

TRIBAL PROGRAM NEWS

Domestic Violence Affects Children

Domestic violence is a crime against all family members, but its saddest victims are children. Seventy percent of children living in violent homes are themselves physically abused or seriously neglected.

When children witness abuse or are abused, they are learning about violence. They learn that the people you love most may hurt you, living in fear is normal, and violence is a way to handle conflict. As they learn, a generational cycle begins in which children grow up to be victims and abusers as adults.

The effects of domestic violence are devastating for children. Some of the major ones include:

Emotional/Behavior Problems

- < Anxiety – Children worry about when the next outbreak of violence will occur.

- < Guilt – Children think the abuse is their fault.
- < Confused feelings – Children are upset by their mixed feelings of love and hate for parents and of fearing though wanting to be with the abuser.
- < Lack of trust – Children have difficulty forming positive relationships due to lack of parental nurturing.
- < Aggressiveness – Many children "act out" violence they witness at home.
- < Role reversal – Children are often placed in the parental or caretaker role because the parents are too involved in the abusive situation to adequately address the family's needs.
- < School problems – Children want to stay home because they think they can control the abuse or protect the abused parent. This results in truancy, poor attention span, poor grades and dropping out.

Physical Problems

- < Developmental delays – Children are often behind developmentally because of a lack of parental nurturing and stress. In babies, this takes the form of failure to thrive.
- < Stress-related ailments – Children often complain about headaches, stomachaches, and feeling bad. Children are accident-prone and may wet the bed.
- < Injury – Children are often victims of physical abuse or are injured when they seek to intervene in a fight.

When They Grow Older

Children who experience violence at home often turn this violence out onto the community. A high percentage of juvenile delinquents are battered children. Eighty percent of men in prisons grew up in violent homes. In murders by boys age 11 to 20, 63 percent killed the men who were abusing their mothers.

Often teen-agers from violent homes turn to drugs and alcohol. Many escape into early marriages and/or pregnancies.

Violence is a learned behavior. Many children who witness abuse grow up to repeat the behavior as spouses and parents. Seventy-three percent of batterers witnessed violence as children.

The **Native Women's Advisory Committee** will conduct its first meeting in September.

The committee will consist of Native American women who live in the Siletz community (including area office regions!) It will be responsible for monitoring tribal agency response to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and will advise all relevant agencies on how to better serve victims of those crimes.

When: Sept. 21, 1999, 5 p.m.
Where: Tribal Administration
Building in Siletz

Please call Nicole Miani at 1-800-922-1399, ext. 389, for more information.

Youth Enjoy Rafting Adventure

by Jill Arden

July 21, 1999, was the day of our adventure down the McKenzie River. The Alcohol and Drug programs, along with the TYEP, sponsored an all-day whitewater rafting trip for tribal members 13 to 18 years old. It was a blast!

Our day started out at 7 a.m. in the main room of the Portland area office. Tension was thick in the air as unfamiliar faces joined. But one thing bonded each of us: We all wanted to be back in bed!

As soon as permission slips were collected and everyone had arrived, we set off on our adventure via two vans, which I'm convinced are large enough to equal approximately one-quarter of the earth's mass. As we focused on our objective for the trip down (sleeping), those of us who found the twisting highway not so much like a rocking cradle were amazed at the amount of food Terry McDowell, our drug and alcohol counselor, managed to pack away! Three hours later, we found ourselves in a gravel parking lot introducing ourselves to the river guides, three **very** nice individuals.

While our vans/tanks were being transported to our destination, we were

all thrilled with the horrifying "If you fall out in the rapids" speech. I don't care if it could save my life, the thought of curling up in a ball to be shot out the bottom of a standing wave did not scream "fun!" to me. The look on Katy Kaady's face showed she thought the same.

Finally, we were off! Three rafts carrying 4-6 of us, with the addition of our river guides, made their way down the river. We practiced turning and rowing with the aid of our river guide. Then we hit our first rapid, which seemed frightening at the time for the whole second it lasted. Katy Kaady, our brave leader, dove for the middle of the raft at the first sign of fast water. She grabbed onto our lifejackets, she says, to keep us on the boat, but we know it was just so she didn't go flying out herself!

As the day progressed, we stopped for lunch and the boys put on an impressive rock-throwing show. What is it with boys and rocks? After lunch, we boarded again and set off for faster water, bigger rapids, and more screams from Katy Kaady!