

# Prescription Take-Back Programs Reduce Danger to People, Environment

By Janet Wicklund

Unused drugs kept in a medicine cabinet, tossed in the garbage or flushed down the toilet or drain can be serious threats to human and environmental health. Drugs of concern include controlled and non-controlled prescription drugs as well as over-the-counter medications.

Drug take-back programs, where unused drugs are returned to designated sources, reduce avoidable poisoning of both children and adults; prevent intentional misuse of unwanted prescription drugs, especially by teen-agers; and protect water quality, fish and other aquatic sources.

Communities around Oregon and the

nation are participating in prescription take-back programs.

In one national study of 139 streams in 30 states, drugs were found in 80 percent of the samples. This causes hormone disruption in fish and in some cases, male fish were found to be producing eggs. One study showed that Chinook salmon are particularly susceptible to sex reversal.

Some drugs can be treated at wastewater treatment plants but others cannot. In some cities, opiate levels have been found to be high enough to be considered a possible cause of continued craving of the drug among people who have developed an addiction and are trying to abstain.

Misuse of unwanted prescription drugs is the nation's second prevalent drug problem, after marijuana use. From 2002 to 2004, Oregon had the third-highest rate in the nation among youth for non-medical use of pain relievers.

Recent feedback in a local school setting indicates that the majority of youth get non-prescribed pain medications from their parents (without permission). Teen-agers age 12 to 17 are the fastest growing group of prescription drug abusers.

Some teens are known to have arranged "pharmacy parties" where they swap drugs found in their homes. This can be prevented by parents taking active

efforts to dispose of unwanted medications, keeping medications in a secure location in the home and counting pills to be sure they are not being used by someone other than the person for whom they were prescribed.

If you are interested in learning more about disposing of unwanted drugs responsibly or getting involved in community efforts to start a Take-Back program in your community, join your community coalition.

CEDARR is one of those coalitions in the Siletz community. Look for information about other coalitions in Northwest Oregon in the January issue of Siletz News.

## December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month – Here are Suggestions for Selecting the Right Gift for a Child

By Sharon L. Mason, CHAI

Finding an appropriate gift for a child – whether selecting a name tag off a gift tree or exchanging names at Christmas time – can be a nightmare. Following are some suggestions and ideas:

- Ask the parent about an acceptable gift and have them give a few ideas to select from.
- Make a list of items you think are acceptable and have the parent pick out one or two.
- Young parents can always use a big package of disposable diapers and all the fixings that go along with the cleanup.
- Getting age-appropriate educational games/toys is always a good idea.
- If you want to get clothes for anyone, it's a good idea to find out the taste of the parent or child. You don't want those new clothes to sit in a pile somewhere.
- Craft gifts will keep hands busy and minds active and creative. Again, try to find out the child's preference.
- As children get older, combining money toward one big present might

be a good gift. Try a karaoke machine, Wii games or a boom box and CDs.

- When a parent or sibling is not available to ask about a gift idea, try asking a close friend of the person the gift is for.

Along with the gift giving, a thought toward the safety of presents should always be in the back of one's mind.

- Select toys to suit the age, skills, abilities and interest of the intended child. Giving a too-advanced toy may pose a hazard.
- Giving toys that plug into the wall to children under age 10 can be dangerous. They could burn themselves or get caught up in the cord, causing an electrical shock.
- Children under age 8 can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Remove strings and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children.
- Children under age 3 could choke on small parts that belong to toys or games. Be sure to keep small parts out of the reach of these children. Government regulations specify that toys

for children under age 3 cannot have parts less than 1¼ inches in diameter and 2¼ inches long.

- Always help the child read instructions before allowing them to play with their toy or game.
- Be sure to keep all batteries out of the way of little mouths.
- Keep plastic bags up off the floor. The small ones could put them over their heads.
- It does not take long to use up the oxygen in a bag.

Have a very merry and happy holiday this year!

### CEDARR

Community Efforts Demonstrating the Ability to Rebuild and Restore

Dec. 2 • Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Siletz Community Health Clinic Conference Room

Agenda: Stephanie Soares Pump will be back to help with our community assessment and strategic planning for our application for the Drug-Free Communities grant.

Your participation is needed!

