

NEH Testimony Speech

- *ʔáʔ čəyəw qíyt – Good afternoon*

Ciʔáʔut cə nəсна? – My Indian name is Ciʔáʔut, I am also known as Jamie Valadez

Čʔéʔx^waʔ nəx^wsʔáyəm cn – I am Klallam from Elwha, in western Washington State.

I teach Klallam language and Native American Studies at Port Angeles High School. I am here to tell you about the success of our Klallam language program that was funded by The National Endowment for the Humanities in 2007. By 2012 we had completed publication of a Klallam dictionary, the most extensive Native language dictionary in our State and a very important tool in preserving our language.

- *The Klallam Language is spoken by three Federally Recognized tribes: Lower Elwha, Jamestown and Port Gamble. These three tribes are located in Western Washington along the Strait of Juan de Fuca into the Puget Sound.*

Klallam is a language of the Central Coast branch of the Salishan languages, which are spoken in Washington State, Oregon, Idaho, and the western part of Montana. The Klallam Language was the last language in Western Washington to lose its first-language native speakers, in 2013. Fortunately, we were able to preserve their Traditional Knowledge in this Dictionary.

- *The Klallam Dictionary project in turn made it possible to preserve the language by passing it on to second-language speakers such as myself and our younger generations. I have been teaching the Klallam Language at the Port Angeles High School since 1999, and until the Dictionary and then the Klallam Grammar book were published, I had very limited resources. Now there are more second-language speakers of Klallam than any other tribal language in our State. This has authenticated our existence, raised up our standard of living, and helped make our social fabric whole once again.*

- *The academic impacts for Native American students associated with the Klallam language program have been enormously positive. Grade Point Averages have improved significantly, more students are staying on track to graduate, state test scores in English have risen, and more Native American students are graduating high school.*
- *The Klallam language program has also helped the relationship between the Lower Elwha tribal community and the local city of Port Angeles. It wasn't that long ago that the Native American and non-Native communities in Port Angeles were isolated from one another, with little interaction or mutual trust. But increased interest in the language and culture has helped change that. We have seen a huge increase in usage of the Klallam Language in local publications, street signage, and the City's new beach park with interpretation and Klallam place names. The Klallam language is spoken as a regular part of the program at many community gatherings. It's safe to say that the NEH grant has been a great investment not only in native language preservation but also in improved*

understanding between two communities that really needed it.

- *By having the opportunity to speak with you today , allowing us to share our success story , we hop that the committee continues to support the projects under NEH that help Native Tribes revitalize their languages.*
- *Haʔnəŋ cn nəscəyaʔčaʔ ʔaʔ cə siʔámʔ ʔəŋsčay – Thank you for your important work*
- *ʔáyʔ cn ʔuʔ haʔnəŋ ʔaʔ cə ʔiyáʔnəŋ ʔaʔ cə sɣʷiʔámʔ – I also thank you for listening to our story*
- *huý kʷaʔčə,*