

# Letters to the editor

## Movin’ Mountains

Registration and initial weigh-ins for the 2021 Movin’ Mountains Slimdown Challenge are this week. The weight-loss and healthy lifestyle challenge is open to anyone 18 and older who lives on the reservation, or in Jefferson County.

The weigh-ins will be at the Jefferson County Public Health building, 715 SW Fourth St., Madras. For more information about the contest call 541-475-4456; or email: [movinmountains@publichealth.jeffco.net](mailto:movinmountains@publichealth.jeffco.net)

Jonathan Courtney, Jefferson County Healthy Community and Tobacco Prevention Coordinator, is serving as this year’s Movin’ Mountains coordinator. The weigh-ins this week at county Public Health are as follows:

This Thursday, February 25 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, February 26 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, February 27 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Entry fee must be received by February 27.

There will be individual and team competitions. The team competitions feature mens, womens and mixed (one man, one woman) categories. Cost to participate is \$25 per category. Cost is \$50 to participate both as a team member and as an individual. Participants are limited to two categories. All entrance fees are returned to the participants as cash prizes to the winners.

Movin’ Mountains is in its eleventh year. The competition encourages reducing weight, fat mass and body mass index figure. Historically, the contest has entailed weight loss and waist measurement reduction.

## Embracing the covid vaccine

The Indian Health Service national headquarter reported that the agency has administered nearly 390,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccine.

At a rate of about 18,490 per 100,000, that’s higher than all but five states.

The trend owes itself both to a harsh reality—Native Americans are four times more likely to be hospitalized from covid—and tradition: Community before self has long been a core principle in Native American culture.

“We already innately have held on to that cultural tradition of taking care of our community,” said Abigail

Echo-Hawk, director of the Seattle Urban Indian Health Institute, and a citizen of the 3,000-member Pawnee Nation.

## Skills classes

The Central Oregon Community College spring term Adult Basic Skills classes will all be done remotely and online. You can sign up now for Reading, Writing, Language Arts, Basic Math, Science and Social Studies classes: Enrollment is open through March 15. Spring term then starts March 29. If you have questions call 541-504-2950. And see: [cocc.edu/departments/adult-basic-skills/schedule.aspx](http://cocc.edu/departments/adult-basic-skills/schedule.aspx)

## Chinook Nation

The mission of the Confluence project is primarily educational; so it is rare that we, as an organization, advocate for specific policy proposals.

We also get a lot of questions during our events from folks asking, What can I do to support Indigenous people? Here is one step we’re advocating for, and we encourage you to join us:

Our friends at the Chinook Indian Nation have asked us to support their effort to achieve federal recognition. As you may know, they have been fighting in the courts to receive the benefits of recognition.

There is now a renewed effort to achieve this goal through legislation in Congress. Letters to members of Congress help a great deal. At the Confluence website—[confluenceproject.org](http://confluenceproject.org)—is a letter of support from the staff and board of directors of Confluence. At the website also is a letter you can submit in support of the Chinook Nation. Letters can then be emailed to the Chinook Indian Nation for distribution. **Colin Fogarty**, Confluence director. **PS: Chinook Nation is also looking to hire an Executive Director and an Office Manager. See page 5 of this publication for information.**

## Getting a grip on your health

Having a strong grip is a powerful indicator of overall health.

Research has shown that a person’s grip strength may be predictive of their longevity, future disability, depres-

## Education advocate joins race for school board position

Jaylyn Suppah has filed for Jefferson County 509-J School Board of Directors, position 3.

Ms. Suppah is a community planner with the Confederated Tribes Health and Human Services Branch. She is a member of the tribes’ Education Committee and a number of other education-related boards at the local, state and national level.

Jaylyn currently manages a program that focuses on school dropout prevention, high school and career/college readiness, and trauma-informed, culturally relevant curriculum development.

“The current board needs equitable representation, more transparency, and better communication and involvement with the community so we can make the best decisions for our students,” Jaylyn



Jaylyn Suppah

says.

“My experience gives me the best fit to achieve these goals.”

Suppah believes it’s critical the school board better reflect the populations it serves. According to [publicschoolreview.com](http://publicschoolreview.com), the makeup of the district’s students includes 34-percent Native American and 34-percent Latinx. Total minority enrollment is at 71 percent, with 29 percent

Caucasian.

Jaylyn’s early endorsers include the Twenty-Eighth Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and Team Jamie for Oregon.

Team Jamie for Oregon was co-founded by Terrebonne resident Jamie McLeod-Skinner to support emerging rural community leaders such as Jaylyn to bring new perspectives to of-

fice.

Ms. Suppah grew up in Simnasho, and attended schools in the Jefferson 509-J district. In high school she played basketball for the lady White Buffalos.

Her two children currently attend the Warm Springs Academy.

To learn more about Jaylyn’s campaign, go to [JaylynSuppah.com](http://JaylynSuppah.com)



Jaylyn, school board candidate, with family.

