



## Congratulations, Damar!

The 477 Self-Sufficiency Program and the Portland Area Office would like to congratulate Siletz Tribal member Damar Lawrence on earning his GED.

We are so proud of you and wish you the best of luck in your future.

*Courtesy photo*

*Damar Lawrence and his grandmother, Jolyne Downey*

## CTSI Jobs

Tribal employment information is available at [ctsi.nsn.us](http://ctsi.nsn.us).

Note: "Open Until Filled" vacancies may close at any time. The Tribe's Indian Preference policy will apply. Tribal government will not discriminate in selection because of race, creed, age, sex, color, national origin, physical handicap, marital status, politics, membership or non-membership in an employee organization.

CTSI constantly is looking for temporary employees to cover vacancy, vacations, maternity leave and extended sick leave. If you are looking for temporary work that can last from 2-12 weeks, please submit an application for the temp pool.

## When I nurture plants, they nurture me

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RD, LD, Siletz Tribal Head Start Nutrition

As part of my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. This segment examines how we may benefit by nurturing our relationships with plants.

At the risk of being too personal, during a period of intense grieving I engaged in garden therapy. It was, in fact, the only thing I was capable of doing.

I needed to be surrounded by plants. I weeded, trimmed, moved plants to new locations and harvested food for days while nothing else got done. I worried about the many other things that seemed important, but I just couldn't do them. The garden was the only place I could find peace.

During this time, I realized that as I cared for the plants, they cared for me. It was somewhat spiritual, yet it was also nutritional!

Think about it – we need plants for life. They help exchange carbon dioxide and oxygen to help us breathe.

They bring us health by providing nutrients (vitamins, minerals, calories and more), antioxidants and phytochemicals. Food plants can be quite delicious and quite beautiful. Some of us also feel a spiritual connection with plants.

We have many lessons and many choices in our co-creation (or our cooperating relationship) when we care for plants. Because my experience with plants is personal, I refer to plants as mine (even though I realize that they aren't truly mine).

First of all, I feel strongly about using natural practices and finding balance for the health of the plants (and me).

I compost and nourish my soil with it, which in turn nourishes my plants. The soil food web is extraordinary with plant decomposition enriching the soil to support growth of vibrant foods. ([soilfoodweb.com/](http://soilfoodweb.com/))

I do not use herbicides or pesticides that are not natural or OMRI approved. The Organic Materials Review Institute

was created to help farmers select products and materials that are consistent with organic agriculture.

The truth is that I rarely buy formulated materials to add to my soil or compost. (Well, I confess, early in planting I occasionally use slug bait [OMRI approved] because otherwise I might not get any viable plants.) ([omri.org/omri-lists](http://omri.org/omri-lists))

By the way, ducks or chickens help create balance as they like to eat the slugs while also fertilizing the soil.

Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum systemic herbicide used to kill weeds, especially broadleaf weeds and grasses that compete with crops. Roundup is one of the many products containing glyphosate.

An increasing number of crops, such as Roundup Ready soybean, have been genetically engineered to be tolerant of glyphosate, which allows application on and around the plants to kill the weeds and allow the chosen plant to survive. Glyphosate use raises many concerns about health effects on humans and the environment.

I believe this is scary stuff. If you eat these treated plants, you ingest glyphosate, which is believed to change the health of your gastrointestinal (GI) tract and is associated with fatigue as well as many other possible diseases. Beware of what may happen if you put these food products in your compost! ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/glyphosate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/glyphosate))

Organic practices are one solution to the glyphosate problems. Research also shows that organic fruits and vegetables are higher in phytochemicals than their non-organic (conventional) counterparts.

Phytochemicals are produced by plants primarily to ward off pests and disease, and these compounds also happen to be beneficial to human health. Interestingly, when we eat the plants, they also protect us with health-promoting properties. Furthermore, organic foods may be more nutrient-dense (more nutrients per calorie). ([organic-center.org/](http://organic-center.org/))

Organic foods not only prohibit genetic engineering and the above-named glyphosates, but they also do not allow

use of irradiation and the application of sewage sludge on crops (which may contain toxins).

The term organic refers not only to the food itself, but also to how it is produced and processed.

It is based on a system of farming that mimics natural ecosystems and replenishes the fertility and nutrients of the soil. It integrates cultural, biological and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity. ([ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/organic-standards](http://ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/organic-standards); this link is not light reading, these are the actual standards.)

When we grow plants, whether for food or another purpose, we can observe and connect with the stages of life and follow the energy of the plant.

For example, when a beet grows, both the leaves and the root can be eaten. Generally the energy moves from seed to leaves early on and then it moves to the root (tap root) as it grows bigger. The leaves generally are eaten when the beets are small for vital energy and flavor.

With broccoli, the energy moves from the seed to the leaves to the broccoli stalks. If they are not picked, they flower and later produce seed. The broccoli flowers (and other mustard family flowers) are edible and delicious when added to salads.

The flower buds can be stir-fried. When broccoli seeds are sprouted to eat, they have high concentrations of health-promoting substances. ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/broccoli\\_sprouts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/broccoli_sprouts))

There is power in seeds! Not only are some seeds the food that is eaten, they also are the source of future growth. Seeds are sacred and when we let our plants go to seed, we respect the plant's need to reproduce. We can collect the seed and be less dependent on buying them. ([rodalorganiclife.com/garden/beginners-guide-seed-saving](http://rodalorganiclife.com/garden/beginners-guide-seed-saving))

Some of my neighbors have said that my garden is messy or that I waste food when my plants (especially the artichokes) flower and seed. I beg to differ.



*Courtesy photo*

*Nancy Ludwig*

Bees frequent the flowers, as do hummingbirds. I show reverence for the cycle of life. In turn, the plants bless me with seeds for another season (or to share or trade with someone else in a seed exchange).

Plants nurture me when I choose to grow them in healthy ways or to purchase them from organic or sustainable farms. They nurture me physically when I eat them. They also nurture my soul when I participate in the cycle of life.

*Siletz Tribal Head Start offers my time at no cost to you to support family nutrition over the telephone. Please contact me if you have nutrition concerns about your Head Start child.*