

Let's Talk Diversity Coalition

Training proves a life-changing experience

(To promote cross cultural understanding, the Central Oregon regional health equity coalition, Let's Talk Diversity, is asking community members from different cultures to share their stories about living in Jefferson County including Warm Springs.)

(We begin this series with a community perspective from Sonya Littledeer-Evans, who has worked in Jefferson County for 13 years with the Department of Community Justice-Juvenile Division. She currently resides in Jefferson County, and serves as a Cultural Competency trainer for the Let's Talk Diversity Coalition.)

Sonya Littledeer-Evans recognizes that she is one of many people who historically have not had power in our society: as a woman, a person of color, and a person who grew up in extreme poverty.

Sonya says that growing up she "felt it—differential treatment—but never heard anyone talk about it. I didn't know how to talk about it, and thought it was just in my head."

This all changed when Sonya first attended an intensive Cultural Competency Training of Trainers.

"Cultural Competency trainings were one of the most life-changing events in my life," Sonya says.

"The first thing I learned was that all the differential treatment I had felt and witnessed was real. It was validating and empowering to realize this and discover healthy ways to process it with other people."

These trainings helped Sonya transform her ability to understand the world through all other walks of life.

"It started changing how I did business in my job," she says, "and then it started changing how I did things in my community, in my job representing my agency, and personally too."

Sonya realized she wanted to continue this type of work as a trainer. She was able to do so through cultural competency trainings of the Let's Talk Diversity Coalition.

These trainings help increase cultural understanding,



Sonya Littledeer-Evans

change policy and social norms, and expand the lens in which we all view the world.

During the coalition's community assessment, community members across every racial, ethnic and socioeconomic group repeatedly identified community relations in public places as one area needing improvement.

"Our trainings are a direct answer to what the community said they wanted to see improved," she says.

"The Coalition and its trainings are about creating a safe environment to get together and talk about our dif-

ferences, and about all the things that make up who we are without blame or judgment."

Sonya adds, "We get to learn from it, to take away from it, and use it in our daily lives, to change how we do our work and interact with each other in our community at every level.

"By the end of the day, across every different walk of life in that room, the community comes together and heals together."

Sonya concludes that only with a better understanding of each other will we have a more unified and stronger community.

If you are interested in finding out more about the coalition please visit the website:

letstalkdiversity.org

Or attend one of our monthly meetings. The next meeting is at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7. Call 541-325-5001 ext. 4221.

(Formed in 2008, the Let's Talk Diversity Coalition works toward cultural knowledge and understanding within the Confederated Tribes and Jefferson County.)

Cobell settlement helps to fund scholarships

The Department of the Interior in April transferred the first funds to the Cobell Education Scholarship Fund. This initial transfer was of nearly \$580,000 to the American Indian College Fund.

The Scholarship Fund was authorized by the historic Cobell Settlement, approved in 2012, to provide financial assistance through annual scholarships to American Indian and Alaska Native students wishing to pursue post-secondary education and training.

In other a related Cobell settlement item:

The land buy-back program was created to implement the land consolidation component of the settlement, providing \$1.9 billion to purchase fractionated interests in trust or restricted land from willing landowners.

Consolidated interests are transferred to tribal government ownership for uses benefiting the reservation community and tribal members.

Interior will contribute up to \$60 million from buy-back program sales to the Scholarship Fund, based on a formula in the Cobell Settlement that sets aside a certain amount of funding depending on the value of the fractionated interest sold. These contributions do not reduce the amount that an owner will receive for voluntarily consolidating their interests.

The American Indian College Fund, headquartered in Denver, will administer the Scholarship Fund, and has extensive experience in providing students the resources to succeed in tribal colleges and technical and vocational certifications as well as traditional undergraduate and graduate programs. A five-member board of trustees is responsible for the oversight and supervision of the College Fund's administration of the Scholarship Fund and for developing and adopting a charter outlining its role and responsibilities.

The College Fund is working with the Cobell Board of Trustees to stand up its operation in concert with this first transfer of funds.

More information about the Cobell Scholarship Program and how interested students can apply can be found at the American Indian College Fund website: collegefund.org/Cobell

This first transfer of funds follows recent land purchases from willing sellers at the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations. More than \$100 million in purchase offers are currently pending for landowners with fractional interests at Pine Ridge.

Owners must accept and return current purchase offers for fractionated lands on Pine Ridge by May 2, 2014. Landowners can contact their local Fiduciary Trust Officer or call the Trust Beneficiary Call Center at 888-678-6836 with questions about their purchase offers. More information is also available at: doi.gov/buybackprogram/landowners

Participation in the Buy-Back Program does not impact a landowner's ability to receive individual settlement payments from the Cobell Settlement.

Hepatitis C virus infection: Are you at risk?

by Lt. Jessie Casberg
Pharmacist, Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center

Hepatitis C is a virus that can infect the liver and lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. Hepatitis C is a slow moving disease. It can take anywhere from six months to more than 30 years to cause serious liver problems. Because of this, people who have hepatitis C may not even know they are sick until their liver becomes

seriously damaged.

Hepatitis C can affect people at any age, but recently, the Center for Disease Control found that people born between 1945 and 1965 have a higher risk of having hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C is spread in the blood. Any time blood is shared between people, there is a risk of hepatitis C infection. People who share personal items that come in contact with blood, like used lan-

cets (used for testing blood sugar), used syringes, or used razors; people who abuse drugs by injecting or snorting them, and people who get a tattoo or piercing with tools that may not be completely clean may be at risk of having hepatitis C.

The good news is that hepatitis C can be treated and cured. The medications needed to treat hepatitis C are available at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center

on a case by case basis.

The bad news is that the medications do not work on everyone, and some people may not be able to use them because of other medical problems.

To find out more about hepatitis C, stop by the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center and ask your provider for more information, or be tested.

Questions? Call Linda at 541-553-2134.

Diabetes support monthly meetings

The Diabetes Awareness and Support Group is hosted by the IHS Warm Springs Model Diabetes Program and the Warm Spring Senior Program.

The group meetings are from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Warm Springs Senior Center on the following dates.

May 13: Topic: How to keep kidneys healthy with Dr. Tilley.

June 17: Sleep apnea/sleep problems with Dr Creelman.

July: Diet drinks taste-test with Eric Bradford, Diabetes coordinator.

August 19: I feel good - Why to do I need medicine? Diabetes/blood pressure with Diana Wambaugh, FNP.

COCC offers business course

Central Oregon Community College's Small Business Development Center is giving a short workshop for people contemplating business ownership. There is one scheduled for Tuesday, May 20 at the COCC Madras Campus from 6-8 p.m. The two-hour session covers all the basic steps needed to open a business. Cost is \$29. Pre-registration required. Call 541-383-7290 to register.



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