

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 24, 2002

### **HIGH-TECH YOUTH STRENGTHEN CONNECTION TO NATURE AT PBCC'S SUMMER YOUTH COLLEGE**

Although today's youths are the most wired generation so far, artist Jana Newton has discovered that they also are fascinated by ancient beliefs and customs.

Last summer Newton taught classes on American Indian and Eskimo culture at Palm Beach Community College's Summer Youth College to students ages 8 to 14.

While Newton's classes involve mostly hands-on multicultural art projects, "during the explanations the children were really absorbed in what I had to say," she recalled. "Many of their parents came to me at the end of the classes to say how much their children loved the classes."

Summer Youth College (SYC) is held at PBCC in Boca Raton. This year's session runs from June 24 to August 1. This summer SYC is offering "edutainment" classes in hobbies and life skills, computers, the arts, sports, science and math, language arts and social science.

Newton's classes in "Arts and Crafts of the American Indians" and "Explore the Eskimos" were so well received she's added follow-up courses for last year's students. She's also teaching "Making Indian Jewelry," "Multicultural Art Experience," and "Nature Art" this summer. Her students will use found objects from nature, beads, paints and other materials to make medicine shields, kachina dolls, dream catchers, bear claw necklaces, moccasins, African mirror pouches, baskets, pottery, totem poles, spirit masks and much more.

"We learn about how like tribal people we are and what we have in common with them," Newton explained. "The emphasis is on how we're all connected to the earth."

Newton teaches the meaning of each traditional native piece her students create and encourages them to be original so that their art has personal meaning as well. She acts as guide and storyteller, sometimes dressing in native costume. Last summer she dressed as a kachina doll, a benevolent spirit being of the Pueblo Tribes of Arizona and New Mexico. Newton, who lived in New Mexico, uses her mother's collection of Indian artifacts and books to develop curriculums. She uses music to create an atmosphere and quiet times for centering to trigger students' imaginations.

"My job is to give them an experience they wouldn't have otherwise," she said. "What I offer is unique."

For more information on Summer Youth College, call director Jacquelyn Keeley at (561) 862-4725 at PBCC at Boca Raton. Photographs of Jana Newton's classes are available by e-mail. Call 561-868-3129 or e-mail [wolft@pbcc.edu](mailto:wolft@pbcc.edu)

