



Chris Garza (above) flashes a "We're No. 1" sign at the community celebration.

The sign (below right) says it all.

Courtesy photo by Selina Rilatos

Mateas Rilatos (below) holds a sign made by his sister, Cameron, at the homecoming celebration for the team as it arrived in Siletz the day after the championship game.



Photos by Natasha Kavanaugh

The Siletz community turned out in force for the Siletz Warriors boys basketball team to help celebrate the team's state championship with a potluck and winter sports awards ceremony.

Siletz Warriors claim boys 1A basketball championship

By Natasha Kavanaugh

The Siletz Warriors defeated The Triad of Klamath Falls 70-56 to win the 2011 boys Class 1A state tournament at Baker High School on March 5.

Both teams were playing in their first Class 1A championship game, with Siletz playing in the state basketball tournament for the first time in 36 years.

Siletz Valley defeated Country Christian, Damascus Christian and top-ranked McKenzie – beating McKenzie for the

first time in four tries this season – to reach the title game.

The Warriors finished the season 22-5.

An awards ceremony and potluck were held the following weekend. Words of thanks poured into the community from event organizers.

"Words cannot express how grateful I am for all of the people that came forward to help with decorations, making food, setting up and taking down tables and chairs, washing dishes, sweeping and mopping, selling shirts and taking orders, producing and setting up video and slide shows," said Bonnie Crawford on behalf of the Siletz Boosters.

Crawford also expressed thanks to Kelley Ellis, who took on food and kitchen duties.

"Your calm organizational skills kept me from having a stroke," said Crawford, who also heaped a load of thanks on Tami Miner, Leah Suitter, Stuart Whitehead, Tony Whitehead, Marci Simmons, Tracey Worman, Savannah Worman, Fawn Metcalf, Chuvonne and Willie Metcalf, Robert Kentta, Buddy Lane, Sheila, and Isaac DeAnda, Bob Line, Mariah Garza, Kathy Kentta, Laura Duarte, Lorrie Syms, Emily McMillan, David Morgan, Willie Worman, Michael Fisher and Reggie Butler.

Siletz Tribal Council member Loraine Butler announced that the council will purchase championship rings for the team as well as the coaches, Dave Morgan and

Mike Fisher. Originally the Siletz Boosters were fundraising through T-shirt and sweatshirt sales to purchase the rings. The council's generous contribution will allow the Boosters to pay for warm-ups and summer basketball camps instead.

Fawn Metcalf put a lot of effort into creating a homecoming celebration. Through brainstorming with the community, she began rallying others to decorate banners and signs and help get the word out.

The team was met by a Siletz Valley fire truck driven by BJ Wawrak to lead them into town on March 6.

"Good thing for cell phones as they kept us all in the know of where the bus was to have BJ prepared," said Heather Butler.

The streets through Siletz were flooded with children who made their own signs congratulating the team, as well as the families, fans, alumni and community. Heather and Reggie Butler expressed thanks too for "everyone who hoo'rah'd our team back into good ol' Siletz."

The state championship brought a lot of pride with it, which was clearly evident on the faces of Siletz residents young and old.

"I cried when I saw everyone lined up – it was overwhelming for me to know you were all there to cheer on our boys! How special for them! My cheeks still hurt! And I'm still smiling," said Suitter.

