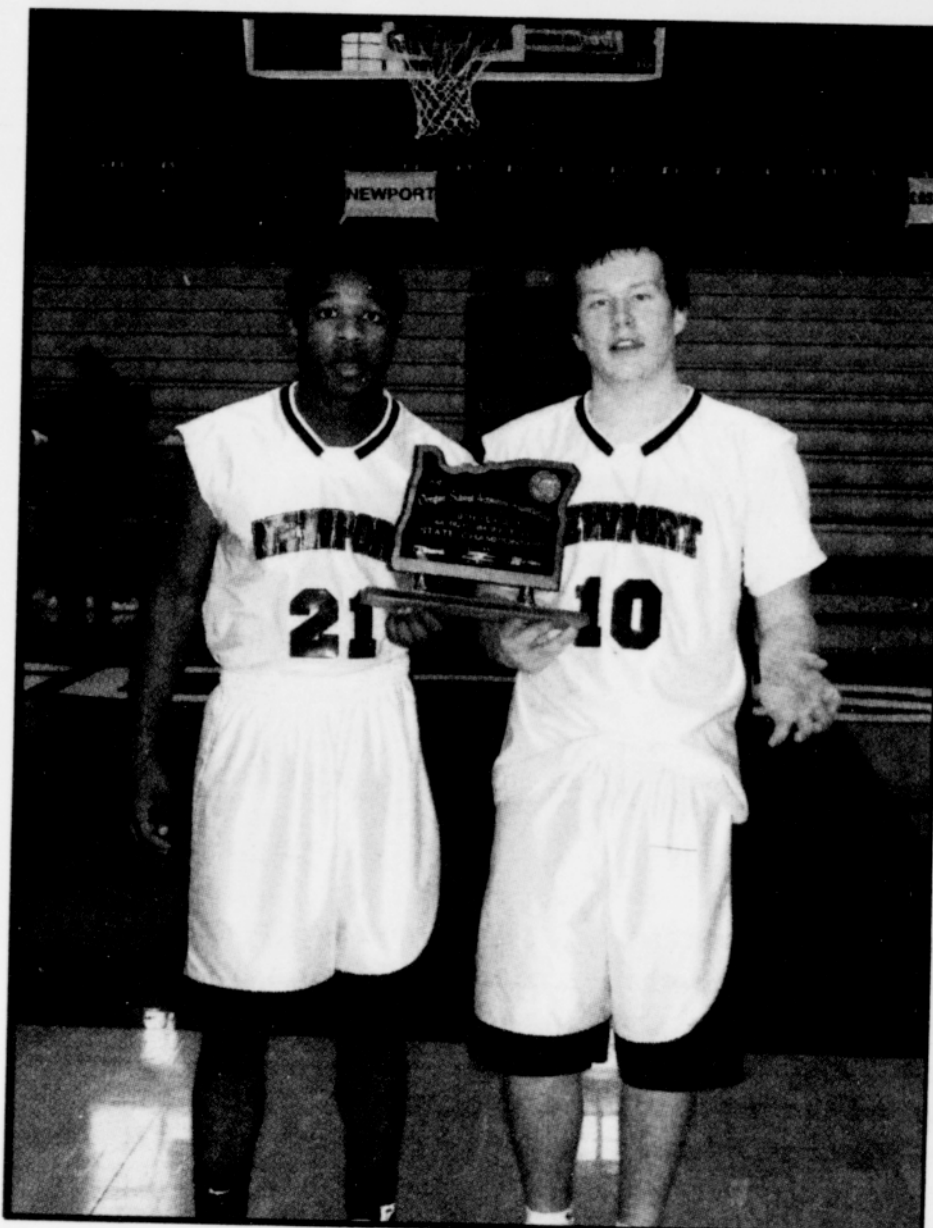




Tristan Metcalf and Zak Bremner (seniors) pose for a photo with the team trophy following their game at OSU's Gill Coliseum on March 13. The Newport High School boys' team placed sixth in the OSAA 4A state basketball tournament.

Courtesy photo by Rose Bremner

April Notes from the Healthy Family Healthy Child Project

Respect – A phrase used in Lakota ceremonies is “Mitakuye Oyasin,” which means “all my relatives.” Its definition reminds us we are connected to all things living. Many stories of animals refer to them as “elk people” or “bear people” or the “bird people.” We are not assigning human characteristics to them, however. We are acknowledging our connection to them. This kinship reminds us of our place, as humans, in the scheme of life. We are not the fastest or the strongest, but we have the ability to reason and that enables us to survive in the same way that a bison’s strength or the eagle’s keen eyesight enables them to survive. This is the reality of respect.

Last month, *Notes from the Healthy Family Healthy Child Project* ended its article with a short paragraph about the need for Native foster homes and relative providers. After the article was submitted, it left this writer feeling uncomfortable because so much was left unsaid and the true importance of the need had not been fully addressed. That paragraph did not even come close to doing justice to the urgency of the matter and needs to be re-addressed in more depth. So here we go.

These are the facts as they apply to the nation:

- American Indian children are about three times more likely to be placed in foster care than all children nationally.
- American Indian children tend to stay in foster care longer and move more frequently (placement to placement) when compared to other children.

These are the facts as they apply to Oregon:

- 12.4 percent of the more than 16,000 Oregon children in foster care are

American Indian, while American Indians account for 1.3 percent of the Oregon population age 18 and younger.

