**Beatrice Taylor Teaching Grandchildren the Language**

All I want to see when I leave this earth is that my children and grandchildren have homes, a good education, and good things like everyone else, but that they are also knowledgeable about their Ojibwe language.

To me, that language is soothing.  You feel safe when you hear it.  And it’s part of our culture – to speak to the Great Spirit or pass on our traditional teachings correctly, you’re supposed to speak in Ojibwe.

It’s a hard language, one of the most difficult languages there is to learn.  One little twitch of the wrong vowel, and you’ve said something completely different from what you intended.

But the little ones, they absorb it like a sponge.  I teach my grandchildren and use Ojibwe words with them constantly.  They listen to me when I speak Ojibwe, and they say, “What does that mean grandma?”  I tell them two or three times, and then they’ve got it.  They’re quick to pick it up, and they get the enunciation just perfect.

Sometimes they learn even when I’m not trying to teach them.  I have one little granddaughter who was pestering me one day when I was sewing my quilts.  She was monkeying with the TV, and I said, “Gae-guh.”

“What does that mean, grandma?” she asked.

I said, “It means don’t.”

She stopped for a minute, but then she started up again.  So I said, “Gae-guh, gi-di-nin.”

“What does that mean, grandma?” she said.

I said, “I told you – don’t.”  Then I said, “Ah-gwa-jing ba da zhi-tahn.”

“What does that mean?” she said.

“It means go play outside.”

She kept monkeying with something, and finally I said, “Gi-noon-dowh-ina?”

“What does that mean?” she said.

I said, “Didn’t you hear what I told you?”

She said it herself – gi-noon-dowh-ina – and then out she went.  A little while later, she came back in again.  I was still trying to get my quilt pieces set in, and I was trying to keep track of my movie on TV.  She kept pushing on me and talking.  I was trying to listen to her and hold on to my sewing at the same time.  But she wanted all of my attention.  Finally she went around in front of my table and said, “Gi-noon-dowh-ina?!”

I was flabbergasted.  I just sat back and looked at her.  She sure picked that up quick!  It made me feel really good.  She still comes over to learn.