

# Conscious Discipline coming to Lincoln County schools

By Tiffany Stuart, M.Ed., University of Oregon Doctoral Student and Siletz Tribal Member

Our children learn from everything around them. Their teachers are in their grocery store, church, library, dancehouse and especially in our homes.

For centuries, our children have been taught lessons in life through storytelling and other practices not done in 2017. Now our children spend seven hours a day and five days a week in the public school. School districts are looking for solutions to rising negative behaviors in the classroom.

Dr. Becky Bailey is the author of *Conscious Discipline* that is being used in many schools and is starting to be used districtwide (including Lincoln County), where many indigenous/American Indian students attend. There are some good benefits to this teaching method for our children and a few things about which to be cautious.

What is conscious discipline? It is a method of teaching children to feel safe and loved in school. Bailey has done a lot of research on how the brain works and methods of teaching used across the country.

She addresses the fact that some students have experienced trauma. American Indian communities have faced trauma for hundreds of years from the force removal to boarding schools.

Methods that might be new to students are teachers giving them the words and tools to handle social conflicts and to encourage compliance. A teacher might tell a student "You did it" and then add what the student did, "You lined up quietly and in line order."

When conflict arises in the classroom, the teacher talks them through the conflict. This method gives specific language for teachers to use. This language helps teachers notice students' strengths, acts of kindness, building of self-esteem, how to manage feelings and learning from mistakes.

Bailey has created many fun sayings to remember the specific language. For example, when you need to be calm and be the person you want others to become, you use STAR – Smile, Take A breath and Relax. This helps the teacher and the entire classroom be calm and handle what they are going through.

Many teachers already do many of the things in *Conscious Discipline*, but not all. Many tools are provided in the book and online, such as the time machine and I love rituals.

It will take time for teachers to get this method down where all students know the language and methods. I encourage all teachers and the community to give the program time to develop.

If one bad story arises from the program, we should move forward and not

dwell on the one bump in the road. We should focus on all the positive things this method brings.

For example, in this program students are not sent to the office or required to turn a discipline card. Visuals in the classroom reinforce the verbal words from the teacher.

Students are given choices to make a safe school family. They are provided tools, such as a safe place in the classroom, behavior plan and logical consequences. The office and other teachers are not involved in the classroom unless the student becomes a danger to himself/herself or others. It will take time and Bailey has said it can take six weeks to teach and learn rituals and routines.

Bailey does give caution in parts of the book to take notice of community norms. Many times when college students and public school teachers are learning about American Indian norms, they are told that students will not look the teacher in the eye and give respect to their teacher, "the elder."

Well, in my teaching of more than 10 years, this has not been the case most times with American Indian students. My thesis is that many of our American Indian students are so well mainstreamed through media and pop culture that these norms don't carry over and or not learned.

Many American Indian children are in foster care or non-traditional homes. So to say we need to have caution on the American Indian norms is good, but the individual teacher needs to learn about his/her specific community. The norms of Siletz can be different than the norms of Umatilla.

A huge piece I liked about this book and method is that Bailey addresses the trauma and history of the school teacher. We examine and we train our brain to think differently than how we were taught growing up to discipline and teach a child.

The biggest part of conscious discipline is how we talk to our students. If schools monitor that all teachers are implementing this teaching method, then behavior issues will decrease and learning time will increase. This last year in Lincoln County one school was already using conscious discipline and saw how it helped many students who struggled in the past.

As a parent, I would add Conscious Discipline Group on Facebook. I would read Bailey's book, *I Love You Rituals*, to do activities with my child. They are fun and interactive.

YouTube has many videos on Conscious Discipline with Bailey. Also, add my YouTube channel, Tiffany Stuart, and you will see videos on Conscious Discipline and other educational videos.

For information about Agent Orange, possible health-related problems and VA benefits:

- Toll-free Helpline – 800-749-8387, press 3
- [publichealth.va.gov/xposures/agentorange/](http://publichealth.va.gov/xposures/agentorange/)

**Higher ed website is one-stop shop for college grants**

From Education Update, Oregon Department of Education, December 2016

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) encourages students and families preparing for college to go to [OregonStudentAid.gov](http://OregonStudentAid.gov) to check out the more than 500 grant and scholarship opportunities.

It's a one-stop shop for information, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Oregon Promise and the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) awards more than \$80 million each year in state-funded grants and privately funded scholarships to help students meet their college expenses.



Photos by Andrea Taylor

Activities for young and old abound this summer as Nakhia Napoleon and Sapphire Harbour (left) mix ingredients for a smoothie at a Hands on Foods event on July 31, sponsored by the Tribal Healthy Traditions program. Ivan Brown (above) works on his plot in the Siletz Community Garden, another item created by the Healthy Traditions program.