

## Siletz Youth Present at Northwest Conference

Portland, Ore., was the host site for the 2001 Northwest Substance Abuse Prevention Conference "Making the Connection: Prevention and Treatment in the Northwest" held May 3-4.

As invited presenters, tribal staff and the Siletz Youth Prevention Group traveled to Portland to participate in the two-day event. Attending were Prevention Coordinator Lisa Brown, Youth Center Shift Leader Rusty Butler, volunteer chaperone Sara Martin, and six youth from Lincoln County – Megan Blacketer, Brad Bogart, Andrew Foster, Rocky Gonzales, Dustin Nelsen-Martin, and Nikki Strong.

The conference included 36 workshops addressing four issues – community, youth, treatment, and policy. The Siletz Youth Prevention Group's presentation focused on community and youth.

The prevention group was invited to present after a favorable program review conducted in early March by the state Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs (OADAP). OADAP representatives had previously observed the prevention group in its role as instructors at the tribe's summer Cultural Camp.

Under Brown's instruction and supervision, the youth are teachers for the "Four Directions Bracelets" project. In making the bracelets, youth instructors relate the story represented by the different colors of beads – a message of respect for the earth, other people and ourselves, and how substance abuse undermines this goal.

Youth facilitate discussion of these concepts and how they are represented in our environment and personal lives. Bracelets made through the project are sold to raise funds to support prevention group activities.

The prevention group held two sessions of its workshop. As presenters, our youth spent six hours planning and preparing, four hours presenting, and

one-and-a-half hours debriefing the process. During debriefing, the youth discuss what went well and what was a problem, and make suggestions for improvements. Four youth from the Burns-Paiute Tribe attended the first session and apparently enjoyed themselves so much that they stayed through the second one, volunteering as assistant instructors.

Youth also distributed handouts to participants, took photos, helped participants sign up, assisted with icebreaker activities, and answered questions about the youth group's mission.

Brown noted that youth learn several skills in the process of presenting – planning, evaluating, teamwork, public speaking, and teaching. She is very proud of the youth who participated in the conference. She watched them go from being nervous and unsure before their presentations to excited and confident afterwards.

Their success also was apparent to others. The prevention group received several requests to be presenters at future conferences, including the Oregon Department of Education's Violence Prevention Conference in mid-July and the Oregon Student Safety on the Move's (OSSOM) upcoming all-night conference.

The Siletz Youth Prevention Group was started through the Siletz Tribe's Prevention Program, which is funded through a State Incentive Cooperative Agreement (SICA). The SICA contract funds a prevention coordinator to develop community partnerships to raise awareness about use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and to promote prevention activities.

Youth wishing to join the Siletz Youth Prevention Group or who are interested in starting a group in their area can contact Prevention Coordinator Lisa Brown at 1-800-600-5599 or 541-444-8238.



*Siletz youth lead a session at the conference on the "Four Directions Bracelets" (clockwise from left): Burns-Paiute youth, Lisa Brown, Oregon Partnership evaluator, Rocky Gonzales, Rusty Butler, John Spence, a counselor from the Klamath Tribe, and an unidentified participant.*

## Walt's Words of Wit and Wisdom

Long time ago, Rabbit went to the Great Spirit. "Would you give me courage?" asked Rabbit. The Great Spirit said, "You will have to do some things first." Rabbit said, "I will do anything."

The Great Spirit said, "You will have to bring me a rattlesnake." Now Rabbit was dismayed. How will I catch a snake? I'm afraid of snakes, he thought. They will eat me.

While walking and thinking of how he would catch a snake, especially a rattlesnake, Rabbit came up with a plan. He gathered a stick, went to Rattlesnake's den, and yelled, "Snake, Snake come here. I have something to tell you."

Now Rattlesnake couldn't figure this one out, a rabbit coming to him? Rattlesnake came out of his den and Rabbit whopped him with a club and killed him. Rabbit drug Rattlesnake to the Great Spirit.

"Now do I get my courage?" asked Rabbit. The Great Spirit answered, "Now you must bring me an alligator." Now Rabbit was really scared, there's no way he could get an alligator. They are big, fast, and like to eat rabbits.

As Rabbit was walking he thought, well, the club worked on the snake, it surely will work on the alligator. Rabbit arrived at the swamp and yelled, "Alligator, Alligator come here. I have something to tell you."

Alligator swam from the little island and came to Rabbit. Rabbit hit him across the head and Alligator went back into the swamp. Rabbit had failed, now what was he going to do? He thought for a while then devised a scheme.

Rabbit sharpened the club and made a spear. Then he went back to the swamp and again yelled, "Alligator, Alligator come here. I have something very important to tell you." Alligator replied, "Why, so you can hit me again with a stick?"

"No," said Rabbit, "That's why I must talk to you. That was my evil brother and we must find a way to stop him before he hurts someone." Alligator swam across the swamp and crawled up on shore. Rabbit leaped in the air with his spear, drove it right through Alligator's heart and killed him.

Rabbit drug Alligator to the Great Spirit. "Now do I get my courage?" asked Rabbit. The Great Spirit answered, "My child, my child, I cannot give you what you already have. You have proven to yourself that you have great courage."

Speaking of alligators, this cute, little, petite blond said she wanted a pair of alligator shoes. Two alligator hunters said that they would get her some later. Now, that was not good enough for her.

Three days later the hunters were in the swamp looking for alligators. They came across this cute, little, petite blond feeling pretty blue with two alligators at her feet. "What are you doing here?" they asked. "I'm looking for alligator shoes and neither of these have shoes," she replied.