

## Community Artist: Delphine Decker

Delphine Decker is a Tlingit of the Yanyeidi Eagle Wolf Clan. He was self taught learning the Tlingit Art Form, and was inspired by his brother who sketches portraits of people in abstract art form. As a teen, Delphine was active in all High School sports until one day a disease changed his life. When he was 19 years old he was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis, he has been confined to a wheel chair ever since. Delphine admits he has his ups and down, but he has learned to make the best of his life. Delphine says that working with youth has brought him a lot of rewards he never dreamed of experiencing.



*Delphine working on screen.*

## 7th & 8th Grade Students

Michaela Bentley, Nikki Box,  
Joshua Leroy DeAsis, Kagan  
Gerdon, Logan Ginter, Steven  
Ireland-Haight, Malia Miller,  
Eduardo Ramirez, Adian Smith,  
Cameron Smith, Sonny Tveten,  
Alexander Wehe, Azure Briggs,  
Mason Gallanos, Cora Gehring,  
Kane Ginter, Anthony Gotner,  
Kymberly Harris, Nathaniel  
Hensley-Williams, Moira Johnson,  
Matthew Lessmeier, Justin  
Lumba, Michael Lundy, Joseph  
Matthews, Abigail Meiners,  
Mallory Miller, Savannah Starr

*Teachers: :*

*Mr. Campbell,, Mrs. Kissel,  
Mr. Watts , Mr. Fasto Paullo  
Ms. Marsha Hotch,  
Ms. Victoria Johnson  
Mr. Fred White*

## Northwest Coast Art Class



7th and 8th Grade Class



Goldbelt Heritage Foundation:

Department of Education Grant Award  
T365C110007: Language, The Pathway to Multi-  
Literacy

## Interior House Screen:

In contrast to house front paintings, interior screens served very different ends. There was a firmer and more deeply felt emotional attachment to them. The house screen frequently was considered a revered constituent of the holdings of the lineage or clan. Though other properties might be sold or traded to outsiders over time there was much greater resistance to parting with the screens. Far more interior screens have survived and even remain intact in settlements than front paintings



### Tlingit Words:

X'een : House Screen

Noosk: Wolverine

Dzanti: Flat fish/Flounder

Heen: Water

### Daily Reminders:

House screens formed an integral part of the interior of the house and offered **daily reminders of family history and position**. Screens served to separate the household into spaces for its different families or for restricted areas, inner sanctums, or chambers for special purposes. The screen walled off the section of the long house in which the leader of the house and his wife resided. Such screens were erected 10 feet or more from the rear wall of the house to provide uniquely separate quarters for lineage leaders. In the case of Tlingit, for example, the clan leader, the keeper of the house, slept behind the screen. But the space represented more than living space. It was a sacred repository where the clan and lineage treasures – ritual and ceremonial possessions of various kinds associated with the group history – were stored in numerous cedar chests and boxes. These treasures were carefully guarded. They were removed from this sanctuary and displayed only for high social functions. As private space reserved for the leader and for the safe-keeping of lineage possessions, even few members of the household were permitted entry.

Resource: Northwest Coast Indian Painting: House Fronts and Interior Screens By: Edward Malin

### School Name: Dzantik'i Heeni

This is the original Tlingit name of the lower portion of Gold Creek and means "where the flatfish gather." "Flatfish" is sometimes translated as "flounder." The Goldbelt shareholder newsletter of November and December 1991 breaks down the word into these elements: Dzanti (flounder), k'i (little) and heen (water), and notes that the upper part of the stream was called It' ji Shaanax.

The words are sometimes considered the original name of Juneau because the first prospectors settled near the mouth of the creek. Long before other people came, Tlingits harvested dog salmon, humpies, coho and steelhead here, using smokehouses to preserve the fish for winter.

Charlotte Wright, now the instructional services coordinator for the school district, was principal of Dzantik'i Heeni when the name was chosen.

"It was a fascinating debate in the community," Wright said. "We had a drop box where people could put options. One meant 'porcupine den' because there was a big den up the hill and porcupines were considered a delicacy. Another meant 'chewing water' because on the flats below when the dog salmon spawn, they seem to mouth the water."

Spin-offs: Built in 1994, Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School used its state-mandated One Percent for Art money to install a concrete walk in front of the school bearing casts of flatfish. The walk was designed by Washington state artists Laura Berkley and Linda Withington, with brass sea creature molds cast by Peter Bevis.

(Juneau Empire)