

# Creating Futures

South Slave Divisional Education Council · PO Box 510 · Fort Smith, NT · X0E 0P0 · Ph: (867) 872-5701 · Fax: (867) 872-2150

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2013

## Fort Resolution Teacher Honoured by PM

### Angie Fabien awarded Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence

Fort Smith, NT – This month Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced Angelina Fabien as a recipient of the *2013 Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence*. This prestigious award, that was presented to her at a gala in Ottawa on November 20<sup>th</sup>, recognizes outstanding teachers in Canada who instill a love of learning, and help create successful futures. Fabien was one of only sixteen winners of the *Certificate of Excellence* among the nationwide competitors. Angie Fabien teaches at Deninu School, a small Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal school in Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories.

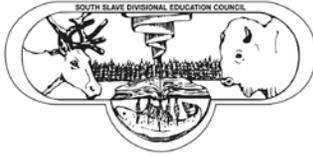
Ms. Fabien is a language instructor, teaching Dëne Sų - the Chipewyan Language - to children and passing the language and culture onto the young generation. For Ms. Fabien the revitalization of Dëne Sų , the ancestral language of the Dene of Fort Resolution, is her greatest reward.

The Chipewyan Language is certainly alive and well at Deninu School. The school is awash in signage and bulletin boards all written in the language. All teachers have been taught basic Chipewyan commands and use these in their interactions with their students. The Chipewyan Language is spoken on the afternoon announcements and celebrated at weekly assemblies. Angie has helped make the Chipewyan Language purposeful and functional and this has spawned a true revival of the language. This attests to the central role that Angie has assumed in leading the students, indeed the entire community, towards a rebirth of their ancestral language.

Assistant Superintendent Brent Kaulback, who oversees the development of the Aboriginal Language program and resources in the South Slave Divisional Education Council, said of Angie Fabien, "She is a true champion of the language and culture of the Dene people. Yet, Angie brings more than enthusiasm and commitment to her teaching position. She is a natural teacher - one who has developed a program that has captivated the interest of her students. Through her creativity in the classroom and her efforts to keep her lessons topical and vital, the students themselves have become equals in their commitment to the Chipewyan Language. They are engaged, involved and eager to learn."

The real strength in her teaching comes from the fact that she has moved the language beyond the doors of her classroom and out into the hallways, the playground and even into the homes of her students. Many community members have commented that through the efforts of Ms. Fabien and others, the Chipewyan Language has been reborn and it is once again being spoken *loudly*

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*and proudly* by the children and youth of Fort Resolution.

Kate Powell, Principal of Deninu School added, “Angie speaks Chipewyan from the heart, and she teaches from the heart. Her genuine commitment to her language and students is evident in all that she does. She constantly strives to expand the Chipewyan language into every corner of our school and every aspect of our students’ lives. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and inspiring teacher at Deninu.”

Ms. Fabien has worked in education for over 20 years. Beginning her career as a custodian and then moving to the classroom as a special needs assistant, Angie assumed the role of organizing cultural instruction for the staff and students of the school. Her passion for her language and the Dene culture and her ability to make strong connections with the students was recognized and she was encouraged to take on the role of Aboriginal Language Instructor. She has been in that role for the past five years.

In 2007, Angie was awarded the *Aboriginal Education Award*, presented by the Northwest Territories Teachers Association (NWTTA). She was also a member of the Deninu School team that was recognized with the GNWT *Premier’s Award of Excellence (Collaboration)* in 2012. Ms. Fabien was also a key contributor to the award-winning Deninu Chipewyan Dictionary Project, which will stand as a permanent language resource for years to come.

Marsi Cho to Angie Fabien! The SSDEC is honoured to have teachers of Ms. Fabien’s caliber on staff and working with our children. We join the Prime Minister in recognizing her amazing contributions to the education of the students and the revitalization of the Chipewyan language and culture.

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