

Portland Indian program closes doors

by Robert Lothian

For a year, the Indian Child Welfare program provided an envelope of support for Indian families in Portland.

Its purpose was to assist Indian families in coping with urban economic and social pressures, according to Navajo Indian Ada Bad Roads Modig, youth worker with the program.

ICW concentrated on children, with Indian arts and crafts classes, swimming and other recreation, field trips to places important to Indians, counseling and Indian foster home placement.

In addition, it sponsored a unique weekly cultural program with topics like the meaning of the eagle feather, the totem pole, the pipe ceremony and Indian legends.

ICW also offered women's abuse education, juvenile court advocacy, family counseling and social service referral, and a young-parents group. All programs were free, said Modig.

But because federal Bureau of Indian Affairs funding for the fledgling program was cut, ICW had to end August 1st.

"We did everything we could to get it back; we appealed and everything," said Modig. Although the Portland ICW program was one of only two such programs in the state, the BIA gave higher priority to reservation programs, she said.

"All Indian families are being short-changed" by loss of the program, said Claudia Long, ICW director for the last year.

"It is highly documented that loss of extended family and intra-tribal assistance has left urban immigrants (relocated Native American families) vulnerable, isolated and with few resources to meet identified needs," said Long, a Nez Perce Indian.

"This disintegration of family life is tremendously destructive to our youth; so the cycle is carried on to the next generation. The loss of human dignity, potential productivity, creativity and cultural richness is staggering for the communities without funds." The end of the program didn't stop the ICW and supporters from having a picnic and pow wow at Laurelhurst Park on July 27th. There was good food, dancing and drumming and the ICW staff—Judy Alexander, Claudia Long, Rose Chasing Hawk, Rachel Herrera, Ada Modig, Brian Jackson and Debbie Grav-

Postal workers sponsor rally

Portland area postal unions are sponsoring a solidarity rally. "Proud to be Union" is the theme of this old-fashioned labor rally, featuring labor songs, labor and community leaders speaking on the importance of unions and postal workers' issues regarding the 1984 contract struggle. The rally is to be held at the North Park Blocks, N. W. 8th and Glisan on Sunday, August 12th, from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

August 12th marks the anniversary of the Postal Reorganization Act signed by President Richard M. Nixon in 1970 which established collective bargaining rights for postal unions and converted the U.S. Post Office Department to the U.S. Postal Service.

Nicaragua

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most people encountered on the street supported the Sandinistas, though some did not. Without exception, everybody interviewed strongly opposed the contras. Nobody here forgets that it was the U.S. which supported the notorious dictatorship which the popular Sandinista movement tore down in 1979. Common sentiment is that the contras would bring another brutal dictatorship. Gladys Baez, a Sandinista commander during the war against the dictatorship who survived jail and torture said in an interview, "The tragedy of another U.S. invasion here will be that many poor U.S. citizens will die trying to kill poor Nicaraguans."



Ada Bad Roads Modig
(Photo: Kris Altucher)

ning—were honored for putting up the good fight.

Children from ICW youth programs were also presented with feathers representing eagle feathers. They were told that the eagle feather is only earned with brave and outstanding deeds.

Modig said arts and crafts classes were offered to 150 young people, including drumming, beading, shawl and wing dress making and arrow head making.

The cultural program enabled nearly 100 people, Indians and non-Indians alike, to hear presentations by people like Martin High bear, Sioux medicine man from Eagle

Butte, S.D.

High Bear told those gathered for the last cultural presentation on July 25th, that Indians were once "just as quiet as four-legged animals, and just as wild. They breathed the fresh air of the sacred four winds. The water was sacred."

High Bear said he had been on the road nine years in the U.S. and Europe in his quest to keep Indian spiritual beliefs alive. "This whole island is our alter," he said. "We're all dirt people."

Modig and Long said they haven't given up, that they will continue to seek funding through grants and other sources.

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