



Photo by Andrea Taylor

Three young Siletz Tribal Head Start students participate in a musical number based on the – you guessed it – “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” theme at the Siletz Community Christmas Program on Dec. 13 at the Tribal Community Center.

City of Portland announces new Tribal liaison

PORTLAND, Ore. – Laura John, a descendent of the Blackfeet and Seneca Nations, started working in December as the City of Portland’s Tribal liaison. John will act as the primary representative of the mayor, elected City Council and all bureaus and offices in relationships with sovereign Tribal governments and the urban Native American community.

“I am humbled to be selected for this position,” John shared. “It is truly a privilege to serve the community that I grew up in. I look forward to elevating the voice of the Portland Native community through outreach, inclusion and representation.”

John has deep roots in Portland’s American Indian community and an extensive background in Tribal advocacy and community engagement as she has worked in American Indian communities for the past 20 years.

She previously was a researcher and program evaluator for the National Indian Child Welfare Association, an early career scientist for the Native American Research Center of Health and coordinator of a child abuse prevention program for the Native American Rehabilitation Association in Portland.

John was a state policy fellow with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, during which time she served as the state-Tribal policy analyst for the Montana Budget & Policy Center and worked closely with American Indian state legislators and elected Tribal leaders in Montana.

She holds undergraduate degrees from Portland State University and Haskell Indian Nations University, and graduate degrees from Washington State University and the University of Montana.

“I heard from the robust and diverse Native communities in Portland about the critical importance of the Tribal liaison position. Laura has a history of being a strong advocate for American Indian and Alaska Native communities,” said Mayor Ted Wheeler. “Her experience and existing close ties with the Portland Native American community will help us form more meaningful relationships and work together to create solutions.”

Rep. Tawna Sanchez (HD 43/North and Northeast Portland), director of Family Services at the Native American Youth and Family Center, commented, “I am thrilled to hear that Laura has been selected to serve as the Tribal liaison for the City of Portland. I have known her for many years and see her new position as a wonderful opportunity to develop partnerships with Portland’s Native community and Tribes.”

The Tribal liaison assists the City Council and all city bureaus in strengthening



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Employee of the Year

Kurtis Barker
477 Self-Sufficiency Program
Director

From the nomination form: “Kurtis excels in his position as the 477 Self-Sufficiency Program director. He is on various committees, and oversees budgets and policies for other programs in the Tribe along with his own. His efforts accomplished the newly built computer lab. The lab will assist Tribal members in getting the training they need to succeed. He has been working on targeted case management and re-entry programs on top of his daily duties.”

Maggie McAfee, Human Resources Assistant (left), and General Manager Brenda Bremner wrap Kurtis Barker in a Tribal Pendleton blanket.