

Solutions Sought at Emergency Community Meeting

by Roger Stwyer

Few people take delight in publicly discussing problems of their children, especially when the problem deals with alcohol and drugs. But because of the senseless violence, untimely deaths and tragedies, and other problems confronting today's youth, an emergency meeting was called October 23 to tackle these problems.

The public community meeting, over 100 strong, was called on only six hours notice and was conducted by concerned people (and not any particular department). Several of the people were concerned enough to take time off their jobs to offer their assistance and ideas.

It was the general consensus at the meeting that most of the problems fall back to the parents.

"You can't tell your children to quit drinking when you got a bottle in your hand," expounded Larry Arthur. "You can't tell your children to quit smoking when you got a cigarette in your mouth (either)," added the former alcoholic.

"We could help by setting examples for our kids," offered Elmer Wolfe, State Police Officer.

Parents admitted to being too lenient with their children and failing to discipline them enough. When a child asks for money it is usually given them, agreed the parents.

George Clements explained that times have changed and children today are subject to many things. The children have access to wherever they want to go (by means of car), he said. Parents should be a little less lenient when their child asks permission to use the car. George commented that the reason some of the older ones can't understand why teens are having all these problems is because their transportation was limited when they were growing up.

The possibility of stopping



PARTY LITTER — Roadside evidence of teenage drinking parties can be seen in most any area of the reservation. An emergency community meeting was held Oct. 23 to address such juvenile problems.

(Rangila Photo)

people who are furnishing alcohol and drugs was discussed but didn't look like a promising idea. That a "buyer" will always be available for the minors is a known fact.

Rex Burroughs, director of the alcohol & drug program in Madras suggested responsible

parents monitor stores to limit or stop buyers from getting to minors.

Stronger interest and support in children's activities needs to be upgraded, was Elmer Wolf's assumption. "Parents don't care where their kids are," said Paulette Armstrong. Kids

need someone to talk to and if a parent doesn't fulfill this need they turn to friends and alcohol.

When James Armstrong first came to Warm Springs he worked as a counselor at the Tribal Group Home. He noted that around 95 percent of the kids in the group home have problems within the home, among parents. "We can't blame the kids entirely," he said. "We need to do more for the parents. I feel we can work with the kids more when we finish with the parents," resolved Armstrong.

"Maybe the other five percent of the good kids can take their parents by the ear and tell them right from wrong (because) not all kids have a lot of things wrong," stated Grant Waheneka.

Waheneka went on to say that the area where the problem starts can possibly be in school. "How much further down the road do we have to go before we prove that we're equal to everybody else?" he asked.

Parents should investigate their children's complaints if they come home from school with a problem, urged George Clements. "See if your child is getting a fair deal over there (at school)," advised Clements. But don't depend on the school to babysit your children, he warned.

If the curfew law was enforced, that would discourage kids from staying out late, Paulette Armstrong commented. And instead of the children serving time or getting the punishment, Paulette thought the parents should take the rap because they raised the child.

It was agreed that all laws should be strictly enforced as a start to cracking down on the problem. Dick Montee, Assistant Police Chief, informed the audience that the Law & Order Code is currently being revised because it is already outdated. The penalties aren't stiff enough so it really doesn't bother the youths. Chief Judge Irene Wells said

that everytime a juvenile gets in trouble the parents stick up for them. Waheneka agreed, "Too many people raise their voice to the juvenile authorities. When a teen-ager gets in trouble he thinks, 'Oh, my parents will come and raise their voice.'"

One person thought that there are too many programs working towards the same purpose. He thought that an evaluation of programs should be conducted and merge wherever possible to reduce confusion and get something done.

Spiritual needs should be filled so young people will know right from wrong, was the opinion of many. Another thought that a Bible School should be held for all the alcoholics because alcohol is a possession and not a habit.

Austin Smith said he would like to see a "Survival School" started to divert potential drug addicts, drunks, thieves, and murderers. The school will deal with traditional teachings such as hunting, digging roots, etc.

The drug program has a "wilderness project" on the drawing board right now which will teach responsibility. The setting of the project will be in a semi-wilderness area. If a child gets cold he has to build a fire by himself to keep warm. If he gets hungry, he has to cook food by himself.

The drug program also goes to the grade school and puts on a demonstration dealing with drugs. The demonstration is designed for a young audience so the children understand.

One interested community member wanted to see more recreation. Lack of anything to do encourages teenagers to go out and "get a case." She thought a swimming pool, tennis courts, and other facilities should be built for the youth's benefit.

"Until they quit manufacturing alcohol and drugs I'll probably never get a good night's sleep," said Prosanna Williams.

Those Who Attended Urge Follow-up

by Sandy Rangila

Nearly a week after the October 23 emergency meeting, people were still talking about it. Most agreed that it was an important meeting but that nothing would be resolved without a community commitment.

Juvenile Officer Neil Wagner said that the meeting was valuable in the sense that people came together for a common purpose. "And some good things were said," he noted.

However, Wagner has a question as to whether or not the emergency meeting will prove valuable in the long run. "If the ideas that come out of the meeting are perpetuated, then it has value," said Wagner. "Otherwise, nothing will be solved without community support. But it's got to be consistent if it's going to do any good," he said.

Juveniles make up a large portion of the population on the reservation (over half), therefore Wagner says the community needs to focus its attention on the juveniles. "We need community support for problems and community support for law and order," he said.

Mike Clements, who attended the meeting for a while, said that he feels no commitment there yet. "There were some good ideas brought out, but basically it was a gripe session,"

said Clements. People got some things off their chest, and the brain-storming and communications was good, said Clements.

But he said that the problem will be solved only with a community commitment. "Programs won't solve it, people in the community will have to," Clements said. He pointed to a "lack of guidance and direction from the adult community." Adults have been shying away from making decisions, said Clements, and until they do things are only going to worsen.

Clements said that the stage may be set for a major change, or an awakening. "But it's not just dollars that are going to be needed. There is a time commitment involved in working with young people, and I think younger people are asking for help," said Clements.

Olney Patt, Sr. said that he felt it was a highly important meeting, but that he would have liked to see some of the teachers and school personnel there. Of the topics discussed, he thought the most important addressed truancy.

Patt referred to the meeting as a "crisis reaction", and thinks the ideas should not just be dropped. "It should be continued, but with the groundworks all laid out," said Patt. He would like to see the tribal education

department involved and more follow-up meetings on the subject.

Garet Soules, director of the local Indian Health Service, was invited to the meeting as a concerned friend of the community. He too felt that some of what was said was good, but that nothing had been resolved. "There has to be considerably

more effort on the part of parents and adults in attitude and on approaching and reaching kids," he remarked. "There has to be understanding both ways," he said.

"The follow through will be important," said Soules. "It's easy to criticize programs. Programs can help but they can't do it all."

Billie Jo McConville of the

alcohol program said it was "an out-of-sight meeting." With only about six hours notice, 98 adults turned out for the meeting. And there were some good suggestions offered, according to McConville. She added that followup meetings have been scheduled through the parenting committee which will be meeting Wednesday, November 8, at 7 p.m. in the Community Center.



Small Fire Hawk, juvenile services head, and newly hired juvenile officer Neil Wagner say they need community support if programs are to do any good.

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