

My grandma Madeline Solomon lived in Galena and devoted her life towards educating children. Earning my Type B Certification for Educational Leadership from the University of Alaska-Anchorage will be an achievement two generations in the making. I believe every student is capable of performing at the highest academic levels. This self-fulfilling prophecy whereby high expectations lead to an increase in performance is what all students and parents should expect from educators, especially in rural villages.

My name is Lillian DeWilde and I will begin my summer internship in July in Galena. Once I gain my certification, I hope to continue to serve in rural Alaska so I can ensure our high school graduates are well-educated individuals able to maneuver effectively in a dynamic world. Seeing the perseverance and passion my grandma had for education made a lasting impact on me. I have spent the past two years teaching in Galena and my future plans will evolve around seeking employment as a school principal in rural Alaska.

As a future principal, I would like to guide effective relationships between teachers and staff, so that we may further advance our students in our communities. My mission is to enthusiastically engage students by inspiring them to achieve their goals as well as to provide safe places for learning.

In December I was elected to serve as a board member for the Association of Interior Native Educators. I am responsible to strengthen our native educators by encouraging culturally relevant curriculum stemming from traditional knowledge and individual learning styles.

I have to step up to support curriculum in our schools that stems from cultural knowledge. Next fall during professional development at my school, I will be working with administration to help teachers recognize the validity and integrity of traditional knowledge by helping them to find ways to integrate students' prior knowledge and skills to support academia in the classroom.

An area of concern is the state education budget. Flat funding for public education has the potential to reduce public education by limiting resources; the biggest impact will be in rural Alaska. As a village leader, I strongly feel we need to combine our resources to make recommendations for ways to be more effective with our education dollars without compromising excellence.

In addition to helping the growing generation of students, I do my best to help the older generation in Galena as well. I spend much of my time at the Yukon Koyukuk Elder Assisted Living Facility, where I visit with the elders; listening and recording their stories, giving words of encouragement, and hugs when needed.

As a learner and teacher, my responsibility is to foster the bridge between our youngest and oldest generations; so that the former may continue down the path of excellence built by those who came before them. It is thanks to many elder mentors that I can break the trail a little bit wider, so the path may be a little bit easier to tread.