

To the editor:

Hello, my name is Teresa Gomez and I'm from the Pueblo of Isleta.

Thanks to AIGC (American Indian Graduate Center), I was able to pursue my graduate studies in political science at the University of New Mexico. I was recently named the president and CEO of Futures for Children, a 40-year-old nonprofit organization that encourages American Indian students to graduate high school and pursue post-secondary education. I look forward to working closely with AIGC as our organizations cooperate to help our young people get the most out of their lives.

Those of you who have received AIGC funding know that however much it is appreciated, it barely makes a dent in school expenses. They tell me that the average funding shortfall grantees face is over \$18,000 per year. Over 90 percent of each dollar that comes into AIGC goes to scholarships and student support, but with the increasing number of grad students every year, the pressure on resources is going to increase. Our programs and our students are facing budget cuts that could seriously impede our efforts.

AIGC has been in existence for over 40 years and is proud to have sustained contract funds to support the fellowship program. Yet there is still an important goal to be accomplished – to develop connections with AIGC recipients and other beneficiaries throughout the nation and ensure strong Tribal and alumni support. This is the ultimate endorsement about which other funding sources always ask – how is the organization (AIGC) supported by the people that it serves?

That is why I am writing this letter. For those of us who have benefited from national programs like AIGC, it's time for us to show our appreciation by giving generously to support its work. We must adhere to the principle of "giving back" so those students who are currently in need are receiving the same opportunities we were afforded.

Send a check (AIGC, 3701 San Mateo Blvd. NE, #200, Albuquerque, NM 87110) or donate online at aigcs.org and plan to include them every year. Your generous financial support will directly affect American Indian students pursuing a post-secondary education.

I call on you to continue to grow this talented and educated pool of American Indian leaders. Your donation of \$20, \$50, \$100, \$500 or whatever you can give truly does make a difference. Your contribution to AIGC will help us to continue to make a significant difference in the opportunities available to students across Indian Country, the opportunity of higher education, the opportunity of achievement.

Thank you for helping to support the work of AIGC.

Sincerely,
Teresa Gomez

To the membership:

I am once again running for a position on the Tribal Council. I have served on the council for several years and in many ways, having served on many committees as well as a Tribal Council officer. My interests have always been the Tribe's interests.

Serving on the Tribal Council has been a great honor and I have served with great pride. The Tribe has had many accomplishments over the years and those accomplishments were recently highlighted at our 35th Restoration Celebration.

Those accomplishments are the result of Tribal Council members working together and having a competent workforce. While we don't always all agree with each other on issues, we have active discussions and we do go forward with the best solutions and decisions the council makes.

Not only do I have the time and energy, I am healthy and have the desire to continue to represent the Tribe in the best way possible. I commit to working toward Tribal goals in providing even better health and educational opportunities as well as addressing our housing, Elders, natural resources, cultural and general welfare needs.

I believe the economy will slowly improve this year and in the coming years, but we must diligently watch our budgets and make the best use of our funds. Our Tribe must be present and we do need to be at the table working with other Tribal, state, federal and local governments. Throughout the years our Tribe has established very good working relationships with all those entities, including Tribal organizations.

If I am elected, I will represent you to the best of my ability. Thank you for your past support and I ask for your continued support. I can be reached at 503-393-6516 or 541-270-5017.

Delores Pigsley

To the editor:

I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude for all the Siletz Tribe has done for my family. Thank you for:

- Paying for my husband's college tuition back in the 1990s
- Paying the co-pay for the delivery of my second child
- Allowing us to live in subsidized housing and helping us save enough money to buy our own home
- Giving our family two computers over the last 10 years
- Paying for the sports fees for my children. This helps stretch our budget.
- Starting my children's education out right with the extraordinary Head Start program
- The per capita payments that help us with school clothes and pay down debt
- Putting the per capita payments for our children into trust so they are financially secure when they start life on their own
- Providing education to my children during Culture Camp
- Supporting Siletz Valley School and Siletz Valley Early College Academy so my children can remain in their hometown, with their friends and with their Tribe
- The fish distribution – salmon is very expensive!
- Hunting tags each year – my daughter will cherish memories of time with her Papa Bristo
- Having an over-income grant for housing repair – we will now be able to replace siding on our home once the rains end
- Providing free health care and prescriptions for my husband and children, and for paying for their co-pays on my employer-sponsored insurance

