



NEWS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

British Museum Inuinnait "visual repatriation" project

YELLOWKNIFE (April 10, 2012) – The British Museum’s collection of Inuinnait objects is part of a “visual repatriation” project taking northern elders, crafts people and researchers to London, England next week.

The project is part of the Ulukhaktok literacies research, a long-term collaboration among the NWT Literacy Council, the community of Ulukhaktok, and the University of Lethbridge. The research sought to understand what “literacy” meant traditionally to the Kangiryuarmiut and what it means today. The elders, researchers and crafts people will examine British Museum tools, clothing and other objects dating back to the first encounters between Europeans and ancestors of the Inuinnait. The museum objects and the trip to London, England will be captured in photos and a video documentary.

“People who still know the importance of these objects to the traditional way of life will have a chance to see some of them,” says Helen Balanoff, the NWT Literacy Council executive director. “We hope to be able to capture language and stories about the objects, as well as the skills involved in making them.”

Those going on the April 16-23 trip include toolmaker, Adam Kudlak and researchers, Emily Kudlak and Helen Kitekudlak, all of Ulukhaktok, as well as Emily Angulalik, a founder of the Kitikmeot Heritage Society, and elders Mary Avalak and Annie Atigihioyak, all of Cambridge Bay. They can use the knowledge they already have to learn some older techniques from the objects at the museum, while also providing some expert interpretation.

The Ulukhaktok literacies research project findings from Phase 1 were shared in a museum exhibit at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in 2009 and in the recent book, *Pihuaqtiuyugut: We are the Long Distance Walkers*. More information can also be found at http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/research_by_nwt.htm

The NWT Literacy Council is grateful for the support of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, First Air and the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC) for making the British Museum visit possible.

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For more information, contact:

Helen Balanoff

Executive Director

867-873-9262

helen@nwtliteracy.ca