

# SIDS high in Jefferson County

Jefferson County has the most fatalities per live births from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in the state. This translates to one of the highest in the nation. To update staff on recent findings on this killer, Health Services invited Kathleen Arthur of SIDS Resources of Oregon to present an in-service forum on March 2.

SIDS, whose cause has yet to be determined, is unusual in that it is described in terms of what it is not. This "diagnosis of exclusion" is: the sudden death of an infant under one year of age which remains unexplained after both an autopsy (to rule out heart failure, aneurysm, suffocation, trauma or other causes) and a thorough investigation of the infant's medical and social history.

Although death rates have declined over the past five years, SIDS remains the most significant health problem for infants between two and 12 months in terms of infant mortality. The national average of SIDS deaths between 1992 and 1998 was one in 1064. In Oregon, chance of mortality rose to 1 in 680, while in Jefferson County the figure was one in 400. Researchers point out that the Jefferson County statistics are possibly skewed by the relatively small number of county births per year (300). However the rate of SIDS deaths has remained constant from year to year, giving greater credence to the statistic.

Several risk factors have been identified as contributing to the disease. Happily some of these – the infant's sleeping position being the most important – are easy to change. (See sidebar.) Unfortunately, babysitting relatives and child care providers may be unaware of current

prevention measures.

Less modifiable factors are: low birth weight or prematurity of the infant and young age or low educational level of the mother. These factors are often linked. Non-modifi-

able factors are sex – boys are more often victims; time of year – fall and winter carry most risk; and ethnicity – African American, Native American and Alaskan Native children die from SIDS at twice the national average.

## Prevent SIDS!

PARENTS: Tell your babysitters about the latest ways to lower the risk of SIDS! They may not be aware of these simple rules:

1. The single most important preventative technique is to place the infant on his back when in the crib. The first time a baby is placed on his tummy, he is at a greater risk for SIDS. Don't assume that even a licensed day care provider knows this fact!
2. No smoking around the baby – before or after birth!
3. Do not overdress the baby. Overheating can be a risk factor.
4. Avoid blankets – a simple one-piece sleeping outfit is safest. No hats.
5. Don't put any loose articles in the crib – pillows, fluffy bumpers, stuffed animals, etc.
6. Avoid a soft underlayment. Use a safety-approved, firm mattress.



Faith Berry, three month old daughter of Wanda and Billy Joe Berry, demonstrates a healthy crib environment.



"Here, they finally had a structured life – school, homework, stability, a safe environment." A grandmother laments the fate of the three children she cared for. Like many women in Warm Springs, she had taken her cousin's children when their mother's addictions created havoc in their lives. However, despite her efforts, their five years under her care included disruptive visits by the mother and, finally, the children were returned home.

Four years later, the grandmother describes the children as "paying the price." The three are experimenting with drugs and alcohol. The 14-year-old is not in school. "I see their mother's behavior all over again," she said. "The circle continues. It should have been broken."

She blames much of the disaster on poor communication between the agencies involved. "I thought the system was to work for the children, but they didn't network; they didn't know what was happening with the mother," she said. "People who don't want to do anything with their lives seem to know how to use the system. But the good people are made to jump through hoops."

This is one story. (A fictitious compilation of a number of anecdotal

# Grandparents meet

notes.) Others were shared at a meeting on February 27 at the OSU Extension offices, one of five OSU branches able to downlink a satellite videoconference "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren."

Across the country, one in 10 grandparents have been the primary support of a grandchild at some time in their lives. Currently 6 percent of children live in a grandparent-headed household.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), one of the sponsors of the event, is aggressively tackling the problems of grandparents raising grandchildren. The video conference included discussions of how Colorado, Delaware and Kentucky have responded to the needs of grandparents.

Warm Springs participants, both "grandmothers" and concerned professionals, agreed that the legal ramifications of informal custody often prevent the caregiver from authorizing health care, talking to teachers and other parental necessities. Parental visitation can be disruptive to impressionable children, yet the grandmothers believe agencies favor parental rights at the expense of the children's well-being. Financial consequences can be overwhelming. A legal foster parent receives financial assistance for children in the home, a relative does not.

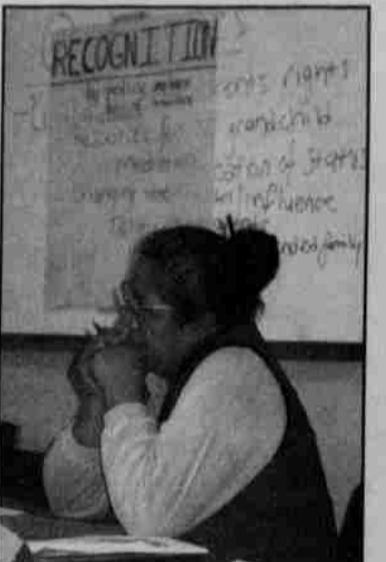
The group fielded ideas for solutions: have the money "follow the child" to whatever home he is in; expand the definition of grandparent to other members of the family not in a direct blood line to the child; improve inter-agency communication.

Custodial grandparents in Warm Springs must learn to navigate both

tribal and state laws when their children's needs can be met only off the reservation. Yet minors and elders are underrepresented in the legal system. Furthermore, attorneys supposedly familiar with "tribal matters" often have expertise in land issues, not elder/minor law.

It is ironic that individuals who lovingly take in children, usually after their child-raising days are ostensibly over, face more difficulties than would the parents themselves. The day's purpose was to identify issues unique to Warm Springs, work with other "grandparents" on solutions, and ultimately implement changes in tribal and/or state legislation. In his remarks, AARP volunteer, Ken Cooper, described his organization as a potent lobbying force for change.