What I am most thankful for today is the medical diabetes program. In 2010, my daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Since then, we have not had to pay for any of her medical care or her daily medication. Sometimes non-Tribal families can't afford the costs and risk the life of their child. We are blessed to have a pharmacy where we can get our medication pretty quickly and at no cost to us.

Also, thank you for paying tuition to Gales Creek Camp for children with Type 1 diabetes. It is one week a year where my daughter can just be a kid like all the other kids, and mom and dad feel safe leaving her in the very capable hands of the doctors and counselors there. Each year she has returned managing her diabetes in a way we could not get her to do on our own. I can't quite explain what a sense of relief and joy I have because of this.

Thank you again for not only improving the lives of our family, but in a way for helping to save the life of our daughter.

Susan Trachsel

To the editor:

I know that this time of year is hard on everyone, but it's real hard on those who are away from family and sitting in the hole right now. So please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Little Chief – Merry Christmas, homie. Stay strong.

Anyone out there reading this who feels like writing to a good young Native bro, feel free to shoot him some words of encouragement. We can all use those once in a while. Here is his name and SID #: Bernadito Garcia #16928659, 777 Stanton Blvd., Ontario, OR 97914.

Merry Christmas to all and Happy New Year.

Todd Ramsey

To the editor:

It was a magical week for me thanks to a variety of people and businesses.

Most of my family and many friends gathered Friday morning bright and early to join me in my swan song on KBCH, followed by a wonderful breakfast at the Anchor Inn.

Saturday, we enjoyed the Angel Ball as our community came together to raise money to assist North Lincoln County families with immediate and basic needs.

Sunday found us spellbound by LeAnn Rimes in Christmas concert at Chinook Winds Casino Resort.

Monday, I truly felt the celebration was over and was meeting with Eric Smileuske, marketing director of Chinook Winds Casino Resort, to discuss details on a boxing program. Much to my amazement and grand delight, Eric led me into the convention center to be greeted by 250 wonderful people.

The Chinook Winds staff served a buffet that was incredible to say the least – tasty food, beautiful presentation and service that was over the top. The room was decorated only like Teresa and her staff can do.

I have been fortunate to have been honored now twice by members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. My good friend Frank Simmons presented me with dentalia following a Celebration of Honor weekend. Now the crowning point. Mike Fisher, general manager of Chinook Winds, and Marketing Director Eric Smileuske wrapped me in a Pendleton blanket. The blanket will forever honor my home. I was deeply touched by their gracious presentation.

My sons spent days producing a video tribute to their father and family that will remain on my laptop for the rest of my life so I can relive the most wonderful party of my life.

Great friends had fun with stories about my life in Lincoln City. Have to admit most were even true.

Thank you Robertson family and our many friends; thank you Chinook Winds Casino Resort.

It really is "Better at the Beach."

Roger Robertson
Semi-retired and loving it

Siletz News Letters Policy

Siletz News, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, is published once a month. Our editorial policy encourages input from readers about stories printed in *Siletz News* and other tribal issues.

All letters must include the author's signature, address, and phone number in order to be considered for publication. *Siletz News* reserves the right to edit any letter for clarity and length, and to refuse publication of any letter or any part of a letter that may contain profane language, libelous statements, personal attacks, or unsubstantiated statements.

Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *Siletz News*, Tribal employees, or Tribal Council.

Please type or write legibly. Letters longer than 450 words may be edited for length as approved by Tribal Council Resolution #96-142.

Please note: The general manager of the Siletz Tribe is the editor-in-chief of *Siletz News*.

Editor-in-Chief: Brenda Bremner
Editor: Diane Rodriguez
Assistant: Natasha Kavanaugh