Sivuniksavut students	Ottawa
Qikiqtaaluk Corporation	Iqaluit
Dept. of Foreign Affairs & Int. Trade	Ottawa
Students' fieldwork contract with NSDC*	Ottawa
Inuit Tapirisat of Canada	Ottawa
Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.	Iqaluit
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board	Iqaluit
Royal Canadian Legion Branch #4	Iqaluit
Qikiqtani Inuit Association	Iqaluit
WMC International Ltd.	Nepean, ON
Nancy Karetak-Lindell MP*	Ottawa
Canadian Embassy*	Tokyo
Kivalliq Partners in Development	Rankin Inlet
Northern Transportation Company Ltd.	Iqaluit
District Educational Authority	Pond Inlet
District Educational Authority	Rankin Inlet
Ekaluktutiak Hunters & Trappers Assoc.	Cambridge Bay
Eskimo Point Lumber Supply Co.	Arviat
Hamlet of Arviat	Arviat
Hamlet of Pangnirtung	Pangnirtung
Ikaluktutiak Co-op Ltd.	Cambridge Bay
JM Sportswear	Pond Inlet
Nunavut Power Corporation	Iqaluit
NWT Power Corporation	Hay River
Precious Children's Daycare	Pangnirtung
Youth Council	Pangnirtung
Learning Resouce Centre**	Rankin Inlet
Nunavut Development Corporation**	Rankin Inlet

* students provided a service in return for funds, which were then used for the trip

** contributed gifts for our Japanese hosts



Graduation ceremonies for the 2000-2001 Nunavut Sivuniksavut students took place in Ottawa on May 16, 2001.

(Front row L—R) Becky Kilabuk, Levenia Kowmuk, Miali Pitsiulak, Krista Zawadski; **(Middle row)** Rebecca Mearns, Gorretti Panika, Tracy Aqatsiaq, Gloria Kowtak, Dorcas Evalik; **(Back row)** Alaana Kusugak, Jeremiah Groves, Aaron Pitseolak, Justin Merkosak, George Henrie.

(Insert) Left - Hannah Kingmiaqtuq; Right - Lucy Tulugarjuk