



Tribal Hostess **Anne Johnson**



Anne Johnson, born and raised in Sitka, Alaska, is Dakl'awedi from the Keét Gooshi Hít. She has been teaching the Lingít language for the past 50 years. She has been named Kéet Tláa, 'Mother of the Killer Whales' and is also known as Gooch Tláa or Kawdukwé.

Having lost her father at a young age, she was raised by her mother Emma, a fluent Lingít language speaker. Anne picked up the language from her mother who spoke it often with her. Later in life, Anne attended five years of school at Sheldon Jackson College.

When her children were small, her daughter Marla Kitka asked her, "Are we ashamed of who we are?" and, "Why didn't we seem to talk about who we are?" That prompted Anne to pursue language work.



Anne currently works for the Sitka Tribe of Alaska with Outer Coast. She had the privilege to attend and assist in teaching many cultural and language workshops across Alaska with organizations like Sealaska, Head Start, Goldbelt and the Sitka Native Education Program where she retired after 40 years.

Reflecting on her time at Head Start, Anne most enjoyed working with young children because they are not afraid to make mistakes. Anne feels a sense of pride when her students begin understanding the language. Anne danced with the Noow Tlein Dancers, a group named by Charlie Joseph, Sr. (Kaal.átk') after Sitka's Castle Hill. Anne had her granddaughter, Kaax'ása.oo Dana Kitka, attend with her. After the unfortunate passing of Dana, Anne was grateful to be able to adopt her great-grandson, Anthony. It filled her heart with joy and put a smile on her face to hear her great-grandchildren sing at a recent koo.éex' in Sitka. It warms her heart when she sees her former students participating in the Native community.

She enjoys children and is beyond appreciative of the privilege to teach the Lingít language. Across her 50 years of teaching, Anne has impacted many lives with her dedication to the Lingít language and culture.