



Honoring a Friend

by Sandra Hahn, RN

Clinic staff made a new friend when they crossed paths at the Elders Conference with Mary Lavoto. Mary was in Pendleton to tell the elders about the cancer support group she founded at her home in Santa Domingo Pueblo, N.M., when she was fighting cancer 12 years ago.

Mary invited Kathryn Dick, Connie Delisio, Cathy Rasmussen, and I to her house for a home-cooked traditional dinner when we were traveling to a conference in New Mexico. While visiting her pueblo, we came to realize the extent of Mary's work.

In Mary's pueblo, cancer is considered taboo. A person is not to speak of it and should refuse Western medicine. They often believe misdeeds or ill thoughts cause cancer, thus they

should look toward spiritual healing only. Cancer is also considered contagious. Mary's now teen-age children were shunned and teased to the point they left the pueblo for a boarding school in another state.

Mary's work has come far since the tribal council allowed her first group to gather under strict rules: only during daylight hours, only at her home, and no more than once a week. Her group raised funds by selling jewelry that members crafted. Mary still sells jewelry from survivors but luckily, she now has learned to write grants for more support.

Mary's home is filled with evidence of her work, from symbolic baskets and pottery that people have crafted for her in gratitude to newspaper clippings and videotapes about cancer, Mary, and her work. She is traveling all over the nation to tribal communities to speak on cancer issues and help establish local support groups. She has



Connie Delisio (top) and Mary Lavoto

visited the White House several times (and claims to have been alone with the president, too). In 2000, she also will travel to Japan and Australia.

Perhaps most impressive is the plaque on her wall from the governor of New Mexico, proclaiming Dec. 22 a state holiday for her. So from your friends in Siletz, Ore. - Happy Mary Lavoto Day!

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When Smokers Quit

Within 20 minutes of smoking that last cigarette, the body begins a series of changes that continue for years:

Within 20 minutes of your last cigarette

- ◆ Blood pressure drops to normal
- ◆ Pulse rate drops to normal rate
- ◆ Body temperature of hands and feet increases to normal

8 Hours

- ◆ Carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- ◆ Oxygen level in blood increases to normal

24 Hours

- ◆ Chance of heart attack decreases

48 Hours

- ◆ Nerve endings start regrowing
- ◆ Ability to smell and taste is enhanced

72 Hours

- ◆ Bronchial tubes relax, making breathing easier
- ◆ Lung function increases 30 percent

2 Weeks to 3 Months

- ◆ Circulation improves
- ◆ Walking becomes easier
- ◆ Lung function increases up to 30 percent

1 to 9 Months

- ◆ Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decrease
- ◆ Cilia regrow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce infection
- ◆ Body's overall energy level increases

1 Year

- ◆ Excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker

5 Years

- ◆ Stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker five to 15 years after quitting
- ◆ Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus is half that of a smoker
- ◆ Lung cancer death rate for the average smoker (one pack a day) decreases to almost half

10 Years

- ◆ Lung cancer death rate similar to that of non-smokers
- ◆ Precancerous cells are replaced
- ◆ Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases

15 Years

- ◆ Risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker

There are 30 chemicals in tobacco smoke that cause cancer. Just **one cigarette a day** takes away all the benefits of being a non-smoker. Now is the time to make that New Year's resolution to **stop smoking and chewing tobacco**. We start Tobacco Cessation classes again this month, meeting every Tuesday and Thursday at noon at the clinic.

If you stopped and started again, don't get discouraged. Tobacco is a very addictive drug and really hard to kick. Together, we can help each other and form a support system to beat this habit. If you have never tried to quit, now is the time. Just think of what it would be like to feel healthy again and be able to breathe easier.

Anyone interested in Smoking Cessation can call Danelle or Kathryn at the Siletz Community Health Clinic, 541-444-1030 or 1-800-648-0049. You also can call the area offices in Eugene, Salem and Portland for information on classes to be held there.