

Tagish Nation Dancers

Carcross

Started: 1973

Contact: Clara Schinkel or Geraldine James

The Tagish Nation Dancers is a First Nation dance group of 30–40 people that performs primarily in the Yukon. The group has also traveled throughout Canada, to the United States and as far away as Japan.



Community benefits: The dance group gives children and adults greater self-esteem and sense of identity. It provides a family-oriented activity in the community and builds unity among the diverse participants. Travel outside the Yukon helps broaden the horizon of everyone, especially the younger participants. This first First Nation dance troupe has also provided a positive example that many other First Nations have followed.

Lessons learned: Organizers learned to follow their hearts and not be slowed down by what other people thought about learning a “dying” language. The use of stories and songs has been an important way of conveying both language and culture.

Future of the project: The dance group will continue to welcome new dancers and it is their dream to tour in Europe. Money is currently being raised to send a few young dancers to a Tlingit culture camp in Alaska. Coordination for the dance group has been passed from mother to daughter and soon to granddaughter.