### Siletz Tribal A&D Programs

Prevention, Outpatient Treatment and Women's Transitional

Siletz: 800-600-5599 or 541-444-8286

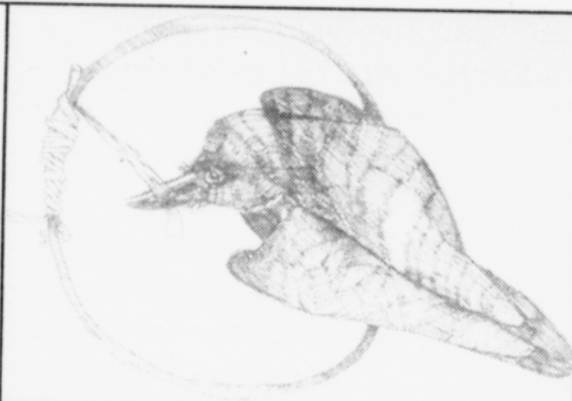
Eugene: 541-484-4234

Salem: 503-390-9494

Portland: 503-238-1512

### Ask Raven

Raven will answer your questions about problems associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. You can call in your questions to the numbers below or mail them to Raven, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380-0549.



## TLC Attitudes of Gratitude: Focus on All the Positive in Your Life

By Lynn Whitlow

Now is the time of year when more people work at being nicer to each other than they do at other times of the year. That is wonderful and sad at the same time.

It's always wonderful to see people make a bigger effort to consider the needs, wants and welfare of friends, family and strangers on the street. The sad part is that it doesn't happen all year long. Each of us could put some Christmas spirit into every day. If we each made an effort, there would be a positive impact on our immediate world.

Gratitude also is something we need as part of our daily life. For myself, if I look at things, events and people in my life for which to be grateful, the quality of my life improves. Focusing on the sad, bad and devastating leads to misery.

There are folks who seem to thrive on misery. It seems like a pretty sad existence. If you identify with this, look around and find one thing for which you can be grateful. Focus on that and see if it doesn't improve your outlook on life.

It may take practicing for several days before you see a change in your attitude and feelings. It's worth the try.

In October, we honored our military veterans. Siletz Valley School and Siletz Valley Early College Academy held their annual veterans recognition program.

It's heartwarming to see children being instilled with love of country and appreciation for those who have put their lives on the line to ensure that we continue to enjoy the freedom and liberties we love.

Quite a few of the veterans represented are Siletz Tribal members. Thank you to each of you for your service.

It doesn't matter what my (our) political feelings are. What matters is that we recognize and be grateful for the individuals who have sacrificed their lives and/or time in our name.

On Veterans Day, I made phone calls to several local vets to say "thank you" for what they did and continue to do for country and community. We all like recognition.

TLC residents have found plenty to be thankful for. They include: To be able to see my sis and nephew, good friends who help out in my time of need. Asking for help to clean up the wreckage of my past. For my son. Asking for help. For the TLC, for candles and matches when the lights go out!

I am grateful for: Trick-or-treating with my son. For all the guidance I have received in my recovery. I am grateful I had help finding my voice to ask for help. For the people in my life, for the support and understanding I receive each day. Most of all, the effort we put into our laughs and smiles, because that's important.

Our 7-year-old says he is grateful for his mom and learning how to understand to appreciate stuff – wow! I'm grateful for my son's "sponsor," for laughing and enjoying each other's company around the kitchen table. For Starbucks peppermint mocha. For my SSP worker and A&D counselor, without them I would be lost.

We are grateful for the awesome Women's Talking Circle that we par-

ticipate in every month. Very powerful women time!

We invite other women to join us for these circles. The next one is scheduled for Dec. 16 as the community Christmas program is scheduled for Dec. 9, our regular meeting night. We aren't missing out on that celebration!

We soon will move into our new TLC house, sometime this month. Preparing for that is exciting and a lot of work. If you are interested in volunteering at the TLC, give me a call at 541-444-8238 or 800-600-5599.

We are grateful to Trish Carey for the donation of children's books. If you would like to donate a new children's book for the children's library at the new TLC, we would recognize your gift with a donor bookplate in the front of each book. You can call the number above or send the book to Siletz Tribe, c/o TLC, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380-0549.

Merry Christmas! May you be cheerful for the holidays. Believe!