- As of Jan. 31, 2010, the most current numbers available from the State, Oregon had 613 Native children in substitute care. The probability is high that this number will have risen by the time you read this article.
- As of the above date, there were only 159 certified American Indian foster homes in Oregon. The probability is high that this number has remained the same, if not fallen.
- As of the above date, of the 613 Native children in care, 170 are with certified relative providers.
- As of the above date, only 32 Native children are placed in a certified Native foster home.
- As of the above date, 343 Native children are placed in non-Native foster homes.

Let us now look at the numbers as they apply to Siletz Tribal children:

- Currently, 37 Siletz Tribal children are in out-of-home placements.
- Currently, there are 18 certified Siletz Tribal foster care homes.
- 21 Siletz Tribal children currently are placed with relative providers.
- 12 Siletz Tribal children reside in non-Native foster homes.

The point is this – there is a great need for people to step up and make a difference in the life of a Tribal child. The sad fact is all Tribes lose a little of themselves with every child who is fostered by a non-Native family, no matter how nurturing and caring or well-intentioned is that fostering family.

The children are the biggest losers in this situation. Not only do they miss the opportunity to be raised by their birth par-

SILETZ COMMUNITY GARDEN FINDS A HOME

The first major project under the CTSI Healthy Traditions grant is a community garden in Siletz. The garden will be located on West Buford Avenue, east of the Tenas Illahee Childcare Center. The community garden project is one of several initiatives to increase the availability of healthy foods for Tribal members and their families. Container gardening and supplies such as seeds and fertilizer will be available for those who are able to garden in their yards.

If you are interested in adopting a plot in the garden or starting your own garden at home, join us for garden planning. Ideas are welcome!



Siletz Community Garden Meeting
April 28, 6-7 p.m.
Tribal Community Center
Refreshments Provided

Below are some general ideas for the garden. These ideas will be adjusted based on feedback from garden participants. Come join in the planning!

- ❖ **Demonstration Garden** – The garden will feature a variety of native plants, mostly edible native plants or native plants that have another cultural use. The demo garden can be used for plant identification lessons.
- ❖ **Education and Gathering Area** – The center of the garden will have a community gathering space for picnics, harvesting, resting and visiting. We can have weekend workshops and classes in this area.
- ❖ **Elders' Elevated Platform Beds** – Beds for Elders will be elevated so that they can stand or sit in a chair/wheelchair/walker while working in the garden.
- ❖ **Lottery Plots** – Plots for families and/or individuals will be available for adoption and lottery drawings will assign gardeners to each plot.
- ❖ **Tool Shed** – The shed will house the tool library. Residents will be able to “check out” tools for use in their personal gardens.

For more information, contact Project Coordinator Sharla Robinson at 541-444-9627 or 800-648-0449, ext. 1627; located in the Tillicum Fitness Center, or send an e-mail to HealthyTraditions@ctsi.nsn.us.



UPCOMING EVENTS FOR HEALTHY TRADITIONS

Are you interested in?...
Traditional Games/Sports
Gathering Excursions (mussels, huckleberries, etc.)
Archery
Cooking Classes
Food Preservation Workshops (canning/drying/smoking)
Hunting/Fishing
Pow-Wow Dance Practice
Hiking Excursions
Plant Identification Classes
Gardening Workshops

*Tribal Members will have the opportunity to suggest and vote for activities and events that are most important to them at the Community Meetings.

Siletz Community Meeting
March 31, 6 p.m., Tribal Community Center
Eugene Community Meeting
April 7, 6 p.m., Eugene Area Office
Portland Community Meeting
April 8, 6 p.m., Portland Area Office
Salem Community Meeting
April 21, 6 p.m., Salem Area Office

The Healthy Traditions Project is funded by a grant from the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The goals of the grant are to revitalize the use of traditional foods, improve access to healthy foods, cultural food education, and to increase cultural recreation activities.

For more information about the Healthy Traditions Project, contact Project Coordinator Sharla Robinson at 541-444-9627 or 800-648-0449, ext. 1627; e-mail healthytraditions@ctsi.nsn.us; located in the Tillicum Fitness Center.

ents, they miss the opportunity to be influenced by their extended Tribal families, their aunties, uncles, grandparents and in many cases, their great-grandparents.

They do not learn family and Tribal traditions, Tribal history and Tribal values. They also miss out on the stories, songs and dances of their culture. They miss the influence and teachings of the Elders. They miss the Tribal experience. This is especially so for those children placed in homes outside of their home states.

You can make a difference by stepping up when children need help the most. By becoming a foster parent, you can give children a safe place to stay while their families get the help they need.

Foster parents give children a chance to heal and feel supported during this difficult time of their lives. It's challenging work, but when you see how your guidance and love has made a difference in the lives of children, the rewards are immeasurable.

The qualifications for becoming a foster parent are few and include:

- You can be single, married or domestic partners.
- You can live in a house or apartment, but must have a bedroom for a child.
- You can work inside or outside the home.
- You must have a driver's license.
- You must be age 21 or older.

- You must have sufficient income to support your family.
- You must be able to physically care for a child.
- You must pass a child abuse and criminal background check (a criminal history does not necessarily prevent you from becoming a foster parent unless the offense was for endangering a child, a violent crime, rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, spousal abuse or homicide).

The children can be babies, toddlers, elementary school age or teen-agers. You can pick the age of the child with whom you feel the most comfortable.

Most of these children will be reunited with their families after the family works through its problems. The need for foster care can be as little as a stay of three months or as long as a year, depending on the problems facing the parents and their readiness to work on their issues.

If you would like to get more information or ask questions, there are two resources that will be very glad to answer these questions. You can call Shawna Henarie, Tribal foster care certifier, at 800-922-1399, ext. 1275, or 541-444-8275; or you can call the Oregon Department of Human Services foster care program at 800-331-0503.

Please make the call.