## A thank you

To all our family and friends here in Warm Springs, Nisqually, Lapwai, Washington and Pendleton,

September 10, 2020 we lost a very great loving man, a husband, father, best grandpa, great grandpa, brother, uncle, father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law and friend, Robert Tracy Sam Sr. As his wife, I would like to say a long overdue Thank You. This has been so hard for us all, and we miss him.

This all started on August 3, 2020 in our home when we all got the virus, Covid-19. Robert was taken to the hospital in Madras on August 5. From there it was on to Bend St. Charles Hospital, where he stayed until September 10, 2020, the day he left all his family.

We would like to thank Warm Springs Fire & Safety staff for being there and helping us. A big Thank you with all our love to St. Charles Bend ICU Covid-19 team, doctors and nursing staff for taking such great care of our loved on; letting us Facetime with him. Doctors calling us 3 to 4 times a

day, keeping us updated, and letting me in to see him. Most of all letting all his family be with him on the morning of September 10.

We all could hold him and say our Goodbyes. This meant a lot to all of us. At this time, too, Thank you Josiah Spino for all your beautiful songs for us at the hospital.

I want to thank all who came to our home with food, drinks and a lot more. Tracy and Veronica and grandsons, for all you did for us when we were at home for the long weeks. Mom, Eliza and sister Ita, all your calls checking on us, Love you.

Thank you Tony VanPelt for getting all the things for our children. Rosa and Brent Graybael family for all you did. Elsie for coming and checking on the children and us. Neda, All you did for us, running around for me. PHN’s calling and checking on us each day. Marie coming with our meds. Wolfman, all the stuff you got for us. Levi and Pearl, Thank you for calling and checking on us. Mandy Suppah, Thank you for all the stuff you got for us. So many people came

out to check on us, Thank you all. Yes, and there was a group of teens that came by with water and thoughts, Thank you all.

Thank you Clint and JeLeah Warner Sr. for all you did and are still doing for my two little ones. I love you both. Thank you Robert Jr. and Mercedes for the new bed, Love you all.

Thank you Andy Leonard for all you did for our loved one. Thank you to our Nisqually family, sister-in-law Diane Hicks and family for all you did, and we love your calls.

Thank you, Carlos and Maria Lopez for opening your home for the services. Marie, being by my side through this all, Love you. Evelyn Plum Gilbert for taking care of me, Love you. Thank you 1910 Shaker Church and the Wasklick Drummers who came to our services. This is just how he wanted it to go. Thank you Louise and Cassie Katchia with our Medicine Society for your beautiful songs when cutting my hair. Thank you! Dayle Tufti for all the food, fry bread and cakes.

*Thank you continues on 5*

## Veterans Representative discusses VA home loans

The Veterans Administration home loan programs are available to eligible veterans, spouses or children of veterans who weres honorably discharged.

The loan programs help you buy, build or improve a home or refinance your current home loan.

These include a VA direct loan, and three VA-backed loans. You will first have to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility for a loan that meets your needs.

### How does a VA direct home loan work?

With a VA direct home loan, they serve as your mortgage lender.

This means you will work directly with the VA to apply for and manage your loan. The Native American Direct Loan—the NADL)—program often has better terms than a



Frankie Williams, W.S. Veterans Representative

home loan from a private lender such as a private bank, mortgage company or credit union.

### How does a VA-backed home loan work?

With a VA-backed home loan, the VA guarantee—that is, they stand behind—a portion of the loan you get from a private lender.

If your VA-backed home loan goes into fore-

closure, the guaranty allows the lender to recover some or all their losses. Since there is less risk for the lender, they are more likely to give you the loan under better terms.

In fact, nearly 90 percent of all VA-backed home loans are made without a down payment.

Lenders follow VA standards when making VA-backed home loans. They may also require you to meet additional standards before giving you a loan.

These standards may include having a high enough credit score, or getting an updated home appraisal,an expert’s estimate of the value of your home.

### Explore different loan types:

1. Purchase loan.
  2. Native American Direct Loan—NADL—program.
- Are you a Native Ameri-

can Veteran or a Veteran married to a Native American? Find out if you are eligible for a NADL to buy, build, or improve a home on federal trust land.

### 3. Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan—an IRRRL.

Have an existing VA-backed home loan? Find out if you’re eligible for a VA-backed IRRRL to help reduce your monthly payments or make them more stable.

### 4. Cash-out refinance loan.

Want to take cash out of your home equity to pay off debt, pay for school, or take care of other needs? Find out if you are eligible for a VA-backed cash-out refinance loan.

*To get more information regarding a VA home loan or a VA-backed home loan, contact **Frankie Williams, Warm Springs Tribal Veteran’s Representative**, at 559-798-7192. Or: [frankie.williams@wsprings.org](mailto:frankie.williams@wsprings.org)*

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