

Early VOCS director recalls challenges

By Sarah Frank
Victims of Crime Services

I spoke recently to Mona Baez, who was the second director of the Victims of Crime Services (VOCS). She had the following to say about her work with the program:

I started in 1990 as a volunteer trying to help with filing and correspondence. The program received a grant for a children's advocate. No one applied for the position so Deborah Jackson asked me to if I wanted the position. In July/August 1991 Deborah left the program. Another temporary director replaced her for a month or two. I was asked to apply and reluctantly did, and worked till August 1997.

I worked as a volunteer, advocate and I helped with National Indian Justice Conferences on the planning committee. At that time we had 30 volunteers, with 20-25 active. We trained them to respond to crisis calls, mainly domestic vio-

lence calls. Some of the volunteers wanted to do more in 1994 so they began doing child advocacy and rape crisis. This is when we first start talking about the need for a Transitional Home.

Sister Pauline, Laura Switzler, Patty Gabriel and Lillian Brunoe went to visit places for a safe home. The first place was at the present Small Business Center. Pam Keo was the first director of the Women's Shelter. After Pam were Corinna Sohappay and Barbara Jim.

This was a time of maturity and I saw what was happening to victims, both tribal members and non-tribal members that were on the reservation and off of the reservation. We worked closely with Prosecution. Prosecution assisted with custody issues.

I was fortunate to have my mom and sister to support me because sometimes my backbone would gel. My Mom would pray for me all the time. Mom would tell me, "You have a very

hard job and there are a lot of people that don't like what you are doing, with the changes that you are all making. It's not just these individuals, it's the whole community."

She'd tell me I'd have to be in prayer all the time. I'll never forget what my mom and sister did for me. I know we stepped on a lot of toes. We'd have to mentally, emotionally and spiritually prepare ourselves for our job.

We helped those off the reservation with referrals and/or assistance to get them home. Recommending them to work with other programs, and network with other tribes throughout the United States. I loved my job, but I had to step out and take care of a family member.

The Victim's of Crime Staff and the many volunteer's know the hard work and dedication that Mona did for the program and the clients. We would like to recognize her for the awesome work she did and continues to do at her present job.

Santos recognized for community spirit

Each year the First Peoples Fund recognizes artists for their unselfish work to bring spirit back to their communities through their artistic expression, commitment to sustaining cultural values and, ultimately, service to their people.

This year tribal member Apolonia Susana Santos is being honored with the Community Spirit Award of the First Peoples Fund.

The award will be presented to Santos on December 3 at the Journey Museum in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Santos works in painting and sculpting, and is the art director of the exhibits at Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert

Resort and Casino.

"Susana has always been so generous with herself," said Susan Balbas, who nominated Santos for the Community Spirit Award. "Through sharing her skills and talents with others, especially with youth, she has assisted directly in the transformation of many lives through artistic expression and cultural teaching."

The First Peoples Fund each year recognizes four exceptional American Indian artists with the prestigious Community Spirit Award. The recipients receive a gift of \$5,000. Along with Santos (Tygh, Yakama), recipients this year are David Moses Bridges (Passamaquoddy/Wabanaki), Nellie Two Bulls

(Oglala Lakota), and Lois Chichinoff Thadei (Aleut).

"Recognized as culture bearers within their communities, the artists are nominated by members of their communities," said Lori Pourier, president of the First Peoples Fund.

"Those that exemplify the idea of community spirit are selected by an independent panel of American Indian reviewers."

Works by the four award-recipient artists will be featured in an exhibit, "Collective Voices from the Four Directions," that will open at the Journey Museum on Dec. 3.

Domestic violence myths and truths

The following information is from the Victims of Crime Services office:

Myth: The victim is at fault if she is intoxicated.

Truth: The victim may have made better choices if were not under the influence, but this does not make them personally responsible for the fact that the perpetrator chose to commit the crime.

Myth: It's the alcohol and/or drugs' fault

Truth: Drugs and alcohol do not cause the crime, but they makes the crime more likely to happen.

It predisposes the perpetrator to act out, and it predisposes the victim to be more vulnerable. (The victim is less aware of what is going on and less able to respond appropriately while under the influence. Criminals by their sociopathic nature take advantage of both of these issues).

Myth: Domestic violence is just about physical abuse.

Truth: Domestic violence is about power and control.

Myth: She should just leave him.

Truth: Survivors face many barriers to leaving their abusive

partners. This is especially true on Indian Reservations due to the lack of resources and the survivor's desire to remain with family and friends on the reservation. (More domestic violence myths and truths in the next Spilyay.)

If you or someone you know is suffering from abuse please call us at 553-2293, or call the Warm Springs Police Department at 553-1171. No one deserves to be beaten or assaulted in any manner.

Micro-Grant program helps small businesses

By Brian Mortensen
Spilyay Tymoo

One plans to do a reforestation project. One needs an upgrade of her accounting software after four years. Several need art supplies.

Each is among the 11 people who received \$2,500 Micro-Grants through the Warm Springs Small Business Center in a ceremony and meeting Nov. 1.

Because of tribes-wide emphasis on accountability in funding, the \$27,500 granted was removed from a \$100,000 fund that had been frozen in June. The Small Business Development Center staff had to provide evidence, in the form of financial records, that showed past funding had been responsibly spent and that tribal members who had received the grants are still in business.

"We had to do a financial report of how the funds were used since the inception of the granting, and how we are going to account for the funds," said Maria Godines, a business coach at the Small Business Development Center. Godines worked directly with the prospective grant recipients.

She and Jolene Atencio, director of the business center, stated their case before a management group that included Chief Operating Officer Lauraina Hintsala, Secretary-Treasurer Charles "Jody" Calica, and Chief Financial Officer Ray Potter. Hintsala appeared at the Nov. 1 ceremony to release the funds.

"It was a challenge, and personally I think that Jolene and Maria have done a good job on this," Hintsala said. "I'm glad we finally got to the point where we

can unfreeze the funding for the 11 recipients. I'm hoping that it can be more than that, and I think it will be."

For now, though, the remainder of the \$100,000 designated for projects such as the Micro-Grant is on hold, Godines said.

The committee in charge of the Micro-Grant program also includes Lori Fuentes of the Tribal Credit office, Bobby Macy of the Warm Springs Market, and Warm Springs Business and Economic Development Department Director Mike Clements. The committee had to agree to make the Micro-Grant checks out to vendors of products and for items the recipients planned to buy and use for their business ventures.

"The primary reason for that is accountability from the tribe's side," said Atencio.

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