

Annual Men's Wellness Conference gathered all ages together



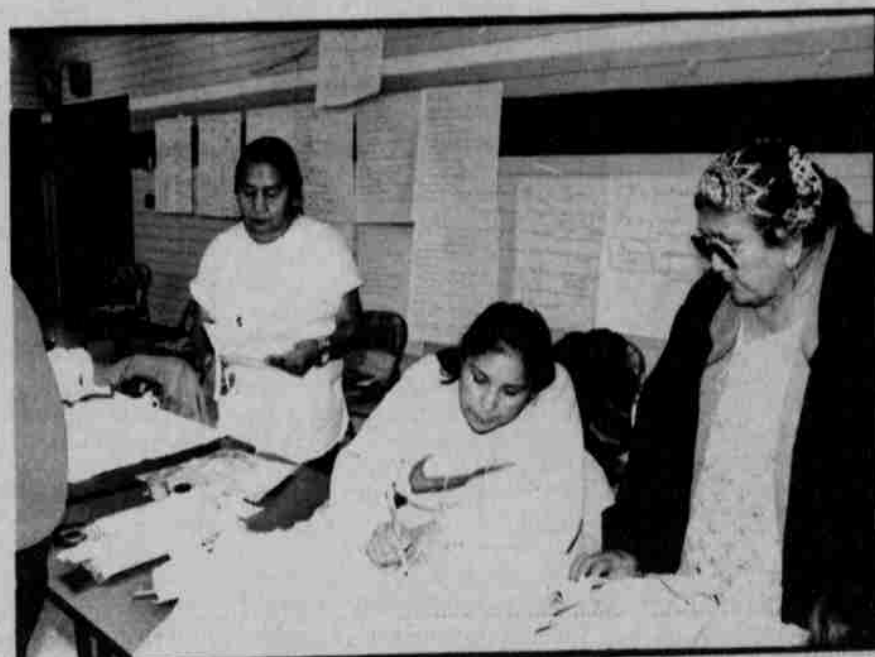
Dan Brisbois, Sr. states his concerns about our community not being able to reach the goal of being the healthiest community for the year 2000.



Jenna Johnson, Cigany Scott, Reanna Charley, Lucinda Stwyer, Wendy Johnson & Jeanie Wilson drum "Indian Women Be Brave & Stand up," a song they learned while they were in treatment. They sang two other songs, a crow hope and "Red People's Song."



Kenny Scabbyrobe, Chaz Mitchell, Austin Greene, Zack DelNero drum round dance songs.



Jeri Jim and Hilda Culpus help Annette Jim make buckskin gloves.



Men's Wellness participants converse with Minnie Red Dog, left and Suzanne Moody, right, following the ladies presentations on victims of violence.

Photos and text by Lenora Starr

The fifth annual Men's Wellness Conference took place at the Community Wellness Center December 1, 2, & 3, 1999 at the Community Wellness Center.

The speakers for the conference covered a variety of topics on spirituality, mental health, physical well being and shared personal testimonies. A day was set aside for learning craft projects such as making drums, moccasins, gloves, yarn bags and mini-teepees.

Men and women, young and old attended the conference. "When you are a spiritual person you can be satisfied with where you are in your life," said Kenny Scabby Robe, a speaker at the Men's Wellness Conference. Scabby Robe addressed the topic of spirituality sharing his testimony of his experience with alcohol abuse and how his life is better without the use of alcohol. Scabby Robe shared a story about a 15-year-old boy driving without a drivers license and insurance who accidentally killed two children. According to Scabby Robe, the mother of this boy was very worried about the consequences that may occur because of the accident and requested prayers for the family. He believes that the power of prayer helped the judge to be lenient with the sentencing. Although the boy had to serve time in juvenile detention, he was released for school and for time with his parents. The sentence could have been life imprisonment. The boy is now in high school doing well and has excelled in basketball. Later, it was learned that the parents of the children in the vehicle where the two children were killed, were constantly fighting over the kids. Scabby Robe said that this could have been the Creator's way of taking the children out of a bad situ-

ation and take them out of the pain of the fighting between the parents. Only the Creator knows for sure.

He concluded, "Through prayer and spirituality, you'll have the ability to succeed in whatever you do."

Keith Moody, Community Health Representative for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs shared his knowledge about diabetes. He said there is 186 people in Warm Springs diagnosed with diabetes and seven of more people are on dialysis, a rate lower than a lot of other reservations. He shares 5 key points for preventing diabetes:

1. Exercise more.
2. Eat less and eat less fat.
3. Eat less sugar.
4. Share ideas for support for people with diabetes.
5. Keeping on the path of incorporating all of the above.

Minnie RedDog shared a powerful testimony of the abuse she endured as a child and how she survived it and how she is prevailing. Minnie works for the Warm Springs Oregon State University Extension office if you would like to speak to her about her testimony.

The conference attendee's were offered an opportunity to evaluate the conference and here are some of the remarks:

"Every presenter did an excellent job"

"The personal stories of sexual abuse and alcoholism were very emotionally touching and very encouraging to witness that these victims can overcome and persevere those issues."

"Very good location and good meals"

Gang awareness, abuse of elders, mediation as an alternative to juvenile hall, men's view of the women

in the community, more information on diabetes, and we need to get more people to the conference were some of the suggestions that were made for future conferences.

The attendee's were also offered a chance to make a personal pledge. They were to write down their pledges and the CHET program will mail these pledges back to the persons to remind them of the pledges they made so that people will be able to see where they are with their pledges.

There were positive comments on Minnie RedDog, Conrad Queahpama and his brother Kyle Queahpama regarding their personal testimonies. Conrad shared that as of November 29, 1999 was his 60th day of sobriety from alcoholism. He acknowledged the hurt and pain he has caused his family by his alcoholism and how he is trying to turn that around one day at a time. He does this by looking to his mentor, Charlie Tailfeather's. Conrad relies on the spiritual songs and the healing of the sweat baths and how through his sobriety he is on a new level of spirituality. He can hear and feel the spiritual songs. His brother Kyle shared through his tears how fearful he was for his brother possibly killing himself with the alcohol and how he may hear of news of his death because of an alcohol related accident. In the end the brothers hugged and some members of the audience were drying their tears. "Tears of healing," some would say.

The lighter side of the conference was the senior wellness team leading exercises throughout the conference and the craft making classes.

For more information about the conference and future events contact the staff at the Community Health Education office at 541-553-4922.



Otis Johnson, left, and Wesley Spino, III prepare their drum frames during drum making class.