

STORIES AND SPACES: EXPLORING KAINAI PLANTS AND CULTURE



For a group of Kainai children living on the Blood Reserve, sweetgrass, sage and red tea were mysteries only their Kainai elders could unlock.

But thanks to a unique partnership that includes Galileo, the Kainai Board of Education, the University of Calgary and Red Crow Community College, these children are not only learning about the plants and landscapes that form the basis of their culture, they're helping preserve it for present and future generations.

Stories and Spaces: Exploring Kainai Plants and Culture is a unique website written in English, French and Blackfoot. While the initial focus of the site – found at www.galileo.org/plants/kainai – is on indigenous healing plants and aboriginal stories, video interviews and stories with elders are included, as well as student writing, art and music.

Adam Delany, a Kainai elder and spiritual guide, was recently interviewed by a group of Grade 4 Blackfoot Immersion students as part of the project.

“If you kids don't learn about the plants, no one will know anymore,” said Delany, whose grandmother told him about sweetgrass, which has special significance in Kainai culture because it can be used for smudging, and making herb tea.

Noah Fox is one of the students participating in the project.

“In the future, like 20 years from now, if you get sick, you can come to our website and know how to get better,” he said.

For Galileo's annual general meeting and showcase December 3rd, Kainai students from Aahsaopi School opened the program with a special Blackfoot prayer, followed by a short presentation of what they've learned through the Stories and Spaces project.



Students from Aahsaopi School