

Juvenile Delinquency: “An Ounce of Prevention ...”

by Leah Switter-Eversole, Delinquency Prevention Coordinator

Juvenile delinquency means any criminal acts performed by juveniles (children under age 18). Delinquency is defined as a failure to do what the law or duty requires; an offense or misdemeanor; a misdeed; adolescents who act in ways that violate the rights of others or society's rules.

This does not mean an isolated incident or an act of inappropriateness, but a repetitive, persistent pattern of behaviors. Up to 16 percent of male and 8 percent of female teens fall under the category of delinquent and persistently participate in destructive, deceitful, manipulative and illegal activities.

Many of our youth end up in the legal system, either on probation with legal restrictions or in detention centers or correctional facilities.

Millions of dollars are spent on prevention programs when in fact, the best prevention strategies begin at home. Children learn from their parents and family members.

If a child's family participates in criminal activities, then the child learns criminal behavior. Early prevention by family members, schools, communities and law enforcement is the key to reducing juvenile delinquency and should begin at a very young age as serious deviant behavior can be identified in children as young as 7 years old.

Deviant behavior is harder to change after youth have become criminals than before or once they first show signs of deviant or anti-social behavior. Many youth can be charged as an adult as early as age 16. Prevention works better and is more affordable than treatment in every aspect and being apprehended/detained only reduces recidivism by 10 percent.

Some things that increase the probability of youth committing delinquent acts are:

- Lack of parental/adult supervision (the No. 1 risk factor)
- Poor academic performance/attendance
- Family history of criminal activity
- Growing incidence of abuse/neglect
- Family changes
- Increased availability of drugs/alcohol
- Labeling of youth by family members, school faculty, community members or peers
- Struggles with mental illness
- Negative peer influences

Delinquency can begin with such acts as:

- Skipping school
- Truancy
- Curfew violations
- Falling grades
- Fighting
- Being disrespectful or refusing to obey rules of parents, schools or community

It can escalate to things requiring juvenile court involvement, such as:

- Deceitfulness

- Running away from home
- Using and/or selling drugs/alcohol
- Vandalism/destruction of property, theft or gang involvement/activities
- Assault/battery charges, physical aggression/intimidation
- Sex crimes

Delinquency prevention begins at home by teaching children informed decision-making processes and teaching youth personal accountability for their actions and decisions by using swift, consistent, age-appropriate consequences.

Rewards for good decisions, privileges and discipline also need to coincide with the youth's interests and desires. Schools, churches, community groups/members, businesses, Tribal programs and law enforcement officials can make joint efforts to get involved and help become the solution.

Children also need to learn empathy. Empathy can be one of the deepest human emotions and to know empathy can deflect potential delinquency when it's fully developed. Empathy is the ability to understand and experience the feelings of another person, the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes, to know and understand how they might feel – and feel for them.

Summer is almost here. Studies show that summer heat increases the risk of youth committing delinquent acts. It also means youth have excess time on their hands, often unsupervised while parents are working.

Here in the Siletz community many options are available to youth and families. For information about youth activities, prevention services, parenting classes and volunteer services, please contact me by e-mail at adyouth@ctsi.nsn.us or DeAnna Pearl via e-mail at adprev@ctsi.nsn.us. Or call us at 541-444-8267 or toll-free at 800-600-5599.

General Council Meeting

May 2, 2009 • 1 p.m.
Siletz Tribal Community Center • Siletz, Oregon

Call to Order
Invocation
Flag Salute
Roll Call
Approval of Agenda
Approval of Minutes
Programs:
Healthy Family Healthy Child Project
Special Presentation
Tribal Members' Concerns
Chairman's Report
Announcements
Adjourn



Courtesy photos by Tina Retasket and Lila Peterson



Ribbon Shirt Class Produces Colorful Results

Some lucky husbands, sons, nephews and friends are out there sporting new ribbon shirts. A group of ladies recently completed a ribbon shirt class, taught by Tina Retasket, as they get ready for pow-wow season.

The ladies were joined by guests – small ones and older ones – who sometimes helped with the process. Class participants included Lila Peterson, Liz John, Chasta Marceau, Denise Riding In, Nancy McCrary and guest Tiffany Haynes.

This was funded, with the exception of our guest (who paid for her own), from Adult Education funding through the Siletz Tribal Education Department.

Top: Denise Riding In works on her ribbon shirt.

Left: CordDee Larue intends to paint a cougar on the back of the ribbon shirt made by his mother, Lila Peterson.

Walt's Words of Wit and Wisdom

by Walt Klamath

It is getting more difficult to think of something that may interest some. I have been doing this since heck was a pup and have written about many different subjects.

As time progresses I think we need to remember our elders who have moved on to a better place. Makes me think of some of the places where I have been listening to people talk. Many of them have the same theme – we must remember those who walked before us. If we don't, we will lose a lot of family history if not all of it.

I am very limited with those who came to my home when I was young and they did share stories, though I didn't pay attention and I should have.

I have been told that when we think of someone in a good way, their spirit will be with us and some of the stories will return then. If we do not think good thoughts, we may remember the person but not remember anything the spirit has to offer.

It is very true that today there are so many barriers to hearing the stories. We might be talking to someone and it might be time for their favorite TV show or time to do some computer things. This does take a different way than when we didn't have computers or TVs. We had radios but we had grandparents to fill any gaps.

Many times we do not think ourselves important, but everyone has two little eyes watching so we cannot do any wrong, anything we say they will fight for.

Everyone has a story of their life. Personally, I think it is an obligation to pass that story on, where you came from, how you became the person you are today, the pitfalls you had to overcome and how you did it. One day that story may have to be relived by a young one learning how to walk, wondering where they are going, why they are even here.

There are many stories, some are humorous, some have no beginning and no end. Some stories are of creation; these are myths in a way. The stories answer questions about why some things are.

This satisfies young minds, as they grow older they will understand what it is. They in turn, however, will tell their children the same story so the tradition will go on.

Personally, I think this is important. This is in fact how our history is passed on to the next generation and on to the next.

Traditionally, winter time was story time. Many times, grandpas would literally be dragged to a home to tell stories.

So the point, grandpa and grandma, is tell the little ones the history, where you come from. I find most of the time the people whom I have the good luck to work with do not know their family history. Then we find out we are not different than our neighbor. Different regions, different customs, different traditions – they come together through the stories.