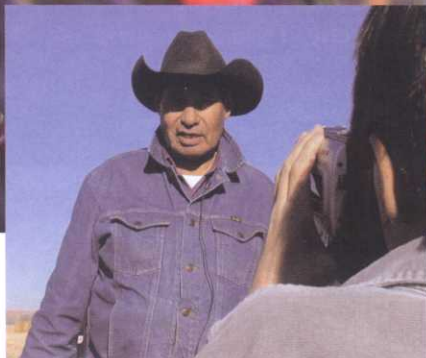


# New Ways of Learning Old Ways of Knowing

by Barbara Dacks



**N**itsitapiisinni—Stories and Spaces: Exploring Kainai Plants and Culture is about learning and remembering traditional ways of knowing. But it is also very much about teaching young children to value their culture and heritage and, by mastering today's digital technology, to keep the traditional ways of knowing alive.

Alvine Mountain Horse teaches Grade 4 students in the Blackfoot immersion program at Aahsaopi School on the Blood Reserve in southern Alberta. She remembers going out on the land as a child with her grandmother to learn about traditional healing herbs. She was concerned that her young students “wouldn't have the opportunity to learn about them [the

herbs] because the Elders are passing on and there aren't too many people who know about the plants anymore.” Then she and her husband, Red Crow College instructor Narcisse Blood, met with staff of the Galileo Educational Network and together they planted the seeds of Stories and Spaces.

This remarkable project took root, blossomed, and bore fruit. From September to March, eight Kainai Elders between the age of 55 and 80 worked with the students in their classroom and took them out on the land, to teach them about the plants. “Now they are more aware of the land and their surroundings,” Mountain Horse says.

Top: Rose hips contain the seeds of the Wild Rose, [*Kinii* in Blackfoot] as it grows on the Kainai Reserve. Left Top: Elder and spiritual leader Pete Standing Alone explains to Noah Fox the significance of Cottonwood trees in the Kainai culture.

Left Middle: Elder and teacher Agnes First Charger tells Sommer Chief Moon and Kendra Day Rider (at the camera) about using native plants like a first aid kit when you are out on the land.

Left Bottom: Brenda Gladstone of Galileo Educational Network shows the web resource to Elder and spiritual leader Adam Delaney and his grandson Slade in Adam's home on the Kainai reserve.

