

# Signs convey serious message

By Leslie Mitts  
Spilyay Tymoo

Three new signs are sure to garner a reaction in Warm Springs—especially since they came back several square feet larger than ordered.

The signs designate a desire for a zero-tolerance, drug-free community and are all three in memory of people who have lost their lives to drugs or alcohol.

Meth Prevention Coordinator Wayne Miller said the idea for the signs came from several elders who attended a meth task force meeting.

Though they were originally supposed to be two feet by three feet in size, Miller said, they arrived as four feet by four feet instead.

Before they placed the signs in the community on August 24, Miller said, a blessing ceremony was held.

It was there that someone suggested that perhaps the mistake in sizes was a sign in itself, Miller said.

“One of the people that was doing the blessings of the sign said, ‘Well maybe this is a sign... maybe the Creator or the Lord has made the sign so big to get the message across,’” Miller said. “I thought that was kind of fascinating. I never really thought about it that way.”

It wasn't the only positive sign people noticed that day—the morning rain suggested a type of cleansing as well, Miller said.

Overall, he added, the blessing was an extremely emotional event.

Washut singers attended alongside representatives from the Shaker Church, while Pas-



One of three new road signs conveying the drug-free message.

tor Rick Ribeiro offered a prayer.

“To be there and to feel that type of emotion was pretty intense,” Miller said. “The families were still hurtful about the fact that they have lost a loved one to drugs or alcohol. You just had to be there to really feel the intensity of it.”

Though they originally intended to put up eight signs, it was difficult to get families to commit to putting the name of a loved one on a sign, Miller said.

But for the families that did come forward, Miller said, “The meth task force honored them and their family for coming forward and being able to put their family name on this drug-free community sign, zero-tolerance sign.”

After the blessing was done, Miller said, they offered the families a chance to speak.

According to Miller, “They

said it hurt, and it was still hurtful, but hopefully the message can get across to the community that we cannot lose more of our younger generation.”

“For them to come forward like that, and listen to them speak, and really grasp on the message that we're trying to get across to the public, it was really intense,” Miller said. “It was not only emotional but you could feel the warmth.”

It's all part of a greater effort on the part of the community to end methamphetamine abuse.

“The meth task force is actually involved with a lot of community members who want change,” Miller said.

“Every aspect of the community was involved in this,” Miller added. “It wasn't just one person or two people saying this is what we need to put on them, this was the whole community that wanted them to be.”

A group of elders came up with the idea, Miller said, but many different people were involved in the creation of the signs—including those from the meth task force working in conjunction with the Community Health Education Team and CPS.

“I want to thank the meth task force and those that took part in the planning of these signs,” Miller said.

For families that would like to feature the name of a loved one on a sign, Miller said, “We are actually keeping that open to the public to come forward if they too want their family to be out there and voice their opinion about how they think drugs are bad.”

Families seeking information should call CHET at 553-3462.

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## Nch'i-Wana celebrates Native art of the Columbia

The Nch'i-Wana art show and events are scheduled for early October at Columbia Center for the Arts at Hood River, and at Skamania Lodge in Stevenson, Wash.

Featured artists include Pat Courtney Gold, Lillian Pitt, Roxanne Chinook, Bernyce Courtney, Tony Stevens, and atwai Apolonia Susana Santos, along with artists from other tribes of the Columbia.

Nch'i-Wana is dedicated to Apolonia Susana Santos, Tygh Yakama, who provided vision and guidance during the early planning phases for this show.

The art show and events celebrate the Native American arts of Nch'i-Wana, Wasco for “the Big River.”

The celebration is set for Oct. 5-29.

The art show opening will be on Friday, Oct. 5 at the Colum-



Dolled-Up Sally, woven basket by Pat Courtney Gold.

bia Center for the Arts. Artist reception is from 6 to 8:30 p.m., with artist panel discussion to follow.

The following day at Skamania Lodge will be the “She Who Watches” petroglyph tour,

from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The art show opening at the lodge will be on Saturday, Oct. 6 from 5-6 p.m., and the artist panel discussion to follow.

More special events, including traditional arts demonstrations, are scheduled through October 29.

For more information call the Columbia Center for the Arts at (541) 387-8877; or visit the website at:

[www.columbiaarts.org/nchiwana](http://www.columbiaarts.org/nchiwana).

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