

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month

As part of the recognition of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, Warm Springs Children's Protective Services is presenting these CPS employee profiles.

Case worker finds job fulfilling

Hello, my name is Roberta Thomas-Hanchor, "Puh-Gah-Ko-Kwe," Prairie Band Potawatomi for "Grey Back Bear Woman" a name given to me by my grandpa, Johnny Wahwasuck. I am an enrolled Tribal Member here in Warm Springs. My mother was atwai Illon Kalama (Thomas/Wahsise) an enrolled member here in Warm Springs. My father was atwai Edwin Thomas Sr. an enrolled member of the Yakima Tribe. I have an older sister, Vera Kindness (Thomas) she has two wonderful children, Cloe (aka Shiralda) and Jade (aka Brittany) Thomas.

I have two younger brothers, Edwin Thomas Jr. and Joseph Wahsise. My overall extended family from both parents is very large, half of whom I do not know or have not met. I personally don't know much family history.

My mother was an alcoholic, it became her life. Growing up I remember all the parties, driving around with loud music, spending the night at peoples houses whom I didn't know. My mom tried to go to school in Durango, Colo., but, alcohol dominated her decision making and eventually left us kids to fend for ourselves. We became a part of the system while we were in Colorado, being placed in several different foster homes.

Eventually we were returned to the Warm Springs Tribe. I then lived with my uncle Foster Kalama for a few years then was moved to Kansas to live with my paternal grandparents, Johnny and Roberta Wahwasuck. I



graduated high school from Kansas, waited two years before deciding to go to Haskell Indian Nations University. I received one college credit in English.

My mother passed away due to her alcoholism. It was the hardest part of my life because I had to step up and take responsibility of all the arrangements. During that time other close members of my family were struggling with the use of meth/alcohol, making decision-making a hard task. I feel as though the alcoholism cheated us, my family, and our children.

I was not prepared for something as big as that, at the age of 24 it was so hard. We stuck by each other and got through it. Because of the life I remember as a child, I try so hard not to allow myself to my children through tat same life. Alcohol has been a large factor in my life, it not only affected my mom but the whole family, and to this day I see my family struggling with the everyday battles of alcoholism and it's hold it has over them to a point where it becomes their life.

I get afraid because I

watched this happen to my mother and to think this is the path my loved ones are going toward, it scares me.

I began working in the CPS Center (aka the group home) in May 2007. I really enjoyed the whole experience from a new point of view. I love working with kids. I wanted to know that I had a positive impact in some way or another. I moved to the administrative side of CPS, now working as a case specialist (caseworker). I have been a caseworker since September 2008. I feel this is where I belong. Everyday is a learning day for me and I am willing to go that extra mile to work with my families.

I've been married for a year and a half to Kalles Hancor Jr. We have been through it all since we met back in the fall of 2000. We have three wonderful children together: Talliah Snyder, 7, born on New Year's Day, my older son Desmond Esha, 6, and my little bundle of surprise Lenso Race, 3. When we are not working, we enjoy spending time together as a family. As a mother I am still learning new things everyday.

I would like to give thanks to a wonderful woman who encouraged me to look into employment. My family was involved with the Early Head Start Program for two years and this lady really helped me through the terrible two's. I feel she gave me that extra push that I needed to get out of my life as a "stay at home mom" and become the working mom I am today. Thanks Tricia Brown, you're awesome.

Privilege working with community

My name is Cecelia Collins. I am an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. My grandparents are the late Cecelia McKinley-Frank and Delbert Frank Sr. My parents are Lillian Frank and Javier Gonzalez Sr. My husband is Michael Collins of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho and my children are Miguel Frank, Malia Collins, Yesenia Collins, and Ava Collins. I also have two step daughters, Kirstie Morrison and Mikayla Collins.

I was born and raised, for the most part, here in Warm Springs. I spent four years of my childhood in Mexico with my paternal side of my family, where I learned how to speak, write and translate fluently in Spanish.

I attended school both in Warm Springs and Madras. I graduated Class of 1995. I took two weeks off, and then applied for a job as the Tribal



Council receptionist.

Two years later, I was promoted as the Tribal Council accountant. Soon thereafter, I was again promoted to retain the title of Tribal Council accountant, as well as a newly developed position of travel desk coordinator, which entailed making all travel arrangements for all of the tribal employees.

After seven years of doing accounting work for the tribes, I applied for the family intake

coordinator position at Children's Protective Services (CPS). I had spent two summers as a youth worker working in the CPS center with the children there, and my husband and I were already foster care providers with CPS, so it just seemed a natural fit for me.

I have been the family intake coordinator for six years, and I would not change anything about making the switch from being an accountant to working at CPS.

Interacting with the people of my community is a privilege and honor. My main job duties include receiving all child abuse/neglect referrals and going out with our local law enforcement to investigate all allegations of abuse and/or neglect. I also work closely with our Tribal Court and our tribal attorney in all cases related to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Activities raise abuse prevention awareness

Warm Springs Children's Protective Services in April will host Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Activities.

On April 9 CPS will host the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Walk and Balloon Release.

The walk begins at the CPS office at 11 a.m., and travels to the administration

building and Early Childhood Education, then ends at the Community Center.

Afterward, CPS will host a lunch at the Community Center.

An April 15, CPS hosts the Community Scrapbook at the Community Center. Bring your own pictures to create a family scrapbook.

Materials and snacks will be

provided. The Community Scrapbook project will be from 1 to 5 p.m.

On April 22, CPS will conduct foster care recruitment at the Community Center. Snacks provided.

If you have any questions, or want to volunteer to help, please call CPS at 553-3209.

CPS hosting foster care recruitment gathering

Want to be a foster parent? Unsure what that entails?

Now is your chance to find the answers to these questions.

Children's Protective Services will host a foster care recruitment gathering from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Community Center social hall.

On hand will be foster care certifier Berni J. Spino, and intake coordinator Cecilia Collins. Breakfast and lunch

will be served. If you have any questions, please call CPS at 553-3209.

The following is the agenda for the gathering:

8-8:15 a.m.: Continental breakfast.

8:30-8:45: Welcome and introductions.

8:45-9:15: Overview of foster care program and how it relates to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

9:15-10: Warm Springs foster care program today and Title

IVE.

10-10:15: Break.

10:15-11: Foster care panel.

11-11:30: What is the foster care process? Foster Care Responsibilities? Training, requirements, and CPS assistance.

11:30-12 noon: Questions and foster care sign-up opportunities.

Noon to 1 p.m.: Lunch.



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OPEN to all students and community members

Warm Springs Library open Monday-Friday

The Warm Springs Community Library is located in the Family Resource Center.

The library is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m.

to 6 p.m. Library staff invites all community members to stop by and browse through the growing book collection.

There are computers available

for Internet access, as well as daily newspapers.

For more information, call 553-3462 or send an e-mail to lsmith@wstribes.org

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