Before adjourning, participants scheduled a follow-up meeting on Wednesday, March 28 at noon. Hoyer hopes that this will be one of a series of meetings which will lead to a support group for custodial grandparents in the community.



# Meet our new provider



Margaret Koepping, Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) is the newest medical provider at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center. She started work here on Dec. 18. Ms. Koepping is scheduled in the outpatient clinic as a provider for Same Day and Urgent Care needs. She will be working from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Thursdays.

Marge comes to us originally from the Puget Sound and Northern Cascades areas of Washington. She previously worked in the Indian Health Service in Chinle, Arizona, before returning to Graduate School for her Masters of Nursing degree and Family Nurse Practitioner's certification. She was most recently working in the Seattle area with the King County Corrections Department. In seeking this position, Marge stated a desire to return to a smaller community with a rural lifestyle. She is excited to be involved

in a community health care setting with the opportunity to interact with families and to teach as part of her practice.

The staff at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center is happy to have Marge on board as one of our providers. By seeing those patients with limited, yet urgent needs, our new nurse practitioner allows more time and flexibility for the physicians on staff to schedule appointments for those patients with long term, chronic problems on a timelier basis. As noted above, Ms. Koepping will be the provider in the Late Clinic (from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, Monday through Thursday). This change will mean that physicians will not be able to schedule for Late Clinic appointments. However, because of the additional manpower, the physicians will have more available appointment time throughout the week.

The demand for services has steadily increased over the past several years since the Confederated Tribes constructed the Health and Wellness Center in 1993. The staff and administration at the clinic are dedicated to meeting those increased demands through a variety of means. New technologies, more efficient scheduling of provider services, and better utilization of space are all areas that are being worked on to bring the best possible service to the community.

With this in mind, please join us at The Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center in welcoming Marge Koepping to Warm Springs.

# Students take over health services



Third grader, Charlene Chee, scrubs those big teeth

On Wednesday, February 7th approximately 200 Warm Springs second and fourth graders were bused over to the Warm Springs Dental Clinic for a lively open house. Clinic staff began this tour seven years ago to celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month. Last year the medical staff joined forces with dental to present an even more comprehensive and entertaining event for the children.

Staff, dressed in a tropical pirate theme, treated the children to skits and puppet shows designed to make the students feel comfortable in the medical environment as well as teach them about issues important to their health. The children eagerly participated in the entertainment as well as the mock "exams" held in the dental clinic.

The following day, approximately 100 Head Start Children toured the clinic for an open house of their

own. And, on the 9th, many first and second grade students received dental sealants in honor of the month.



Dental Assistant, Camille Hall, and helpers prepare for a cleaning

# Boat Launching Site to Close for Construction

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has announced closure of the Warm Springs Boat Launch on the Deschutes from March 5 through the end of the month for improvements. A reopening date is unknown at this time. Improvements include widening the boat ramps, enlarging the parking and boat staging area, and replacement of a rest room.

Parks officials recommend Mecca Flat, located two miles downstream from U. S. 26 as an alternative access point for launching boat and raft trips.

# Police department introduces new officer

## Officer Introduction

Hello my people, my name is Ron Belgard, my Indian Name is Washté' Wichasha in Lakota Translation it means good man. I am of Chippewa/Cree and Tootootni Nations. I have recently started work with the Warm Springs Police Department Patrol Division. I am very glad to be employed by this department and I am also glad to be working for this community and its people. I have been living on the Warm Springs reservation off and on for the past twenty years depending on where the best powwows are at-eyes!



I have come to realize what a beautiful place I live at. The people have always treated me good, I have never felt better about being anywhere. I am really happy to be accepted by so many wonderful folks. I am also a Sundancer and whenever I'm not working, I attend Washut Services to pray for blessings of family, the foods we harvest, and the numerous issues we face as Native people everyday.

As a police officer for the Warm Springs community, my goals are to Protect and to Serve to the best of my ability. I would also like to establish a career-oriented program with our youth to help them gain an understanding of what it means to be Warriors and Leaders. We need to educate our youth not to fall prey to those evils that have become so prevalent in our Native peoples lives.

Working with youth, I plan to revive their interest of our traditional way of gathering sacred foods, hunting and fishing, and making the

Longhouse the primary focus of our young ones before it disappears forever.

While out in the community, please feel free to come talk with me regarding problems I may be able to assist with. I encourage everyone, especially the youth who are our most important asset for the future of this reservation.

Thank you for your love and kindness, and thank you for your time.

## Community Policing

Spring is coming and with the warmer weather more outdoors activity. Is everyone ready to be out in the fresh air, work on gardens, yards, fix fences, etc. For many this is a time to do cleaning, and haul trash, and all of the rest of the things we do when spring time comes. Some of our Patrol Division officers, led by Officer Bob Sprengel, are looking at ways to help do some cleaning of the basketball court in West Hills, along with help from local street residents

and volunteers. So those of you that were watching us up there on Friday will know what we were doing. For more information you can contact Sgt. Lonny McEwen at 553-3272, Officer Bob Sprengel at 553-2217, Lt. Stoney Miller at 553-2283, Bob Medina at 553-2274 or Nancy Collins at 553-4943.

The Community Police Officers have started the knock and talk visits with the people of the communities. There has been information given on Neighborhood Watch, alarms and systems, door locks, crime prevention tips and other topics given on these visits.

## Dogs

There have been a number of calls on loose dogs chasing children in different parts of the Agency area lately. Dog owners need to know that they are responsible if some one gets bit or injured by a dog at large. An owner of a dog involved in such an incident can be issued a citation for Maintaining a Public Nuisance.