



Photo by Diane Rodriguez

Graduates attending the annual Student Gathering on June 21 included (l to r) Nikita Cole, Ameer Shamsud-Din, Sarah Addis, Monique Lane, James Anello, Ami Case, James Cederstrom and Peter Hatch. More than 40 people attended the event to congratulate students on their scholastic achievements, from graduating elementary school to graduating college. See the next issue of Siletz News for more details on the graduates and the gathering at Hee Hee Illahee RV Resort in Salem, Ore.

## Let's Move! in Indian Country looks to solve problem of obesity in children

The Obama Administration recently formed the inter-agency collaboration, Let's Move! in Indian Country. Participants include representatives from the First Lady's Let's Move! Initiative; the White House Domestic Policy Council; and the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Education.

Informed by research and recommendations in the President's Childhood Obesity Task Force Report, the four main goals for Let's Move! in Indian Country are:

1. Creating a healthy start on life
2. Developing Healthy Learning
3. Communities Increasing Physical Activity
4. Increasing Access to Affordable, Healthy and Traditional Foods

Let's Move! in Indian Country is a comprehensive initiative dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation so children born today will grow up healthier and able to pursue their dreams.

Elected Tribal leaders in rural and reservation communities and other community leaders such as school officials and urban Indian center coordinators have the ability to spur action in the areas of health, wellness, nutrition and physical activity. Throughout our country's history, Native communities have provided some of the best examples of healthy food and sustainable community-based practices.

Childhood obesity in America is a national health crisis. Over the past three decades, rates of childhood obesity in this country have tripled and today nearly one in three children is overweight or obese. One-third of all children born after 2000 will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives. Many others will face chronic obesity-

related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer and asthma.

### Obesity in Indian Country

- A study of 4-year-olds found that obesity is more than two times more common among Native American/Alaskan Native children (31 percent) than among white (16 percent) or Asian (13 percent) children. This rate is higher than any other racial or ethnic group studied.

The threat to Indian Country is not just to health, however. Childhood obesity weakens the fabric of Indian communities, putting the next generation at increased health risk and threatening Tribal ways of life.

Overweight children are overwhelmingly more likely to be obese as adults and obesity in adulthood robs the community of active community elders. On average, obese adults live shorter lives and are less able to contribute to leadership roles in their communities.

Native communities depend on their younger generations to uphold Tribal traditions and culture and to pass their heritage on to the next generation. Today's Native youth, however, may not grow to be as old or as active as their elders.

Maintaining lasting and vibrant communities in Indian Country starts with childhood health. Healthy children are better able to support their communities and carry on their proud Tribal traditions. Having fit, energetic and vibrant communities is the Indian Country way and by acting now, we can ensure this tradition continues for generations to come.

Healthy child development habits begin before birth. One proven strategy for reducing the risk of obesity early in life is to support breastfeeding. In addition to empowering mothers to breastfeed their babies, we need to offer healthful food choices to young families that they can afford. We also need to encourage physical activity and healthy living at all ages.

But in today's busy world, this isn't always easy. So Let's Move! in Indian Country offers parents and caregivers the tools, support and information they need to make healthier choices while instilling healthy eating habits in children that will last a lifetime.



### Nutrition information

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, put forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), provide science-based advice for individuals over age 2 to promote health and reduce the risk of major chronic diseases. The current dietary guidelines encourage most Americans to eat fewer calories, be more physically active and make wiser food choices.

### Next generation food pyramid

To help Americans make healthier food and physical activity choices, the USDA is modifying its famous food pyramid. MyPyramid.gov is one of the most popular websites in the federal government and a 2.0 version of the website now offers consumers a host of tools to help them put the dietary guidelines into practice.

### Pediatricians as partners

The American Academy of Pediatrics, in collaboration with the broader

medical community, is educating doctors and nurses across the country about obesity to ensure they regularly monitor children's BMIs (body mass index, a measure of height and weight ratio), provide counseling for healthy eating early on and, for the first-time, write a prescription for parents laying out the simple things they can do to increase healthy eating and active play.

Physical activity is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. In combination with healthy eating, it can help prevent a range of chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer and stroke, which are the three leading causes of death. Physical activity helps control weight; builds lean muscle; reduces fat; promotes strong bone, muscle and joint development; and decreases the risk of obesity.

Children need 60 minutes of play with moderate to vigorous activity every day to grow up to a healthy weight. If this sounds like a lot, consider that 8- to 18-year-old adolescents spend an average of 7.5 hours a day using entertainment media, including TV, computers, video games, cell phones and movies. Only one-third of high school students get the recommended levels of physical activity.

To increase physical activity, today's children need safe routes to walk and bike ride to school, parks, playgrounds and community centers where they can play after school and activities like sports, dance or fitness programs that are exciting and challenging enough to keep them engaged.

Let's Move! in Indian Country aims to increase opportunities for kids to be physically active, both in and out of school and to create new opportunities for families to move together.