

Community Health Accomplishments/Successes

By Ruby Moon, Community Health Director

A couple months ago, I was asked to write an article for the December newspaper spotlighting the work of Community Health. I sat down and wrote it in early October, but it didn't feel right or at least not complete.

Everything I wrote about was true. The article focused on what the team accomplished during the pandemic. I am proud of what we did, but our response during COVID is not what we normally do. After lots of reflection, however, I came to realize it may not be what we normally do, but it is absolutely who we are.

It is my hope that during the last few years we have demonstrated our commitment as we deployed our response to COVID. Within 24 hours of shutting down services, we had built a phone tree and began to contact each elder regardless of where they lived and continued those phone calls throughout the first couple years of the pandemic.

At the same time, our team built a resource line for all Tribal members to call in to navigate services like unemployment, which morphed into a line to request hard-to-find items. Staff and the membership would call into that line and the ground team would take it from there.

ICWA, continued from page 1

- that ICWA provides a necessary and effective framework for managing state-Tribal relations in child welfare.
- Child welfare experts know that ICWA's emphasis on strengthening family and community ties is a best practice that produces better outcomes for Native children and all children.
 - Medical experts agree that ICWA's provisions address the physical and emotional trauma that Native kids have suffered from centuries of harmful federal and state policies.
 - Individuals who have interacted with the child welfare system who have come forward to share their stories as vocal supporters of the law.

Haaland v. Brackeen represents a fight for Native children, Native families and Tribal Nations. ICWA upholds and respects Tribes' rights as sovereign nations to determine what is best for their youngest citizens.

We urge SCOTUS to side with the 502 Tribal Nations, 62 Native organizations, 23 states and Washington, D.C., 87 congresspersons and 27 child welfare and adoption organizations who support ICWA.

The Protect ICWA Campaign was established by four national Native organizations: the National Indian Child Welfare Association, National Congress of American Indians, Association on American Indian Affairs, and Native American Rights Fund. Together, the campaign works to serve and support Native children, youth and families through upholding the Indian Child Welfare Act. It also works to inform policy, legal and communications strategies with the mission to uphold and protect ICWA.

That part of the team was responsible for securing hard-to-find items, from TP to hand sanitizer and everything in between. When a request came in from the resource line, the ground team would package and deliver those items either directly or through the mail.

Many essential services during this time did not stop for our team. Transportation services for medical appointments never stopped. They remained open, providing access to vital services. CARE continued and expanded services to those in need of domestic violence and/or sexual assault advocacy. Harm Reduction services remained opened and expanded services out of necessity.

We partnered with any department needing assistance, from packing food boxes, pouring healing salves, beading necklaces, delivering prescriptions, sewing masks and in so many other ways I can't even begin to remember. We remained agile in the face of the unknown and tried our best to predict what was coming next so we could continue to offer the best service we could to our community.

For us, that meant stepping up when vaccine became available and processing thousands of people's intake paperwork for receiving the vaccine. It meant training to become contact trace and case investigators for all Siletz Clinic patients literally days before it was asked of us to fill that role. It meant erecting and manning an

evacuation shelter when the 2020 Labor Day fires threatened this community.

It's been a long and tiring road that we have all traveled over the past few years, but this team among others served in a way that makes me proud to be a part of them. Teammates have changed over the course of this experience, but what we accomplished could not have been done without the contribution of each and every one of them.

I like to say Community Health is where leaders and legends are born. We are a small but mighty team. Our department philosophy is no one fails. We support each other to ensure success and have that same commitment to all programs with which we partner. Every person working in this department, both past and present, has a giant heart and is committed to this community, the people and this team.

We look forward to fresh starts where we gather and play together again. We hope to serve during the good times with the same integrity we served with during hard times.

Each and every individual who currently serves or has ever served on this team does it with their whole self. They always go above and beyond and give more than expected. I'd go as far as to say it's impossible to tell where each person's professional life and personal life diverge because the work is our lives. It's who we are.

For me, this is the most important work of my life. Working in Community

Health affords me this mix of impact from great big projects that help to strengthen our community to the intimate work of coming along side individuals and fortifying their personal belief in their own ability. Although I would never feel I could speak for the team's experience, I believe the work we do brings value and meaning into all of our lives. It's who we are.

Imagine a job that allows you to give so deeply of yourself and receive fulfillment and purpose in exchange. That is what it means to do the work of Community Health. It's all about connection. Not only connection to each other, to friends, families, neighbors and community, but also connection to ourselves, our hearts, souls, minds and our actions.

We're in the business of healing and while we are encouraged to heal our own hurts, we get to share that journey with those around us and be with them through their own journeys. This is a human experience. We are all in it together. It's who we are.

Our team encompasses several programs that change lives, save lives and enrich lives. We feature the CARE Program, Community Health Advocates, Medical Transportation and Harm Reduction. We believe in the work we are doing, carry the responsibility to strive for excellence in our work and assist others in achieving their goals. It's who we are.

So if you are wondering who we are, we are Community Health and if you're wondering who Community Health is, it's who we are.



Courtesy photos by Teresa Simmons

On Nov. 13, Siletz Tribal Arts and Heritage Society Chairman Gloria Ingle and Angela Ramirez, STAHS treasurer and Tribal Council member, took part in the Portal to Native Heritage event at the Newport Performing Arts Center. Other Tribal participants included Mark Pullam, story teller; Robert Kentta and Peter Hatch, who made a historical presentation; and Junior Miss Siletz Kendall Bell-Tellez, Little Miss Siletz Beyonka Bell-Tellez, Bella Gomez and Penelope Gomez, who participated in a dance demonstration; and Leonard Harmon (Nanticoke and Lenape Tribes of Delaware and New Jersey), a men's traditional dancer who also showed some of his artwork.